

MY Journey

☞ *Stories from a Blessed Man* ☞

BOB ANDERSON

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Bob Anderson

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*This book is dedicated to my beautiful Betty,
the only woman I ever loved and
whom I will always love with all my heart
forever and ever —
and to the extraordinary family she gave me.*

PROLOGUE

BETTY AND I RECENTLY CO-AUTHORED A BOOK ENTITLED *LOVE LETTERS—I'LL BE LOVING YOU ALWAYS*. That book is a collection of over 860 letters that Betty and I wrote to one another while she was in the tenth and eleventh grades at Van Nuys High School in California, and I was serving in the Army in Japan and on the front line of Korea. That book contains an introduction, some of which is also covered in these pages. So, if you've read our book and you hear a familiar tune, please forgive the duplication. It's there because I believe it to be important background for what's coming.

Let me also take a moment to apologize to Betty's sister, Mary Adele Ward Dowling, for omitting the second "e" of her middle name in the *Love Letters* book—and while I am at it, my apologies to anyone else whose name or other information I mangled in that book and will most likely do again in this one. Should you be interested in obtaining a copy of our two-volume *Love Letters* books, you can do so through Amazon.com by typing in the phrase "Love Letters Bob and Betty Anderson."

For some time I have felt the urge to write a book about my experiences and those of my family. Today I start that journey, uncertain as to where it will take me. There are a few areas that I'd like to define and guidelines I want to establish. Primarily, I want the project to be a fun experience that will give my children and grandchildren a better idea of their "roots" and quite possibly some insight about their parents' and grandparents' life journeys. Rest assured that this will not be a scholarly effort, and it is likely that some facts and figures will be "fuzzy," distorted, or even downright wrong. Please understand that I am shooting from the hip here and that my recall is far from perfect, but that is okay because what I really want to share with you is the flavor of the story.

Throughout the pages of this book, I will share with you many stories—some of which may even be true. At this point, however, I need to affirm that I have been richly blessed all the days of my life. Quite likely, as I tell my stories, you are apt to think, “What kind of ‘religious nut’ is this guy?” I understand, but it is important for me to convey that the blessings I have received are not because of my nature, but because of God’s nature. Most certainly, it has not been because I am the brightest candle on the birthday cake or the most righteous person in the pew—far from it. Over the years I have learned that God blesses anyone who will allow Him to do so. His love is so great for us that He can do no other. Let me also affirm in the strongest possible way that every good thing I have ever done, achieved, or accomplished, or will accomplish in the future, has been through the grace and power of our heavenly Father.

With a few exceptions, the names you read in this book will be fictitious. There are several reasons for this; but the biggest one is that it is 60 years after the facts. It would be impossible to obtain permission to use them, and I certainly would not be comfortable doing so without such approval. Beyond that, I feel responsible to protect the innocent along with the guilty, especially since some of those guys were my Army buddies and if they are still around they know how to shoot.

The exception to the true name rule will be family members and those that I consider “public figures.” In these pages, I will use many “tongue-in-cheek” expressions (one is coming up). If I offend or puzzle you, please accept my apologies and just try to laugh. But, most of all enjoy the read.

Table of Contents

PROLOGUE	v
CHAPTER 1: The Beginning	1
CHAPTER 2: Family Changes	9
CHAPTER 3: Early Stages of Growth	15
CHAPTER 4: High School	23
CHAPTER 5: A Very Good Year	33
CHAPTER 6: My Greatest Achievement	37
CHAPTER 7: A Person of Substance.....	43
CHAPTER 8: The Land of the Rising Sun	53
CHAPTER 9: Korea: The Front Line	61
CHAPTER 10: Home and Graduation	69
CHAPTER 11: Starting Our Life Together.....	75
CHAPTER 12: Family on the Way.....	85
CHAPTER 13: Graduation and Beyond.....	93
CHAPTER 14: Claudia.....	101
CHAPTER 15: Bob.....	109
CHAPTER 16: Counseling	113
CHAPTER 17: More About Bob.....	117
CHAPTER 18: Bob's in Love	121
CHAPTER 19: Bob and Carmen On Their Own.....	125
CHAPTER 20: Larry.....	129
CHAPTER 21: Larry, Sasha, Maxi, and Boris.....	133
CHAPTER 22: Mary and Patrick.....	137

CHAPTER 23: Odds and Ends..... 145

CHAPTER 24: Teaching Sunday School 149

CHAPTER 25: Climbing the Ladder 153

CHAPTER 26: Youth Ministry 161

CHAPTER 27: My No Pet Rule..... 169

CHAPTER 28: Praying, Learning, Choosing and Serving 175

CHAPTER 29: Moving On..... 183

CHAPTER 30: A Funny Way to Run a Railroad or Appointment and
Compensation..... 189

CHAPTER 31: An Angry Daughter, Woman in a Wheelchair,
and a Stormy and Dark Night 193

CHAPTER 32: Central California..... 197

CHAPTER 33: Called as a Seventy.....205

CHAPTER 34: More Transfers211

CHAPTER 35: Working with Good People219

CHAPTER 36: Health Issues227

CHAPTER 37: Returning to the Scene of the Crime235

CHAPTER 38: Betty Made a Difference245

CHAPTER 39: Decisions to Retire.....255

CHAPTER 40: God’s Promise Fulfilled.....263

Author’s Note.....269

MY Journey

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CHAPTER 1

The Beginning

I WAS BORN VERY YOUNG AND THE DOCTOR IMMEDIATELY SLAPPED ME. That was such a traumatic event that I was unable to talk or walk for almost a year. By now, if you are still reading, you are beginning to get an idea of where this is going, and the wise will stop reading immediately and head for the nearest shredder.

My family consisted of my father, Claude Holman Anderson; my mother, Leona Yvel Anderson; and my sister, Claudia Hope Anderson. Claudia, who was 15 years my senior, married Stanley Furlong. Prior to their divorce, she gave birth to a daughter, Leona Yvel, who was nine years younger than I was. We were a loving and tight-knit family. My niece was more like a sister to me, although she always called me Uncle Bob. She had a son from a short-lived marriage and gave him the name of Andrew Claude Lee, but to family and friends he has always been called Andy. As for the name Yvel, my parents, who were in vaudeville, were looking for a new stage name when a bus pulled up, and there in its window was the name Yvel. It was a reflection of the name of the store behind them. That was how “Levy” became “Yvel,” and the act became known as Anderson and Yvel.

My dad’s family immigrated to the United States from Scotland. He was born in Carrolton, Missouri, on July 20, 1893, and died in Simi Valley, California, on September 7, 1985. His father, Robert Miller Anderson, was Scotch-Irish. His mother, Emma Jane Holman, was Dutch. I am sure my parents took me to visit both sets of grandparents, but other than my maternal grandmother, I have no memory of them.

My grandfather earned his livelihood as a contractor and built barns and homes in and around Carrolton and Kansas City, Missouri. There

was a roller-skating rink in town. To earn tips, my dad helped people to clamp their skates to the soles of their shoes. Then he would securely fasten them by using a skate key. I assume that this is where my dad perfected his skating ability.

My mother was born in Bevier, Missouri, on July 20, 1898, and died in Panorama City, California, on March 13, 1959. They were also married on July 20, 1916, which meant that their wedding anniversary and my mother's and father's birthdays fell on the same date. Both claimed that to be purely coincidental, but I suspect my dad figured that the fewer dates he had to remember, the better.

My maternal Grandmother Hannah came from Wales. She married George Sherman, who was a railroad engineer. They had three children, Ammon, Elizabeth, and my mother, Leona. In the early years, they lived in and around Kansas City, Independence, and Western Missouri. My grandparents later divorced, and both remarried while still in Missouri. Shortly after my birth, my grandfather died in an auto accident. I have no memory of him or of ever meeting his second wife; but my grandmother married Homer Twaddell, and they lived together until her death in 1952. Over time, all of the children from my maternal grandparents' first marriage, along with their offspring, relocated to the Los Angeles, California, area. Here we lived in close proximity to one another. My mother was the "glue" that held the family together.

Although my grandmother lived within the city limits, she had a chicken coop in her backyard. When I visited, she would often ask me to collect the eggs. The problem was that every time I entered the chicken coop, a rooster would attack me. I certainly did not want to admit that the rooster had me buffaloed, so I bravely went out and somehow managed to collect the eggs. As I got older, and perhaps a little braver, I decided to take a stand. One day when that old rooster came at me, I was ready for him. I reared back and kicked that rooster as hard as I could. Man! Was that something! That rooster let out a squawk that could be heard into the next county and was catapulted a good five feet into the air, his feathers littering the sky. Yesirree, on that day that old rooster and I reached an understanding—and from there on in, we got

along just fine.

When I shipped out overseas, my grandmother promised she'd bake me two of her famous apple pies when I got back. Let me tell you, if she had entered her apple pie in the Pillsbury Bake Off, there's no question in my mind but that she would've walked off with the \$25,000 Grand Prize. However, she passed away shortly before I made it home. I wish I would have had the opportunity to "see her off" and to enjoy one more piece of her scrumptious apple pie, but it was not to be. From time to time, I think about her and imagine her smiling as she looks down on me. Of course, when I do, her apple pie rushes into my thoughts, and I have to wipe my mouth because it is watering and my taste buds are exploding. As I recall, the secrets to her recipe were the delicious filling and flakey crust. In truth, I really know that it was not the recipe that made it so special; it was her loving hands. Thanks, Grandma!

My grandmother was the first member of our family to be buried at the Hollywood Hills Forest Lawn Cemetery in Burbank, California. As time went on, the remainder of our immediate family joined her there. Yes, that is right. The family is still in close proximity to one another; but when my time comes, I will break that tradition and join my beautiful Betty in Santa Barbara.

Growing up in southern California, my grandmother, uncle, and aunt (along with their children) were the extent of the family that I knew about. So, imagine my surprise when, as an adult, I traveled to Missouri and found relatives that I had never heard of. They came out of the woodwork—like the man who walked up to me in our church's 6,000-seat auditorium, grabbed my hand and said, "Bobby, I'm your Uncle Oney." And he was just the start of the parade.

As I mentioned, my parents were in vaudeville. For those of you who are too young to know what that was (which will be the vast majority of those reading this—assuming somebody still is), vaudeville was the major form of entertainment in the United States prior to motion pictures. On any given day, literally hundreds of performers, such as comedians, singers, magicians, dancers, etc. were crisscrossing the United States on their way to one theater or another.

The premier theatrical agency that booked acts into theaters was the Orpheum Circuit. Typically, my mom and dad gave evening performances on Tuesday through Sunday and played matinees on Saturday and Sunday. Monday was a “dark day,” so named because the stage lights were not turned on. It was usually a travel and rest day; and depending on train schedules, they would wrap up their act and be off to their next booking on either Sunday night or Monday morning. Upon arrival, they relaxed and got some rest. Then would check in at their new venue on Tuesday for the start of another week of dazzling performances. After all, “The show must go on!”

My mom and dad’s act was a six-minute roller skating gig and took place on a portable stage that traveled with them. For their grand finale, my dad would grasp my mother by one wrist and ankle. As she stretched out, simulating the flight of an airplane, he would rapidly spin in circles as he repeatedly swung her up and down, coming closer to the stage floor with each rotation. “It was a show stopper,” said some who saw the act.

Of course, all of that was before my time; but my sister, Claudia, traveled with our parents and on one occasion managed to sneak onto the stage, to the great delight of the audience.

I am indebted to my daughter-in-law, Sasha Vukelja, who went through an old trunk and found priceless vaudeville photographs and documents having to do with my parents’ career in show business. She and our son, Larry had these mounted in two large frames that they presented to me as gifts. These now hang proudly in my study and include publicity items, an article stating that my mother was named to represent the show business industry in the Miss America contest, and a 26-week contract on the Orpheum Circuit for \$325 per week. In 2015 dollars, that is about \$85,000 per 26-week circuit.

When one circuit was complete, they would take a few weeks off and then start on another 26-week tour. As for the Miss America contest, I don’t know anymore about it; but I expect it’s true, since all of us Anderson men marry extremely beautiful women (both inside and out). Should you need further verification, just check with my two sons and grandson.

My parents' biggest gala, however, occurred on May 29, 1932, when I made my debut in Chicago, Illinois. Modesty prevents me from saying more about that; but if you happen to be in Chicago, be sure to stop by and visit my statue—it is the one with all the pigeons! Times were tough; the depression was in full swing. My parents tried to eke out a living in a wholesale donut business that featured my grandmother's donut recipe. Try as they may, each batch was defective—they all had holes in them. There were also delivery problems, and I recall my dad's talking about riding "shotgun" on his trucks with a loaded shotgun on his lap. The crowning blow to the business came when he made a night deposit. In an effort to prevent a run on the country's financial institutions, the Federal Government closed all the banks before they could open the next day. I do not know if my parents were ever able to reclaim any of their lost deposit, but the government's action served as the crowning blow to their business.

So, it was "California, Here We Come!" There my mom and dad opened a donut shop on West Adams Boulevard in Los Angeles. I vaguely remember that it occupied a long, narrow space with a counter and swivel stools that ran the length of the building. It was about that time that I came down with rheumatic fever, and the doctor prescribed lots of bed rest. That may have been the start of my love affair with sleeping late. Fortunately, I made a full recovery and suffered no future ill effects, although I did have to repeat the first grade, since I did not meet the attendance requirement. During that time, my mother tried to entertain me, and she had a favorite story she loved to tell. It seemed that one day I asked her to draw me a picture of "The Three Little Pigs." Then awhile later, I asked for a picture of a "bee" which she assumed meant the letter "B," since I was learning the alphabet at the time. Anyway, when she unveiled her drawing, I took one look—and being the sensitive and diplomatic child I was, blurted out, "That's worse than The Three Little Pigs!"

When we first arrived in California, we lived in Los Angeles, and then in Culver City and later in North Hollywood—always in close proximity to one another. Family members included my sister Claudia, husband

Stan, and daughter Leona (last name Furlong); my grandmother Hanna and husband Homer Twaddell; my Uncle Ammon, wife Dorothy and son Dick (Sherman) and my Aunt Bess, Uncle Al and three of their children, Billy, Gloria and Hannah (Moore), along with Billy and Gloria Brohamer from a former marriage. She also had an older son Jack Brohamer, who was an adult and lived on his own. When she married, Gloria took the last name of her husband (I have no recall of what it was); Hannah became a Bettis (her second husband); and Leona became a Lee. Both Hannah's and Leona's marriages ended in divorce.

When my mother passed, my sister and, to a lesser degree, my niece, assumed the role of holding the family together. Upon their deaths, our extended family began to melt away for one reason or another; and I have no idea where these family members might be or, indeed, if any are still living.

My Uncle Ammon was also in the wholesale donut business, and he asked my dad to manage his company. When my dad accepted, we moved to Culver City and lived in a three-unit court. Ours was the front unit. I do not recall ever being spanked (obviously, because I was a perfect child), but I vividly recall a time when Dad became so angry that I thought he was going to kill me. My mother was doing the wash on the back porch. He was between her and me, so I took off out the front door and made the mistake of turning right. That meant I had to run around all of the units in order to reach the safety of my mother. Remember now, my dad was a former professional athlete, but fear was a motivating force. I outran him and flung myself into my mother's arms just before he caught me.

My mother was a loving, stay-at-home mom who doted over me and was a pushover when it came to discipline. Rather than spank me when I did something wrong, she docked privileges from me. She would say, "All right, young man. That will cost you three privileges." Later in the day, I would come and ask her if I could go to Johnny's house. She would say, "No" and one privileged demerit bit the dust; somehow, she never seemed to catch on that I did not want to go to Johnny's house in the first place. It was sort of like the old story of the university that installed

the honor system. The professors had the honor, and the students had the system. As for me, I was a pretty good kid with seemingly a strong moral compass beyond my age. However, there were a few times that I got off course; and when I did so, I was held accountable. Always, however, my parents stood by me through thick or thin.

Our car was a coupe with a rumble seat, and my parents often took long Sunday drives. As we rode along, I curled up in the rumble seat. To this day, I can feel the warm Southern California sun caressing my body. On one excursion, we stopped at a trout farm. That is where I learned what a great fisherman I was. Upon arrival, my parents were shuffled off to the “adult” pool to fish, while I went to the “kiddy” pool. I’m proud to say that on that day, I caught seven times the amount of fish that my dad caught. You’re right. The fee for fishing at the farm was based on the number of pounds you reeled in, reinforcing the saying that, “There’s a sucker born every minute.”

Things worked a little differently for my sister. When she went with them as a child, my folks stopped at a “money cave,” where my dad would go in first to make sure that everything was safe. Of course, what he was really doing was “salting” the mine with pennies, nickels, and dimes. It was great fun for my sister until my dad went into a cave and actually found a bear. That, Mr. and Mrs. America, was the end of my sister’s gig.

My mother and father loved each other a great deal, and I am indebted to them for the example they set. On those long car rides, my dad would often reach down for my mother’s hand and, bringing it to his lips, kiss it. “Like father; like son,” they say. With great delight, I remember the first time I unconsciously reached for the hand of my beloved Betty and carried out that loving gesture—an act I must have repeated thousands of times over the years.



CHAPTER 2

Family Changes

EARLY ON THE MORNING OF MARCH 19, 1959, MY DAD CAME HOME FROM WORK AND FOUND MY MOTHER ON THE LIVING ROOM COUCH, WHERE SHE HAD QUIETLY PASSED AWAY FROM A STROKE. She was a devoted wife, mother, and grandma who deeply loved her family. One of the biggest disappointments in my life is that she died so early. That robbed her and our children of the joy of “growing up” together. They would have had a ball.

A short time later, my sister invited Dad to live with her, Leona, and Andy. One day Claudia returned home from work to find that my dad had moved in. All of her furniture was in the garage, and the furniture from his family home occupied their space. I guess that was his way of accepting her invitation. The four of them lived quite well together in Simi Valley, California, until my niece, Leona, died of ovarian cancer in 1985. Burying her only child was a huge blow to my sister and added enormously to the physical and financial strain she was already experiencing. Betty and I offered to take responsibility for our dad, but they wanted to keep things as they were. Some years later when Dad passed away, my sister decided to move to Roseville, California, to be closer to us.

When my dad sold the Panorama City house, he opened savings accounts for my sister, niece, grandnephew, and me for \$25,000 each. I never saw any paperwork, legal or otherwise, on that. The understanding was that these funds would pass to the “beneficiaries,” provided the funds had not been used prior to my dad’s demise. My sister was the “guardian” of these accounts. In view of the above, I asked her to use the funds from my account first, should they be needed. I was very much aware that

they would be.

Andy enrolled in the computer science program at Sacramento State University where he excelled. Upon graduation, he went to work for the University and today is one of the top managers in their computer department. I think that my sister made that move so Andy would be close to family in the event that something befell her. That premonition came true in 1994. My sister and I had arranged to have coffee together at her house; but when I rang the doorbell, there was no response except for the barking of their two dogs. I didn't have a key, so I walked around to the back of the house and peered into my sister's bedroom. I saw her lying peacefully in her bed. Later, it was determined that she had gotten Andy his breakfast and sent him off to work before going back to bed, where she died of a stroke. Andy had lost his mother, grandmother, great-grandma, and great-grandpa. He was now the only member left of his immediate family; he was alone.

At the same time, he was now free to live his life as he chose, no longer hindered by family considerations (not that he would have chosen that). Betty and I were there for him; but if he leaned on our shoulders in any way, it was slight. Andy seemed to handle the situation well. A few years later, mutual friends introduced him to Liane, and I performed their wedding ceremony in the presence of family and friends in the new home they had purchased together in Rocklin, California. They have a son Mitchell, who is a great kid, but sadly, I have just learned that they are to be divorced. Mitchell is a delight. He is bright and highly motivated by chocolate chip cookies.

A couple of side notes about my sister and me. We had a very strong and loving relationship. One of her favorite stories was about the time she saved money for weeks so she could take me to the circus; only I slept through the entire performance. Afterwards, she said if I ever did anything like that again, she was going to feed me to the lions.

One time when I was in junior high school, I called her up and told her that I was going to a dance and wondered if she could teach me how to dance. "Sure," she said, "When's the dance?" "Tomorrow," I said. Then it was over to her house to practice my dance step. And it was a

one, a two, and a three, step; followed by a one, a two, and a three, step and so on. However, she must not have been a very good teacher because I never did learn to dance well. In fact, even Arthur Murray couldn't teach me to "dance in a hurry." It was a shame because Betty was such a good dancer. The good news was that she loved me, and she said that she would rather have me stumble all over her feet than to have someone else hold her on the dance floor.

As great as my sister was, she wasn't perfect. One time she promised to take me to the ocean. As we started down an embankment from the road to the beach, a step gave way and she fell about 8 feet. Bruised and bleeding, she said we were going home. "Going home!" I exclaimed, "You promised to take me to the beach, and I haven't even got my feet wet!" And I thought, "Boy, if you can't trust your sister, who can you trust?"

In Culver City there was a movie theater called the Palms. At every performance they would show an in-house advertisement of a chauffeur driving a Rolls Royce into the driveway of a mansion. A woman dressed in lavish furs would come out, get into the car and say to the chauffeur, "To the Palms, James." I told my mother that when I got big, I was going to get her a car like that. That was the only promise I made to her that I did not keep.

The theater also ran a series of promotions, one of which was giving away a Shetland pony. It ran for several weeks. On the last week, I was one of 10 finalists. The deal was that in order to be eligible for the prize, you had to bring a parent with you to the final drawing. I looked over, and my mother was praying. "How can I lose?" I thought. But I did. As I became older, I came to realize that parents do not always pray for what you want, but for what is best for you and the family. What would we ever have done with a Shetland pony in a one-bedroom apartment?

Just prior to our country's entering World War II, my uncle Ammon decided to build a 24-lane bowling alley in North Hollywood, California; my dad was asked to manage it. He was a good choice. North Hollywood was the center of the motion picture industry, and hordes of his vaudeville cronies visited the alley in support of their old friend. That gave it prestige

and publicity that money could not buy. Not that it was needed, mind you. The Second World War was in full swing, and the defense industry was in full bloom. My dad had three shifts of teams slinging balls down those 24 alleys all day every day. It was not only a gold mine; it was also patriotic. It helped to build the morale of defense workers.

During that time, I met a number of Hollywood personalities (movie stars) who had been friends with my parents during their vaudeville days. Now I cannot say I was overly impressed with meeting them. After all, I was going to school with their kids and grandkids, but it was a good feeling to hear all the nice things they had to say about my mom and dad.

There was one time, however, when I really was impressed. My dad took me to a Los Angeles Angels baseball game. That was during the era of the Pacific Coast League that at the time was playing class AAA ball, one step below the Major Leagues. We got to the game early and sat behind the Angels' dugout. My dad started yelling, "Dutch, Dutch, Dutch!" A uniform emerged from the dugout. When the guy who was wearing it saw my dad, his face broke out in a mile-long smile. He took the steps two at a time. When he got to my dad, they grabbed each other in a bear hug and pounded one another on the back. It was then that I met the great Casey Stengel. They had been boyhood friends, and like everyone else, Casey had great things to say about my dad. Now we were talking—movie stars were all right, but AAA Baseball Managers; that was something else!

Speaking of famous people, one time Betty and I had an opportunity to have breakfast with Barack Obama. Our grandson, Robert, was attending Princeton University and had interned in Washington, DC, the previous summer. We were on our semi-annual trip to see him and had included a few days in the Capital to see the cherry blossoms and revisit some other sites. Robert came up from the campus to spend a long weekend with us and to do some networking among some politicians that he had met the previous summer.

One evening Robert came into our hotel room and said that he had told Barack Obama that we were in town. Mr. Obama had said he would like to meet us and had invited us to a breakfast the next morning. Betty asked,

“Who is Barack Obama?” Robert offered some information and concluded by saying that he was an up-and-coming Democrat. At that point Betty said, “If you think I am going to get up that early to have breakfast with somebody I do not know, you have another thought coming!” I just hope that the Junior Senator from Illinois wasn’t too disappointed.

And now, back to my childhood. The bowling alley was nearing completion, and my folks contracted to have a two-bedroom house built in North Hollywood. It was located on Laurel Canyon Boulevard, just two blocks east of Victory Boulevard. That was in the heart of the San Fernando Valley, which was still in the stages of development. Essentially, that was the house that I grew up in (although there is some debate about the growing-up part). Later on, my dad added a large rumpus (family) room at the back of the house. He did the work himself, and for a long time I wondered where my dad learned his carpentry skills. I guess I did not wonder enough to ask. For some reason, my parents never talked about the family other than those who were close by. In doing research for this book, I got my answer. My grandfather Anderson was a building contractor in Missouri, so it makes sense that my dad learned his carpentry skills from him. It also appears that I’m missing the “family building gene” because I have a great deal of difficulty driving a nail through a piece of wood. The good news, however, is that our two sons seem to have inherited the gene.

There is a story that goes with this. When we moved into a new house in Vancouver, Washington, I wanted to build a stand-alone storage shelf for the garage. One day I was out on the front lawn assembling the shelf from some pre-cut lumber when Bob offered to help. I said, “Sure,” and we began working together. Soon, a neighbor came up and asked what we were doing. “Bob and I are building a storage shelf,” said I. Bob took one look at the shelf and quickly added, “No, Dad. You’re building the shelf.” He was not about to take ownership for such a monstrosity. Years later after Betty and I moved to Sacramento, California, I offered the shelf to Bob and was pleased that he quickly accepted. “Finally,” I thought. “My workmanship is being acknowledged.” Then I learned that he didn’t want the shelf—just the lumber.

Across from our Laurel Canyon House were two enormous fields where I spent many hours during World War II. I dug foxholes and built forts as I single-handedly defeated the Japanese Imperial Army, Navy, and Air Force. Of the three, the Japanese Navy was the easiest to conquer, since their battleships had a difficult time maneuvering in the sand. Running through the two fields was a “flood control wash,” into which water was released from a dam during heavy periods of rain. This resulted in torrents of water rushing down the wash and over any streets, such as Laurel Canyon Boulevard, which was in its path.

Motorists could detour and cross over temporary bridges, but many chose to brave the fast-flowing water that covered the roads—often to their peril. When I became older, I organized my friends and we pushed stranded cars out of the wash for tips. Today these fields, and in fact the entire San Fernando Valley, are crowded with housing, huge department stores, and other retail and service operations. My boyhood neighborhood is no more; it has been replaced by retail operations. One of these is a Carl’s Junior where, a few years ago, I purchased a cheeseburger and proceeded to eat it on their patio. This was noteworthy to me because this was the exact spot where our family’s dining room once stood. Such is progress! But, I’m sorry, Carl. Your cheeseburgers just don’t cut it next to my mom’s—or my Betty’s.

While our new home was under construction, we lived with Claudia and her husband, Stan, and their daughter, Leona. Their house was a two-bedroom, one-bath home that was about fifteen minutes from the site where our house was going up. When World War II came along, Stan was drafted, saw combat with the Army in Europe, and was gone for the duration. I did my part for the war effort by building balsa wood models of Japanese aircraft. I hung them with strings from the garage ceiling, and then blew them into oblivion with my trusty BB gun. I can’t help but wonder how many residents of my sister’s old house have wondered where all those cotton-picking BB pellets came from. If this book goes into print, maybe I will stop by and offer the current residents a complimentary copy.



CHAPTER 3

Early Stages of Growth

WHILE WE LIVED WITH MY SISTER, I ATTENDED OXNARD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. One teacher was from England. She made quite an impression on me because she kept rapping me on the head with her knuckles while saying, “Settle down, Master Anderson.”

When we moved into our new home, I transferred to Victory Boulevard School, which was about four blocks away. The Second World War was going strong; and as I look back, it seemed that between the needs of the military and the defense industry, qualified teachers were few and far between. That explains my elderly teacher in the fifth grade who napped on the classroom daybed.

It was during sixth grade that I started to bloom. The major reason was that my teacher, Mrs. McGuire, recognized talents within me. They were organizational rather than scholarly talents, mind you, and she worked to bring them out. She wrote in my class remembrances/ autograph book that I had organizational abilities that any President of the United States would be envious to have. That was an overblown statement to be sure, but in coming years I would realize there was some truth in it. I was also an achiever (make that overachiever), and it was during that time that I began to acquire some leadership skills by participating in a multitude of organizations. Most of these were related to the war effort. I earned the rank of Colonel in the Junior Army, became a Battalion Chief in the Junior Fire Department, and served as the Captain of School Safeties.

However, there were a few problems. First, let me say that another kid,

whom I will call Gerry, and I were by far the largest guys in the class. To unfairly characterize us, I was the good guy with the white hat, while Gerry was the not-so-good guy with the black hat who was constantly pushing up against me. The other major issue was bees. I was deathly afraid of them, but, of course, a sixth grade boy could not confide that to anyone. The problem was that our sixth grade classroom had a glass beehive, and Mrs. McGuire arranged the class in alphabetical order. Guess who was lucky enough to sit right next to the hive? All year long, I just knew that some klutz would stumble into the hive, smash the glass, and free the bees. What's more, I was convinced that every single bee in that hive had made a pact that, given the opportunity, he would gladly give up his stinger and his life to mount a fanatical attack on my body. Fortunately, that did not happen—but I still had a phobia about bees (more on this later).

The problem with Gerry came to a head when I broke my wrist while trying to walk a barrel, and the doctor put a cast on my left arm that ran from my elbow to my wrist. I am of the opinion that Gerry saw that injury as placing me at a disadvantage. Seizing on the opportunity, he “called me out” during a recess. At that point in my life, I knew next to nothing about fighting—after all, I was a lover, not a fighter. However, there are times when push comes to shove and “a man's gotta do what a man's gotta do.” That was such a time; and during the ensuing battle that lasted less than ten seconds, I took a wild swing. My cast landed squarely on his right temple. That's right, you read correctly. I whacked him good with my trusty cast, and he went down for the count. Of course, whacking his head with my cast was like clobbering him with a blackjack. I do not think he ever figured out what hit him; and I sure was not going to tell him—especially since he was a lot easier to get along with now.

When I was nine, I joined the Cub Scouts. During the next three years, I earned all of the organization's badges. These were named Bobcat, Wolf, Bear, Lion, and Webelos. In addition, I was a Den Chief, and I kept my mother busy sewing gold and silver arrows onto my blue uniform. The arrows were in recognition for doing more than was required for the basic Cub badges. I had so many arrows that people would ask me the name of my tribe.

As noted earlier, that was a time when the United States was at war with Germany and Japan. Being a very patriotic lad, I invested a lot of time digging foxholes in the fields adjacent to our home. There I single-handedly kept those evil powers from our shores. Unfortunately, while the Cub Scouts had a lot of arrows, they did not award medals for those brave and dangerous operations that saved America.

The irony of all this was that during that time in our nation's history, Japan and Germany were our mortal enemies, while Russia was our ally. In the space of five short years, I was across the Pacific in Japan instead of the field across the street. Supposedly, the mission was to serve as part of an occupational force. But the real and unheralded mission was to discourage Russia from invading that strategic island nation. This time, however, there was a big difference; this time they were handing out medals.

The following summer, I was 12 and actively involved with the Boy Scouts. I quickly rose through the ranks and became the Senior Patrol Leader of my troop. The required Life-Saving Merit badge, a requirement for the rank of Life and a prerequisite for the rank of Eagle, was evading me. One of the requirements for the badge was to be able to row a boat in a straight line. Each time I tried, I got a defective boat—it just would not go where I was guiding it. My scoutmaster had gone the second mile and beyond. On the fourth time he drove me to Echo Lake in downtown Los Angeles and rented a rowboat so that I could zigzag back and forth across the lake. I thought, “How is it that I always have to get a boat that thinks it is a minesweeper?” However, the fourth time was a charm. My scoutmaster accepted the inevitable and signed off on the requirement. He said, “That’s good enough.” The next requirement of swimming a mile proved to be much easier. It was just a matter of swimming laps in a pool all summer long to build up my strength and endurance.

Scouting made a lasting impression on me, and to this day (83 and counting) I continue to follow the principles espoused by that organization's Oath, Motto, and Laws. The following are cited from memory.

The Scout Oath:

“On my honor, I will do my best, to do my duty, to God and my country, and to obey the Scout Law, to help other people at all times, to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight.”

The Scout Motto:

“Be prepared.”

The Scout Law:

“A Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean & reverent.”

I have found these principles to be both worthy and enduring, and I highly recommend the principles they espouse.

Beyond attending scout camps, that was also the summer of my first weeklong church and Deputy Auxiliary Police (DAP) camps. These events became yearly activities, together with church reunions and conferences.

Two other programs I entered that summer dramatically shaped my life. The first was playing in a YMCA basketball league. Out of that arose a group of friends who continued to play competitive basketball together into our high school years. During the next two summers our team played in three different leagues at the same time. We won the championship for all three leagues (that was nine league titles in three years, plus three city championships).

The other event was joining the DAPS, a youth organization sponsored by the Los Angeles Police Department. I became the Deputy Chief of that organization, which was the highest rank obtainable. I came to know just about every cop in the Valley Division (more about these two activities later).

As the summer neared its end, I looked forward to the new adventure of junior high school. All of the grammar schools from the surrounding area fed into a single campus. Sometime in the past, the upperclassman had managed to start an unauthorized initiation of smearing lipstick on the faces of incoming seventh-grade boys. It seemed that the school

authorities looked the other way on the first day of classes, but the practice was taboo after that. As mentioned previously, I was a good-sized kid, and I was able to escape that ritual by arming myself with a large tube of red lipstick. I impersonated an upperclassman and strutted around campus like King Kong. The ruse worked, and not a single dab of the dreaded red goopy stuff adorned my face. Was I cool or what?

The junior high was about 15 miles from where I lived, and there was no public transportation to get you there. The students were dropped off by their parents, hoofed it, or peddled their bikes to school. There was, however, a provision in California at the time that allowed fourteen-year-olds to obtain a drivers' license for the purpose of going to and from school or running other essential errands. Given these options, my parents chose to buy me a brand-new Cushman Motor Scooter. However, ugly rumors floated around town and accused me of paying little attention to the restrictions of the license. These rumors were somehow reinforced, as I traveled all over the San Fernando Valley and beyond. I never was pulled over or asked where I was going, even though I sometimes had up to five passengers aboard. Now I am not one to point a finger, but I do have the feeling that the vicious rumor came from my fellow, but disgruntled, classmates whom I passed in a cloud of dust as they walked to school.

My first car, a 1936 Ford, was built like a tank. On my way to school one day, a *really old guy*, who must have been in his 50's, failed to yield the right-of-way at a traffic light and plowed right into my left fender. (Author's note: as I'm writing this, I'm in my 80's—but it's a very young 80.) Anyway, the old geezer, who most likely was trained by Hitler's Gestapo, read me the riot act. He stood in the street and yelled that teenagers today have no sense of responsibility and that they should not be allowed to drive bicycles, let alone automobiles. (No one would ever dream about saying that today.) At that point, a black-and-white squad car pulled up. As the Patrol Sergeant emerged, he called out "Are you having a problem, Bob?" Boy, talk about turning on a dime. Suddenly that guy got religion big time. He confessed, "No problem, Officer. It was completely my fault." He ended up with a ticket for failure to yield. I suggested that the sergeant also write him another for "bad manners,"

but the Sarge said he could not remember the citation code. Yes sir, it pays to have friends in high places.

The collision tore a hole in my fender, and the best way I can describe it is that it looked like a can of peas with its lid halfway peeled back. Six doors down from our house, a neighbor ran an auto repair business out of his garage. I took the car to him and watched as he pushed the bent metal back into place, welded it to the fender, gave it a good sanding, and then covered his work with a coat of primer and black paint. By golly, the old jalopy looked as good as new. Things certainly were a lot simpler when I was growing up.

The car also had a gearshift that looked like a golf club protruding out of the floorboard, sort of like a three-foot stick with a knob on top. Years later our sons, Bob and Larry, came running into the house. They were all excited about a new car they had seen that featured a revolutionary gearshift. The manufacturer was hyping the car with its brand-new “four-on-the floor” transmission. When I told them I had one of those when I was a kid, they rolled their eyes and said, “Yeah. Sure, Dad.”

I had a great time in junior high, and there are three stories that immediately come to mind. The first is about basketball. As mentioned earlier, we had a group of guys that ate and slept the game. For three years running, we fielded a team that played in three different leagues at the same time. Our normal routine was to play in the YMCA league on Saturday morning and grab a hamburger. Then we would take in a movie. Then we played in the Park and Recreation League in the evening. We also played in the DAP League. These games took place on weeknights. They required group travel since league teams were scattered all over Los Angeles. Often, that would mean riding in the Los Angeles Police Departments prison bus. It was a hoot! There we were in a big black bus with the words “PRISON INMATES” written all over it. Heavy screens covered the windows, and we banged on them and shouted to passing motorists to “Let us out.” The looks we got were hilarious. The funniest incident, however, was when the bus was at a long red light; and a very attractive teenage girl was waiting on the corner to cross the street. I do not know what got into him, but the officer who

was driving opened the bus door and asked the girl if she wanted a ride. She must have been a track star, because she took off running.

At the end of the season, the winners of those three leagues, along with the champions of the Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) played for the City Championship. A problem arose during our first year of play when we took first place in each of the three leagues. It was necessary for us to forfeit two of the crowns, so they could field four teams for playoffs. This was a three-year recurring problem with the same solution, and we went on to win the Los Angeles City Championship three years running. At least our parents knew where we were.

The second incident involved a Los Angeles City school policy that junior high students could not play tackle football. Notre Dame, a brand-new Catholic high school, was looking for teams to play practice games. A group of our ninth graders arranged to play them at a local park. It was comical. There we were with a hodgepodge of football equipment that we had to trade back and forth so that each player would be able to play with some semblance of equipment, such as shoes, a helmet, pads, etc. A brand-new bus drove up, and the Notre Dame team charged off the bus, decked out in their brand-new uniforms and gold helmets. They were a remarkable sight, but it was not to be their day because we walloped them 28 to 0.

The problem arose when Yours Truly wrote an article about the game that appeared in the *Valley Times* and mentioned that our team members were students from North Hollywood Junior High School. A few days later, those named in the article were summoned to a meeting with the school's coaching staff. We were read the riot act and given to understand that this was a serious breach of district policy, even though the game took place in a public park and in no way was connected with the school. While not said, the reason for the chewing out was that school politics were at play. Administrators were protecting certain parts of their anatomy. Following the scolding, everyone was free to leave except for me. I was to stay and talk with the head coach. When the room cleared, the coach leaned forward, gave me a big grin and said, "Okay, Bob, tell me about the game."

The third incident revolved around a DAP course in hand-to-hand

combat which I took when I was in the eighth grade. I was also Captain of the Rangers, which was a group of students who helped to keep order on the school playground. The incident occurred when a rowdy student I was trying to deal with pulled a knife. Being invincible, and having learned in the hand-to-hand combat class how to disarm a knife-wielding assailant—not to mention being just plain stupid—I disarmed the kid. When he dropped the knife, the blade nicked the inside of my left wrist, and I bled like a stuck pig. My assailant was horrified. Not to be deterred, I grabbed him by the collar of his shirt and marched him to the vice principal's office. We were followed by a steady stream of blood droplets. Upon entering the office, the nurse came running and determined that the wound was minor. She attended to it with some ointment and a bandage. As for my assailant, I never saw him again.

The next day during first period, I was called to the vice principal's office. I stood proud and tall as I walked briskly to his office, expecting nothing less than the Congressional Medal of Honor. But upon entering his office, his stern voice bellowed, "Young man, if you ever pull a stunt like that again, I'm expelling you for a month. Now get back to class." So much for being a hero.

During the following summer, my dad wanted me to go to the bowling alley with him. On the way, he pulled into a used car lot, saying that this would just take a minute. When we got out of the car, the lot owner greeted us. He and my dad talked for a while. Then the owner said, pointing to a 1941 four-door blue Ford, "Bobby, what would your friends think about this car?" We walked over to take a closer look, and I said that I thought they would like it. My dad tossed me the keys and, with a big smile, said, "It's yours!"

A few years later I learned that my mother was the instigator of that gift. My 1936 Ford had mechanical brakes, while that one had hydraulic brakes. For some odd reason, she thought it was important that I be able to stop should the need arise.



CHAPTER 4

High School

IT WAS NOW TIME FOR THE “BIG ONE!” So, it was off to North Hollywood High School (NHHS). The Los Angeles City school system had a rule that a student could play football during the first semester; but if he did, he could not play basketball during the second semester. Consequently, I had a dilemma. Basketball was my true love and my strongest sport, but football had more glory and was what all the “jocks” chose. Naturally, I went for football.

The Huskies had a great team that year, with a line that averaged 225 pounds from tackle to tackle. It was anchored by a high school All American at right guard, an All City left guard and an All Valley tackle, also on the left side. I walked onto the field weighing 167 pounds, but the team ran a single-wing offense. That meant that the guards often pulled out from the line to lead plays. That required both speed and blocking ability. I had both of these. (At the time, I was the second fastest man on the squad.)

I played on the second team behind the All American. I should say, “He played and I scrimmaged.” That meant that five days a week I banged heads with an All City guard where I learned a great deal that I would never really put to use (more about this later). That year the Huskies won the Valley League title and ranked second among Los Angeles City schools.

Incidentally, the All American came down with infantile paralysis following the season, and I never heard of him again. On a brighter note, the All City guard went on to star at San Jose State College.

During the semester, I was aware of some illegal activity that was taking place among a gang of students. I talked with my DAP adviser

who said he would look into it. Later he arranged for an “unofficial” appointment with my mother and me (my dad was not included because he worked nights). He said that the preliminary investigation indicated that the illegal activity at school might be more serious than originally thought. When, and if, the LAPD moved on it, I might be at risk if my role in reporting the crime became known. He suggested that to be on the safe side, it might be a good idea for me to transfer to another school.

Talk about dilemmas! Most of my friends were at NHHS. A bigger problem was that the Los Angeles City School District had a strict policy. If a student transferred schools and the transfer did not include a household move, the student would be ineligible to play sports for year. However, there was a loophole. That policy did not apply if the student transferred from a private school to a school within the Los Angeles system. It seemed that the safest and best solution for me was to transfer to Notre Dame High School. Well, I also had a number of friends there. Best of all, at Notre Dame high school I could play not only football, but basketball as well.

When I arrived at Notre Dame, the “Knights” had a couple of remaining football games. I suited up and got in some playing time. I was also the captain of the Varsity Basketball team. I do not remember how many games we won—but I do remember that it wasn’t pretty.

Religion was a required course at Notre Dame. The instructor was a Jesuit Brother in his 60’s, who taught that if the Catholic Church decreed it—it was so. Coming from a different faith perspective, I kept asking challenging questions that seemed to annoy him. While I believe it was undeserved, I got a D in religion. In his class, one was to accept and believe, a position mirrored by some other denominational leaders at the time (including some from my own faith community). There are also those who would argue that some denominations are still holding to this position.

Having said this, while I was upset about the D when I got it, I am indebted to that good Brother today. I learned a lot in his class, including some things not having to do with religion. However, I do regret it if he thought I was a troublemaker who was trying to disrupt his class. That

was not my intention; I was just looking for answers, and I found some!

That brings to mind a spectacular event that took place years later. Along with church leaders from other denominations, I was selected in 1987 to represent my faith community at the Pope John Paul II Papal Mass at Candlestick Park, which at the time was the home of the San Francisco 49ers. The Diocese did a superb job in hosting that, and I drove over to a Catholic High School in San Francisco. There I met up with a special bus that transported members of the clergy to Candlestick, where we were ushered into the 49ers' locker room for light refreshments. Joe Montana was the quarterback, and pocket cameras flashed as distinguished guests posed in front of his locker. Shortly thereafter, we found ourselves in premiere seating on the grassy floor of Candlestick. As for me, my seat was dead center and six rows back from where the Pope spoke. It was a shame that I only knew a few Latin words, but I could still feel the spirit of the occasion. I could sense that history was in the making, and that change was in the wind. Still in the midst of all that pomp and circumstance, I could not help but smile, as I thought to myself, "Not too shabby for a kid that got a D in a Catholic high school religion class."

I recall the day I was playing right guard at a practice game against Jordan High School. On this particular play, my assignment was to pull from the line and lead a running back around the right side of the line. I was to block anyone who got into my sights; but my primary target was the left-side linebacker—and there he was, as big as life. He was roaring down on us. As I threw my block, I felt a sharp blow to my right hip. The pain was excruciating, and I couldn't move—I just lay there, trying not to cry. "Linemen don't cry," I said to myself, but that one sure wanted to. The coach and trainer were at my side almost instantly. After looking me over, they led me to the team bench for observation. I sat there for around 15 minutes, biting my lip and still wanting to cry, until the coach wandered over. He told me to go home and suggested that it might be a good idea to see a doctor.

Two of my teammates escorted me to the locker room. I called my mother and told her what happened. "Don't drive," she said, "I'll be

right there.” One of my teammates stayed with me as I struggled to get dressed. By the time I completed the task, my mom was in the parking lot. She had already called “Old Dr. McDermott” who would see me as soon as I could get to his office. X-rays were taken, and he gave me a good looking over. As I was leaving, he dropped the bomb, “Bobby, I’m afraid you’re through for the season.” I was devastated!

I did not know a lot about it, but I *did* know (as viewed from a wet behind the ears teenager’s understanding) that when a person got sick in the church, the elders would be called. They would come and pour oil on the sick person. Then they would put their hands on the person’s head and say a prayer and God would heal him or her. Not a very sophisticated or sound theological description; but hey, I was only a sixteen-year-old kid at the time.

Another thing I knew was that when people lived in areas where it was hard for the elders to reach, they would sometimes leave a container of blessed oil for the family to use in emergencies. Again, not a very sound theological practice; but the people were acting in good faith. God was hearing their prayers and was blessing them.

I knew about that, not because of my deep theological training or my understanding of all things eternal, but because I was a kid. We had a container of oil in our medicine cabinet, and it had been blessed a couple of decades ago by my grandfather. Sometimes when I was sick, my mother would put some drops on me and then say a silent prayer. It was certainly not the way it was written up in the *Priesthood Manual*, but she was a woman of faith. She loved me, and God loved me. It always worked.

That night when I got ready for bed, and without telling anyone, I got that can and smeared so much oil over my pelvic area that it was a wonder there was any left. After all, it was an emergency. That was *football* we were talking about! I said my prayers and had a good night’s sleep. Three days later I was free of pain, went to school and then to football practice. I have never felt an ounce of discomfort from that injury. I wish I could say the same about some of my other body parts.

Now the minister in me says that I need to set the record straight. So, here goes:

James 5:14 reads: *“Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the Name of the Lord.”*

That scripture, along with others, is the basis of a sacrament that we celebrate within our faith community. It is based on faith, it glorifies God, is administered by those in authority, and it seeks God’s blessings in keeping with His will and timing. It is also understood that the “consecrated” oil used in this sacrament is a symbol of God’s outpouring love and has no inherent healing properties. Furthermore, those seeking this blessing are urged to avail themselves of competent medical help. Quite often the prayers spoken during this sacrament also ask for God’s blessing upon those health professionals who are attending to this need. Both ways seem to work equally well, and I will leave it to those with greater theological understanding than I have to explain why this is so.

My point is that God was at work on that football field that day. Of course, when you think about it, that’s really a stupid thing to say since God has always been and always will be at work throughout the universe and beyond; His office hours are 24/7 (Celestial God Time). In addition, I certainly am not suggesting that God caused my injury. What I am trying to get at is that God used that injury to teach me some very valuable lessons—lessons not only for my edification, but also for the benefit of so many others that I have been called to minister to throughout the years. The principle here is that God is the healer in all things, as well as being the One who determines the nature and timing of the blessing. Our part in this is faith and prayer, responding to His will, and sometimes stepping aside and allowing God to bless us.

By way of testimony, I have laid my hands on the heads of hundreds of people; and in the name of the Lord Jesus, I have asked God to bless them. I do not know of a single solitary time that a blessing was not forthcoming. These have involved physical and mental infirmities ranging from the simple to life-and-death situations in all kinds of environments with all kinds of people—even those that we, in our sinfulness, might judge as “unworthy.” God is not a respecter of persons. He has even healed me on numerous occasions.

Of course, not everyone is healed the way you want him or her to be; but all are blessed. I remember calling on an elderly woman in the hospital. As I was leaving, she asked me to “Administer” “ to her. I anointed her head with oil and prayerfully asked for a blessing. As I did so, the room was alive with the power of the Holy Spirit. I opened my eyes to see tears flowing from her eyes as she said, “Thank you, Brother Anderson. I can go now.” That evening she peacefully passed away.

Then there was a young child stricken with what we believed was an incurable disease. A group of teenagers gathered to pray for the child. During that service, it was given to me that the child would live. Immediately after the service, I told the pastor of my experience; but regrettably, my faith was not strong enough to share that with the young people. Glory be to God—the child did live. God used that instance to strengthen my resolve and faith.

On a more humorous side, I was once visiting a congregation and staying in the pastor’s home. He received a telephone call around 2:00am saying that one of our members had been rushed to the hospital. At that early stage they did not know what it was, but they believed it to be life threatening and highly infectious. She had been placed in isolation. When her pastor and I got to the hospital, we ran smack-dab into “Nurse Ratchet.” Her patient was in isolation and there was no way she was going to allow us to get near her. We explained the Sacrament of Healing; and finally she relented and agreed that one of us could go in, but only one. The pastor asked me whom I thought should go in; and I weighed that question carefully, since there was a risk of infection. “Better me than him,” I thought. But he was her pastor and they already had a close relationship. More importantly, it was obvious that he wanted (make that needed) to be “the one.” I asked the Holy Spirit for guidance and it became clear that these two considerations trumped the risk of the first one. “You go!” I said.

He was a big man (not overweight, but big) and if he stood in doorway, he filled it. In fact, they had difficulty locating a hospital gown that was large enough to fit him; but eventually one was found. So, covered completely with gloves, hat, surgical mask, and gown, he

entered the room and awoke the sleeping woman. She turned, took one look at her pastor, and let out a blood-curdling scream that awakened the entire hospital. One can speculate whether it was the prayer, the docs, her pastor scaring the living daylights out of her, or a combination of all of the above; but the next day she was fine. After a short stay for observation, she went home, fit as a fiddle.

During the summer, I became more and more active in church activities. I attended church regularly, was President of our Zion League senior high youth group and traveled all over the Los Angeles area to share in weekend activities. I also participated in weeklong camps and church reunions and was beginning to feel a stronger draw about attending Graceland, in Lamoni, Iowa, our church affiliated University.

My mom, dad, and I were attending our Burbank, California, congregation when church authorities asked us to help start a new mission (congregation) in Van Nuys. That newly formed group started meeting in a rented hall. Sometime later, an opportunity became available to purchase a large house, with the understanding that it would be moved. At a business meeting called to discuss the opportunity, I particularly remember the words of a woman who spoke in rebuttal to a man who opposed the project. She said that she was ashamed of having her children study their Sunday school lessons over a poker table. That was the first time that I knew what those green felt tables were for. Boy, the things you learn in church!

The congregation chose to accept the building and relocate it to Sherman Oaks. Our members did as much work on it as they could. That entailed many work weekends; and while I am not handy at wielding a hammer, I showed up and did as much as I could. The plan called for large cement blocks to be used in the building of the basement, as well as serving as the foundation upon which the house would set. To pay for the blocks, someone dreamed up the “buy a brick for a buck” campaign. I scrimped and saved; and when the time came to present our offerings, I proudly marched forward with my \$18. Later, our pastor took me down to the basement and, counting off 18 bricks, declared that these were mine.

To enhance the view of the podium, the floor of the sanctuary was slanted downward from the rear to the front. When that project was completed, theater seats were installed. Many years later, I was to offer the Sunday morning sermon at my former congregation. I was now under Appointment and was getting used to this preaching business. But this was different in that it was promoted as the local kid's coming home, and good folks that I had not seen in years came out to support me. The sanctuary was packed to overflowing. And there in the back was my devoted sister who, you will recall, was 15 years my senior. The pastor gave an eloquent introduction; and just as I rose to speak, my sister dropped an open package of M&M's on the slanted wood floor. I thought the blasted things would never stop rolling! She claimed it was accident—but I wonder. Anyway, I got through it, but I could have done without the crack from one good brother who said that he thought it was a “*sweet*” sermon.

On another occasion, I was to speak at a congregation about a hundred miles from our home. My calendar was such that I would go over and return on the same Sunday. I asked Betty if she would like to go with me, and she said she would arrange for the older kids to be looked after. The following Sunday, we bundled up our daughter, Mary, who was a toddler, and headed out. When the service was about to start, Betty placed Mary in a portable canvas seat and put her in the aisle next to her chair. Those who were to offer ministry took their places on the rostrum. Just after the first hymn, the pastor leaned over and whispered to me “I’ll introduce you.” “Why?” I thought, “All these people know me.” But he was the pastor and he introduced me. I do not know what got into him, but he went on and on. I was beginning to think that I would not have any time left to preach. *Finally*, he came to his close and said something like, “*And now it’s my privilege to introduce to you the speaker of this hour, Seventy Robert L. Anderson...*” At that exact moment, my little daughter put her lips together, puckered up, and cut loose with an extremely loud raspberry.

There was also the time when I was to provide a weeklong ministry to a congregation that was outside my assigned area. The pastor and

a young woman who was in one of my youth groups years earlier welcomed me. She and I were glad to see one another, and she said that she was the choir director for this congregation. The choir had been working hard on special a piece of music *just* for my sermon. She was so excited. I must admit that it was a little catching, and I was feeling somewhat flattered. Then, just before my sermon, the choir rose and sang, “O Lord, give us strength for what’s to come!” (Or something to that effect.)



CHAPTER 5

A Very Good Year

IN SEPTEMBER OF 1949 I TRANSFERRED FROM NOTRE DAME TO VAN NUYS HIGH SCHOOL, BUT MY PLANS TO PLAY FOOTBALL DID NOT MATERIALIZE. I made the team but rode the bench for the entire season. I reasoned that the coach probably had that year's team well in mind by the close of the previous season, and then too, perhaps he was "gun shy" about playing me, in view of the Los Angeles City School District's student transfer policy. However, just the fact that I was on the team carried with it a certain amount of prestige, a benefit that I took full advantage of. I had a stupendous year.

For the life of me, I have never been able to figure out why I joined the ROTC at the school. I say that because the Battalion met at 7:00am, and I have never been an early morning person. However, join it I did; and I quickly became a sergeant and squad leader, which were the same rank and leadership roles I held in the National Guard. I was also on track to become a company commander the following semester and perhaps the Battalion Commander the following year.

A couple of guys in the Battalion had some "rough edges," and I suddenly found that they had been moved to my squad. But they settled in and later that year my squad won the Close Order Drill Competition that the Los Angeles City School District held in the L.A. Coliseum. Towards the end of the year, I was presented with the Russell G. Holt Memorial Award for Outstanding Leadership. I received a wristwatch that is no longer in working condition, but it's one that I prize greatly and which upon my death is to go to my son, Larry, because of his interest in timepieces and also in an attempt to avoid the huge family feud that most certainly would take place should an heir not be publically designated.

A host of great things came my way during 1949. These included attending the Key Club Convention in Berkeley, California, along with my first airplane ride; going to California Boy's State at the Sacramento State Fairgrounds (elected to the Legislator but losing the Lieutenant Governors nomination); and writing an every-issue column for *The Mirror* (the school paper) while also serving as its News Editor. The top prize, however, was becoming a Knight—a prestigious campus organization whose membership was offered to but a few—by way of a unanimous secret ballot. In addition, my grades were good, and my folks and I were happy. Yes sir. For the new kid on the block, I was doing okay.

And let's not forget my social calendar. It was filled to the brim and overflowing. There were endless parties, dances, beach trips, movies, basketball, semi-pro softball, off-Broadway plays, college and professional sporting events, hanging with the gang, marching in parades, and sharing in family activities. Then too, there was church, youth events, camps, retreats, DAPS, and Boy Scouts. Of course, there was the Uno One activity—the dating scene! No wonder I had that tired, rundown feeling. Boy, what a great year it was! And looking down the road, my senior year promised to be even better—but the winds of change were brewing.

My dad made good money; I had a generous allowance, and if I needed more, all I had to do was ask. That said, I also worked for additional spending money. At one time or another, I delivered newspapers, solicited subscriptions for magazines and then delivered them, sold donuts door-to-door, and let's not forget my world famous lemonade stand. My biggest source of outside income, however, was writing as a “stringer” for the *Valley Times* and *Van Nuys News*.

A stringer is a freelance writer who writes articles intended for publication in various newspapers. Mostly, I wrote about sporting events not normally covered. Should the editors choose to use my stories, which they usually did, I would be paid. Between the two newspapers, I usually had a little more than a 100-column inches published each month at the rate of 35¢ per column inch. I made some good money for a kid. Of course, the fact that I was a “newspaperman” added to my prestige, seeing as how everyone likes to read their name in the paper, and I was in

the right spot to help fill that need.

The sports editor of the *Valley Times* was my dad's friend. Since my dad always called me Bobby, so did the sports editor. In fact, he gave me my first byline that read "by Bobby Anderson." I thanked him and tried to get him to call me Bob, but to no avail—to him I was and always would be Bobby. On one occasion, he encouraged me to study journalism and become a full-time reporter. According to him, I had a real flair for the occupation. My reply was that I was an atrocious speller. At that point he gave me an exasperated look and said "Bobby, that's what we have editors for!" The good news is that with the advent of "spell check," my spelling has somewhat improved—although whoever edits this for publication will undoubtedly have a differing opinion.

Continuing on the topic of my spelling, I had a close friend who was a professional secretary and offered to type my church letters. I would write them in longhand, and she would type them. Of course, she kidded me about my poor spelling. At one point she said "Bob Anderson (at least she was calling me Bob), you're the only man alive that can misspell the same word three different ways in the same letter." To which (faking anger) I said, "That's it! I've had it! If you ever criticize my spelling again, I'm going to type my own letters and put your initials at the bottom!" Later she became the personal secretary to the President of our church in Independence, Missouri. Come to think about it, he never did thank me for "breaking her in."

Van Nuys High School was probably about 13 miles from my North Hollywood home. I always drove the same route to school except for that one day when for some inexplicit reason, I *turned right* on Hazeltine and then took a quick left on Gilmore. It turned out to be a very good "Right Turn"—a turn that changed my life forever.

About two blocks down, there was a guy standing in front of his house with the hood of his car up. Now when my car breaks down, I know exactly what to do. I call AAA, which should give you a good idea of my mechanical ability. Still, I saw that the guy was in an ROTC uniform. Since I was a member of the ROTC (comrade in arms and that sort of thing), I stopped to lend him a hand. He turned out to be Chester

Lawrence Ward, who had two younger sisters, Betty Anne and Mary Adele. Even though he was a year ahead of me in school, we became good friends. When we did things together, his sister Betty was often around. She was two years younger than I was— just a kid. I was polite to her but paid little attention to her.

A big difference between Chet and me was that I never touched alcohol. I was okay in the looks department, but I was not a “party animal” although I was an “aspiring jock.” Many years later our son, Larry, asked his Uncle Chet why he and I hit it off so well, considering our differences. Chet’s reply was, “Well, somebody had to drive!”

Well, Chet, the truth of the matter was *that Someone Else was driving!*
Read on.

Along about that time a friend of mine said, “Let’s you and me join the National Guard, and then we can drive trucks.” That sounded like a good idea to me, so I moseyed down to Guard headquarters, lied about my age, and enlisted. The Grand Prize was my first railroad trip, an overnighiter to Camp San Luis Obispo where I participated in my first and only Guard camp.

I got my Army drivers’ license, and my first major trip was driving a two-and-a-half-ton truck filled with ammunition over the Coast Range. Perhaps you’ll recall reading about the big explosion and the new mountain pass that it created. Kidding aside, the trip went well, but I had several problems. For one thing, I had enlisted in the infantry. No one bothered to tell me that when the infantry wanted to go somewhere, they did not drive but did what was known as a speed march! Then too, I never found out what happened to my friend who wanted us to join up together; he never showed up! Oh well. “Over hill, over dale,” I was in the Army now, or at least in the California National Guard.



CHAPTER 6

My Greatest Achievement

WHEN ASKED WHAT MY GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT WAS, WITHOUT HESITATION, I ALWAYS ANSWERED, “PERSUADING BETTY TO MARRY ME!” But I am well aware that I had a great deal of help on that one.

My plan from the very beginning was to love Betty so much that she would have to love me back. Man, I was head over heels in love. I would often say to her, “You’re the most beautiful thing that I ever saw.” She would just smile and say, “That’s your rose-colored glasses talking.” One day I went down to my optometrist’s office. He was an old 40th Infantry Division buddy, and he gave me a letter stating that he had examined my glasses and that they were, in fact, crystal clear and were definitely not rose-colored. I framed that letter, and it remains prominently displayed on my living room wall.

Like many couples, we had an “I love you” ritual. If I said it first, Betty would come back with something like the rose-colored glasses bit; but if she initiated it, I would reply, “I loved you first”—a statement never called into question.

The height of that ritual came many years into our marriage when I replied, for what must have been the umpteenth time, “I loved you first.” That time Betty’s response was different. She got a strange, faraway look in her eyes—as if she was trying to grasp and understand something—even struggling to do so—and then after a long deliberating pause, her eyes fixed upon mine and she said,

“I think you loved me before I was born!”

It was not the words spoken but the confirming spirit that *impacted* that moment. I know of no basis or scripture that would support such a notion; nevertheless, I firmly believe it—and so did she.

Elizabeth (Betty) Anne Ward (also known as My Beautiful Betty) was born in Santa Barbara, California, on July 3, 1934—and everyone was very excited. In fact, the next day, fireworks filled the sky; and she became known as The Premature Firecracker, so named by her Aunt Inez.

At that time, the Ward's family home was in College City, which is adjacent to Arbutle, California. Her father taught horticulture at the local high school. Since Betty's father, Benjamin Briggs Ward, Junior, was taking graduate courses at the University of California at Davis just before her birth, her mother, Nora Elizabeth Cash Ward, chose to return to her parents' family home until their child was born. The grandparents, Charles Chester and Nora Adele Cash, lived in Santa Barbara, California. So, Betty Anne, as she was always affectionately called by family members, was born at the Cottage Hospital of that city.

Throughout her life, Betty spent a great deal of time in Santa Barbara and was very close to her maternal grandparents, as well to her extended family in San Fernando, California. She and her cousins spent weeks upon weeks camping out in their grandparents' backyard in Santa Barbara. One of their favorite games, dreamed up by their Aunt Inez, was the "candle races." In that game, a candle for every cousin, whether they were there or not, was placed in a plate of sand. The candles were lit, and the last one to go out was acclaimed as the winner. Of course, kids grow up, but tradition is very strong. Years later, it was a fun-filled and happy moment on the beach of Santa Barbara to watch these adult cousins scream and carry on, as they urged the flame on their candle to continue to flicker.

I do not know if Betty loved the beach or the ocean the most, but love them she did. I teased her by saying that if Darwin was correct, she must have come from some sort of a sea creature. She loved to take long morning walks on the beach, picking up shells and other treasures along the way. At home she "planted" them in our backyard flowerbeds, which were covered with shells. They seemed to fight for space among dozens

of glass floats, sea life statues and woodcarvings. Right now, I have a smile on my face as I am recalling the visit of two children who were of Hawaiian descent. They screamed with delight when they discovered Betty's "ocean garden."

Because of moves, the garden is long gone; but I still have ocean floats and jars of shells decorating my apartment. What good memories they bring. Today Betty is buried in a Santa Barbara cemetery on a bluff overlooking the ocean, where she can "hear" the gentle waves lapping at the beach just 50 or so yards away—and where I will join her when my time comes.

Education was very important to Betty's entire family. Both her father and mother were graduates of Occidental University, and one might say that they were both educational pioneers. Her father was an educator who was instrumental in establishing Pierce College in Woodland Hills, California. In 1931 (a year before I was born) her mother graduated with a Master's Degree from the San Anselmo Presbyterian Theological Seminary, now a part of the San Francisco Conglomerate Seminary. That was the same three-year course of study required for the ministry, but in those days women could not be ordained.

When she married, she chose to be a stay-at-home mom. Betty's grandfather, Benjamin B. Ward, Sr., was a medical doctor. Her great-grandparents, Samuel Lawrence Ward and Irene Crane Briggs Ward, were educational missionaries to Persia (present day Iran), where they established the First Presbyterian School that later became the University of Tehran. Betty's maternal grandfather, Charles Chester Cash, was also a well-known and beloved educator who was instrumental in building Laguna Blanca, a prestigious private school in Santa Barbara. A school building there honors his name. His grandson, Chester Lawrence, and his great-grandson, Robert Chester, carry his name. From that paragraph, one can easily determine the source of Betty's pioneering and educational spirit!

She was also adventurous to a fault. When she was a kid, she managed to climb to the top floor of the Van Nuys City Hall, then out of a seventh story window and onto the flagpole that protruded out from the building.

In another letter, she wrote of a harrowing automobile trip. She and some friends were at a YMCA party for blind kids in Beverly Hills. On the trip home, they foolishly chose to get into a car that was mechanically unsound and had numerous safety defects. The car reached extremely high speeds and passed slower moving vehicles on blind curves as they traversed a treacherous mountain pass. I wasn't there, but I'm certain that the biggest problem with the car was the "loose nut" behind the wheel. Believe me, my darling got one real good "chewing out" in my next letter.

Then, too, there is the story of the Los Angeles All City quarterback who lived in the neighborhood. Guess who the last kid on the block that could tackle him was.

Betty's independent streak came out one night in particular, and it was one the funniest things that happened in our married life. I was watching something on television, but she had wanted to watch something else. When she wanted to change the channel to her show, I said, "No, I'm watching this." She got mad and said, "All right, I'm going to go down to buy my own television set." So, she walked out and drove to Sears. She talked to a salesman and picked out a television set. Then the salesman said, "We're going to have to have your husband's signature for this." She really blew up at that. She told him, "Hey, I make more money than my husband does!" So, that was the day Sears had a policy change (at least for that sale), and we ended up with two television sets.

On another occasion, Betty and I were in the men's department of a Macy's department store. I was talking with the clerk about something when Betty said that she wanted to go over to a different department. That was back in the days when credit card companies only issued a single card to approved families. I reached into my wallet, gave Betty our card, and said that I would meet her at the other counter. As she walked off, the salesman jokingly said, "You mean to tell me that you are going to trust that woman in a store like this with your credit card?" I said, "Mister, I trusted that woman to raise my children—and a mighty fine job she did."

While in Fresno, my local bank came out with a promotional program

that with the approval of credit, a customer could write checks up to \$1,000 per month at no cost, provided the money was paid back within 30 days. My Elder's Expenses funds were often down to the bare minimum, so I decided to submit an application, thinking that I would draw on these funds should the need arise. Of course, before approving my credit, they sent a form to the church to verify my employment and asked for a character reference. One day when I went into the bank, the manager said he had something he would like me to see. When we reached his desk, he showed me the character reference that the church had sent to him. Scrawled on the form someone had written in big red letters, "If he was not of good character, he would not be working for us." That program never cost me a nickel, but it did allow me to make several trips I would have had to cancel for lack of funds had the program not been in place.

During this time in our church history, Appointees received their support from free will offerings received from the members of the areas they served, usually in the form of discretely passed checks or cash to the Appointee as he was about to leave from their midst. Of course, all such funds were judiciously reported on the Appointee's Elder Expense form. Vern Weeb (his real name) was my regional bishop and as such received a copy of my monthly Elder's Expense. At times, my Elder's Expenses funds were almost nonexistent. On several of these occasions, I opened my mailbox to find an envelope from Vern. Inside was a check that Vern had endorsed over to me—a check given to him by our people *for his use*.

In this regard, I also recall a time when a young boy about ten years old greeted me at the door following one of my sermons. He said he liked it—especially my jokes. Then as he shook my hand he pressed a nickel into it—and I still have it as a reminder of the sacrifice and generosity of that boy and our people.



CHAPTER 7

A Person of Substance

BETTY WAS VERY FORTUNATE BECAUSE SHE WAS ABLE TO GO THROUGH SCHOOL WITH THE SAME GROUP OF CLASSMATES, BEGINNING WITH GRAMMAR SCHOOL AND RUNNING THROUGH HIGH SCHOOL. She knew everyone and was especially close to a group of about 20 girlfriends who were from good homes and families. That was the era of the “Big Bands,” and teens loved to dance. Betty was no exception. She was also a stickler for doing what was right, as evidenced by her taking on a prestigious dance studio. The group of girls had contracted for dance lessons; but as time for the lessons approached, the owner of the studio said that they could not accept one of the girls at his studio because she was Jewish. That was not only prejudicial, it was ironic because the girl’s uncles were Academy Award winning songwriters who banged out many of the hits we were dancing to. One of these was “Don’t Sit Under the Apple Tree (With Anyone Else but Me).” When Betty learned of the decision to exclude one of her friends, she rallied the girls. They spoke as one, “We either all take lessons together or none of us do.” In the end, the studio caved in; and all the girls had their dancing lessons, albeit with some lingering bad taste in their mouths.

The dance studio conflict was referred to in our *Love Letters* books that were published in 2013; herein lays a remarkable side note. Recently, the woman central to the story called me; and, with a voice full of emotion, said that until she read the introduction in our book, she knew nothing of that affront. Imagine the love and care that that

group of 20 girls (teenagers, yet) must have had for one another. They not only stood up for her, but for over 60 years they honored and “protected” her by never saying anything about the incident. The CIA should do so well.

Betty was a fun-loving person, and people were attracted to her like flies are attracted to honey. For our 50th wedding anniversary, we had a family portrait done. Later, my son, Larry, and his wife, Sasha, adopted our grandson, Boris, from a Russian orphanage. The next time we came together as a family, another portrait was commissioned because everyone thought it important that he was included. After all, he was now a part of the family. The photographer positioned Betty and me in the middle with Larry, Sasha, and their children, Maxi and Boris, on the righthand side. Before the photographer could start taking pictures, Boris had worked his way around to Betty’s side and whispered, “I want to stand next to Grandma.” So, that’s where he is in the picture.

Betty was that kind of person. Everyone wanted to be near her. If it is possible to care too much about others, that was Betty. She was very loyal to her family, her friends, her job, her school, and everything else. Whenever people talked to her about their problems, she often worried about them long afterwards.

She was also very involved and loyal to her high school and would not tolerate anyone’s saying anything negative about it. One time when she was a teenager, she and a close friend were at a high school football game against Canoga Park. Canoga Park’s band appeared. They were sporting white pleated pants, green vested coats with brass buttons, and huge plumes on their hats. Her friend made the mistake of commenting that she thought that, “Canoga Park had better band uniforms than we did.” Betty was so incensed that she would not talk to that friend for two weeks! I found that especially interesting, since our high school band members were all ROTC cadets. Their uniforms consisted of Eisenhower khaki jackets.

But please understand that while Betty had loads of fun in school, she was very much a person of substance—a leader who was looked

up to and got things done. She was the recipient of many prestigious awards, including being chosen by her peers to be the President of the Ladies. It was a great honor just to be a member of that organization; very few were, but Betty's goal was to be its President. In all honesty it was a very long shot for anyone to aim at, but she did it. I could feel her sense of accomplishment, excitement, and joy as I read her letter of January 23, 1952. "I just got home from Ladies Installation. It was nice, and I am so proud to be the President." Let me tell you, she was not the only one "popping buttons" on that occasion.

Betty was also very social, and her daily letters talked about her going to one event or party after another. It seemed as if she was living in a constant whirlwind, and I suppose she was. But primarily, she was about substance and achievement. Academically, she ranked eighth in a graduating class of over 500 and along with only twelve other class members, was an Epehbian, a prestigious scholastic organization made up of the cream of the cream of the crop. That said, there were two things in her letters that constantly astonished me. First, how did she get such good grades without ever being in class? (That substantiates my theory that teachers like girls better than boys.) Second, she and her friends literally ran Van Nuys High School. Did I ever tell you that we Andersons marry extremely well?

When I was 18 and going into my senior year of high school, my National Guard Division was activated for duty in response to the Korean War. The Guard thought I was 19 because I had lied about my age to enlist. I could have gotten out; a lot of guys did. But when I commit to something, I am honor bound to do it.

My unit was the 40th Infantry Division, and we were sent to Camp Cook in Lompoc, California. The base had been in mothballs and was in shambles, so during the first few months, we got the Camp back into shape. The work went smoothly with a minimum of red tape, since there was an abundance of tradesmen in the division who did the work themselves.

After about two months, I was sent to Fort Ord in Monterey,

California, to go to Leadership School. It was tough and rigorous and was considered the Officers Candidate School (OCS) for Non-Commissioned Officers (NCO). With my notable exception, it was for the cream of the crop for proven NCO's and was highly sought after and prized. Only those with a strong and determined work ethic made it through. Rumor had it that it was twice as difficult as OCS. A dropout rate (forced and otherwise) that was less than the officer's program would seem to support that notion. I learned a great deal, did a lot of growing up, and developed skills that were useful and beneficial to me throughout my entire life.

When I completed Leadership School, Sixth Army tapped me for Division Faculty where I taught small weapons to new recruits. The big thing about being assigned to Division Faculty was that they issued Class A passes. If you had one, you could leave the base at any time without permission, as long as your classes were covered. Believe me, a lot of "horse trading" took place at that base.

One weekend when I was home on a pass, I went over to Chet's house to say "Hi." Chet was not at home, but Betty and Mary Adele (three years younger than Betty) were.

The big thing in high school at that time was Bob's Big Boy. That's where all the kids went to have their fantastic cheeseburgers, malts, and hot fudge sundaes. I asked Betty if she wanted to get a hot fudge sundae, and she said "No." But Mary Adele piped up and said, "I'll go!" At that point, Betty hesitantly said, "Well, I'll go, too." (Later she said that she agreed to go in order to protect her little sister.)

The date was September 9, 1950, and as long as I live, I will celebrate it every year. The fact is that I was smitten—right then and there. I do not know what happened to me, but I really believe it was the Lord's doing. However, I had a problem because I was separated from Betty by a 600-mile round-trip between Fort Ord in Monterey, California, and Betty's home in Van Nuys. It was a tough drive on old Highway 101, a two-lane road with changing terrain and a maximum speed limit of 50 mph that dropped rapidly upon entering

small towns where unsuspecting motorists were greeted by ingenious speed traps.

But the next weekend, I was on the road again, hoping to see her. In Santa Barbara I stopped and called her house. Betty's mother answered and said that Betty was working at Newberry's, a five-and-ten-cent store. "What did you want?" her mother wanted to know. I said, "Well, I was going to ask if she wanted to go to the show." "She'll go," her mother said, to my surprise. "You pick her up at 9:00 when she gets off." I hung up the phone and continued merrily down the highway—only 100 more miles to go.

When I picked her up, Betty was very cordial; but she was furious that her mother had accepted a date for her. We went to a movie that night, and I like to joke that the next week when I came down for our third date, Betty said, "Let's get married!" Of course, she said no such thing but what is true is that for the next four months, until I was shipped overseas, I made it to her house every weekend. It was 600 miles round trip—but she was worth every kilometer. Betty was gorgeous, both inside and outside; and her personality and laugh were downright infectious. I was in love with her. I still am, and I always will be.

Our time flew by. At the time I left to go overseas, she was only 16, and her parents never would have given permission for her to marry me. But had it been possible (unless my brain overrode my hormones), I would have married her in a minute—make that a microsecond. I used to tease her that she was costing me a \$70-a-month allotment by being my girlfriend instead of my wife. (In the Army, you got more pay if you were married.)

I knew she loved me, but wisely she did not want to get married right then because I was leaving. Besides, she wanted to have all the fun and excitement that her senior year promised. Truth be told, I did not want to saddle her with a guy who might not make it back home, and I certainly did not want to dampen her senior year. That experience was lost to me when I went on active duty, so in many ways I lived my senior year vicariously through her letters.

At the time we started writing to one other, we had the

understanding that we were both free to date whomever we wanted. We agreed that if either of us changed our mind about how we felt about each other, we would say so immediately. Sadly, a lot of the guys got “Dear John” letters, which said just that. But I never felt threatened about that, even though we were separated for about a year and a half. That was a long time to let such valuable “merchandise” lie around unattended.

We also agreed to try to write each other every day, a task that both of us accomplished. I took a lot of kidding from the guys (make that secretly-envious guys) about the amount of mail I received. In addition to Betty, my mother and sister each wrote me every day. I also got a fair amount mail from church members and friends. In fact, one of the clowns in my platoon started a petition whereas I was to have my “Personal Mail Clerk.”

Sometimes, I found myself in conditions that were next to impossible to write my daily letter to Betty and the family, but I wouldn’t have missed writing them for the world. The mail was the lifeline that kept me going, and the letters were such a joy to both write and receive.

In many ways these letters were our “courtship.” We only went together for four months before I shipped out and that was only on weekends, coupled with seven days of deployment leave. Upon my return, we had less than three months together before we joined hands at the altar. As I read those letters today, I find that we unknowingly did a remarkable job of growing our love, learning about each other, planning for the future, and developing a sense of what was really important in our lives. We may not have had all the answers or known what we were doing, but ours was a marriage made in heaven. God was pointing the way—just as He continues to do now.

Today our letters, now in book form, are a consistent source of joy and solace for me. When I was reading and writing them some 60 years ago, I never dreamed that they would be so precious to me today. But they are, and I eagerly look forward to turning their pages every

morning upon awaking and every night before retiring. The morning reading gets me off to a good start, and the nightly readings usher in dreams of Betty. I am thankful for the letters and grateful that we had the forethought to preserve them. Every time I pick up the books, I am immensely aware that I am holding a treasure in my hands.

When we got word that we were shipping out, I asked Betty and my family to watch out for each other. To say they hit it off big would be to put it mildly. Their letters were filled with things they did together, and accompanying photos served as graphic reminders. Betty was especially helpful to my mom. With me gone, her company filled a big void with my mother. The two of them spent a lot of time going bowling, talking on the phone, comparing letters, going to shows, and doing other things together. My sister and niece were not only supportive, too—they were leading the parade!

Prior to my senior year in high school, North Korea invaded South Korea (June 25, 1950). The Security Council of the United Nations authorized the sending of troops in support of the South Koreans. The United States responded by sending troops who had been stationed in Japan. With exceptions, these troops were ill prepared, untrained and poorly supplied. Nevertheless, they were successful in pushing the North Koreans back until hordes of so-called Chinese “volunteers” entered the conflict.

The ensuing result was that tremendous casualties were inflicted on the UN forces. That caused a disastrous retreat until the largely American forces were able to establish a main line of resistance that held. While the Chinese called these troops “volunteers,” they were, in effect, hardened Chinese regulars who were well trained and equipped.

The United States responded to the entrance of the volunteers by deploying several divisions of regular troops to Korea. They also called up a number of reserve units, along with two National Guard Divisions, one of which—the 40th Infantry Division—was mine. Four men in our ROTC unit were also members of the 40th. One ROTC cadet (I’ll call him Wilbur) had a real doom and gloom attitude, and he really gave us a hard time. According to Wilbur, we were dead meat. We were being sent

into battle as lambs being led to slaughter. The disturbing thing about that was that it was not good-natured kidding around; it was downright mean-spirited (more about this later).

However, he was right about one thing. We were ill prepared when we entered the war, and we took a shellacking. According to one published report, during the three years of conflict more than 54,000 Americans were killed in action; over 100,000 were wounded; 7,140 became prisoners of war; and 8,176 were missing in action. I am sure that you will agree that those are staggering figures.

If you will be kind enough to indulge me, I want to specifically honor the men with whom I fought. During the Korean War, 135 Medals of Honor were presented for bravery in action, 97 of them posthumously. Of these, three went to men from the 40th Infantry Division and two of these were awarded posthumously to men from my unit (Company F, 2nd Battalion, and 223rd Infantry Combat Regiment). Undoubtedly, many more citations for bravery could have been awarded; but in the early going, there was no one left to write the citations.

While still at Camp Cook, the inevitable happened; and the division received orders to deploy to Japan. On March 30, 1951, I wrote Betty that we had left Camp Cooke by train the night before and had arrived at the San Francisco Port of Embarkation 12 hours later. We were sailing at 6:00pm aboard the General M.C. Meigs. The night we sailed was beautiful. The lights of the city, along with those on the Oakland Bay and the Golden Gate Bridges, shone like diamonds. However, it was a mighty quiet and melancholy atmosphere on the Meigs, as we started on a 4500-mile journey that would lead us to God knows where.

Now here is an ironic fact for you. Do you remember Wilber, the doom and gloom ROTC Cadet? Well, on a cold winter's day I was sitting next to my bunker in Korea when I looked up to view some incoming replacements. *There was Wilber*. He had been drafted and was assigned to a rifle company in the 3rd Battalion. I never saw him again, but the scuttlebutt said that he did not make it home. The four men from our

ROTC unit that he was casting doom and gloom on returned without a scratch. Go figure!



CHAPTER 8

The Land of the Rising Sun

ON FRIDAY, APRIL 13 (NOW THERE'S A DATE FOR YOU), WE DOCKED AT YOKOHAMA, JAPAN. Our 223rd Regimental Combat Team was divided into two groups. One went to Camp Schimmelfenning at the seaport of Sendai, and my group went to Camp Younghans in Honshu—some 60 miles distant from the much larger city of Sendai. Officially, we were in Japan as occupational troops and to train. An equally and perhaps more important reason was to deter Russia from invading Japan.

We did train, and I guess we also deterred Russia because they did not come knocking. Of course, that was not surprising since word had leaked out that I was with the 223rd. It was well known how I had single-handedly defeated the Japanese Imperial Forces during World War II.

As we steamed across the Pacific towards the land of the Rising Sun, I wondered how the Japanese people would greet us. True, they had started the war; but we had annihilated their Air Force, destroyed their fleet and killed hundreds of thousands of their husbands, sons, and sweethearts, etc. Then we dropped two atom bombs on metropolitan areas and were now giving them American cigarettes to facilitate their dying of cancer. To my relief, the people were very friendly and cordial. Politeness seemed to be ingrained in their psyche. When we marched through their towns, they would often stop what they were doing and line the road to greet us in Japanese. True, we did not know what they were saying; perhaps it was “Drop Dead, American Dogs.” But at least they were smiling and waving when they said whatever it was. Some say the children loved us because

we gave them candy—not so. It was definitely my personality.

The men of the villages were anxious to do things for us. On one occasion, we were running a military exercise in the field, and each man had to dig 3 foxholes measuring 6' x 4' x 3'. The first was on the main line of resistance. The next was a 100 yards to its rear, and the final one was another hundred or so yards behind that one. If the enemy were to overrun our position, we would fall back to the second foxhole and then to the third position, if necessary. It was a scorcher of a day, and we had just completed a 25-mile forced march with full field pack. At that point, four or five men from the village showed up and offered to dig the foxholes for us. It was tempting, but we declined their offer. However, they did go home with two or three American cigarettes as a goodwill gesture.

In larger towns, there were also groups of attractive ladies who offered to “entertain” us in their places of business. I was told their rates were very reasonable. In our platoon, there was a senior noncom that kept urging me to take advantage of these once-in-a-lifetime “opportunities.” I always declined, but he was persistent and at one point offered to pay for my first “date.” He said that these “entertainers” would teach me techniques that Betty would be thrilled about when I got home (*I don't think so!*).

For a long time I thought he was so persistent because we were from the same town. He was married, and he did not want any “innocent witnesses” around that might spill the beans. Then the thought hit me—maybe he was “pimping” for these ladies, pimping being defined here as being paid for bringing in new customers. He was kind of a sleazy guy. If he were “pimping,” he wouldn't be making any money off of me.

Now I was a fairly good-looking guy. In fact, everyone said that I was a beautiful baby. Before Betty, I had more than my share of “hot” dates where some very heavy petting took place, but I chose never to go any further. That principle has always been observed (although at my age, that's probably a moot point). It's my guess that I will probably get some family censoring on the above paragraph. If Betty were alive, it is a certainty that you would not be reading it. My point is that I never wanted anyone other than Betty. If you could see the smile on my face right now, you would know that I got her; although our four children

might have tipped you off.

Our training in Japan was very intense and was designed to equip us with combat skills and conditioning. We started out with full field pack speed marches of 2 or 3 miles and quickly worked up to marching 20 to 25 miles. Most weeks we would speed march to our destination on Monday and live in the field while taking classes. We ran simulated battlefield exercises day and night; then we would complete another speed march back to camp on Friday. Saturday was devoted to the care and cleaning of equipment. With luck, we had Sunday off. For us, that was a typical weekly menu, although there were weeks when we remained in camp for specialized training or for other reasons. Our goal was to be fully ready when, and if, we were deployed to Korea or to some other theater. When that time came some eleven months later, we were hard as nails and ready for whatever came our way.

My major job as a squad leader was to take care of and train the men under my command. However, I also had other responsibilities. I had graduated from Leadership School, so a lot of classes came my way. On average, I taught or assisted two classes per week at the company, battalion or regimental levels. These ranged from how to make beds and practice good personal hygiene to classes on tactics, camouflage, weapons training, military justice, physical condition, close order drill, or whatever else they could think of for the old timers. In civilian life, some of these skills came in handy. I remember talking with Betty about getting married. I told her that she knew how to cook and I knew how to make a bed, so what else did we need to know?

On a regular basis, I also taught hand-to-hand combat at the battalion level and assisted with regimental sessions on watercraft landings and aircraft transportability. Loading C119's was a little more complicated than stuffing the kids' toys into the trunk of a car. If the equipment we were loading was not balanced, properly placed and tied down, the aircraft could not fly. Or if it did happen to get off the ground with an unbalanced load, it might not make it back.

The Aircraft Transportability Training took place on mockups of C119's that were built to scale. One day one of the GI's was having a

hard time securing a jeep to the aircraft, so I crawled underneath the vehicle to give him a hand. My motto was, “practice makes perfect.” So, I had him undo the tie down and then redo it several times.

That took awhile and gave another guy time enough to wander over and stick his foot under the jeep. It was in the way; so I reached over, tugged on his pant leg and said “Hey, buddy, move your foot”! He did, and a short time later I crawled out from under the jeep to find that the pant leg I tugged on belonged to a three-star general. I immediately snapped to attention, saluted, and said “Good afternoon, Sir.” He returned the salute and said, “Carry on, Sergeant.” My mother used to tell me that if I was going to say something, I should say it nicely. I was sure glad that on that day I followed her advice and did not tell that pant leg what I really thought of it.

On “Graduation Day,” we were driven to an airfield where dozens of C119’s were waiting to be loaded in accordance with the manifests that we had been handed. My crew loaded six aircraft, all of which got off the ground and reached their destinations with flying colors. Ours was the only crew with a 1,000% batting average. “Fine,” I thought. “If the Army decided on an aircraft invasion, they knew whom to look for; and they knew where I lived.”

One of the more interesting assignments I received was to be an “observer” for the 2-week war games conducted by the 160th Regimental Combat Team at Camp McNair near Tokyo. Talk about power—with the wave of a red or white flag, I got to decide who lived and died!

In the realm of “It’s a small world,” I was chosen to be the umpire for K Company. The first sergeant of that company was the director of Camp Valcrest—a DAP summer camp where I had gone as a teenager.

In June of 1951, we had a very interesting “exercise” that involved an amphibious assault. All of our equipment was turned in, and the barracks were completely empty when we departed camp. We were transported by truck to an awaiting ship, boarded it, and were ordered not to communicate with the outside world (they even confiscated my carrier pigeons). The Brass said that they were trying to make that exercise as real as possible and that we were going to make an

amphibious assault on a Japanese beach. We sailed around the Sea of Japan for six days, playing cards on deck and falling all over one another on that packed ship as we wondered how all that was adding to our combat readiness.

Of course, there were all kinds of rumors; but what was really going on was anyone's guess, unless you were in the top echelon of command. Finally, that glorious day arrived. It was over the side, down the nets, and into the awaiting amphibious landing crafts as we were swept off to an undefended Japanese beach, which we victoriously invaded. The *Los Angeles Times* snapped photos and wrote headlines, including one that read: "Fighting 40th Comes Through!"

The captain also selected me as the company athletic NCO. I am not sure why, but I think it had something to do with my severe case of athlete's foot. We fielded teams for the company, battalion and regimental leagues in flag football, basketball, and softball. We did all right for ourselves, considering that we played against some very talented guys, some of which had college experience. Of course, that success was largely due to my brilliant coaching.

While at Camp Youngman's, I was fortunate to share a cadre room (walled-off space with a door) with another NCO who always called me Sarge. One day I took a photograph of Betty into town and had it enlarged, colorized, and framed. I proudly hung it on the wall at the foot of my bed where she would be the first thing I saw in the morning and the last thing I saw at night. She was beautiful, and every day I enjoyed greeting her with a "Good morning" and a "Good night."

One night my "Good night, Sweetheart" got a little exuberant; and I was startled to hear my bunkmate reply, "Good night, Sarge." The greetings continued but were a little softer after that. I might add here that Betty has now been gone for just over three years, and I continue to greet her every morning and every night. But now I keep her photographs handy so I can easily kiss them.

Within our faith, we baptize at eight years of age; prior to that, children are often blessed. During the blessing sacrament, ministers place their hands on the child's head; and prayer is asked upon the child

and his or her parents. My grandfather, an Elder within the church, was the one who blessed me. Several witnesses present on that occasion told me that his prayer that day broke with tradition and was very unusual. According to their accounts, he said that on earth, I would be known as Robert LaZelle Anderson; but in heaven, I would be known by another name. Unfortunately, I never wrote the name down. As unusual as the name was, it has long ago been forgotten. Sadly, my grandfather was killed in an automobile accident a short while after my blessing, and I never really knew him.

I didn't hear about my grandfather's pronouncement until 1964, some 30+ years after the blessing. When I traveled to Independence, Missouri, I learned from complete *strangers* about the startling effect that my grandfather's words had on those who witnessed his pronouncement. More precisely, it was not so much the words but the powerful spirit that accompanied them. Those people did not know me or anything about me, but they exuberantly shared a testimony that they had carried with them for more than 30 years. Talk about a sobering and scary moment!

During the middle of November 1951, when I was stationed in Japan, I received a letter from my pastor. He informed me that I had been called to the priesthood office of Deacon. It had been approved, and there were men in Japan who could ordain me. That certainly was a life-changing development for me and, subsequently, for Betty. After reflection and prayer, I felt a confirmation of the call. Although Betty was not my wife at the time or a member of my church, she graciously agreed to support me.

In all honesty, that business about being ordained was not in my game plan. I have never aspired to any office or position in the church other than to be a good disciple. Coming when it did, however, was both frightening and reassuring. Frightening as to what effect it would have on Betty's and my relationship (although deep down inside, I felt a sense of wellbeing about it) and reassuring in that I would soon be in harm's way and I figured that if God was behind this (which I was assured He was) that He must have something in mind.

At the time, a small group of about six church members who were in my same regiment worshipped together in Sendai. Previously, two

priesthood members had been a part of the group, but they had just rotated home. The group was now void of any official leadership, not that such leadership was necessary. However, when the group learned of my pastor's letter, they became big-time advocates for my being ordained as soon as possible. The stated reason was so that I could offer official leadership to the group. Talk about the blind leading the blind! But alas, it was to be—and not to be.

The group contacted Carl Crum, a US civilian employee who worked in Tokyo. He agreed to come to Sendai to share with us. On that Sunday we celebrated the Lord's Supper together. That was especially meaningful, since we had received our marching orders for Korea. At that same service on January 13, 1951, I was ordained to the priesthood office of Deacon, and it is believed that this was the first ordination of my faith group to take place in Japan.

Three days later and newly ordained, I shipped out to Korea with the rest of the 40th Division. The new wrinkle was that I was in a front line infantry unit; but the other church members were with regimental headquarters, many miles to the rear. So much for offering ministry, but I figured the Lord knew what He was doing. Somehow, and as ridiculous as it sounds, that “new mantle of authority” gave me a renewed sense of assurance and wellbeing. Heaven knows I could use as much confidence building as I could get.

I was nineteen years old, inexperienced, and in a hostile environment—both shooting- and weather-wise. My job was to care for my men, defend and maintain a 2,000-yard section of the main line of resistance, run frequent patrols, and to engage and kill the enemy. I had a lot to learn, and I learned fast. By the time I rotated home, I had run 25 patrols and suffered only 3 casualties in my squad. All three of those men were hit when I was not with them. This is not the time or place for war stories, but I feel obligated to share my testimony that the Lord has walked with Betty and me all the days of our lives. He has protected us from harm and blessed us in astonishing ways. Read on.



CHAPTER 9

Korea: The Front Line

WE WENT ASHORE AT INCHON ON JANUARY 22 AND STAYED IN TENT CITY FOR A FEW DAYS. Then we moved by truck to the main line of resistance where we relieved the 24th Division. We occupied the Kumsong-Chwapae-ri sector above the 48th parallel. That was about as far north as one could get and still be on our side. The switch was primarily with personnel only, since we had left most of our equipment in Japan. The 24th Division left their equipment with us. I forgot the name that the Army had for that, but I called it “being screwed.” Their equipment was all chewed up and in disrepair, while ours was in top shape. Nevertheless, it was what it was, and we made do until the supply chain caught up to us.

The Brass decided to take Hill 364. I was given 2 squads (17 men) with orders to take and hold a smaller adjacent hill in order to protect the right flank of G Company. They attacked Hill 364, and it did not go well. G Company was cut up pretty badly. My unit fared better; we took and secured our objective without resistance. I positioned my troops, had them dig in, and prepared for a counterattack of overwhelming force. Understand here that I was as green as they come and was probably the youngest guy on top of that mountain when I became aware that the Chinese were not mounting a major attack but were instead working their way up the hill. It did not make sense. That is not the way the Chinese operated. Nevertheless, there it was. I figured they would eventually come at us in overwhelming numbers.

I didn't want to disclose our positions, so I ordered my men not to fire until the Chinese were on top of us. We rolled grenades down the hill when we determined the location of the enemy combatants. So far,

judging from cries of their wounded, the strategy was working. We knew where they were, but they had no idea where our positions were or how many of us were on the top of the hill. I sure was glad that I had listened to that still small, inner voice that told me to have my guys double up on the number of grenades they carried with them that night—even though there was a lot of grousing about it.

To be honest, I thought we were “burnt toast.” Of course, our artillery was zeroed in on our position. I figured that when they came, the only way we could deny them this high ground was to call in our big guns, knowing full well that shrapnel is an equal opportunity killer.

That night I learned what it meant to “sweat blood” in prayer. I prayed like I had never prayed before and have only done a few times since. I was in contact with our artillery, ready to give the firing order—and then it happened. The enemy withdrew! They had us, and they withdrew! For no apparent reason, they just withdrew!

Then came our orders to withdraw, and we hightailed it out of there in a flash. We had worked our way through the neutral, but extremely dangerous, valley that separated the Chinese from our main lines of resistance. We were snaking our way through the barbed wire and minefields that fortified our entrenched positions, when a funny thing happened (at least we laughed about it later). A radio call came in from a platoon leader with G Company. He asked if we wanted his unit to cover our withdrawal. I heard my radioman say, “Sir, we done withdrawn.” Indeed we had—yes, indeedy, we had!

When we reached our position at the top of the hill, I was exhausted—physically, mentally, and emotionally spent. I removed my helmet, sat on it, and started to pray to thank God for His deliverance. Then a strange thought came to me. In my mind, I heard myself saying, “Lord, if you were going save us, why didn’t you say so and spare me from all that fear, pain, and anguish?”

I sat there, reflecting, meditating, and pondering, and then I heard an audible voice say:

“The time will come when you will lead my people.”

As the weeks went by, I came to understand that my prayers on the hill

that night were not for deliverance. I firmly believed that all of us were going to die—that was a given, and I was resigned to it.

My prayers that night were for wisdom and for the ability to make right decisions and be strong for my men. I especially prayed about finishing the fight and not letting my men down. That night God was not saving people in the physical sense. That night He was taking a wet behind the ears disciple, strengthening his faith, molding his armor, giving him new insights, and building his leadership for what was to be. Through this growing disciple, many would be brought into God's Kingdom. This was not an unfamiliar tune, and throughout my life I would hear it played over and over again. It was what my grandfather was led to tell me when he blessed me as a baby. It was ordained from the beginning, and that night God opened this man's eyes and ears in new ways—and that my friends is my "Road to Emmaus" story!

A few days later new orders came down—Hill 364 would be taken. Period. End of report! Only this time, my Squad would lead the assault. Sure enough, when word of this leaked out, the Chinese troops packed up and headed for the hills. It seems that my reputation of having defeating the entire Japanese war machine in the field across from my house during World War II had preceded me. Anyway, when the smoke cleared, we had blown all of their bunkers, three Chinese soldiers had gone to be with their ancestors, and we took no casualties.

When men are in a fight, especially one that involves life and death, a lot of bravado takes place. I must admit that I did my share of talking big. Perhaps I was trying to bolster myself up or to moderate the fear that kept creeping into my thoughts. Perhaps it was just plain stupidity. One day when I was checking our area, I came across a skeleton of an enemy combatant. I snapped his picture and sent it to Betty for our scrapbook. I told her to place a caption underneath it that read, "The only good Gook is a dead Gook," a highly popular saying among the crowd I was running with at the time. Years later in looking through this book, I came across that caption and I was ashamed. I told Betty that I was going to change it, but she insisted that I leave it alone. "You can't change history," she said; so it remained as it was. However, I do need to

apologize for disrespecting that man. Surely, he was a brave warrior who did not want to be in that war anymore than I did. He, along with all of his comrades, deserved better—just as our troops did.

In a February 1952 letter to Betty, I wrote that everything was quiet except that our mortars and artillery were zeroing in on an area to the west of us and that the noise was deafening. I speculated on the possibility that the Brass were shoring up the area for a possible Chinese attack. At the time, that area was being defended by the Capitol and Sixth Divisions of the Republic of Korea (ROK) Army. Talk about being prophetic.

The following month, we received orders that the 40th would exchange positions with the ROK units mentioned above. That was quite an operation, which was carried out after the sun went down and took place in bits and pieces. At a given time, a ROK unit and one of our corresponding units would simultaneously switch places, moving as quickly and quietly as possible. Of course, that required that the adjacent units on the main line of resistance stretch their defensive positions to cover both their current and the newly vacated positions until the moving units could get on line. That was no easy task, because it involved thousands of frontline infantrymen. It took several weeks to complete, but it went surprisingly well. Upon completion, the 40th Division had moved some 30 miles to the west and was now responsible for defending the Kumhwa-Kumsong sector.

While the operation was successful, once again we got the shaft. We had put a lot of time, effort, and sweat into improving our bunkers and living conditions. But when the switch came, the Koreans registered at the “Hilton,” while we moved into Motel 6 (make that a Motel 4).

The sequel to the story was that for once, the Brass had it right when they moved our troops to that sector and zeroed our big guns in on the area. In mid-June of 1952, the Chinese threw a reinforced regiment against my “old” Second Battalion that was manning their newly acquired positions. My guess was that that gave the Chinese a numerical advantage of five or six to one. I referred to the unit as my “old” battalion because I had rotated home and missed the fight. Essentially,

that was the last major battle of the Korean War, and our artillery and mortars clobbered the enemy. I have found no figures for the number of American casualties. Most likely, the number was relatively low because of the entrenched positions and the type of battle waged there, but the Chinese did not fare as well. The next day over 500 Chinese bodies littered the battlefield—what a waste!

They had different names for patrols. They were called combat patrols, ambush patrols, reconnaissance patrols, etc., but their real function was to serve as an “early warning” system for the Main Line of Resistance, in case the Chinese mounted a large offensive. These patrols usually consisted of five men who arrived at their assigned area just as darkness set in. There, they would lay motionless in the snow for six or seven hours, waiting for enemy troops to stumble upon them. If they came, a firefight ensued with those already in position having a distinct advantage. Then just before dawn, everyone would go home. While it was never acknowledged officially, it was understood that these patrols were expendable.

While I was in Korea, I ran 24 patrols and only missed two. A full squad consisted of nine men, and most often only five of them would run the patrol. That usually equated to each man going out every other time. It was my practice to select four men and I would serve as the Patrol Leader for each outing. That is, it was my practice until my Platoon Leader ordered me to alternate command with Pittman, my Assistant Squad Leader. The Lieutenant felt that he needed the experience.

Unfortunately on Pittman’s first time out, the squad came under fire and we took two casualties. Pittman performed well and risked his own life to secure help for the wounded. Later, I recommended him for a Bronze Star for Valor. Thankfully, my squad took only one other casualty; again, when I was not with them. This time a sniper hit Wilber in the hand while he was on a work detail.

On an earlier patrol, as I was leaving my bunker, I grabbed some candy bars and stuffed them into my pocket. When we arrived at our assigned area, I positioned my men—two on my right and two on my left, with a space of about 20 yards between each man. We settled in for

a long winter's night, lying as still as possible in the snow. About three hours into the patrol, I decided to have a candy bar. I reached into my pocket when "Old Mother Guilt" hit me hard.

Here I was, ready to enjoy that delicacy, but my men had none. So, I crawled stealthily within five yards of the first man, exhaling my breath to limit how far my voice would carry, and quietly called, "Marshall." "What do you want?" said Marshall. "Do you want a candy bar?" said I. "What kind?" he asked. At my ensuing court martial, the court ruled it was "justifiable homicide"!

There was probably a distance of around five miles between the Chinese and our main line of resistance, and there were some wild turkeys in the valley separating the two lines. An unknown officer from a higher echelon said that anyone could check out a shotgun to go hunting in the valley, provided it did not interfere with other duties. A short while later a sergeant from a much lower echelon, and whose initials are RLA, said, "No way—not in my squad." It should also be noted that the sergeant further recommended a Section 8 (otherwise known as a Mental Discharge) for the higher echelon officer, as well as anyone who wanted to go "hunting."

One early morning we returned from running a patrol to find a turkey sitting on top of one of our bunkers. Before anyone could stop him, Simpson took aim with his carbine and pulled the trigger. One 30-caliber round would have demolished the bird, but Simpson forgot that he had his weapon on automatic, so three rounds raced through the barrel of his weapon. I do not know how many rounds hit the bird, but its remains were scattered all over Korea.

The Company Commander's call was instantaneous. I heard, "What's going on up there?" Lying through my teeth, I said, "Accidental discharge of a weapon sir." "Well, tell those #&%@%\$ to be careful!" "Yes, Sir," I said, as the call went dead.

I told the men to get some sleep, but the first order of business when we got up was to clean up the remains of that bird. The men did a good job, and nary could a feather be found. Then someone came up with the bright idea of having a memorial service. The remains were placed

in a box, a hole dug, and a cross lashed together; and then the men took turns saying some very nice things about our departed feathered friend. Well, what do you expect? This was the front line, and it was very slow TV night.

At times, making up our own entertainment was almost an art form. One time we were repairing a road when the guys came across an old artillery shell casing. They dug a hole and buried about two thirds of the shell casing in the middle of that road, leaving the rest of it protruding out of the road. Then they gathered around the shell and waited. Soon 2 dump trucks pulled up. The men started to yell and holler as they waved their hands in the air and took off running in all directions. The truck drivers, seeing the commotion and the shell casing sticking out from the road, assumed that it was an unexploded round. They almost killed themselves jumping out of their trucks and running for cover; and my guys—they just rolled in the dirt, laughing until they hurt.

Replacements were coming in, and when one was assigned to us, I teamed him up with a seasoned trooper. The new guys were rightly nervous (as were us old guys). One of them said that if the Chinese mounted an assault, he was headed for the rear. His mentor said, “You wouldn’t want to do that.”

“Why not?” questioned the recruit.

“Because Sergeant Anderson would put a bullet in the back of your head before you got 10 yards.”

“Oh, he wouldn’t do that!” exclaimed the recruit. The mentor, in a very hushed, secretive voice, asked, “See that cross over there?” The recruit said, “You mean...?” The mentor just nodded his head in the affirmative. And so it was that for the next 2 or 3 days, the said recruit gave me a very wide berth.

Somewhere around the month of April, my parents forwarded me a very nasty letter from my draft board, which in effect said, “Get yourself down here right now, or you are in big trouble.” Seizing the opportunity, I rushed down to company headquarters and told the captain that he had to send me home immediately. He looked concerned, thinking that it must be a life or death situation, until I handed him the letter. After

reading it, he looked up and said, “Sergeant, I can’t send you home. You’re the only man in the company that’s expendable!” After that, I heard nothing more from my draft board.



CHAPTER 10

Home and Graduation

OUR COMPANY HAD A GREAT MESS SERGEANT, AND THE FOOD WAS GOOD AND PLENTIFUL. Whether we were in the US, Japan or Korea, he would usually manage to get at least one hot meal to us every day. Considering the logistics involved, that was quite a feat, especially in Korea. When hot meals were not available, we ate C-rations. These came in one-week packages and consisted of canned goods and other items. Fruit cocktail was my favorite. That delicacy was limited, however, since the weekly C-ration package had only a single can.

We also received a beer ration of five or six cans per week. That placed me in a good bartering position, since I never touched alcohol. I gave one of my cans of beer to each of my two scouts and another to my Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR) man, and then I traded the remaining cans of beer for cans of fruit cocktail. It was also my policy that I never sold my beer, although some of the offers were staggering, including the guy from another company who offered me his month's pay for a single can.

In my squad there were two men that had a "love/hate" relationship. They were always arguing back and forth over nothing. They loved to argue, and they loved each other like brothers. On one occasion, Marshall was trying to talk Simpson out of a can of fruit cocktail so he could trade with me. I sat there, amused at the conversation, when suddenly Simpson, in an accusatory tone said, "What have you ever done for me?" Marshall almost fell off his log and exclaimed, "*I saved your life!*" Simpson, without batting an eye, shot back, "I mean lately!"

At the price guys were willing to pay for a can of beer, it was not surprising that cans had a way of disappearing. South Korean laborers carried most of our supplies up to us. It was a long steep climb; and there were “losses” along the way, particularly on the days when the weekly beer ration came up the trail. A supply sergeant from another company complained to a South Korean Captain that beer losses were getting out of hand. The next day the ROK officer observed a laborer “accidentally” dropping a case of beer and pocketing one of the cans from the damaged container. The ROK captain pulled out his revolver and executed the laborer on the spot. It seemed that the Korean Military Code of Justice was quite different from ours, but it was very effective. From that time on, beer losses were almost nonexistent. But what a price to pay for a lousy can of beer!

On the other hand, while I abhor the man’s execution, one must ask if his life was taken because he was a thief or because he was considered a traitor? In either case was such action justified? I will leave it to the readers to decide—but I think not!

My experience is that the Lord works in mysterious ways. While I hated missing my senior year of high school, much good came of it. With a little help, I completed my high school work while I was in the Army. When I came home, I graduated with Betty’s class, a marvelous experience. I also gained all kinds of maturity and experience and developed teaching and leadership skills. After being discharged, I was eligible for college funding, a low-cost housing loan, and inexpensive life insurance. Looking at the flip side of the coin, if I had not served in the Army, things might have played out differently. I might never have gotten together with Betty. Let’s face it—it was definitely the uniform that won her over, plus a very hefty shove from the Almighty. All in all, in a world of batting averages—I’m a heavy hitter!

While I was at Camp Cooke, my company commander talked with me about going to Officer’s Candidate School. I told him I did not think I was eligible to go since I was only nineteen (actually I was eighteen) and I had not graduated high school, although I was working on it. He told me to keep at it; the next thing I knew, I was off to Leadership

School at Fort Ord. Time marched on, and I was now nearing the end of my time in Korea. The Company Commander called me in again—that time to offer me a Battlefield Commission. I reminded him that I did not meet the age and educational requirements, and he replied that the Army would waive them. Still, I was not interested. So, I thanked him for his consideration and declined the offer, saying that I had other plans. Those plans, of course, were to get back to Betty just as soon as I could, start our life together, and live “Happily Ever After.” And that is exactly what I (we) did!

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, I was about to go on another patrol. It was May 18, 1952; and my men and I were ready to set out on what would be my 26th patrol. The company clerk came running up, shouting, “Sarge, Sarge! Pack your gear and report to company headquarters at 0600am tomorrow. You’re going home!”

Well, maybe it was not quite that dramatic—but it was music to my ears. I turned the squad over to my assistant squad leader and sweated out the rest of the night. Thankfully, the Boys came trudging up the hill early the next morning and reported that everything went off without a hitch. I praised God, said my goodbyes, and headed for company headquarters. I wanted to be early; that was one truck I did not want to miss!

When I got to Japan, I was stuck for troop transport and was delayed for a little over a week. That was disappointing since Betty and I had hoped against hope that I would get home in time to escort her to the Senior Prom. In fact, somehow she had managed to have the prom rescheduled for a week later just to give me a little more wiggle room; but it was not to be. Betty may have had a lot of pull with good old Van Nuys High School, but not with the Army. Because of delays, I did not make the prom, but I did make the wedding.

On the day I arrived home, my mother and dad came to meet my ship at Camp Stoneman, and they invited Betty to come with them. However, Los Angeles City Schools had a rule that if you were graduating, you had to be in school the entire final week in order to walk up on the stage to receive your diploma. Betty asked her parents if, considering the circumstances, could she skip the walk and they both said, “No.”

Disheartened, she went back to her mother and asked again. Thinking Betty could never make that happen, her mother said, “Well, if you can get a letter from the school that says that you can skip school to meet Bob and still walk when you graduate, I’ll let you go.” Betty went immediately to see the Girls’ Vice Principal, Miss Caneely. As they spoke, Miss Caneely began to cry, and then said, “Certainly you can go, my dear. My fiancée didn’t come home.”

When my ship docked, I finagled a three-day pass; and we all drove home together. I think I embarrassed my parents to death on that journey home. They sat in the front seat with their eyes fixed on the road while Betty and I sat in the back seat (under a blanket) making up for lost time.

I cut it close, but I made it. A few days later on June 19, 1952, Betty and I graduated together from Van Nuys High School. In recognition of her scholarship achievements, Betty sat in a place of honor on the first row. Thanks to her friends who made up the seating chart, I sat immediately behind her. It is hard to say which of us was more proud that night. I can safely say that we were extremely proud of one another. Following the ceremony, a *Valley Times* reporter photographed the high school principal, A.G. Andersen, as he presented my diploma to me. The photo caption read, “Classmate Betty Ward looks on.” The following day, that photo, together with a good-sized article, appeared in the *Valley Times*. What a blessing it was to be home, free from injury, and to be able to celebrate that milestone with the woman I so deeply loved.

The next milestone took place on June 27, 1952, when I was honorably discharged from the US Army at Camp Stoneman, free of additional service. As Betty and I had so often said to one another in our letters, “We could now start living.” And that is exactly what we did!

Our plans were to marry, and then the two of us would attend college together in Iowa. I had been very frugal while I was overseas. I had saved about \$2,000, which in 2015 dollars would probably be around \$17,000-\$18,000. That was pretty good on a sergeant’s pay of \$139 or so a month. Betty worked at Sears in order to pay for the kind of wedding that she always wanted. She had estimated that the wedding would

cost \$500. As for me, my dad had lined me up with a summer job at Tri-Engineering, and I busily delivered parts to defense manufacturers all over Southern California. A few years later when I graduated from the University, I asked the President of the firm for a letter of recommendation. He must have liked me because he wrote that I had been promoted to the position of Assistant Manager of the Delivery Department and was given a 20% raise. When I read over his letter, I got a big laugh. There were only two of us in the department; the other guy was the manager. The 20% raise amounted to 25¢. Anyway, it looked good on my résumé.

Betty was a very devout Christian and came from an exceptionally strong Presbyterian background, although her family often referred to her as the “girl of many churches.” She got that tag because she attended all kinds of different church services with her friends and, at times, more than one on any given Sunday. One of her biggest thrills was when she sang in a mass choir to a packed house at the Hollywood Bowl in support of a Billy Graham Crusade.

She also sang in the Presbyterian choir and was scheduled to sing a solo, but she came down with some sort of bug and had to cancel. Foolishly, the choir director claimed that she was scared and not really sick. That was the end of her membership in the Presbyterian Church. Hundreds of years of tradition went down the tubes that day because of a dumb remark from a church leader who certainly should have known better. The pastor and choir director apologized profusely, but the barn door was open. Betty was not about to go back in. Youth leaders and pastors, take note!

Having said this and knowing what is coming next, I cannot help but wonder if God was paving the way for our journey—or at least using these events for His purposes.

Across the street from Betty’s house was a Lutheran church that Betty started attending and later joined. By now, I am sure that you are aware that the church of which I am a member is very important to me. I wanted to be married by one of my ministers in one of my churches, while Betty wanted the “perfect wedding” that she had always dreamed

of. It would seem that I was a little too pushy on this issue, and when my mother and sister learned about my foolishness, they let me have it with both barrels (make that four barrels, since there were two of them). They gave me to understand that it was *always* the bride's prerogative to choose the site of the wedding—period, explanation point, end of discussion. I even got the distinct impression that if this wedding didn't take place, they were keeping Betty. Of course, if I could help it, there was no way that I was going to let Betty get away, and I certainly wanted her to have the kind of wedding that she had always dreamed of—that is, if I was the groom. We were married in the Lutheran church that Betty had joined.

If you've read our book, *Love Letters*, you probably came across concerns that some of Betty's family members had about our entering into a "mixed marriage"—in this case "mixed" meaning that I was not Presbyterian; heck, I wasn't even Lutheran. Sixty years ago, it was a widespread belief among many denominations that if both partners were not of the same faith, the marriage was doomed from the start. In fact, my faith group had a saying that if you did not marry someone from the church, you were "weak in the faith." But let me tell you, if I did not marry Betty—I would have been weak in the head!

On the back cover of our *Love Letters* book, I penned these words:

Once asked what my greatest achievement was, I quickly answered that it was persuading Betty to marry me—an event ushering in 60 years of magical love, devotion and blessings that produced an extraordinary family of which we are both so very proud (a feat credited largely to Betty). As for the wedding, Betty got the beautiful and perfect one she always dreamed of. But coming home from war and marching down that aisle with my beloved on my arm—I got the "Victory Parade"!



CHAPTER 11

Starting Our Life Together

IN PREPARATION FOR BETTY'S PERFECT WEDDING, BETTY AND HER MOTHER TOOK THE RED CAR (STREETCAR) FROM VAN NUYS TO DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES TO LOOK AT WEDDING DRESSES IN HIGH-END WEDDING GOWN SHOPS. The gowns ran from \$300 to over \$1,000—a king's ransom in those days. They found a gown they particularly liked and located a suitable pattern. Then Beth, Betty's mother, started her labor of love for her beautiful daughter. She sewed the perfect wedding gown that Betty had always dreamed of. Each stitch was strengthened with a bond of love—at first taken for granted, but over the years becoming more and more meaningful. It was a love gift of a mother, who in many ways struggled and was underappreciated, to a daughter she loved and cherished. That was a gift that no other could give her.

The wedding gown is shown on the back cover of our *Love Letters* books and went on to be worn by five other brides, all of whom have had long and lasting marriages. Nora Elizabeth Cash Ward made the wedding dress in 1952. It was worn by Elizabeth (Betty) Anne Ward, who married Robert LaZelle Anderson in 1952. Betty's sister, Mary Adele Ward, wore the dress when she married Daniel Lee Dowling in 1956. Betty's cousin, Dorothy Irene Dirks wore it when she married John William Nelson in 1963. Betty's niece (and Dowling's daughter), Denette Ann Dowling donned it to marry Steven Craig Laufmann in 1977. Betty's niece (and Dowling's daughter), Mardele Lee Dowling married Ronald Bates Gardiner in 1985 and wore the dress.

The dress is now in the hands of a curator who will care for it and make it available to family members who want to carry on the tradition. A collage of the five brides wearing the gown proudly hangs in my living room. Betty loved that picture and rightly so.

A while back, I came upon receipt for the gown's materials. It came to under \$38. Think about that—five wedding gowns worn for less than \$38 and still counting—quite a bargain. However, by far, the biggest bargain of that wedding, in dollar terms, was the \$2 that I paid for the marriage license.

As mentioned earlier, Betty's dad was the head of the horticulture department at Pearce College. He and a few of his students went down to the Los Angeles Flower Market, purchased flowers for our wedding, and decorated the church with them. It was a remarkable sight, and the church was gorgeous.

The Rev. Ramseth, pastor of the Central Lutheran Church, conducted a very meaningful wedding ceremony. The proudest moment in my life was on August 22, 1952, when I slipped that wedding band on the ring finger of Betty's left hand. I entered the church that day standing at 5'9" and was standing so tall at the conclusion of the service that I had to duck as I exited through the front entrance. Man, I was walking on air—and I still am.

After Betty's passing, and in accordance with her instructions, I gave her wedding rings to our daughter, Mary. What an honor it was for me to pass them on to her. They were symbols of her parents' undying love and fidelity—symbols, never broken or tarnished. My wedding ring remains where my beloved placed it on the day of our wedding. It will remain there throughout all eternity.

Following the service, family and friends gathered at the home of Betty's parents. We all continued the joyous celebration, and the pastor of my church, Douglas Clark offered a special prayer of blessing upon Betty and me.

Originally, Betty and I each selected six attendants for the wedding, but later Betty invited my niece, Leona, to be a junior bridesmaid. Leona was thrilled to be a part of our wedding party, and her Uncle Bob also

felt pretty good about it. I ended up with only five groomsmen because a major earthquake ravaged Bakersfield, California, in the early morning of our wedding day. One of my ushers was a reporter for the *Valley Times* and was sent to cover the story. Some 55 years later, Betty and I had lunch with him and his wife. He showed me the money clip that I had given to my ushers as mementos of our wedding. He proudly proclaimed that he was never without it—I should certainly hope not; those babies cost me almost five bucks apiece.

Chet, Betty's brother, was my best man. I enlisted him to make certain that my car was not sabotaged and/or covered with decorations. I knew him well, and that was like asking the lion to look after the lambs. When the time came for us to leave, we jumped into my *dad's* car and sped away on our honeymoon.

Our first night together (and I mean our very first night together) was at an upscale motel on Sepulveda Boulevard near San Fernando, California. The next morning I suggested I could probably get a “*very special*” rate for the rest of the day (actually I would have gladly paid double), but Betty felt we should stay with our plan to return to her family home to greet folks and open wedding gifts. I am pleased to report that when we arrived at her parents' home, my shiny and exceptionally clean car was parked out front. I never did find out if Chet had been true to his promise to protect my vehicle or if my dad had it washed and cleaned up—but if I were a betting man, I'd put my money on the latter.

Now for those of you who know me well, I am sure that you will all agree that I would like nothing better than to sit around all day and chew the fat with family. However, when 10:00am rolled around and Betty said it was time to go, I knocked two little old ladies and a small child to the floor as I made a dash for my car—just slowing enough to make sure that Betty was in the vehicle! Then it was off to the Hotel Fresno in Fresno, California, where we spent our second night together. On the way we made a brief stopover in Bakersfield, California, (the site of the earthquake) to meet and visit Betty's Aunt Inez. Boy! What a hoot that was; she was one fun lady.

The Glacier Hotel in Yosemite was our next stop. Here I embarrassed my new bride when I instructed the hotel staff to move the twin beds in our room together. Later Betty told me that I should have waited to do that until she was not in the room. Unfortunately, it seems that I am a man of action rather than sensitivity. We only spent one night there because the food was terrible. That afternoon, while we were poking around on the valley floor, we discovered a cabin that we rented. The rest of our stay in Yosemite was great, except that the deer and antelope got a whole lot more of our wedding cake than I got. But then, I got what I was after, too. Man does not live by wedding cake alone, you know.

We were fortunate that many of my work assignments placed us in close proximity to Yosemite. Over the years Betty, the children, and I spent quite a bit of time there. We camped, drove over roads, hiked trails, stretched our necks to see the top of giant redwoods, and felt the spray from gigantic waterfalls upon our faces. It is a truly a magnificent and beautiful place.

The next week the *Van Nuys News* carried a huge spread on the wedding. It featured a 5 x 7 photo of Betty, about thirty-column inches of all kinds of information about Betty's wedding gown, the flowers she chose, sports she played, school activities, prestigious awards, clubs she belonged to, her family pedigree, where the family vacationed, the education of her parents and grandparents, her blood type, the brand of soap and hair conditioner she uses—and then, finally, the last paragraph read, “The groom was also there.”

Finally, my dreams had come true, and I was married to the most beautiful woman in the world. Betty had just turned eighteen and I was twenty. Some people questioned if we were old enough to be married, but heck, like I said before, she knew how to cook and I knew how to make a bed—so what else did we need to know?

So let's see, where were we and what was going on? For openers, I had come home from Korea without a scratch (well, maybe a little one). Betty and I graduated high school and had a great summer together. Our wedding ceremony was beautiful (but not as beautiful as the bride), and our honeymoon was great, except that the critters at Yosemite got

more wedding cake than I did. I also talked Betty into forgetting about attending one of those prestigious universities in California. She happily agreed to leave her family and friends to go with me to a small town in Iowa with a population of 2,000. That was if you counted the 500 students enrolled in the local college.

So, California here we were—Iowa, here we come! My plan was to drive across the desert at night because we were traveling at the height of summer. Our air-conditioning was the 480 model (4 windows rolled down at 80 miles an hour). However, Betty wanted to see the scenery, so early one morning we started out over the desert. About an hour later, I heard ZZZZZZZZZZZZZ—so much for the scenery. Soon the car began acting up, but I managed to get it into Salome, Arizona, before the car collapsed. Now I was not a mechanic, but I suspected that the problem with the car was “sunstroke.” Anyway, the people at the garage told me that it would take three days before they could get the parts to fix it. So here I was, out in the middle of the desert, in a motel room with this gorgeous woman—and I had absolutely nothing to do, other than to make love. Now I ask you—was that any way to treat a returning war hero?

When we arrived in Lamoni, we rushed out to see the campus—talk about culture shock! We were used to California universities with large, lush, green, and highly manicured lawns that covered rolling hills like velvet. In Iowa, it had been a scorching hot summer, and they had let the grass grow in an attempt to preserve it. Since we arrived early, it had not been mowed yet, so we were greeted with what appeared to be dead grass that stood a good two feet high. What’s more, for years I had heard over and over again about “Graceland Standing on a Hill,” and I thought to myself, “In California we have pitching mounds higher than this.” In my mind, I could also hear Betty saying, “What in the world has Bob gotten us into?”

We rented an apartment behind Ed Downey’s barbershop as our first home together. It was sparse. We had a small eating area, small kitchen, and a bedroom. Coming from California where things were more “modernized,” we assumed it would have a bathroom. However,

the bathroom was downstairs in the basement, *and* we shared it with the barbershop! One night Betty went down to use the bathroom, and I heard her scream. I rushed down to find a big rat staring at her. From then on, anytime she had to go to the bathroom, I ran a reconnaissance patrol and then stood guard.

We soon had an opportunity to move to better quarters. A chiropractor who had rented an office next to the barbershop also wanted to rent our apartment. So, Ed connected us with Dr. Shipman, the town dentist. Dr. Shipman had a cottage, and he was willing to let us rent it for the same amount that we were paying for our barbershop apartment, which was \$35 a month. Now that I think about it, I suspect that Ed may have been picking up part of the rent. He was a great guy, and he and everyone else was really helpful in getting us started.

We also had a rodent problem there. It was a vicious thing—maybe 1-1/2” high. It would scamper around, foraging for dropped particles of food on our kitchen floor. Occasionally, it would sit up on its hind legs and nibble on the treasures it had found, all the while keeping a curious eye on the two of us. He sort of reminded me of a pint-size Jerry (as in Tom and Jerry). After a number of visits, Betty decided he had to go, so she went down to the grocery store and bought a mousetrap. Talk about overkill, she came back with a trap that must have measured a foot in each direction; but it worked, and our tiny furry friend became a missing ~~person~~ rodent. Now I am no expert on such matters, but I do have combat experience. It is my professional judgment that it was the concussion that did him in.

While I chose not to be a member of a social club or to play athletics at Graceland, I was active on campus. I was the President of the “Ball and Chain Club” (a group of about 12 married couples), a pastoral group leader, the News Editor of the Tower (the college newspaper), and a member of the automobile committee—probability because I was one of the few students that had a car on campus. Most everyone else lived in college dorms. I also played intramural sports, was active in the religious life of the campus, and relished escorting the best-looking girl on campus to functions such as plays, concerts, athletic events, and religious services.

Betty and I also entertained in our home, and Betty enjoyed sharing in the activities of the social club that she joined.

During the second semester, a group of the students who held priesthood (ministerial) offices were invited to participate in a missionary project in Bethany, Missouri. That was my first “real” missionary experience. On six consecutive Saturdays, we canvassed the town and knocked on doors. Given the opportunity, we shared with residents. If the people were interested, a pamphlet on church beliefs was left, along with a promise to return the following Saturday. Conversely, if no interest was indicated, the residents were thanked for their kindness and hospitality; and their addresses were removed from our visiting list. Over the six-week period, a number of interested people were identified, and a group of more experienced ministers later contacted them. It was my understanding that the Lord blessed that effort, which resulted in a number of people choosing baptism. A congregation was organized. Beyond that, it certainly was a growing and enriching experience for me, as well as for the other Gracelanders who shared in the venture.

My dad’s sister, Nelle, and her husband, Campbell, lived in the Kansas City area and were quite well to do. They were conscious of social and fashion trends, and in November of 1952, Betty and I celebrated Thanksgiving with them at their home. That was the first of several visits; they were good people and we enjoyed having them as family. On that trip, we were going to an event together, and it was time to leave. My aunt told Betty that it was cold outside and that she should get her warm coat. Being from sunny California, Betty did not have a heavy coat. When she said so, my aunt excused herself and returned with a fur coat and told Betty to try it on. It was a great fit. When it was time for us to go back to Graceland, Betty went downstairs to return the coat; but my aunt exclaimed, “Oh no, honey. That’s your coat. I have no need for it.” We were very grateful to my aunt, since the coat kept Betty good and warm for the two winters we were in Iowa. Eventually, furs went out of fashion and even became somewhat dangerous to wear, given the violent misguided actions of so-called animal rights advocates. Having returned to California, Betty had no real use for the coat, so she gave it to the

drama department at Prairie High School in Battle Ground, Washington. Who knows—it may still be hanging in the school’s prop room.

On another occasion, my aunt and uncle were going to an event and we were staying behind. They employed an older couple who had been with them for years. My aunt arranged for them to serve us dinner in the formal dining room. I was seated at the head of the table and, shortly into the meal, a man appeared from the kitchen and inquired what he could do for us. I replied that the dinner was delicious and that we were doing fine, so he returned to the kitchen. That same scenario was repeated two or three times. Finally, the man came from the kitchen and said, “Master Anderson, if you need anything, just step on the mat beneath your chair. It will signal me in the kitchen.” Poor guy! Unaware of the mat, I had been dancing all over it; and he had kept answering the calls. My hat’s off to him; he showed real class in the way he handled it.

Years later, my dad visited his sister in Kansas City. On his way home, he stopped off in San Pablo, California, to visit us. After unpacking, he brought out a very loud multicolored sport coat to show us—I mean, that coat was off-the-wall. Remember now, my folks had been in vaudeville. Betty assumed that it must have been a prop from a long ago act and that he’d dug it out of an old trunk that had been stored in Aunt Nelle’s basement. Betty said, “Oh, that’s one of your old vaudeville costumes.” It was the wrong thing to say. My dad was always very conservative as to how he dressed, and I suspect that my fashion conscious aunt had a hand in its selection. According to my sister, my dad was so embarrassed that when he got the coat home, he tried to dye it. That just made matters worse, and he never wore it again. Betty felt terrible, but I told her to forget it; things could have been worse. He could have worn it while taking a walk and been attacked by a pack of wild dogs.

During the first Christmas break, Rob, another married student, and I signed up to work at the college. They paid 35¢ an hour, so if I could get 80 hours in during the two-week break, that would amount to \$28—just \$2 shy of our monthly food budget of \$30. We reported to the maintenance supervisor on the first day of work, and he said he

had two jobs for us. One was to paint the inside of the infirmary and the other was to unload coal from rail cars. He went on to say that in order to be fair, we would switch the jobs back and forth on a daily basis. That day Rob was to paint, and I was to shovel. At that point in my life, I was in good shape. I had just spent the last year and a half doing grueling physical training, running up and down hills and virtually living outdoors in the frozen lands of Japan and Korea. Still, that was hard manual labor in the dead of winter. The more I shoveled, the lower the coal got; and the harder it became to lift the next shovel load of coal up and over the side of railcar and into the bed of the awaiting truck.

Earlier in the week, Betty and I had been invited to have dinner with Rob and Eddie after our first day of work. When we arrived, I sensed that something was wrong. As we were about to leave, Rob said he had a favor to ask. He said that while painting, he was almost overcome by the fumes from the paint and wondered if I would be willing to paint every day while he unloaded the coal. In a gesture of *true brotherly love*, I placed my arm on his shoulder and said, “Anything for a brother!” We got the switch approved by the maintenance manager and every day I checked to see if Rob wanted to keep things as they were. He always did. He was a big, strong hard-working farm boy from Ontario, Canada, and unloading that coal car seemed to be right up his alley. As for me, I had never painted before, and I learned all kinds of things on that job—things that were particularly useful, as I painted my way through some 16 household moves in the ensuing years.

Betty and I took most of our classes together. That way, I got to carry her books, and I also got to sit next to her. During one of our psychology classes, the instructor gave the students an assessment test. It was designed to measure psychological attitudes, likes, dislikes, and projected life goals, etc. After the tests were scored, he waltzed into the classroom and said, “Even though Bob and Betty Anderson have the same last name, it’s a good thing they are not married!” The gasp that arose from the class broke the sound barrier. How that instructor, in a college with an enrollment of around 500 and in such a close and protected environment, missed the fact that we were married was beyond

comprehension. However, all was not lost. He spent the rest of the year trying to patch us up together again, and we vowed to stay together just to spite him. It also makes for a great story.

As for staying married, people have often asked me the secret of our long-term marriage. I've told them it's really quite simple—we made a pact that whoever asked for a divorce had to take the children.



CHAPTER 12

Family on the Way

SPEAKING OF CHILDREN, ONE WAS ON THE WAY. We knew that towards the end of the school year. We would need more space in September, so we rented the upstairs apartment of the Floyd Mortimer home. When finals were over, we loaded up the car with all our earthly belongings and, filled with excitement, headed home to California. We stayed with my parents, and Betty worked at the Lockheed Aircraft Corporation in Burbank. I returned to my previous summer job at Tri-Engineering.

We had a great summer. Betty beamed every time she told family or friends about the new package we were expecting. With all the baby showers her friends were giving her, there were lots of opportunities for her to “beam.”

While in California, Betty told me that she wanted to postpone college in order to be a full-time mom. That was a departure from our plan to complete college together. I knew how important education was to Betty, so I had some misgivings. However, nothing was more important to Betty than her children; so that was that. She continued to be a full-time mom until all four of the kids were in school.

We also discussed the possibility of my not returning to Graceland, but somehow that did not feel right. So, during the last of August, we were on the road again, headed to the land where “the tall corn grows.” Looking back, I cannot believe I was not more sensitive to what Betty must have been going through. She never said anything; but there she was, barely 19 and about to become a mother. We were 2,000 miles away from family and friends. When her delivery time came, I drove her about 17 miles to the hospital in Mount Ayr, Iowa, where they administered ether to her as a pain sedative.

Soon I was a father with a beautiful daughter who had 10 toes and 10 fingers, and I was as proud as proud could be. Betty was still groggy from the ether as they moved her to her room. As I walked beside her and listened, she kept saying over and over again, “It’s a girl. What are we going to do with it? It’s a girl. What are we going to do with it?” That was when it hit me, and I got some inkling as to what she was feeling and going through. She had just learned that she had given birth to a girl and was expressing concern as to how we would care for that child. (We named her Claudia.) My answer to her was a gentle kiss and the words, “We’re going to love this girl with all our hearts, just as I’m always going to love her mother.” It may not have been brilliant—but it worked, and that is the way it has always been and always will be.

The decision to move into the apartment above the Mortimer’s was a stroke of genius. More likely, it was God pointing the way again. Sister Mortimer couldn’t have been better. She was always there when Betty and I needed her. At the same time, she gave us space and counseled us in a gentle and loving way as to how we could best care for our beloved daughter. I wish that good woman could see what her loving support helped to bring about, not only for our first-born, but also for those that followed. Who knows? Maybe she can.

Now my wonderful daughter will hate me for writing this; but shortly after she was born, she developed an allergy to milk and needed a special formula that cost \$15 a month. That was \$15 out of a food budget of \$30. I do not know how Betty did it, but she managed the budget. Claudia had her formula, and we always had more than enough to eat. It was our privilege to be able to do that for our baby girl, as well as to provide for all of our children over the years. Whatever was expended, the bill was more than paid years ago.

One day Betty got her sewing machine out and made Claudia an adorable blue dress. Betty’s Grandmother Ward had given Betty a sewing machine, complete with lessons. I’m sure that she would have been delighted that her granddaughter was putting her gift to such good use. Her first great-granddaughter sure looked cute in the dress. A little later, Betty’s sister, Mary, gave birth to a daughter, so Betty boxed up the dress

and sent it to her. Two other daughters followed and all three became a beneficiary of that special garment. When Sally (who is married to Chet, Betty and Mary's brother) had a daughter, Mary sent the dress to her. Then along came another daughter who also wore the dress. Eight years after we thought we were finished having children, a surprise came our way. It was our daughter, Mary. One day a package arrived for Betty. When she opened it, there was that adorable little blue dress. Betty sat there, hands to her face, and cried and cried with joy. I guess that Great-Grandmother Ward really started something!

The town movie theater was across the street from the Shipman cottage. It was a place Betty and I liked to go to on our "date nights" when we could scrape together enough change to buy tickets. When Claudia arrived, we continued the practice. We wanted her close by; and since she got in free, it was a lot cheaper than hiring a babysitter. We would bundle her up and lay her in a small canvas foldable bed that fit nicely behind the last row of seats in the theater. There she would "coo," and Betty and I would hold hands and occasionally steal a kiss (well, maybe a little more than occasionally). My friends, now you know why our daughter, Claudia, has always had such an insatiable interest in the theater—that, and just maybe because she comes from such a long line of "hams."

There were many differences between California and Iowa. For example, in a communications (English) class, the instructor once talked about how identical things could be called by different names in other parts of the country. He said, "Where Bob and Betty live in California, they have alleys. We have the same thing in Iowa, but we do not call them alleys, we call them..." and at that point, I called out, "*Highways!*"

In California, hamburgers were a very big deal. In Iowa, hamburgers were not popular, and you can imagine our dismay. One day, Betty and I were taking a drive through Bethany, Missouri, a neighboring town, when we saw a sandwich board that read, "California Hamburgers." "Oh boy," I said. We rushed in and placed our order. When the order came, it consisted of a hamburger bun and a meat patty and nothing else. I looked at the burger and then at the waitress and asked, "If this is what a

California hamburger looks like, what does a Missouri burger look like?” The waitress grunted and walked off, shaking her head and seeming to mumble, “Californians!”

“Live and learn,” I say. A few months later, we were looking at another menu and there it was, as bold as bold could be—hamburgers! Well, I had been snookered once, but not again. I asked, “What do you put on the hamburgers?” “Anything you want,” the waitress said. So, I ordered one with all the trimmings. When I got the bill, it was 5¢ for the mayo, 5¢ for the ketchup, 5¢ for the lettuce—anyway, you get the idea. The trimmings ended up costing more than the burger. On the bright side, I got another great story out of it.

Then there was our trip to Des Moines, some 60 miles away. In California, many people drove 60+ miles to work every day. We soon learned that if you were going to the “big city” in Iowa, you needed to devote two or three days to the trip. You were also under obligation to tell your friends and neighbors that you were going so they could ask you to pick things up for them. Having learned that and made all of the proper notifications, we turned off the heat and headed north on a cold winter’s day. Of course, you are way ahead of me and have already figured out that because we had turned off the heat, a pipe burst. Who ever heard of such a thing? That never happened in California (at least that I knew of). Fortunately, the landlord caught it early and had it cleaned up and repaired by the time we returned home. I offered to pay for the damages, but he graciously refused. However, while I am not certain, I do think that as I was leaving I heard him mumble something about “Californians” under his breath.

I recall a story of a mother who was watching her son march in an Army Review. As the troops paraded by, she leaned over and said to her neighbor, “Can you believe it? Two hundred men in my son’s company, and he’s the only one that’s in step!” My point here is that while I am telling stories about the good people of Lamoni, they were really good people who were very kind and supportive of Betty and me. I was a stranger in the land and out of step—not them. So, having made my confession, I profoundly thank them for their kindness and for the

lessons learned, as well as for their putting up with us “aliens” from California.

Another lesson learned was in an American history class. We had an outstanding instructor at Graceland who taught history. More importantly, he also taught life lessons. We were examining the Alexander Hamilton-Aaron Burr conflict. He was using that as a dramatic opportunity to teach an important lesson. The class was divided into two groups—one supported Hamilton; the other supported Burr. The groups then divided themselves into an additional two groups. One group was pro-Hamilton; the other group was pro-Burr. As it turned out, I was in the pro-Burr camp and was chosen to be the leader of the group. We dug up everything we could to discredit Hamilton. The class researched the men, both pro and con, for several weeks and had little trouble finding more than enough material to support our preconceived positions, not that everything was factual. The lesson learned, of course, was that almost anyone could be discredited, given the manpower and resources to do so. That was a real eye opener for many of the students. But, as that annoying commercial says, “Wait, there’s more...”

After Graceland, I attended San Jose State College where I took a speech class. There are those who say that I am a good public speaker. In fact, a while back when giving a sermon, I received a standing ovation—everyone got up and walked out! Anyway, I was getting straight A’s in the class when the instructor gave us the assignment to speak on an “unusual” topic. Hey, I had all that dirt on poor old Alexander Hamilton. How much more “unusual” can you get than that? When I gave my speech, I had the class sitting on the edge of their chairs—that is, everyone except for the instructor. It turned out that she was related to Hamilton and was *very proud of that fact, as well as she should have been*. From that time on, my straight A’s suddenly plunged to B’s, and that was the final grade I got in the class. The lesson learned was worth it—to wit, never speak poorly of anyone unless you absolutely have to, and *always know your audience!*

In addition to being the Chair of the Horticulture Department at Pearce College, Betty’s father was a college counselor and really helped

to guide us through the maze of college choices that Betty and I were facing. Among the three of us, we decided that San Jose State College (now a university) would be the best place for us. It had a good business department, the tuition was low since it was a state institution, and it offered married housing to Veterans. It turned out to be a good choice.

The Veteran's Housing, know as Spartan City, had two sections of refurbished World War II military housing. One area had stand-alone, one-bedroom units, and the other section had two-story converted barracks with two bedrooms. We chose the latter, and our apartment was located on the second floor. It was ideal for us because every family living there was in the same boat. We were ex-military, motivated academically, had children, and everyone was as poor as church mice. The "city" also had a strong sense of community with lots of sharing and togetherness. Our children ran and played freely with differing parents "unofficially" supervising the goings-on of not only their own children, but their neighbor's as well.

Some twenty years later, I read in the newspaper that Spartan City was to be demolished. I was going to be in the area, so I decided that I would drop by for a final farewell. When I opened the gate and walked in, a woman was immediately at my side, asking if she could help me. What she really wanted to know was, "Who are you, and what are you doing here?" She stuck to me like glue and was with me for the duration of my time there.

Reminiscing about our earlier time there was a bittersweet experience. Good things had happened there, but I was saddened by today's times when children can no longer run and play freely, even in a protected environment.

In talking with the woman, I learned that she was a graduate student with two children. As we walked over and stood outside our former apartment, she asked when we were here. I replied that we were there in 1954-1956. "Oh," she said, "that was before I was born." I could have gone all day long without hearing that fact!

When we moved into Spartan City, I made three mistakes. The apartments were furnished, but a refrigerator was not included, so we

purchased a used Frigidaire for \$100. I rented a dolly, and a neighbor and I were taking it up the back stairs to our second floor apartment. When I planted my foot on a step, it gave way. I lost control of the dolly and refrigerator and hung on for dear life, fearing for the safety of my neighbor. Thankfully, he was able to jump clear. I did not fare so well. When the refrigerator came to an abrupt stop at the bottom of the stairs, I was catapulted over its top and needed stitches to close the wounds to my forehead. Otherwise, I was in one piece. As for the refrigerator, we replaced the broken glass and like the “little train that could,” it kept going, going, and going for another 10 years. It was still going when we replaced it with a new one. Betty wanted a freezer compartment; but, like the man said, “They don’t make ‘em like they used to.”

The other two mistakes I made were when Betty and I attended a community meeting. Going was the second mistake, and the third was when I opened my big mouth. Before the meeting was over, I was the newly elected Mayor of Spartan City, a position I occupied (with great distinction, I might add) until I graduated in February 1956.



CHAPTER 13

Graduation and Beyond

FOR THOSE OF YOU DOING THE MATH, I ENROLLED AT GRACELAND IN SEPTEMBER 1952 AND GRADUATED FROM SAN JOSE STATE COLLEGE IN FEBRUARY 1956—A PERIOD OF THREE AND HALF YEARS. That period matched my eligibility for the G.I. Bill. To do that required good planning, and with the help I received from Betty's dad, I was able to pull that off with the loss of only three credits. I knew these would be non-transferable when I took a church history class. My Associate of Arts degree from Graceland was in General Studies, and my Bachelor of Arts degree from San Jose State was in Business Administration. Later, in June 1970, I graduated with an advanced degree in Religious Theory and Practices from the School of the Restoration in Independence, Missouri. In August 1976, I received a Master's Degree in Counseling from Lewis and Clarke University of Portland, Oregon.

In terms of continuing education, I accumulated over 260 credits from Temple School, the continuing education arm of the church, and other higher educational institutions. In addition, I studied under church growth leaders like Win Arr, Stephen Covey, Billy Graham, Robert Schuller, Thomas Gordon, Pete Wagner, Rick Warren, and other Community of Christ and denominational leaders. In addition, I earned three Specialized Certificates from Temple School: Office of Seventy in 1984, Evangelism Consultant in 1991, and Church Planter in 1991.

My mom and dad came up from the San Fernando Valley for my graduation from San Jose State. My dad took me down to Forman and

Clark's clothing store and bought me two suits (each with a second pair of trousers) as a graduation gift—a gift highly needed, since I would soon be making my way in the business world.

I might add here that I was the first member of my family to graduate from college, but Betty saw to it that I was not the last. We have four children and four grandchildren, along with a great-grandson. Everyone who is old enough, including spouses, has university degrees; and the vast majority of them have one or more graduate degrees. It's rumored that our family was largely responsible for keeping educational institutions in Washington and Oregon afloat by having five family members enrolled in them at the same time. It should be understood, however, that this was a team effort. Each member contributed to his or her education through hard work, grants and scholarships, as well as having the full support and backing of “Mom and Dad, Inc.”

Many years down the road, Betty and I were at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC. We proudly watched our son, Larry, graduate from the Uniform Services Medical School. Following the ceremony, he came up to his mother, put his arms around her, and presented her with his diploma. It hangs proudly in my study.

Echoing that story is when our son, Bob, thanked his mom for encouraging him to go to college. “I never would've done it without you,” he said. When she protested and said that she had never pushed him to go to college, he said, “I know, Mom, but I also knew how disappointed you and Dad would be if I didn't.”

During my final semester at San Jose State, a couple of professors encouraged me to enroll in the new Master of Arts program in Business Administration that was to launch in September. It was tempting, and while my federal G.I. Bill would have run its course, I probably could have swung it financially because my new dry cleaning business was doing so well (more about this later). I also still had eligibility for the California G.I. Bill. However, we now had two children with another on the way. The lure of a monthly paycheck, health insurance, and company car won out—a decision that I never regretted.

One of the classes I took at San Jose was Audio Visual Aids. It was

a required class for Educational Majors. When the instructor learned that I was a Business Administration Major, he exclaimed that although he had taught that course for over fifteen years, I was the only one he knew about who had taken it as an elective. Maybe so, but I enjoyed the class; and I found it to be one of the more useful classes I ever took. What's more, once the instructor learned I was a "walk-on," I was a shoo-in for an A.

There was a big Pushcart Relay every year at San Jose State College. Organizations built carts and selected a driver and located "pushers" at designated stations along the race route. When the start gun sounded, the first pusher pushed the cart as fast as he could to the next station. The second pusher took over for the next lap, etc. To me, it always seemed like a stupid thing to do, but what do I know? It drew large, enthusiastic crowds, and everyone seemed to have a great time.

The above paragraph sets the stage for a story about an enterprising friend of mine who was always thinking of ways to make a fast buck. This one was a doozy. He went down to the wrecking yard, purchased a dilapidated car, and then converted the rumble seat into an ice bin. The vehicle was then towed to a busy spot on the raceway where the bin was filled with ice and beer. He made big bucks until the local Gendarme closed in.

Now an opportunity like that only came along "once in a lifetime." Knowing cops as I did, I could just picture a group of them sitting around a table as they drank coffee and dreamed up charges for my friend to face. When they were done, they had him charged with 13 different crimes. These ranged from a minor selling beer, selling to minors, selling without a license, selling on a public thoroughfare, selling on school property, having open containers of alcohol in a vehicle; the list goes on and on. The crowning glory was the final charge—selling alcohol on the day of an election.

Being a friend, I stood by him when the guillotine fell; but there was very little that I could do other than to hold his hand and tell him "this too shall pass." Fortunately, the judge went easy on him with a slap on the wrist, but the President of the College expelled him. That cost my

friend an entire school year. But I give him credit; he took it like a man. The following year he re-enrolled at the college. I lost track of him over the years, but I fantasize that he opened a giant beer distribution center somewhere and has made millions. If that is true, in all likelihood he is not a heavy contributor to the San Jose State Development Fund.

One day I was reading the San Jose State school newspaper and saw an ad for a dry cleaning solicitation/delivery man. When I looked into it, I cannot say that I was impressed; but for some odd reason, I took the job. A few weeks later, the owners asked if I wanted to buy the business. I knew the answer to that—especially at the price they were asking for their equity—but I had to write a business plan paper for one of my classes. I told them that I'd let them know after the weekend. I wrote the paper on Saturday. The decision was a no-brainer. I certainly did not want to take that business off their hands. Before the next weekend, they announced they were closing the business. That meant that I was out of a job. Maybe I was out of a job, but the Lord had just opened up a brand-new opportunity for me.

Remember my friend who had the innovative idea about a rumble seat filled with ice? Well, his dad owned the *premier* dry cleaning business in town. I was now thinking about going into the dry cleaning solicitation business. Actually, I was already in business. I had even written a business plan. The only thing I did not have was someone to do the cleaning for me. I went to see my friend's dad. He certainly did not need my business; but I learned a long time ago that if you don't ask, you don't get the order. That was "networking" before it was fashionable to call it that, and his response nearly floored me. I am sure it was because of my good looks; or maybe it was because I had befriended his kid when he needed a friend's shoulder to lean on. In either case, I was in business.

Our "business deal" called for me to bring my cleaning into his shop before 10:00am and pick up the garments before his 7:00pm closing time. He provided the supplies that I would need to process the orders and would guarantee the quality of the cleaning. With that deal in hand, I went a-callin' on my targeted prospects. I say "targeted" because my business plan called for me to solicit young couples who were both

employed and were required to wear proper business attire to work. Today we would call that a “niche market.”

I focused my efforts on prospects who lived on the first floor of upscale and well-lit apartment complexes. That eliminated my need to climb stairs, while saving time and reducing my risk. My sales pitch was simple. I offered a guaranteed overnight premier dry cleaning and dress shirt service. They would save 30% or more as compared to what they would pay if they went to the trouble of walking their garments into a storefront establishment. I also gave S&H Green Stamps—at the time *a very big deal* in San Jose!

I worked Monday through Thursday evenings. That kept the weekends open for family. Each night I would take the clothing back to our apartment where Betty would tag each piece and do the bookwork, while I did additional studying or attended to chores. The next morning I would take the garments into the cleaners, attend class and do most of my studying before heading for home. Betty had dinner waiting at 4:00pm. That gave us a couple of hours to be with each other and the children before I headed out to make deliveries and solicit new business. I managed my business so that I could always give my customers superior service, and I got back home before 9:00pm.

The plan worked well, largely because of the type of clientele I was calling on. Usually, each stop produced orders of multiple clothing. Some orders reached 10 or more garments, not including dress shirts. As time went on, more and more of my customers had their orders bundled and waiting for me when I rang their bell. That was a great timesaver. With my profit margin ranging around 40% and overhead almost nonexistent, I was doing quite well. In fact, when I graduated and got a “real job,” I had to take a pay cut if you added together my G.I. Bill income (which was now exhausted) to what my business was taking in. Of course, the “real job” had benefits. For one, it offered a company car that was also available for personal use. Thankfully, raises and promotions were frequent.

Because the dry cleaning business was doing so well, I considered expanding it rather than seeking “real employment” following

graduation. I prayed about it, and somehow it just did not feel right. So, I decided to sell the business. The new owner was another college student whom I trained for a couple weeks before turning the business over to him. I could have sold the business for more than he paid; but I remembered those who had helped me along the way, so I decided to let it go at a bargain price. After all, us starving students needed to stick together. A few years later “Perm Press” came onto the scene like a roaring lion, and many a dry cleaning establishment was devoured. I thought about the new owner but figured that sufficient time had passed; most likely, he had graduated and moved on to other things.

I also had a few Spartan City customers. One of them had a two-year-old girl named Jane who played with our daughter, Claudia. On one of my calls, her mother handed me her daughter’s soiled red coat. Jane grabbed it back and said, “No, that’s my coat.” Her mother told her that it was okay and that I would have it cleaned and bring it back tomorrow. “No, he won’t,” she said. “He’ll give it to Claudia.” Her mother tried to reassure her daughter, but Jane was a possessive two-year-old and was not convinced. I offered to make a special trip to pick up the coat the following evening, but with a little more coaxing, Jane reluctantly let the coat go. When she did so, I knelt down to talk to her and promised to bring it back the next day. When I made the delivery, I made a point to remove the coat from its cover and show it to Jane. “What do you think?” I asked her. Jane was noncommittal until I whispered in a voice loud enough for her mother to hear that there was something special for her in the pockets of her coat. Her face brightened and immediately she reached into one of the pockets and pulled out several pieces of wrapped hard candy. Now both Jane and her mother had big smiles on their faces, and I had just made two friends for life.

Under the heading of lessons learned, one night I got lazy and left some clothes in the car overnight. The next morning I found my car window had been smashed, and the clothes were missing. The owner of the cleaners said that when such losses occurred, the usual procedure was to determine how old the clothes were and to discount the garments accordingly.

I didn't feel right about that approach. After all they had entrusted their clothes to me, and I had been negligent. So, I went to the three customers whose clothing had been stolen, explained the situation, and asked them to give me a figure that would take care of their loss. After all, my reputation was at stake and, besides, fair is fair. I wanted to do right by my customers. All of them were very understanding, and if anything lowballed the amount they asked for, I immediately wrote them a check for the full amount as soon as they gave me a figure.

Then, on the following evening I delivered a one-pound box of See's candy, along with my heartfelt apologies, to the customers who suffered the loss. That turned out to be a good public relations move with them—but not with everyone. Betty wanted to know where her See's candy was. She was kidding, but the next day it was back to the candy store to pick up a two-pound box of her favorite dark chocolates. After all, she was marking the garments and keeping the books, and one has to keep the “help” happy. But what I was really after was that beautiful smile on her face and the delicious kisses that went with the delivery—and we're not talking about candy kisses here.



CHAPTER 14

Claudia

A TRIP TO THE DENTIST REVEALED THAT CLAUDIA HAD TO HAVE TWO BABY TEETH PULLED TO MAKE ROOM FOR THE ADULT TEETH THAT WERE ON THEIR WAY—SO OUT THEY CAME! At the time, the Tooth Fairy’s rate for teeth was 50¢ per tooth. When it was Claudia’s bedtime, we tucked her in and placed her teeth under her pillow. Later I went in to make the exchange; but when I lifted her pillow, she began to wake up. I gave her a kiss and departed without accomplishing my mission. Later, when I got up to use the bathroom, I had better success when I placed the bill under her pillow in exchange for the pulled teeth. The next morning Claudia came charging into our bedroom yelling, “Mama, Daddy! The Tooth Fairy was here and left **five dollars!**” The moral of the story is do not engage in financial dealings when you are half-asleep.

On another occasion, I was feeling bad because Claudia was to sing the lead solo in a music production at her junior high school, and I was 100 miles away. However, something came up, and I wasn’t needed there right then. So, I decided to make a quick dash for home, catch her performance, and return the following day. About halfway home, the car’s water pump went out. I called the auto club and had the car towed to the Ford dealership. The service manager told me they could have it fixed by the next afternoon. Now the question was how to get home. Public transportation was not an option, so I decided to hitchhike. My lucky stars were shining, and I caught a ride almost immediately with a man whose son also attended the same junior high school as my daughter. When he learned why I was hitchhiking, he even went out of his way to drop me at the front entrance of the school.

When my daughter found out that her father had hitchhiked, she was

devastated. How could her father possibly disgrace the family in such a way; and, especially, how could he do it with a father of someone she knew? “I’m sorry,” I said, “but the car with the big red sign that read ‘Jack the Ripper’ was completely full.” So much for giving it the old college try. As it turned out, I missed her performance. But I did get to sleep with a very beautiful woman that night.

When Claudia was a senior in high school, I invited Betty to go with me on a weeklong “business trip” to British Columbia. After talking it over, we decided that Claudia was now old enough to handle being on her own for a week, especially if we enlisted the help of some trusted friends to keep an eye on things.

On the Saturday we left on our trip, Claudia was in charge of a bottle drive conducted by our church youth. The kids had been out all day, and most of the bottles had already been dropped off at various collection sites. They were on their way to their final collection stop when the brakes went out on the car. Claudia was driving and did a great job in maneuvering the car to the side of the road and nudging it into a city light post.

Betty and I had stopped for the night in Seattle when she called. No one was hurt. The light post was only scuffed, and there was only minor damage to the car; but since she had no brakes, she was without transportation.

I had a great mechanic and when I called him, he said not to worry that he would take care of it and we should enjoy our trip. I call the next day and he had towed the car into his shop, the brakes were fixed, and Claudia now had the car. Everything was fine, and when I ask about payment, he said I could take care of that when I got home. Betty and I had a great trip, and our confidence in our daughter’s ability to handle things was greatly enhanced, not that we ever really doubted her.

When I got home, I went into my mechanic’s shop. When he saw me, he had a big grin on his face. The first thing he said was that he knew that I was a preacher, but he did not know I was a *swinging preacher*. He said that when he popped the trunk, scores of beer bottles came tumbling out. As it turned out, the young people had not yet deposited

their collected bottles at the local brewery. That is my story, and I'm sticking with it.

Another time, I answered the ringing telephone at our home and a young voice asked for Jill. "I'm sorry," I said, "but there's no Jill here." I hung up. Then Claudia spoke up and said that the call was for her. "No," I said. "It was for somebody by the name of Jill." My daughter said, "I've changed my name." "You've done *what?*" I exclaimed. "I've changed my name," she repeated. I said, "No, you haven't. You're named after your grandfather, Claude, and your aunt, Claudia; and your name is *Claudia!*" More on this later.

Earlier I wrote that Claudia had a flare (make that, a gift) for drama. Due to a number of circumstances, she attended three different high schools. She must have been good at acting because she got the female lead in at least one play at each of these three high schools. Boy, you talk about astronomical cost! The roses her mother and I presented to her on opening nights were costing me a fortune—and I was on a minister's salary.

Claudia took after her mother and was an extraordinary student. When she graduated with high scholastic honors from her high school, she was entitled to wear an honor cord. She refused to do that because she felt that everyone should be treated the same on graduation day. While standing in the processional line, two boys ahead of her used incorrect grammar while speaking with one another. Claudia's teaching genes kicked in, and she corrected them. It turned out not to be not the wisest of moves. She was met with a scowl on the face of one of the boys who then shot back, "What do you know? You're not even wearing one of those honor thingamajigs!" Yes, it is true that God is good. That will teach her for criticizing her poor father for hitchhiking.

Another way she took after her mother was that she was very independent. Betty, Claudia, and I were once visiting a park when we saw a small herd of white deer. Our three-year-old daughter was enthralled. We had been there about 30 minutes, and it was time for us to move on; but Claudia wanted to stay longer. We tried to coax her, to no avail. Finally I said to Betty, "Let's go get in the car, and she'll come

along.” When I looked in the rearview mirror, I smiled as I saw Claudia running lickety-split towards us and was congratulating myself on my parenting skills—until she ran to the front of the car, put her little hands on the hood and tried to push us out of our parking spot.

She tried Graceland College, but it was not for her. So, she came home and attended the local community college until the new semester started at the University of Washington where she enrolled. Three years later she graduated with honors with *two* Bachelor of Arts *degrees*: one in drama and the other in speech (note that these were degrees and not majors). She also earned a teaching certificate that authorized her to teach kindergarten through 12th grade in the state of Washington. As previously noted, she had, fortunately, inherited her mother’s smarts.

To help pay her school expenses, Claudia took a job as a nanny for a lawyer and his wife who had a beautiful house overlooking Lake Washington. She was provided her room and board in exchange for helping to take care of the couple’s three children. While she was there, she purchased a British-manufactured car that proved to be a disaster. I got a call asking if I could help her choose another car to buy. Her brother Larry knew a guy in the used car business, so I went down to see him. I explained the situation and told him that I was looking for a car for my daughter. The car needed to be both reliable and cheap. He asked me if I cared what it looked like, and I said I was willing to look at anything.

Timing is everything, and it just so happened that on that very day he had gotten a 1957 Dodge on the lot. It had a little less than 30,000 miles on it. *Wait a minute!* That was 1973, which meant that the car was 16 years old. That mileage claim looked mighty suspicious to me. The story was that an older man had purchased the car and was its sole driver. Shortly after he purchased it, he passed away. Since his wife did not drive, the car was parked in the family garage; and there it sat all these years. I asked him what he was asking for the car. The salesman was asking \$200, and I asked if I could have my mechanic look at it. “Sure,” he said. I took it down to my trusty mechanic and left it overnight. The next day my mechanic told me that the car checked out fine. However, it did need new tires, so he suggested I offer the dealer \$100 for it. To my

surprise, the used car salesman snapped up my offer and my daughter had a new different car.

Of course, when she saw it, she was horrified. It was a dull gold rust bucket with huge fins and looked like something out of a Buck Rogers movie. But let me tell you, when Claudia drove down the street, people got out of her way!

One weekend when I was at home, I took the car down to get it gassed up. While I was filling the tank, a guy asked me if I would be interested in selling the car. I told him it belonged to my daughter and she needed it for school. He then said to let him know if I ever changed my mind. He gave me his name and address, which I dutifully tucked away for safekeeping.

Several years later Claudia purchased a new car, so I dug the guy's address out my files and gave him a call. He and his son came right over and after a test drive asked what I wanted for the car. I hemmed and hawed a little when the guy said, "I'll give you \$300." I did a little more hesitating and finally said that I was really thinking of a little more than \$300. The guy said, "Okay, I'll give you \$400." The guy had just bought himself a car, and my daughter had made a \$300 profit on a vehicle she had driven all over the Pacific Northwest for five years. Of course, the guy wanted the car for its parts; and we were very pleased with a tidy profit.

The year Claudia graduated from the University of Washington, teaching positions were few and far between. She snagged a position at Covington Junior High School in Vancouver, Washington, where she taught English, US history, and drama. The following year, she and her pet corgi, Gibran, moved to teach in Quincy, Washington, where she became a "Jack Rabbit." However, Gibran's nose was out of joint when he discovered that "Jack Rabbit" was a nickname for the school and did not refer to the ones that he could chase and/or herd.

She taught in Quincy for two years. Then she wanted to go to graduate school to obtain a Master of Fine Arts degree in directing. However, before she applied to graduate school, she needed additional theatrical experience. She asked if she could come to live with us in

Vancouver while she gained that experience with a Portland, Oregon, theater company. Of course, we told her that she could.

A year later, she was accepted into the MFA directing program at Florida State University (FSU). The day she left for Florida, I was working in Boise, Idaho. She stopped off for a lunch visit with me as she came through Boise on her way to Florida. I remember the melancholy feeling I had as she drove off in the distance with Gibran staring out the back window, wondering if they had jackrabbits in Florida. Then, too, what was all this talk about Gators?

After a year at FSU, the head of the directing program moved to Rutgers University in New Jersey and invited Claudia to transfer with him, which she did.

It was a great opportunity for Claudia. Not only was she working with talented students, but also professionals from the New York area. Her directing professor arranged for her to work as an assistant stage manager for an Equity summer stock company in Maine. After the season, Claudia was eligible to apply for her Equity card. Equity is a union for the theatrical industry, and they have a rule that they can only enroll one person with a particular name. For example, they cannot have two Bob Andersons. So, the phone rang. It was Claudia, and she was devastated. “Claudia Anderson” was already taken. “What can I do?” she asked. I said, “Try Jill.” “Father!” she shrieked into the telephone. Finally, she hit upon the name of Claudia Anderson Cash. “Cash” was the maiden name of her Grandmother Ward, who helped with some financial support while she was attending the University.

Claudia completed her MFA degree after three semesters at Rutgers. She started looking for work in professional theater. Then reality set in. As I recall the story, she was standing on a street corner in New York City and asked herself, “What am I doing here? I don’t know anyone here, and all the people I care about and love are on the West Coast.”

“Can I come home?” she asked on the phone. “Of course you can,” her Mom and I said. Boy, was I disappointed. Here was my older daughter, trading in a profession where 90% of the Equity members were unemployed. A large majority of the remaining 10% were waiting

on tables or doing any kind of work they could get, just trying to hang on until they got their “big break.” However, the reality of the theatrical profession is that the “Equity Graveyard” is chock full of such hopefuls. So, here was my daughter, giving all that up in order to teach school where she would make a positive difference in thousands of lives. By teaching, she would make a substantial salary and have health insurance and a retirement program. Now I ask you—what father in his right mind wouldn’t be disappointed?



CHAPTER 15

Bob

IT WAS DECEMBER 1, 1955, AND I WAS RACING TO O'CONNOR HOSPITAL IN SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA. Betty kept yelling at me that I was going the wrong way. It is a good thing I did not listen to her. We reached the hospital and I turned Betty over to an attendant. By the time I had parked the car and was filling out paperwork, I was told that Betty had blessed me with a son. Whew! Talk about calling it close!

Of our four children, Bob was the only one “planned.” Right now I can hear the other three children saying, “So much for planning!” Of course, we wanted all of our children, but because of Betty’s close relationship with her brother, Chet, she wanted a son. He would be a brother to Claudia and she wanted them to be close to one another in age. That was the reason for the “planning.”

As it turned out, they were two years apart, which is the same age difference between Betty and her brother. Of course, the pressure was on me, since the male is the one who determines the sex of the child. I am glad that I was able to come through. Except for pleasing Betty, however, it really made no difference to me. I am with the kid whose mother is expecting and when asked if he wanted a brother or sister said, “It doesn’t matter, just so long as it’s *wealthy*.” For the record, Bob and all of our children have added great “wealth” to our family.

Perhaps this is about as good a place as any to talk about the most difficult decision I ever made. Actually, Betty and I made the decision together. Bob was attending Hudson Bay High School, and he was making some poor life choices that Betty and I considered to be potentially damaging. We had done everything we could think of to rein him in, to no avail. Finally, in desperation, we decided to send him to

Annandale, Virginia, to live with his Uncle Chester and Aunt Sally. Chet was now a full colonel in the Army and was serving as the Assistant White House Physician to President Nixon and later to President Ford. Our thought was that maybe with a different type of discipline and a change of environment, things would improve for Bob. It worked like a charm, and we are eternally grateful to Chet and Sally for taking on this task.

When it was time for Bob's plane for Washington, DC, to depart, I stood at the window in the airport. Tears streamed down my face, and I held tightly to Betty's hand. I was praying as hard as I knew how to pray and hurting like I had never hurt before. Betty and I stood together, each with our own thoughts, as we watched the plane slowly disappear into the distance. I had just sent my oldest son away, and I had an empty hole in my heart that I thought never again would be filled.

Chet arranged for Bob to work for a neighbor who was a cement contractor. It was hard work, but Bob was never afraid of work. In that position, he learned a great deal about construction, something that I never could have taught him. Bob also did better in school, earned a varsity letter in track, and came home to Vancouver for a visit that summer. He had the option of either returning to live with his uncle and aunt or staying with us. Of course, he delayed making that decision until the very last minute. He decided that he wanted to stay with us. That caused our hearts to jump with joy.

He also wanted to change high schools—a wise and mature decision. That put us in a bind, however, because school was about to start, and the Vancouver School District had a very strict boundary policy. The bottom line of that policy was that students were to attend schools that serviced their place of residence. At the time, we were renting a house in a location that would exclude Bob from attending Fort Vancouver High School (FVHS), the school of his choice.

When we had first moved to Vancouver, Betty had done her homework and had determined the best schools for our children to attend. Our problem now was to locate where Bob could attend where he wanted and the other children could stay where they were already attending. Further complicating the issue, the church also had to give its

blessing to the move. Adding to the drama was that the school bell was about to ring.

We drew the school boundaries on a map and started searching fruitlessly for another house. Then one day I took a different route home and spotted a very (and I mean very) small sign that was all but obscured with weeds. The sign read, “House for Sale by Owner.” The church would never have authorized us buy a house, and we were not in a position to argue since they were paying our ministerial housing allowance. But something told me to go and take a look. The house in question was at the end of a dead-end street, and from the outside, it looked pretty good. When I got home, I told Betty about it and we decided to call the owners to see if we could work something out. That night we met with Mrs. E, one of the owners. Betty liked the house and asked the owners if they would consider leasing the house to us with a two-year option to buy. They would; and when they came back with the proposed contract, it was so favorable to us that I just about fell through the floor.

I called a contractor who was a church member, and he came out and said the house was in excellent condition. All that remained was to get approval from the church. At first they were hesitant; but when I pointed out that the new rental payments would be less than we were currently paying, they were all for it. Funny how those things work.

When we entered into that contract, I never expected to be there two years later, since the church frequently moved their ministerial personnel. As it turned out, I received five assignment changes while in Vancouver, but none required a household move. The net result was that Bob, Larry, and Mary all graduated from FVHS. Claudia had already graduated from Hudson Bay High School prior to our leasing the new house. But, wait! God was continuing to pave the way. When I was transferred to Sacramento, California, in 1985, we had \$50,000 in equity to take with us, an interesting figure to remember. More on this later.



CHAPTER 16

Counseling

THE PROBLEM WITH BOB HAD PROPELLED ME INTO AN AWARENESS THAT I NEEDED TO IMPROVE MY PEOPLE SKILLS. I decided that the way to do that was to take some counseling courses. However, I soon found that what I wanted was not readily available. In searching, I found an instructor who had taught counseling courses to the clergy; but he was no longer offering those on a regular basis. However, my discussions with him led us into contracting with him to teach a series of basic classes to about 20 members of our priesthood (ministers). That went well, my appetite was whetted, and I felt a call for additional training.

About that time, I came across a Masters Program in Counseling at Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon. There was a problem, however. I had to be enrolled in their program in order to take classes, so I requested and received Continuing Education approval from the church. That allowed me to enroll in the program on a part-time basis. That meant I could take classes one day a week.

At this point, I feel the need to make two things clear. First, I was taking the counseling program as an *addition* to my current ministerial assignment. Hand in hand with that, my call as a Seventy was (and is) paramount. That has always taken precedence over everything else that the church has asked me to do, and I have worked hard to communicate that to those who had jurisdictional authority over me.

Second, I never expected to graduate from the program. I enrolled just so I could take classes. My plan was to complete as many classes as possible before the church transferred me to some faraway place on the globe. However, miracle of miracles, even though I received a number of assignment changes, none required a household move. I was able

to graduate in August of 1976. I am also pleased that over the years several of my church colleagues enrolled in the program and were able to graduate.

I felt an obligation to use those skills I had received. With the approval of my administrative officers, I modified my Position Support Program (job description) so that I could offer counseling one day a week. It soon became apparent that many of the things I was seeing people for could have been avoided (or at least modified) if they had better communication skills, so a class on Listening Skills was developed. The plan was to offer counseling one day per week during the day and teach the listening class that same night.

I also felt that the counseling sessions and class, if properly advertised, would help make the church more visible and could be a good outreach tool. To do that, we needed to reach beyond our church members, so a syllabus on “Effective Listening” was submitted to Portland State University and to the University of LaVerne. Both institutions approved it as a three-unit graduate level course.

Enrollment in my first class was a little on the sparse side; but after that, thanks largely to word-of-mouth advertising, each class was full. There was even a waiting list. The student population consisted mostly of parents, teachers, school administrators, business professionals, and community leaders, along with church members. Some chose to travel up to 75 miles to attend the class.

Later, building on the Effective Listening class, two other courses: Conflict Resolution and Problem Solving, were developed and approved as three-unit graduate level classes. The three classes were taught on a rotating basis: one each quarter, with no classes taking place during the summer months.

Counseling was also offered through the Clark County Family Court and at Evergreen High School. Court cases came to me by way of the court and involved couples seeking a divorce. At that point, the couples were well downstream, and I do not recall that any of the couples reconciled. Some progress did take place, however, in terms of anger management and enhanced self-esteem.

The group counseling at the high school involved 12 students with dismal grades and social behavior issues. The one-hour sessions met weekly for the entire semester, and some positive changes took place. The assistant principal and I agreed that everything that took place in the sessions would be confidential, except for issues in which the student threatened harm to himself or others. I also agreed to submit attendance reports. On one occasion, the assistant principal asked me to verify that a student I had marked “present” was actually in class. When I assured him he was, he just shook his head, and said, “That was the only class the student had attended that day.”

When my church supervisor told me to discontinue the counseling/teaching program, many expressed disappointment. They commented how helpful, beneficial, and life changing the programs were. It appears that the “absentee boy” was not the only one to find value in the program.



CHAPTER 17

More About Bob

THE PROGRESS THAT BOB MADE IN VIRGINIA CONTINUED WHEN HE MOVED BACK HOME. His grades kept improving, his friends were more acceptable, and he earned varsity letters in cross-country, track, and swimming with an emphasis on diving. As I recall, he went to and placed in the Washington state finals in diving and track.

One thing about Bob, I believe that he never lied to me, no matter the consequences. Maybe he stretched the truth, but he never actually lied. One time, we were at our church reunion grounds in Battle Ground, Washington, when I heard that some of our kids were jumping off the bridge that crossed Lewis River. That was a dangerous thing to do. The bridge stood over 45 feet above the water, and the jump was into a small pool of water surrounded by jagged rocks. When I asked Bob if he had jumped off the bridge, he replied that he hadn't. Literally, that was the truth since he dove rather than jumped from the bridge. I figured his mother's genes were responsible—after all, she was the one who crawled out of a seventh story window onto a flagpole.

When the Boys were attending high school, a big issue arose having to do with the length of students' hair. I have always worn my hair on the short side; but, frankly, I always felt that trying to regulate the length of students' hair was ridiculous and a waste of taxpayers' money.

Bob had long, golden hair that movie starlets would die for. When he ran distance races, his form was near perfect—perhaps a genetic gift from his Grandpa Ward, who earned a varsity letter in track at Occidental College. Let me tell you that when Bob ran the 440, it was a remarkable sight as his long hair flowed behind him like a golden jet stream. It was simply beautiful.

I also want to recognize the positive impact that Bob's varsity track and swim coaches had on him, as well as on so many others. In addition to building athletes, they built men! Thanks, Coaches! Applause, Applause, Applause! That applause also goes to all of you other coaches and mentors out there.

While attending Western Washington State College, Bob was elected by the student body to serve as their student services representative and later as vice president. While at the University, he also attended a conference on student rights in San Francisco and organized the first college textbook exchange on campus.

He worked on funding for a student employment center and had a hand in making major revisions to the college catalog in the areas of class offerings and student rights. At FVHS, Bob earned varsity letters in cross-country, swimming, diving, and track. In 1973, he graduated with honors from FVHS.

He also received Certification as an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and drove a wheelchair van for a Portland ambulance company. On a volunteer basis, he organized a program to receive complimentary tickets to sporting events, concerts, and theatrical productions and then escorted disabled persons to these venues. He also worked at Freightliner, mounting tires, and in the admission's department of the Veteran's Hospital in Portland, Oregon. Later, while in remote locations in Ecuador during his Peace Corps service, he was the nearest thing that the population had to a medical doctor.

Both Bob and Larry played Little League Baseball, and we were fortunate that both were on the same team. One woman had four boys, each on different teams—just try to work that into your calendar. Bob played catcher and Larry played second base. To hear them talk, they individually carried their entire team on their shoulders. In fact, Wheaties, “The Breakfast of Champions,” was banging their door down, trying to get the Boys' endorsement for their cereal.

One day we were playing in a tight game (or at least in as tight of a game that you can get in Little League) when an opposing player tried to steal second base. Bob fired a perfect strike to Larry, who dropped the

ball, and the runner was safe. When several of our team players started getting onto Larry, Bob called timeout, walked to second base and in a voice that could be heard throughout the city of Vancouver yelled, “You leave my brother alone!” The Boys were competitive with each other—often to a fault—but when push came to shove, they had each other’s back. They still do.

Bob graduated from Western Washington State University in Bellingham, Washington, with a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology. While there, he enjoyed playing competitive lacrosse as a club sport. During one semester he was employed at an “all you can eat” buffet as a hot food cook. One of his assignments was to make the dressing for the evening meal. When he came home for Thanksgiving, his mother gave him the opportunity to make the dressing for our family Thanksgiving turkey dinner. He declined, however, stating that he only knew how to make dressing for 80 people. Following graduation, the University hired Bob as a head resident/dormitory director. One day he called and said he wanted to join the Peace Corps and go to a Spanish-speaking country. He wanted to come home until he received his assignment. That was fine, but his mother questioned, “Why Spanish? You don’t speak that language.” He said that he would learn it—and he did! Once home, he received all kinds of offers to non-Spanish speaking countries, but he held firm until he got the assignment he wanted. It was to Ecuador.

Bob worked primarily with infrastructure in the Peace Corps, constructing school buildings, a cheese factory, and sanitary facilities. He put the skills he learned in Virginia to good use. Space does not allow for a lengthy discourse, but the two-room cement schoolhouse he built in a remote (emphasis on *remote*) jungle location bordered on the miraculous. Just getting the building materials to the site was a logistical nightmare. His assignment was to construct the schoolhouse and also to teach the native population how to use building techniques and materials that they were completely unfamiliar with—in that case, cement rather than wood.

Just imagine my pride when, some time later, Betty and I visited that remote village with Bob, and a villager said he wanted to show us

something. He escorted us to a clearing in the jungle, and a Catholic Church constructed out of cement stood there. True, it was somewhat primitive and certainly was not the best structure I had ever seen, but to me—and, I believe, to God—it was a beautiful cathedral.

In preparation for this next story, one needs to know that Ecuadorians love to dance, especially at festival time. One time I asked Bob what was the most difficult thing he had done in Ecuador, and without hesitation he replied, “Keeping the villagers off the newly poured cement floor until it properly cured.”



CHAPTER 18

Bob's in Love

A TELEPHONE CALL FROM BOB TOLD US THAT HE HAD MET A BEAUTIFUL AND WONDERFUL BLACK WOMAN NAMED CARMEN. They were in love, and they wanted Betty and me to come to Ecuador for the wedding. They also wanted me to perform the ceremony. Of course, we would come and, of course, we had concerns. After all, we did not know Carmen or anything about her or her family, and I knew all sorts of horror stories about homesick GI's who had taken brides in Japan with disastrous results. However, if you thought we had worries, you should talk with Carmen's family. I understand that their concerns made ours look pale in comparison. However, the kids knew what they were doing, and I am delighted to report that the smartest thing my son ever did was to marry Carmen (and vice versa). It might also be of interest to know that Carmen and Bob could well be the "most married" couple any of us know. First, in keeping with Ecuadorian law, they were married in a civil ceremony that took place in Carmen's sister's home. A day or so later, I married them in an English-speaking ceremony, while standing beside me a minister from the Missionary Church spontaneously and authoritatively translated my words and their wedding vows into Spanish. Finally, since Carmen was a teacher in a Catholic High School, they were married a fourth time by a Catholic priest.

Something must have taken because 33+ years later, they're still very much in love. They have a strong and committed marriage and are having a great time living the retirement life in Esmeraldas, Ecuador. They come back to the States frequently.

Their wedding took place on a Saturday in Esmeraldas. The church held about 60 people on simple wooden pews. In order to let sunlight

and air into the building, the wooden frames that covered the windows were propped open with sticks. The director of Bob's Peace Corps unit had scheduled an all-day conference in the town on the Friday preceding the wedding. That allowed the Peace Corps volunteers to travel during the week, attend the Friday workshop and, if they chose, to stay over for the Saturday wedding. I believe everyone did stay. It was a full house, spilling over onto the sidewalks as curious townspeople looked on through the open windows.

Weddings are different in Ecuador. By our norm, to say they were disorganized would be to put it mildly (at least that one was). The children were excited, and when they saw a camera, they all wanted their pictures taken. Everyone was having a good time, but the atmosphere was chaotic. Betty took it for as long as she could, and then tried to give the affair some semblance of order. The kids were running around, laughing, hollering, disrupting—and then she spoke. She did not speak Spanish and the kids did not understand English, but they understood a “teacher’s voice.” When they heard it, they quickly found a place to sit. As a reward and a memento, an individual picture of each child was taken, and copies were sent to the church’s pastor for distribution.

Wisely, Bob extended his Peace Corps assignment in Ecuador for a year. That gave their marriage time to mature before he uprooted his bride from the only life she had known to bring her to the United States. Their son was born during that year.

Bob’s relationship with his Uncle Chet and Aunt Sally had remained strong. In 1992, when Bob and Carmen’s son was born in Ecuador, they honored their Uncle Chet by giving their son the middle name of Chester.

Robert Chester Anderson received a football scholarship and graduated from Princeton University. He now lives with wife, Jessica, and their son, Robert Hamilton, just outside of Boston, Massachusetts, (that is the fourth living Robert in the family, or the fifth, if you count my departed grandfather).

Bob and Carmen’s daughter, Carmen Elizabeth, was born in Portland, Oregon. She received a soccer scholarship and graduated from Washington State University where she was named to the Second All Pac Ten Team.

She was recently married. She and her husband, Travis, live in West Linn, Oregon, just south of Portland. Both families are doing well in their business careers and their Grandpa Anderson is very proud of them—as was their Grandma Anderson.

You may have noticed that Bob and Carmen's daughter was also named after family members—Carmen after her mother and Elizabeth after her grandmother and great-grandmother. It is another family tradition.

When Bob, Carmen and baby Robert arrived in Vancouver, they stayed with us for about a year while they got their feet on the ground. That offered us a great chance to come to know one another in more meaningful ways. As it turned out, since I was home recuperating from a very serious bout with cancer, I had the special opportunity to hold Robert for hours. The result was that a very special bond developed between us.

Betty helped Carmen to sign up for two classes at the local community college. The first was in English as a Second Language, and the other was a class in Early Childhood Development. Our daughter, Claudia, had Carmen's college transcripts translated into English and took them to the University of Washington. At that university Carmen was granted an equivalency university degree which would prove to be very important a year down the road.

Bob and Carmen decided early on that Spanish would be spoken in their home. For the first few years, Carmen's English was limited. Bob wanted to make certain that she understood everything that was taking place in her American home. I think that a secondary reason was that both she and Bob wanted to make sure that the children would be bilingual—which they are.

However, it is not easy to satisfy everyone. With tongue-in-cheek, Bob complained that he went to Ecuador and married an Ecuadorian woman. But when he brought her home to the United States, his mother and two sisters Americanized her.

While Carmen was taking classes, Bob worked as a Drivers' License Examiner for the state of Washington. One day a vehicle owned by a well known drivers' training school pulled into Bob's lot. One of the school's

instructors and a student, who would be using the car for her driver's test, were inside the car. The car was covered with advertising, which promoted the driving school.

When Bob climbed into the car, the student driver was already behind the wheel, so he greeted the woman and gave her some instructions. The woman proceeded to start the car and put it in gear. Then she crashed it into the building that was immediately in front of her. "Oops," Bob said, "I'll have to deduct a point for that!"

When Betty's father, Ben, was in his eighties, he lived in a retirement community in Santa Barbara. He still drove his car, and every Sunday afternoon, with family or friends in tow, he drove down to the Santa Barbara Harbor, if weather permitted. Everyone strolled along the Breakwater Promenade, and afterwards they rewarded themselves with a scoop of ice cream. Let me tell you, that was a big tradition. Even today, when my adult children visit Santa Barbara, they want to walk the Breakwater.

Of course, Ben also drove to many other places. Some of the family had deep concerns about his driving (which makes me wonder what they are thinking about my driving at age 83). One Christmas, the family was together in Vancouver, Washington. Someone suggested that Bob take Ben for a driving test. To my surprise, they both agreed and off they went. When they returned, Bob told everyone that Grandpa did very well and that there was no reason why he could not drive. Interestingly, from that point on, Ben chose not to drive again. The moral of the story is, "If you tell a Ward that he or she cannot do something, you will have a fight on your hands. Approach it from another angle and maybe..."



CHAPTER 19

Bob and Carmen On Their Own

BETTY AND I BEGAN TO FEEL IT WAS TIME FOR BOB AND CARMEN TO HAVE A PLACE OF THEIR OWN. It was the American way, and we thought they needed space to develop and grow together as a family. So, Mama and Daddy Bird started to nudge the chicks from the nest. However, we (and they) did not fully understand the cultural differences that were at work here. In Carmen's culture, families lived together—it was just the thing to do. In our culture, a married child moves on as soon as the family is ready (and in some cases even sooner). Carmen took that to mean that we were encouraging them to move because somehow she had offended us. Nothing could have been further from the truth. We loved (make that love) Carmen, not as a daughter-in-law but as a daughter.

Thankfully, Carmen came to Betty and asked her what she had done. Betty was stunned at the notion and was able to assure her of our love and devotion and that nothing could have been further from our mind. Happily, our relationship has done nothing but grow over the years.

Then the other unrelated shoe dropped when Claudia announced that she, too, was going to move. "Fine," said Carmen. "You can live with us." Of course, that is not what Claudia had in mind; she wanted her own space. So, Carmen was faced with still more culture shock—in her country, such an arrangement would be considered as highly improper.

What is being demonstrated here is the caring of our family. We are an independent lot, but when someone is in trouble, the bugle sounds, and

the cavalry comes a running. That's just the way we Anderson's are—"one for all and all for one." And that, my friends, transcends everything else—including culture. Truly, we are a blessed family.

When Bob and Carmen moved from the family home, they rented a duplex located about five miles away. Later, Betty read an article about a government program where those at certain income levels could receive subsidized loans to build homes. She talked to Bob about that, but he was skeptical. Betty persisted, so Bob checked it out and found that he was eligible. He found a firm that he liked and looked at available building sites. He and his mother went out to look at the sites, and he favored a particular one. Betty thought that the one across the street, with its magnificent view of Mt. St. Helens, was superior by far. Bob agreed, but he had rejected that lot because it was \$1,000 more—and history repeated itself. Just as his father's mother had given a \$1,000 house-warming gift to his parents when they purchased their first home in San Pablo, so his mother offered the same amount to her son so that he could purchase a more desirable building site for his family's first home. (See LeRoy Height story towards the end of Chapter 26.)

About a year later, Claudia built her home on the lot adjacent to Bob's. They even had a gate connecting their back yards. That allowed the grandkids to run freely between the two homes. It was a sad day for Claudia when, a few years later, Bob took a promotion with the state of Washington in Support Enforcement Services in the Tri-Cities (Richland, Pasco and Kennewick) areas of Washington. Bob and Carmen packed their possessions, bundled up the family and moved to Kennewick. They got settled in a rented trailer, and then Bob had to leave for six weeks of training in Olympia.

Betty's Uncle Edward had a family of three children and a medical practice in Paso Robles, California. Carmen became friends with a former schoolmate of Uncle Edward's children while living in the trailer park. One day, the friend came to Carmen and told her that the Kennewick School District was looking for someone to call on new mothers who spoke little or no English. BINGO! Carmen had all the right credentials. She was a college graduate, had successfully taught high

school in Ecuador, was bilingual and had completed a course at Clark College in Early Childhood Development. She got the job.

When Bob returned from Olympia, he learned that his Ecuadorian wife did not need her mother-in-law and his two sisters in order to be assertive; she was perfectly capable of doing that all by herself.

However, what she really wanted to do was to teach high school Spanish. There was a hitch, however. Carmen's Bachelor's Degree was in Psychology, and it was on the strength of that major that she had obtained a certification to teach. However, if she wanted to teach Spanish, she needed to have a certain number of credits in Spanish to obtain the necessary Washington State teaching certificate. Yep, that's right—it mattered not that she had taught high school Spanish classes in Ecuador for years. Bob told her, "No sense in trying to fight City Hall." So, she enrolled in Spanish classes at the local community college. When I heard about that, I felt sorry for the college instructor. That would be like my teaching a preaching class to Billy Graham. However, knowing Carmen, I am sure she handled the situation very diplomatically and was very helpful to the instructor and the class.

Carmen taught Spanish at Kennewick High School for a year. She found the attitude and behaviors of the students quite different from the ones she had taught in Ecuador. The next semester, she left the high school to help open a new elementary school. There she taught bilingual (Spanish/English) kindergarten classes until her retirement many years later. While there, she also earned a Master of Education degree in bilingual education from Heritage University in Toppenish, Washington.

Carmen also taught evening classes in English as a Second Language at her old "Alma Mater" known as Columbia Basin College in Pasco, Washington.

Within a short time, they moved from their rented trailer and purchased a house. Later they parlayed that property into a larger home in Kennewick where they resided until they retired in 2010. Both were very involved in the community. Bob was a shop steward for his place of employment and president of his local union. Bob was also a chairman of the County Democratic Party where they lived.

In 1996, Bob was elected as a delegate to the national Democratic convention in Chicago and continues to be well connected politically in the state of Washington and surrounding areas. I am proud to say that he used that influence to bring about positive change and to stand up for and protect those being unfairly treated. Both he and Carmen were highly respected on both sides of any issue because of their fairness and commitment to what is right, even though at times it was not in their best interest to do so. Additionally, both Bob and Carmen worked diligently to promote racial understanding and equality in their community. They also encouraged academic excellence, especially among the black and Hispanic populations.

Soccer is a very popular sport among Hispanics, and the Tri-City area had a men's league of over 200 players. A Board of Directors oversaw it, and Bob was invited to sit on that board—the only “Gringo” ever so honored. Carmen was also a driving force in the community. She was a proponent for Early Childhood Education and served on the AAAS (Afro-Americans for an Academic Society) committee. She was also instrumental in helping to secure numerous bilingual educational grants for her school district.

Today Carmen and Bob are “retired” in Esmeraldas, Ecuador. If you are wondering about the quotation marks around the word “retired,” it is because she is still teaching English on a part-time basis at the local university. It is my understanding that it is a team effort; she teaches, and Bob handles the paperwork.



CHAPTER 20

Larry

LARRY WAS THE NEXT ONE TO COME ABOARD. He was born at the Marin General Hospital in San Rafael, California, on January 10, 1957, 13 months after the birth of his brother. There was an uproar when we named him Larry. Betty's mother and my mother insisted that he needed a more formal name. To keep peace in the family, we changed it to Lawrence, after his Uncle Chester Lawrence. That was not the last time that Larry caused us trouble or, for that matter, that his grandmothers had something to say. In all honesty, it was probably wise counsel. The local newspaper also featured a photograph of Larry in their special Valentine's Day edition. They only included the *very best looking kids*, and everyone said that he looked just like me.

When Larry was attending Lewis Junior High School in Vancouver, Washington, he wanted to play football. Now Larry was always a "gentle soul," and I was concerned that once he got into it, he would not find it to his liking and would want to quit the team. I felt that it would not be in his best interest. So, I told him that he could play, but that it was going to cost us quite a bit of money. He would need physicals, football shoes, etc. If he started to play, I expected him to complete season. "Oh, I will!" he exclaimed, and so he turned out for the team. Over the next few weeks, he came home with great stories of how well he was doing. Having exaggerated a few times in my life, I took it with a grain of salt.

Betty and I always made every effort to support the games or other activities of our children. So, when the day came for the first game, we were there with bells on. As it turned out, we arrived a little late, but just in time to see a tailback break loose and race for some 60+ yards for a touchdown. "Hey," I said, "That kid looks pretty good." Then I discovered

that “that kid” was our kid. Larry went on to play in high school and for 20 or more years held the record for the most touchdowns scored in a single season. In fact, when rumor had it that I might be transferred, and we would have to move, the high school varsity football coach paid us a visit. He said that Larry could live with him and his family if we moved. Of course, there was no way that was going to happen.

Larry’s lifetime ambition was to follow the example of his Uncle Chet, who as previously noted, is a Physician. Larry was now in his junior year, and the FVHS Trappers had a great year and won a berth in the state playoffs. They were playing in their second playoff game against Wenatchee, a perennial Washington state powerhouse, when Larry was hit hard just before the end of the first half. He suffered a concussion that ended the game for him. The Trappers went on to lose the game. Following that game, Larry’s uncle used the prestige of the White House to learn which helmet the professional football team trainers considered to be the safest. We passed that information on to the FVHS coach who gulped, but he bit the bullet. The next season Larry had a brand-new, sparkling and safer helmet to wear.

There had been some talk of Larry’s playing college ball; but during the ensuing summer, he told me that the next season would be his last. He did not want to risk a brain injury that would reduce his chances of becoming a doctor. I thought that was good thinking. If he felt that way, I mentioned in the form of a question, why not hang his cleats up now rather than play his senior year? His answer was that he felt an obligation to the team.

That summer, on Larry’s behalf, his uncle made several inquiries with the admission directors of several prestigious medical schools. The strategy was to identify any areas that might hurt Larry’s chances of being offered acceptance into their medical school. The one area identified was that he lacked medical experience.

For the past two summers, Larry had worked for a firm that manufactured telephone poles. He got the job through a friend whose dad did the hiring. They paid union wages, and the job consisted of manhandling the poles—a great job for getting in shape for football.

However, right now Larry needed medical experience, so he went

down to the local hospital to see about a job. He found the Human Resources Manager to be less than supportive. When Larry kept after her, she finally agreed to allow him to fill out an application form. When she reviewed it, the first thing that struck her eye was the amount of money he was making manhandling telephone poles. Looking up from the application form, she said, “Young man, we pay minimum wage at this hospital; there is no way we could match what you have been getting.” Larry quickly retorted that he was not interested in the money; he was interested in the experience. The woman was so impressed that she offered him a two-week replacement position for a person who was going on vacation and quickly added that there was no guarantee of anything beyond that.

Several weeks later, he came home with a huge book. It was an “Operation Procedure Manual.” He said that a surgeon had invited him to sit in on an operation, and Larry was going to read up on it. “You mean they have a ‘how to’ book in the operating room?” I asked. He said, “Sure.” I thought, “What kind of rinky-dink hospitals do we have in this town?” Of course, since then, I have learned that everyone has them, although I suspect that now they are electronic.

Larry was on his way, and he never looked back. He worked at the hospital in various positions during the day and took Emergency Medical Technician courses at Clark College at night. He parlayed these into another part-time position with an ambulance firm headquartered in Portland, Oregon. He was getting the experience he needed. He continued to work at the ambulance firm as time allowed, until he graduated from the University. There was one time, however, when Larry was beside himself. We were at an Oregon beach, vacationing for a week, when a United Airlines aircraft crashed into a home near the Portland International Airport. At the time, Larry was working for a Portland ambulance company that was called to the crash scene, along with a host of others. Larry was bemoaning the fact that he was not involved in the operation. “Why in the world would you want to be a part of all that carnage?” I asked. He replied, “Because, Dad, it’s a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.”

When he graduated from FVHS, Larry received a four-year, full-ride (room, board and tuition) scholarship for leadership to Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, Washington. He attended one semester but was unhappy with the “fit.” He transferred to Washington State University in Pullman, Washington, the next semester. It turned out to be a good move. He loved it there, was active in the Sigma Nu fraternity house and graduated as a Phi Beta Kappa and as the Senior Man of the Year.

Prior to attending college, Larry was also involved in student government. He served as the student body president at Lewis Junior High and helped to rewrite the student constitution for FVHS. In addition to football, he also lettered in track and baseball and served on numerous committees. He was also invited to join the Fire/EMT Department at Washington State University. He declined that invitation. Since that was a paid position, I asked him why he turned it down. He replied that he was afraid of heights.

After joining the army and graduating from Officers Candidate School, he volunteered for Airborne Training. Now that seemed to me to be incongruous—but then he had a mother who you will recall had climbed out of a seventh-story window as a kid. The flip side was that it was a “gutsy” thing for him to do. As I have said before, “A man’s gotta do what he’s gotta do.” That is coming from a man who went on a rollercoaster once—and *once* was enough!

However, with Larry you did not always get the answers you expected. When he was about seven years old, he and I were driving down the street when a police car passed us, going in the opposite direction. “Look at the PIG!” Larry shouted. Immediately, I turned on my teaching/preaching mode and corrected him by saying that police officers were our friends and that every day they risk their lives trying to protect us. Continuing the Lesson for the Day, I said, “Suppose your daddy was a policeman, and a bad man was sticking up a store. When your daddy went to arrest him, the bad man shot him dead. What would you say then?” Larry looked up and said, “Well, that’s the way the ball bounces.”



CHAPTER 21

Larry, Sasha, Maxi, and Boris

BOTH PARENTS OF SASHA VUKELJA, KATARINA MAKSIMOVIC AND IVAN VUKELJA, HELD DOCTORATES IN ECONOMICS AND WERE CONFINED TO A PRISON CAMP IN COMMUNIST YUGOSLAVIA FOR MANY YEARS BECAUSE THEY DID NOT AGREE WITH THE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF THE COMMUNISTS IN POWER. Katarina was released, but Ivan stayed under house arrest throughout Sasha's childhood and he died without release.

Sasha was born in Ljubljana, delivered by the same obstetrician that delivered Sophia Loren's children. Sasha and her mother spent the next 16 years moving within Yugoslavia, spending no more than one year in one place. They finally received passports and were able to flee to Austria, where they were placed in a refugee camp called Traiskirchen. However, they were unable to meet the immigration requirements of countries they were interested in and were subsequently deported back to Yugoslavia. They spent a week there in prison being interrogated until the regime let them go since Sasha was a minor. After their release from jail, Jesuit priests took them in for a year where they worked in manual labor (cleaning windows, etc.) in order to receive one meal a day. With the help of an aunt, they next immigrated to Brussels, Belgium. In Brussels, Sasha earned a nursing degree. Eventually, she and her mother immigrated to the United States. They landed in New York with no money, no friends and knowing little English (although Sasha spoke several other languages). There she supported both her mother and herself by obtaining a nursing position in a hospital. During that time,

she also attended and graduated from Lehman College in New York. Then she was accepted by the Uniform Services Medical University (USMU) in Bethesda, Maryland.

It was at USMU that she and our son Larry (who was also a medical student there) casually met for the first time. They both received medical degrees from USMU. Later, the two were both stationed at Brooke Army Hospital in San Antonio, Texas, where Larry specialized in dermatology and Mohs-micrographic surgery. Sasha was the director of the bone marrow transplant program and was attending physician in hematology and oncology.

They began dating in Texas. The romance flourished, and they were married in a beautiful country club ceremony by their close friend, Army Chaplain William Clark. His daughter was one of Sasha's patients. It was a beautiful ceremony and Sasha was given away by one of her former patients, Lieutenant General William Schneider. Betty and I, along with a large cast of family and friends, looked on.

Time marched on. They both wanted children but were having a difficult time conceiving. Finally Sasha did become pregnant. As the time approached for the delivery of the baby, Larry was in Panama in charge of the medical care for the Cuban refugees who had successfully escaped from that Caribbean island. So, Betty and I went to San Antonio to support Sasha and to be backup, should Larry not arrive back home in time for his child's birth.

Of course, we were also there for another reason—we wanted to be a part of the fun, excitement and blessing that the birth of our third grandchild would bring to us and to our family. Fortunately, Larry made it home in time to experience the birth of their daughter. They named her Katarina Maksimovic Vukelja Anderson but called her Maxi. Her names were in honor of Sasha's mother and General Maxwell Thurmond, who was one of Sasha's patients.

At the time, they were both senior officers and had paid back their obligation for their medical education. The only things keeping them in the Service were their patriotism and the fact that they were making a difference in the lives of their patients. Overall, they liked the Army.

Then came the guy with the clipboard who wanted to know who would “get” Maxi in the event that they were both deployed at the same time. The story goes that they looked at each other and said that they did not have that child for someone else to rear. They decided to resign their commissions and leave the Army. It was a career that they both found fulfilling and were highly successful in, but the well being of their daughter came first.

Sasha eventually chose to join a medical practice in Tyler, Texas. It was a good choice, and she blossomed there. She became actively involved in many community affairs. Today she is an accomplished painter and sculptor with several art shows to her credit. Sasha also authored two books, including a memoir named *Seeds*. The book gives all of the details of her dramatic life. Her second book is *Seeds from My Patients* about the life lessons she learned from her patients.

It was a little different story with Larry. He had always wanted to go into private practice, so he looked around in Tyler and found Dr. Robert Rossman, an “old-fashioned doctor” who wanted to retire. He is one of the finest Christian gentlemen that a person could possibly meet. Please understand that when I say “old-fashioned,” I am not referring to his skills or ability to practice but to his philosophy of giving care. He reminded me of “old Doc McDermott” who used to take care of me when I was a kid. No wonder I liked him so much. The agreement was that Larry would purchase the practice and Dr. Rossman would stay on for several months. He would practice as he chose, but primarily he answered questions that might come up. Down the road a ways, the good doctor told Larry that the reason he wanted to retire was that he disliked the business end of the practice. Now that Larry was handling that part, he was having a ball, and he wondered how Larry would feel about his staying on. “I would be honored,” Larry answered.

Larry and his associates built a thriving practice that was the largest in Texas and one of the largest in the United States. He and his associates sold their practice to a private equity company in 2012. For now, Larry continues to be involved in the firm’s daily operation and holds clinics there twice a week. However, it is readily apparent that his fingers are in

a lot of pies, and I would not bet money on that rocking chair appearing on his porch anytime soon. The same goes for Sasha.

Throughout their lives, both Sasha and Larry have substantially given back to their communities—both in terms of dollars and by rolling up their sleeves and getting dirty. They are heavy supporters of education, health issues, countless social causes and the arts. Sasha spearheaded the startup of the Susan Komen Race for the Cure in Tyler. She also gives support to dozens of worthwhile causes. In 2012, she was named Tyler Woman of the Year and was recently honored by the Daughters of the American Revolution with the Medal of Americanism.

Larry is equally active in the community and serves on the Board of Directors for Southside Bank. He also served several years on the Texas State Medical Board, having been appointed to that position by former Texas Governor Rick Perry. Maxi is attending the University of Oklahoma at Norman. In 2005, Larry and Sasha adopted Boris, who is now a sophomore in high school. He came to the family by way of a Russian orphanage in Saint Petersburg. From the get-go, he fit like a glove with all of our family. Both grandkids are doing extremely well, and my only complaint is that I feel exhausted after hearing about everything they are doing—but then I guess they come by that naturally. One thing is for sure, their Grandpa is very proud of them, as are their mom and dad; and I am certain that that also goes for their Grandma Anderson, who is keeping a close heavenly eye on them.



CHAPTER 22

Mary and Patrick

ON DECEMBER 13, 1964, SEVEN YEARS AFTER LARRY WAS BORN, WE RECEIVED A “DELIGHTFUL SURPRISE PACKAGE” AT WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP HOSPITAL IN FREMONT, CALIFORNIA. We named her Mary Elizabeth. (Mary after her Aunt Mary and Elizabeth after her mother and Grandmother Ward). When we first learned that Betty was pregnant, Claudia started praying for a sister. When I came home from the hospital and announced that it was a girl, she put her face in her hands and sobbed with joy. However, spoiling Mary rotten quickly became a joint effort happily entered into by her siblings. They did a remarkable job. If Mary has any deficits, it is their fault; certainly, they could not have come from her father, who has always had perfect parenting skills.

One of Mary’s ~~deficits~~ strengths is an assertive nature. When she was about six, we held one of our regular family council meetings. At the end, I asked if anyone had anything else to say. Mary raised her hand and said, “I need a bigger allowance.” Her sister decided to tease her and asked how much she was getting now. She replied, “I’m only getting 25 cents a week.” Claudia exclaimed, “25 cents a week?! I wish I had gotten 25 cents a week when I was your age!” If looks could kill, Mary would be doing time on death row. She shot back, “Well, ya gotta speak up!” No one has ever accused her (or any other member of our family) of doing anything else but.

On days when I was home and the older kids were in school, Mary and I often took the car to a drive-through carwash. She was around three, and we had fun playing a game inside the carwash. You see, a monster lived in the carwash, and that monster would blow steam through his nose trying to get us wet. So, we huddled together in the

car and made-believe that we were afraid that he was going to get us. Fortunately, he never did, but rumor has it that some people who entered that carwash are still missing.

After narrowly escaping from the monster, Mary always wanted to stop to get a Wienerschnitzel hotdog. As I drove down the street towards the one where we always stopped, I would tell her that we did not have a Wienerschnitzel in town. “Oh. Yes we do,” she’d say. Then suddenly, she’d spot it and yell, “There it is Daddy! There it is!” Then I would say, “No, that’s not a Wienerschnitzel. That’s Joe’s Hotdog Joint.” After eating our hotdogs at “Joe’s,” we would get in the car and I would suddenly forget where we lived. “We’re lost!” I would exclaim. “How will we ever get home?” She would then gleefully say, “I know the way!” Before I would let her give me directions, she had to say the secret password, which was the same as our telephone number. Somehow, magically, she always managed to save us—and her lost father knew that if she was ever really lost, she knew our telephone number and the way home.

When Mary was the editor of the Lewis Junior High School paper, she received an invitation to a press conference led by the Vancouver Superintendent of Schools. Towards the end of that conference, he asked if there were any questions. Mary raised her hand and asked why the boys’ athletic facilities were so much larger and equipped better than the girls’ facilities. Then she asked the rhetorical question, “Isn’t there a federal law prohibiting that?” The superintendent tried to sidestep the issue, but the local press had a field day with it. The following day Mary was called into the assistant principal’s office. When she learned what he wanted, she very wisely refused to talk with him without her father being present. I was home, so I went right down there to offer moral support. She handled the meeting well, although I chimed in to say that it seemed to me that Mary was just doing her job, as any good reporter should do. I told him that if I got any inkling of reprisals against her, there would be consequences. He assured me there would be none, and we left it there. The next day when I asked Mary how school was, she replied, “Fine, but the boys aren’t talking to us (meaning the girls).” “So,” I asked, “how do you feel about that?” “It’s an improvement,” she said.

In grammar school, Mary loved horses and worked out an arrangement with a nearby neighbor to clean their stables and do other chores around their place in exchange for riding their horses. It was a “win-win” situation and seemed to work well, but my story is about the summer just before she entered junior high school. That year I had responsibility for the Junior High Church Summer Camp. I knew of Mary’s love for horses, so I arranged for a church member to bring some of his horses to the camp. It was the first time that had been done at that particular camp, and it was a smashing success—except that Mary chose not to ride. When I asked her why she didn’t ride, she gave me an exasperated look and exclaimed, “I don’t want to smell like an old horse!” Lesson learned: Things change with age!

One time I was in Kansas to attend a church conference. A colleague told me that he had heard on the radio that a tornado had struck Vancouver, Washington, causing damage and several deaths. I thanked him, but dismissed the news. We just didn’t have tornadoes in Vancouver; it was probably a strong wind or something. Nevertheless, it might have caused some damage to our house, so I decided to call home. Of course, all of the circuits were jammed, and it took quite a while before I was able to reach Betty. She confirmed that the news was true, and it had completely destroyed Mary’s elementary school. Mary, who was six years old at the time, was inside the building, along with the rest of the school’s population when it struck. “It’s okay,” she said, “Mary is fine. According to reports, no one at the school was killed, although there were some severe injuries.”

She then put Mary on the phone, who explained that they were watching a movie when the tornado hit. The blinds were drawn, and that probably cut down on the amount of broken window glass that exploded into the classroom. However, later they did find a lot of shattered glass in the pockets of coats that were hanging in a walled-off section of the coatroom. Mary told me that when it hit, she ran out of the front door and was nearly run over by a horse that apparently had been lifted out of its pasture. She continued to run across a muddy field that was adjacent to the school and at that point, she began to cry. She was sorry, but she

had lost her shoe. It had gotten stuck and had come off in the muddy field, and she was too scared to look for it.

A theme that runs through this writing is that God works in mysterious ways. Here is another concrete example. FVHS was adjacent to her elementary school, and two high school boys were sneaking a smoke next to the gym when the tornado hit. They immediately alerted the coaches, who quickly recruited some other boys. Together they rushed to the demolished school where they pulled children from the debris. The children were taken to the high school gym where each one was teamed up with a high school student. That quick action was credited with reducing the injuries and trauma that the children experienced.

At the time the tornado struck, Bob was working on some dittos for one of the teachers. Those old enough to know about these will recall that the ditto machines printed from a purple carbon-like substance. After the tornado, the authorities had quickly closed off access to the school, so parents were unable to make contact with their children. You can imagine what they were going through! Bob was a distance runner, and he took off in a torrent of rain, purple dittos in hand. When he reached our front door, he was covered in purple! There he found his mother and a neighbor lady in the living room. Bob was equal to the task. He told them to stay seated in the living room, and he would make them a nice cup of warm tea. Ya gotta love that boy.

It seemed that Bob was also equal to other tasks. He had a paper route when we lived in Fresno. If we were short on time or there was real bad weather, I sometimes drove the route with him. On one occasion, he was delivering papers down the street while I was parked at the curb. One of the local residents came up and inquired if he was my son. I proudly replied that he was. He then related that he just had to come over to tell me what he had seen Bob do a few weeks earlier. In the neighborhood there was a dog that chased cars and bicycles whenever it got the chance. One rainy day, as Bob was delivering his papers, that dog came charging toward him. Bob laid his bike down, grabbed one of his papers and chased that dog, tail between its legs, all the way home. The man was

laughing so hard that I thought he was going to have a stroke. Then he added, “You know, I haven’t seen that dog come after your son since!”

Mary went on to FVHS where she was an outstanding student and leader and graduated with top honors. As a sophomore, she was chosen to be on the varsity volleyball team—the only sophomore selected that year. As I recall, that team went on to the state finals. However, she decided not to turn out the following year because of her interest and commitment to other student leadership activities. After serving as sophomore class President, she went on to serve as the Statewide Communications Coordinator for the Future Business Leaders of America and Student Body Treasurer in her junior year.

Her crowning high school achievement, however, was in founding and directing the Leadership Development Program. In that program the most capable student leaders were identified through extensive interviews and other means. They were then offered quality training and hands-on experience. Over 25 existing student clubs joined in support of the program, which included the hiring of leadership consultants. They offered input into the program and also facilitated leadership training retreats and follow-up classes. It proved to be a dynamic and effective program, and after more than ten years it was still going strong.

Mary enrolled and graduated with honors from the University of Washington where she received a Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration with an emphasis in Finance and Human Resources. During that time she was employed as the first undergraduate Assistant Director and then Director of The Experimental College, a large student-run program at the University of Washington that offers hundreds of personal enrichment, non-credit classes every quarter. Following graduation and additional work experience, she received a Master’s Degree from the Leadership Institute of Seattle at Bastyr University in Applied Behavioral Science, with an emphasis in Coaching and Consulting in Organizations.

One morning in 2001, I was awakened out of a sound sleep by the ringing of the telephone. As I sat up on the side of the bed and lifted the phone from its cradle, I heard my daughter say, “Dad, it’s Mary and I’m

in Seattle.” I heard what she said, but I was trying to clear my mind from the cobwebs of sleep. I thought, “Why is she telling me that? She *lives* in Seattle!” Sensing my hesitation, Mary continued, “Do you know what is going on?” “Evidently not,” I said, and she went on to say that it was all over the news that terrorists had crashed two airliners into the Twin Towers in New York City.

At the time, she was employed as the Western Region Vice President of Human Resources for an east coast firm. She worked out of Seattle, but her firm was a subsidiary of a much larger company headquartered in New York City. That firm employed hundreds of workers who reported for work each day at the business complex that was now destroyed. I was also aware that quite often Mary would travel to New York on business. There the company would usually provide her with an office in the Towers and put her up in a hotel immediately adjacent to the property. She was telling me that she was safe! Thank God! However, thousands of others had perished, and thousands more would be scarred for life.

In 2009, Mary met Patrick Moy Tung through E-Harmony, an internet-dating site. Their first date was at a local Starbucks for coffee. Patrick brought Mary a single pink rose. Their attraction to each other was instantaneous, and they talked for about two hours and then went to a movie. Three days later, they had lunch together. Patrick knew that her birthday was coming and asked if he could have the honor of taking her to see the Nutcracker Ballet on that special occasion. They had a great time.

About six weeks later, they became engaged, and Patrick took her to a jewelry store to pick out a ring. The one she selected was already sized perfectly for her finger, so she had it on when she left the store. A few hours later, Mary suggested that she give the ring back to him so that he could plan a special occasion to “propose officially.” He was reluctant to take it back, saying he would not know what to say on such an occasion. Mary said that it would be easy and that he could practice right then to see how easy it would be. So, Patrick dropped to one knee and delivered a beautiful proposal. With tears in her eyes, Mary accepted. Now Patrick says that she tricked him into getting married because he

was only “practicing” when he asked her to marry him. It seems that the Anderson women are sneaky that way. They know a “good catch” when they see one. Mary and Patrick were married in an intimate ceremony on October 29, 2011, at a bed and breakfast in Belfair, Washington.

In my Christmas letter that year, I wrote: “Our Good News this year is that Mary and Patrick Moy Tung have joined together in marriage. Patrick is a good guy—and I mean a really, really, good guy! He is loving, considerate, caring, and successful, and he spoils Mary rotten. In turn, Mary has introduced Patrick to a new dimension of life—one that is full of new wonder and excitement—sort of like a child suddenly awakening in the midst of a giant candy/toy store with no parents around. Needless to say, they are deliriously happy together, and we are very blessed to have him as the newest addition to our family.”

Patrick’s mother and father were born and raised in rural China. His grandfather immigrated to Trinidad, along with his son and brother, to escape the violence of the Sino-Japanese War. Patrick’s paternal grandmother had passed away in China prior to their immigration.

When Patrick’s dad and uncle were ready to marry, they were introduced to their brides via a mutual acquaintance; the couples then corresponded with one another through letters. Later, having never met the men, the young women boarded a plane together and traveled to Trinidad where the couples were married.

Patrick was born on March 10, 1961, in Trinidad, a Caribbean island that lies just seven miles off the coast of Venezuela. He was named Patrick in honor of St. Patrick, who was also born in March. As a young boy, Patrick loved to climb on things and play with marbles. He had one toy (a little race car) and a tricycle. Because his parents were busy running a grocery store, he also spent a lot of time watching his younger brother.

When he was ten years old, Patrick and his family immigrated to the United States because his parents wanted to offer their children a better life and new opportunities. They settled in the Pacific Northwest to be close to Patrick’s maternal grandmother. After coming to the U.S., his father cooked in Chinese restaurants and worked 6 days a week. His

mother, who previously worked in nursing in Hong Kong, was employed as a sportswear seamstress for an REI supplier. His brother currently works in the cell phone industry. Patrick's brother and mother now live together in Seattle, Washington.

Patrick graduated from the University of Washington in 1984 with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Sociology. While attending classes, he worked at the Bon Marche department store restaurant as a short-order cook.

In 1987, he began a long and successful career at United Parcel Service (UPS). He has worked at UPS for 27 years (and counting!) in a variety of departments, including accounts payable, billing, purchasing, information technology, revenue recovery, marketing, and business development. When he worked in technology, he traveled extensively to Alaska. Patrick is well liked by his staff members and was awarded "Supervisor of the Month" on four different occasions. He also bought his home in Federal Way, Washington, in 1990 and had it paid off in 12 years.

As a young man, Patrick was an avid bicyclist and participated in organized events such as the Seattle-to-Portland annual bike ride. In 1992, he was hit by a car while riding his bike. As a result, he completely lost the use of his right arm. Since then, the arm has been amputated. Testifying to his toughness, determination and resourcefulness, he learned to write with his left hand, tie his shoes and cut his own fingernails. Truth is, he does everything so well that I often forget he only has one arm.

In addition to going to the movies, watching TV, and playing with their beagle (Solo), they also like to travel. So far, they have been to the Grand Canyon, Sedona, the Oregon Coast, and the San Juan Islands. International trips include visits to Victoria, British Columbia, a cruise to Mexico, and a week in Paris.



CHAPTER 23

Odds and Ends

WHEN OUR GRANDDAUGHTER, CARMEN ELIZABETH, WAS AROUND THREE YEARS OLD, SHE TOLD BETTY AND ME THAT WE “KISSED TOO MUCH.” I took her in my arms and explained that kissing her grandma too much would be a complete impossibility. She was right about one thing though. I loved to kiss that woman and I did so at *every* opportunity. Betty went to be with her Lord a little over three years ago, and I am still kissing her. Every day I kiss her picture a dozen or more times and most likely will continue to do so for the rest of my life. It is nowhere near as satisfying as the “real thing,” but it is the next best thing. I look forward to it every day, especially when I awake and greet her in the morning and then just after saying “Good night, my darling” as I drift off to sleep and begin to “dream about her the whole night through.”

Of course, the above is not the only time Carmen Elizabeth has offered us unsolicited advice. One time Betty and I were having dinner with Bob and his family in a Mexican restaurant. We ordered in English, while the rest of the family ordered in Spanish. After the waiter left our table, Carmen Elizabeth spoke up and said “Grandma and Grandpa, you should learn Spanish.” “Why should I learn Spanish?” I thought. “After all, I was paying the bill and in US currency yet.” But then I told you earlier that we Anderson’s are very vocal with our opinions—and it hasn’t gotten any better with age. The fact that Carmen Elizabeth was probably right is beside the point.

This might also be a good place to plug in the story about my Beautiful Betty when she was a kid. For those too young to have experienced it, or are so old they have forgotten it, we had food shortages

and rationing in the US during the Second World War. Some things like shortening and chocolate were next to impossible to get. During that time, Betty must have been between the ages of 6 and 11. One day she decided to make cookies, and she used up all of her mother's shortening. When her mother discovered that, she blew her top. So, Betty robbed her piggybank (or wherever she kept her stash), climbed aboard her trusty bicycle and started peddling from store to store in search of the elusive item. At the same time, she was keeping an eye out for chocolate candy bars—an item her Grandmother Ward especially coveted. In her quest, she traveled from Van Nuys to San Fernando, a distance of over 17 miles on what would be termed “not the safest roads in town.” She stopped and searched at each grocery store, but to no avail. Finally, she arrived at her Grandmother Ward's house, all peddled out but with no shortening. I don't know about the chocolate bars. However, I have been told that her Grandmother Ward was so enraged about her foray that she refused to let Betty go home for three days. Her father was finally allowed to drive over to get her and her bicycle and return his cargo to Van Nuys. Of course, the tragedy of all this is that it happened before I started going with Betty—so I didn't get any of the cookies.

On the first Mother's Day following Claudia's birth, I presented Betty with a single long-stemmed red rose. As our family grew, other red roses appeared within the bouquet to celebrate each new arrival. Suddenly new blessings began to emerge in the form of grandchildren. The color choice to represent these newcomers became yellow. Later, when our great-grandson came on the scene, peach became the color identified with his generation.

Ted and Winnie Martin were visiting us when our doorbell rang. It was Mother's Day, and Winnie answered the door. Standing there on our porch was the florist with a unique bouquet of four red and four yellow roses. Each rose represented the love that Betty and I had for our four children and three grandchildren. As for the bouquet, it was but a token that was attempting to express my enduring love for my beautiful wife and to thank her for the gift of family that only she could give me.

However, there seemed to be an extra rose—but it was not extra. It

was the rose of hope and anticipation and represented our grandson, Boris, who was not yet with us. Larry and Sasha were in the final stages of adopting him and would shortly be in a Russian courtroom for what was supposed to be their final appearance before the adoption was finalized. In Russia, however, nothing is final until you are no longer on their soil.

Winnie was curious and inquired about the uniqueness of the bouquet. When Betty told her the story, she was enthralled. Since she had adopted three children, and Ted later took them on as his own, she strongly related to the symbolic spirit that was taking place here. She was an excellent amateur photographer and felt the need to try to immortalize that occasion. Everything stopped. The photo shoot was set up, and pictures were taken. They were magnificent, and copies were shared with family and friends. Thanks, Winnie!

Today some of those pictures are on display in my living room. I gaze at them every morning when Betty and I talk and share coffee together—but there is more to the story.

Remember that in the Russia adoption process, it only takes a single word from an official to scuttle all that has gone on before. Larry and Sasha were now in a Russian courtroom and had been answering questions before a female judge who vigorously questioned Sasha for a great length of time.

Suddenly it was Larry's turn. As I recall the story, the judge's first question to him was, "How will your American parents accept this Russian-born boy?" Larry produced the picture and told her the story behind it. With that single question asked and answered, the judge approved the adoption. Larry and Sasha quickly bundled up Boris and rushed him off to the US Embassy. His passport was issued and then it was on to the airport. They caught the next flight Home. (Note the use of the word "**Home**")!



CHAPTER 24

Teaching Sunday School

WHILE AT SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY I WAS INVOLVED IN TWO CHURCH-RELATED ACTIVITIES THAT WERE BEYOND MY NORMAL MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITIES. The first was serving as the founder of the Cumorah Club, a recognized campus group largely made up of church members. The purpose of this group was to be a positive influence on campus through the offering of fellowship, support and wholesome activities.

The second was teaching a Sunday school class to Junior Boys in grades 4 through 6. My pastor asked if I would do this, saying there were only two boys in the class—but adding that they were a handful. Considering that two years earlier I was an infantry squad leader on the front line of Korea, I figured that I could handle it and said I would give it a shot. The first two classes did not go exceptionally well, since the boys were not at all interested in the class. I needed something to jazz it up and I asked myself, “What do boys of this age like?” The answer came back loud and clear—*competition!*

At the next class, I announced the contest. There was a possibility for the boys to earn ten points every Sunday: one for attending, one for reading their Sunday School lesson, one for bringing their scriptures, and two for bringing a friend.

In addition, a five-question true or false quiz would be given at the end of class, with one point awarded for each correct answer. At the end of the month, the weekly scores would be added together, and whoever

had the most points got to come over to our place for one of Betty's famous cheeseburgers. Afterwards, the winner and I would go to the show together, and he would get to choose the movie (within reason). The contest worked like a charm, and when I graduated a year later, we had a class of around 10-12 boys.

The contest however, was not without critics. One Sunday after church I was buttonholed by an irate father who complained that he was late for church because halfway there his son had said he forgotten his scripture, and they had to go back home to get them. I listened carefully, made a few suggestions and then asked how his son liked our Sunday school Class. "He loves it", said the father, and then I asked how his son had liked the class before we initiated the contest. He got this sheepishly grin and then said, "I see what you mean." "That was an easy one to win over," I thought to myself.

Thirty years later, I was walking down Market Street in San Francisco when a young man in business attire approached me. He asked if I had taught Sunday school in San Jose. "Years ago," I replied, and he said that he had been in my class. I vaguely remembered him, and we stood there on the street with people rushing by as we shared with one another. He said he was in town on business and now lived in a city in the Midwest. He was the pastor of the local congregation in that community. It was a gratifying conversation for me until he said, "I don't remember anything you taught us, but I do remember your jokes." We both laughed, and I restrained myself from telling him another joke! I invited him to have a meal with me, but he was on his way to catch a plane.

I have told of that experience in a number of sermons. Since he was a pastor, it was obvious that he had learned something about the doctrine of the church along the way. But, more importantly, what he was really saying to me that day was that it wasn't the doctrine and beliefs of the church that were important to him—it was the fellowship that held him to the faith. He was saying by his actions that as important as beliefs may be, it is the personal relationship we have with our Lord and with others that is paramount. That is what binds us together. This was so important to him that on that day he was willing to risk embarrassment and

reproach to ask a stranger in a city not his own if he had taught Sunday school. We both not only knew the way to San Jose; more importantly, we knew the way of the Master.

Where there are wins, there are also losses. One day Larry raced into the house and yelled, “Daddy, Daddy! Can I go to Primary with David?” (For those of you who may not know, “Primary” is an excellent afterschool program sponsored by the Mormon Church.)

I told him no, but still he begged, “Please, Daddy, please! David says it’s a lot of fun and I want to go.”

“Larry, I’ve already told you that you can’t go,” I repeated. “But I want to,” Larry pleaded. Finally, I said, “Larry, do you know what Primary is?” “No,” he admitted, “but I want to go.” I told him that Primary was like our Sunday school classes. At that, Larry got a stunned look on his face, reined in his horses and exclaimed, “*Why, that dirty rat!*”

First, let me applaud David for sharing his testimony and issuing his invitation—certainly more of us need to do the same. At the same time, let me acknowledge that I had just won the argument, but I lost the war. I was the pastor of our local congregation and as such, I was responsible for the Sunday school program we offered, and that program had just received a major indictment from one of its most important clients.



CHAPTER 25

Climbing the Ladder

AFTER I GRADUATED FROM SAN JOSE STATE, I HAD A TEN-YEAR SUCCESSFUL GROCERY PRODUCTS SALES CAREER WITH THREE DIFFERENT CORPORATIONS, WORKING MOSTLY IN THE WESTERN PART OF THE UNITED STATES AND ESPECIALLY IN CALIFORNIA.

My first position out of college was with the Pillsbury Company. I was hired in December 1953, with a start date following my graduation in January of 1954. In the intervening time, the sales manager that had hired me was promoted to be the sales manager of the Los Angeles office. The new San Francisco manager (I'll call him Martin) invited me to come in for a "get acquainted" meeting. I thought it strange that he wanted me to come in the night before and stay at a particular motel, since I lived in San Jose, which was only about an hour's drive from the office. But he was the boss. The two of us hit it off well; and I was relieved that I still had a job, since I did not relish the idea of starting the interviewing process all over again. I liked Martin and learned a lot from him. However, some of his management practices seemed strange to me.

The above motel stay was one of them. Sometime later, I learned that after a perspective employee checked out, the motel manager would call Martin and report on the condition of the room. If it was not satisfactory, the candidate would most likely get a "thanks for coming in, but no thanks" interview. The longer I knew Martin, the more his bag of tricks seemed to overflow with such unsubstantiated theories. Still, he was the boss.

Of course, he was sizing me up during our “get acquainted” session. He asked dozens of questions having to do with my sales experience, my family life, did I like San Jose State, did I like to fish (to which I replied I didn’t), what was my favorite professional football team (which of course was the San Francisco 49ers), what did I like to do in my spare time, etc.

Toward the end of our time together, he said that he had two territories open. One was the San Francisco territory, and the other was the North Bay Area, which meant a two-night stay at Clear Lake every six weeks. He asked which one I would like to have. The answer to that was not so easy as one might suppose.

When Betty and I were writing to each other while I was overseas, the one thing we kept saying to each other was that once I got home, “we would be together always.” However, I played the game with Martin and answered, “Wherever you feel the company can best use me.” At the end of the interview, he gave me the North Bay territory.

After graduating, we moved to San Rafael, California, where we rented a house even though the inside needed paint. We decided to paint three of the living room walls an off-white color. For contrast, we painted the remaining wall a dark green. For our bathroom, we choose the same dark green color as the living room, except we used paint that was enamel instead of flat.

Betty took a break when she completed the green living room wall and came into the bathroom to talk. She set her flat green paint can down and when she left, she picked up the enamel paint can by mistake. I recall thinking how much easier the paint was going on now, but dumb old me, I just continued to paint merrily along until the job was completed. When the paint dried, I discovered that I had painted half of the bathroom with enamel and the other half with flat paint. I always intended to do a repaint job but somehow never got around to it. Whoever followed us into that rental got a uniquely painted bathroom at no additional charge.

When I accepted the position with Pillsbury, I got a company car with the understanding that only employees could drive the vehicle. But after a few weeks, the policy was changed and driving privileges were

extended to wives. A short while after that policy took effect, Betty came home from the grocery store and parked the car in our sloping driveway. Unfortunately, the car rolled down the driveway and across the street where it came to rest—after demolishing our neighbors' white picket fence. Thankfully, no one was hurt. The neighbors got a new fence out of it, and the car sustained only minor damage. Since I was the new kid on the block, I had visions of the company reversing the car policy and blaming everything on me. However, nary a word was said, although I did notice that the neighborhood children no longer played in front of our driveway.

Actually, Betty was an excellent driver and drove hundreds of thousands of miles without incident, except for one minor accident. Betty stopped behind a car that had previously stopped at an intersection. Now all of you that have had this happen to you, raise your hand. That's right, the front car started to move forward, and as Betty began to pull forward, the driver of the lead car suddenly stepped on her brakes. Betty stopped safely but only after nudging the bumper of the lead car. There were some scratches on the lead car's bumper, but it was unclear whether the accident had caused them, or if they were there before. There was no damage to our vehicle.

The woman driver of the lead car said that no harm was done and asked that no report be made. Betty said she was uncomfortable about not making a report, but the woman pleaded with her, saying that her husband would be very angry with her. We were now under Appointment, and the car Betty was driving was a church-owned vehicle. So, when Betty told me about the accident, I said that we would have to report it. Like all good drivers should do, Betty had collected the necessary information and I made the report.

Just before the statute of limitations ran out, we received a legal notice from an attorney. It notified us that his client was suing us for \$1.5 million. The church's insurance company offered to settle the claim for \$1,500. That annoyed the heck out of me. When the other car owners declined the offer, Betty gave a deposition to the attorneys of the church's insurance company. They had asked me to check out a

few facts concerning the accident. One had to do with the damage that had occurred to the lead vehicle. It had been taken into the dealership for repairs, and I learned that the cost came to a little under \$50. I could not believe it—when can any vehicle be worked on by any dealership for under \$50? Sometime later, when the “clients” found the insurance company was not going to waver, they took the \$1,500—but I am still incensed. The moral of this story is...but then, you already know what that story is.

I am still bothered about the same kind of accident that I had when I bumped into an old dilapidated vehicle in Stockton, California. Upon examination, the only damages to the vehicles were a few scuffmarks. I suggested we exchange information and was quickly out-voted by the two Hispanic men in the other vehicle. They wanted nothing to do with it and only wanted to get out of there (I think before the cops came).

Since no real damage occurred, I suppose that no harm was done—except to my sense of justice. There was no question about it, I was fully at fault and was more than willing to do what was right. However, because of their life circumstances, those two Hispanic men just wanted to blend into the countryside. I wish them well.

A year after going to work for Pillsbury, I was promoted to the position of Assistant to the Branch Manager. That was a management-training job that was supposed to be for one year. I learned a great deal, but after six months, the learning curve took a downward turn and I was bored out of my gourd. Fortunately, a territory opened up in the East Bay. I asked for it and received Martin’s blessing—more about this later.

That training position with Pillsbury required us to live near the office in San Mateo, California. That meant that we would have to move from San Rafael and leave our finely painted green walls behind. We found a perfect rental in Redwood City. It had plenty of room and was in a good neighborhood close to the freeway. Best of all, the rent was right. Why, it even had imported English linen wallpaper in the living and dining rooms and was beautifully landscaped and maintained. “What’s the catch?” I asked myself. Then my question was answered. If we rented it, we would have to allow the owner to choose and pay for the gardener.

“A free gardener?” I thought, as I was falling all over myself trying to find a pen so I could sign on the dotted line. Then I heard Betty say, “It’s very nice, but no thank you.” When we got into the car, I almost screamed “Why?” Betty very patiently explained that we had three small children. If we rented that house, she would live in constant dread of their destroying that very expensive wallpaper. Women! What’s a little wallpaper when taken in context of a *free gardener*?

We continued to look and on a bright sunny day rented a house in San Bruno. Three days later the fog bank rolled in, and it was with us for the duration. At the office one day, I was leaning back in my chair with my feet resting upon my desk (which was the recommended posture for young rising executives) when an earthquake hit. I watched as the beam over my head cracked, but no extensive damage occurred at the office. I immediately called home and learned that everything was OK there, except for some broken dishes.

When I got home, I discovered that our four-year-old daughter, Claudia had been lectured on what she should do in the event of an earthquake. As we sat down for dinner that night, we offered a blessing, and Betty decided to demonstrate her teaching skills by saying to Claudia, “Tell Daddy what to do if we have an earthquake.” My daughter looked up from her plate and said, “You get a broom and clean it up.”

Later that became an illustration for one of my sermons—namely, people learn more from observing what you do than they learn from what you tell them. I believe this to be a very important “truism.” If this is the only thing you receive from reading this book—this truism is well worth the price of admission! So, please do me a favor and read this paragraph again (no, scratch that)—do yourself a favor!

While we are on the subject of earthquakes, several years later in downtown San Francisco, I was teaching a new salesman how to check expiration codes on our packages. As he reached for one of the packages on the shelf, we experienced an earthquake! It was a pretty good jolt, and merchandise went flying off the shelves. As I looked at the new man, his face was ashen and, with voice quivering, he said, “What did I do?”

I have a few other stories relating to the time that Betty and I spent it in San Bruno. The first has to do with traffic flow. The Saturday before I was to start in my new position as Assistant to the Branch Manager, I made a dry run from our San Bruno house to the San Mateo office. The trip took 20 minutes, but the following day I arrived at work 15 minutes late. No one said anything, so the next day I allowed extra time. Again, I was 15 minutes late. This scenario was repeated several times, allowing more time for the drive, but I was still arriving late at the office. I apologized to the Branch Manager and told him that I could not figure out the morning traffic flow. No matter what time I left the house, I arrived at the office 15 minutes late. Thinking that he might know a way around the traffic, I asked if he had any suggestions for me. He said, “Bob you’re now in a management training program, and you need to make a management decision.” I must have given him a puzzled look because he then went on to say, “If I were you, I would make the decision to come into the office at 8:15.”

I continued to shoot for the 8:00am start time and was successful about half the time. Having said that, I should let you know that on the days when I was 15 minutes late, I made up for it by going home 15 minutes early.

In a sales position, one is valued not for the number of hours he or she puts in, but for the volume of sales made. Of course, the two go hand in hand and I don’t remember a time when I was not at or near the top of a list that measured these two categories. When I covered a territory, my hours were supposed to be from 8:00am to 5:00pm, Monday through Friday, but I rarely got home before 6:00. In addition, I usually worked a couple of Saturday store sales per month.

Speaking of store sales, there was a time that I was doing a Santa Claus sale for one of my accounts. The line of kids stretching out before me must have been 200 feet long. I reached down and picked up a little girl who was about two years old. Setting her on my lap, I greeted her with my cheeriest, “Ho, Ho, Ho.” Then I heard her older sister say, “She doesn’t speak English.” Somehow, Santa was able to pull it off.

My “Clown Sale” events for new store openings and anniversaries were

also in high demand. These involved balloons imprinted with the store logo and a lot of *my hot air*. It was a fun activity, and more than one store manager commented that when it came to clowning around, I was a natural.

I did very well with Pillsbury and in 5 ½ years I received five promotions, more than doubled my starting salary, and won every single sales contest. Martin liked his salesmen to live in the territories they served. So, most promotions required a household move. We started out living in San Rafael, moved to San Bruno a year later, then moved across the bay to San Pablo. The next two promotions were to key account manager positions where I called on minor chains. These promotions did not require a household move.



CHAPTER 26

Youth Ministry

DURING THAT TIME, GOD WAS AT WORK WITH BETTY AND ME. In San Rafael, we were the church youth leaders. When we moved to San Bruno, I served as the District Director of Youth. In some of the letters that Betty wrote to me, she had mentioned that she would like us to do youth work together. At that point, she was talking about being youth leaders for Y clubs, like the ones she was so active in and which held so much meaning for her.

But it seemed that the Lord was moving us in another direction. The important thing was that we were trying to respond to the leadings of God's Holy Spirit, and we were walking hand in hand together. It was an exhilarating and rewarding time, and we were richly blessed as we journeyed on.

I served as the District Director of Youth for five years. During that time, I established and strengthened youth groups in each of our District's 22 congregations. Since I was responsible for assisting with both the high school (Zion's League) and junior high (Zioneer) youth groups, I had my hands full. The quality of the congregational youth programs varied widely; some were doing a good job, but others were seriously lacking or even nonexistent. Working with and through the pastors, we aimed to straighten the groups we had and then identified, recruited and trained leaders for the remaining groups. The good news was that the people were willing, and we made steady progress towards our goal of having 44 youth leaders in place who were teachable and capable of doing good work.

Once we got the ball rolling, additional training and encouragement was necessary, partly to keep the leaders motivated and in place.

However, these leaders were volunteers; and our turnover rate was unacceptable, partly because pastors raided our youth leader ranks to fill other positions in their congregations. These pastors were also volunteers, but their “raids” disrupted our youth program and I told them so. A couple of the pastors complained, but I reminded them that I, too, was a volunteer and I had invested many hours and personal dollars to recruit and train these leaders, only to find that “poachers” had been at work on my territory.

From that point on, we had a new policy. Unless we agreed otherwise, it was to be “hands off” of youth leaders. When new youth leaders came on board, it was with the expectation that they would serve for five years. Of course, the policy was unenforceable. Still, that gentlemen’s agreement was mostly honored, and our turnover rate became much more manageable.

The above “tenure policy” was so successful that from that time on, I put it to work in every leadership position I held. I also had my training philosophy. It was simple and straightforward and consisted of three points:

1. If it worked, use it.
2. No revolving doors.
3. In God we trust.

We must have done something right because God blessed us at every turn.

The other part of my responsibility was to offer district-wide activities where the youth from different congregations came together. These activities varied, but two of the most successful were a yearly Volleyball Play Day and a Drama Festival that brought together around 200 senior high students. These “Days” and “Festivals” were the grand finales of about six months of activity that led into these District events and offered the opportunity for the young people to worship, study, and make lifelong friends. We also supported summer camps, but the administrations of these camps fell to the camping committee.

One year, a youth retreat was coming up and I wanted to get there early. So, I asked for a vacation day just prior to the start. I explained to

Martin that I was the District Youth Leader for my church and I was in charge of an important weekend event. I wanted to take the Friday start date off as a vacation day. He asked how many of these events would take place during the year. There were four, but I was only asking for that one day. After a few more questions, he leaned back in his chair and said that since I was his number one salesman, I could take as many days off as I needed for these events. I would let him know when I would take the time off and those days would not be charged against my vacation time, provided that I continued as the branch's top salesman. I was always at the top of the sales charts, and these special days off were never questioned. I wondered if that was the Lord's doing, or if Martin was just teaching me how to motivate—probably a little bit of both.

Martin also taught me to be concise (although if you are reading this, you probably have your doubts). One day he handed me a letter and told me to answer it and to keep it short. He also wanted to review it prior to mailing. I set to work and about a half an hour later gave it to our secretary for editing and typing. She looked at it, and a weird smile came across her face. I wondered what that was all about, but soon my question was answered. When I took my masterpiece into Martin, he looked at it and said that it was “very good.” He quickly added, “But let me show you how to save some time.” He proceeded to rip the page in half, as I stood there in astonishment. Reaching into his pocket, he retrieved a pen and in the margin of the original letter wrote in big red letters the word “NO.” That was a valuable lesson. I now knew what our secretary was smiling about; she had seen that happen before. When I asked her why she hadn't given me a “heads up,” that smile returned and she said, “What? And spoil all of the fun?!”

As our youth program unfolded, we became aware that a number of our senior high students wanted to explore their faith more fully to prepare themselves as better witnesses of their Lord. In response, the Youth Venture for Christ came about—a program beyond their regular youth activities. Stringent in design, it was a six-month congregational sponsored activity that met weekly for classes, involved major outside reading assignments along with the writing of essays, and mandated

75% participation in all church and youth activities. In addition, the program called for participants to practice responsible stewardship, visit in homes, and bring friends to church and youth activities. Pastors would certify those who successfully completed all of the requirements. Those candidates would then be eligible to take a final examination that covered both the class work and reading assignments. Regrettably, some did not pass, and I ached while writing letters telling them so. Happily, just about everyone came roaring back the following year.

Those who “graduated” were then eligible to participate in the Youth Venture for Christ Caravan that traveled to distant congregations throughout California, where they offered ministry. I am not sure how valuable that was to the congregations, but our people applauded it heartily. I do know that it was a life-changing event for many of the young people. As word of the program’s success spread, other jurisdictions throughout the United States adapted it; 50 years later, it is still operational.

Neither Betty nor I spoke Spanish, so when we visited Ecuador, Bob always arranged to have someone with us who was fluent in both English and Spanish. During the weekend of his wedding, he arranged for a girl from a Peace Corps unit other than his own to share with us. Her name was Joy and she was a member of the church. She was from Michigan and had been in Ecuador for almost two years.

Since I knew she had been away from the church that long, I asked her if there was anything “church wise” that she would like to do. She answered that if it were possible, she would like to celebrate the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper. That evening she, Betty, and I gathered in our hotel room to celebrate that Sacrament together. By way of preparation, I suggested that we each share a testimony having to do with the “most real experience” we had ever had with Jesus.

Joy went first and said that for her it was the Youth Venture for Christ program. I looked at Betty, and she looked at me, and I said, “That’s interesting; tell us about it.” She went on to explain in vivid detail a special six-month program that she said changed her life.

It was an electrifying experience! Electrifying because she was

speaking about a program that I conceived, developed and carried out in the San Francisco Bay Area some 15 years earlier. More correctly, the Holy Spirit conceived and then planted. Now, many years later we came together in Ecuador to hear how our ministry had borne fruit. What are the odds? However, God does not deal in statistics. He deals in blessings; and that night, in that small upper room, three Disciples committed themselves anew by partaking of the Lord's body—and were blessed beyond measure.

Working with young people is always challenging, and there was a time when a teenage girl asked if she could talk with me. “Sure,” I said, and we went outside and sat on the steps of church in Berkeley, California. I must admit that I have no recall of what she said—it did not seem overly important at the time—but I do remember some 30 years later when that girl, now a mature woman, stood in a meeting, unaware of my presence, and recalled that experience. Can you imagine my amazement when she concluded her remarks by saying that that during those 20 minutes, her life was irrevocably changed? Obviously, the Holy Spirit was hard at work there because I sure as heck didn't know what was going on. Ain't God wonderful?

Betty and I decided that it was time for us to think about purchasing a home. It just so happened that my mother, who always had a keen eye for real estate, came to visit. We took her for a look-see. One house was an established home, and the other was in the new LeRoy Heights housing development. It was a three-bedroom two-bath house with radiant heating in the floor and offered a built-in stove. I had arranged for a G.I. loan, but the Heights house required a down payment that was \$1,000 more than the other house we were considering. That would have been a stretch on our limited resources. When my mother looked at both places, she said that the Heights house was by far the wiser purchase. When we concurred, she wrote us a \$1,000 check as a house-warming gift, which we greatly appreciated. Recalling the “God works in mysterious ways theme” of this book, if my mother had not written that \$1,000 check, we probably would not have purchased the Leroy Heights house, and our journey would have been radically different.

The house was great, but it did have a design flaw. The hookups for the laundry were in the garage. To get to the washing machine and dryer, we had to go out the front door and then raise the garage door to access the laundry area. That was a real pain, especially with three small children. The garage also had a door that opened into the backyard. I called a carpenter who installed a sturdy outside door in Claudia's bedroom. The door had a strong lock and deadbolt. Now either Betty or I could simply gather the laundry from the adjacent bathroom and take the wash basket through the newly installed door and into the garage via its back door.

Years later, we drove through the old neighborhood and found that our first home was for sale. We had purchased the house for \$11,500 and had sold it for \$15,000. Out of curiosity, we called the real estate agent who said that the asking price was \$89,900. He also wanted to show us the house, but when I declined, he was insistent. What the heck. We took the tour down memory lane and grinned from ear to ear when the salesman pointed to the door we had installed and proclaimed that this house was the only one in the tract that had that feature. Several years later, Betty checked out the old place on the computer—hold on to your hats. The current owner had just paid a little under a million dollars for it. Yep, that's right—it wasn't the house, but as that old saying goes, it was location, location, location.

It seems that I did not learn my lesson at San Jose State, and I went to a LeRoy Heights Improvement Association meeting. Just as I returned home from the meeting, our telephone rang and I was told that one of our neighbors had been in a critical accident and desperately needed blood—could I possibly help? When I hung up, Betty asked what the caller wanted. I replied, “Boy, this outfit wants blood!” The good news was that the Association members responded generously at the blood bank. When I last talked with the accident victim, he was playing 18 holes of golf three times a week. The bad news was that at the next meeting I was elected as the Association President. I never quite figured out if that was a promotion or a demotion from being the Mayor of Spartan City.

Living in LeRoy Heights was a good experience for us. Most of us

were young and just starting out; on any given block there must have been 25 to 30 kids under the age of five who were supervised by stay-at-home moms. The kids played together and everyone was included, even if the color of their skin was different from the vast white majority. Neighbor helped neighbor; they babysat, had coffee together, knew and visited one another. They acted appropriately and had each other's back—and some even gave blood. Of course, all of that was due to my tremendous leadership.

Kidding aside, there were two things that I felt very good about—Christmas lights and Christmas trees. Early on, the Association negotiated to purchase quality lights at a very low price and to provide them at cost to the homeowners. Just about everyone jumped on the wagon, so during the holiday season our community was ablaze with red, green, blue, yellow, and white lights hanging from rooftops. For many, the lights held religious significance, but for just about *everyone* they also symbolized a great sense of community and togetherness. Another source of pride to me was the planting of hundreds of evergreen seedlings. The seedlings went on to become majestic trees, stretching to the heavens and giving the community an enduring sense of beauty, identity, and togetherness. They also stabilized the hillsides.



CHAPTER 27

My No Pet Rule

AS I RECALL, AND MY MEMORY IS GETTING DIMMER EVERY DAY, OUR FIRST PET WAS PRINCE. We inherited him when my mother passed away. The problem was that he was a “high strung” adult dog that snapped at the kids. One day he went too far and took a chunk out of Larry, so it was off to the pound for Prince.

The other day I was thinking about that, and I felt that I had let my mom down. Then I remembered that when I was a kid, she had taken my dog to the pound. Our house was on Laurel Canyon Boulevard, and she was fearful that our dog that was losing his sight might wander onto that major thoroughfare. Then, trying to rescue him, I would be run over by a truck. On the Anderson homestead, the well being of the children always came first, and it still does!

Princess was the next dog on the scene. She came to us by way of Betty’s “Oh it won’t hurt just to take a look” philosophy. We were at Happy Valley, our church campground, when a neighbor invited us to look at his new puppies. I said, “Thanks. But no thanks.” But Betty said, “Oh, it won’t hurt...” The rest is history.

We lived in Fremont at the time, and our backyard was completely enclosed by a six-foot fence. Somehow, that dog was able to get up on the top of that fence. She then proceeded to walk along the top of it—not just once, but over and over again. Try as I might, I could not figure out how she did it unless she had a few ancestors that were cats, or perhaps a witch had put a spell on her. Or maybe she was part of a circus act and had escaped. That said, walking the fence was not the problem. She could have done that all day long, and no harm would have come of it. The real problem was that she snapped at people. Mary, our newest

addition, was now a toddler, and we worried that our snapping highflyer might cause her bodily injury.

So one day after the children had left for school, I took Princess to the animal shelter. I intended to spare the kids the trauma of losing her, but for a guy who was is the “perfect father,” it was a really stupid thing to do. That said, our kids seemed to handle it well. However, just recently, Bob, now a retired adult, told me how much that dumb stunt had hurt him. Right now I’m banging my head against the wall and I’m saying to myself “stupid, stupid, stupid!” So, once again, Bob, I am sorry, but I really had no choice—the animal shelter wouldn’t take Mary.

That led to my “no pet” rule, which meant that when I left on a trip, it was very likely that there would be a new pet underfoot when I returned. Yesirree, my friends, I ruled my house with an iron fist.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, Claudia had taken a liking to Welsh corgis—you know that expensive breed that the Queen of England has. I was thinking that she must pay for them by using national treasury funds. Anyway, Claudia talked a breeder into letting her have one of his pooches at a highly discounted rate. Claudia named him Ian. We were now living in Fresno, California, and Bob and Larry had somehow acquired a guinea pig. Of course, I was still ruling my house with an iron fist. In view of the overwhelming success of my “no pet” rule, I had now instituted the “care and feeding” rule.

In keeping with that new rule, the Boys were cleaning the guinea pig’s cage in our backyard, which was securely fenced. While they cleaned, the guinea pig was running around freely. Suddenly Ian darted from the house and went directly for the rodent. It was “all hands on deck” as we rushed to the aid of the guinea pig, only to come to a screeching stop when the corgi started to herd the guinea pig all over the back yard. Years ago, corgis were bred to herd cattle, and when the cows kicked back, the corgis were so low to the ground that the cattle hooves missed their mark. So, there we were, centuries later, and instinct kicked in. That corgi had the time of its life, herding the guinea pig all around our yard. Meanwhile, that poor guinea pig was getting the workout of his life. We all sat there, laughing ourselves silly and marveling at God’s eternal plan.

The church had a graduate program for its ministers. It was originally set up so that we were assigned to participate in four six-week sessions over a period of a couple of years. I was two-thirds through the original program (that's 18 completed weeks of study), when they changed the program to a full year of study. You guessed it. I was now one of the first honored guests of the new program, and I was thinking that they mistakenly believed that "I'd get it second time around."

That required a household move. We were now living in Independence, Missouri, and I was in big trouble because I had rented a house with only one bathroom. With three kids, two adults and one bath, Betty considered divorce but decided instead to never trust me to rent anything again, unless I was accompanied by a responsible adult.

We had just made the move to Independence when Ian escaped through the front door, tore into the street and was run over by a car. Claudia was devastated and wanted another corgi. Old Softy Dad thought that she was not only going through the emotional trauma of moving and being uprooted from school, but also now her beloved dog had been killed. So, of course, she wanted another corgi. It turned out that the nearest breeder we could find was 75 miles away, and the owner's asking price for the dog was double our monthly food budget. But our daughter was hurting, so Good Old Dad suspended his no pet rule and Claudia was then happy. That's how Dylan became a member of our family.

However, Dylan was epileptic, and a year later after our move to Vancouver, Washington, he began to have seizures. One day he escaped from the yard and did not return. We searched high and low for him, but there was no Dylan. One day on the way to school, Larry found him dead in a field. With tears streaming down his cheeks, he carried him home so that he could be buried in our backyard.

So here we were again, and Claudia wanted to purchase another corgi. That time I said no, not just because of the cost, but also because of the trauma that we went through when one was lost. However, she was insistent. After much pleading by her, I made the mistake of saying that if she could pay for the dog, she could have another one. Of course,

at that point I was thinking that there was no way in Hades (that's the name of a town in California) that she could pull it off. That day I made two big mistakes. First, I forgot that she had her mother's genes, and when those genes made up their mind about something, it had a way of getting done. The second mistake was that I had said all that in earshot of Claudia's two brothers (who are also related to their mother). They figured that if she could have a dog if she paid for it, then so could they. Of course, they did not bother to check with me, and before I could learn of their diabolical plan, they pooled their money and rushed to the animal shelter where they paid \$15 for a German shepherd.

The shepherd was black and white, and they named him Raider after the Oakland Raiders. Miracles of miracles, somehow Claudia managed to wheel and deal and talked the breeders down from their asking price. She then scraped together the remaining \$300 for the corgi that she named Gibran. We now had two dogs, which, if you stop to think about it, was a lot of K-9's, considering my "absolutely, positively, and under no circumstance" pet rule.

The saga of the two dogs turned out well. Claudia had a constant companion that she loved dearly. She now breeds and shows beagles, along with working as an assistant principal at a high school in Battle Ground, Washington, so she can feed the dogs. At least someone is taking my "care and feeding" policy seriously.

Raider also turned out to be worth his weight in "Kibbles and Bits." He was very protective, and both Betty and I felt very good about his standing guard while I traveled all over the country. Our house in Vancouver, Washington, was a tri-level with three bedrooms on the top floor and a room downstairs that sometimes doubled as an extra bedroom. When we turned in for the night and the room downstairs was not being used, Raider would position himself in the hall adjacent to the three upstairs bedrooms. However, when all four rooms were occupied, he would reposition himself and sleep on the landing between the two floors. It reminded me of one of the Army's General Orders that started out, "I'll walk my post in a military manner..."

Betty's mother, Beth, had a nervous streak; and when she was visiting

and sometimes became stressed, the octaves of her voice would rise. When that happened, Raider would lift his head and growl. Magically, Beth's voice would then drop to normal. I would lean over and pat Raider on the head and, in a quiet voice, say, "Good Boy."

Trapper (named after the FVHS Trappers) was Mary's dog that she obtained from the animal shelter. Since she could not take him with her when she left for the University of Washington, Trapper more or less, by default, became Betty's dog. The kids had left the nest and I was traveling about 80% of the time, so he was good company for Betty. He met Betty at the door when she came home from a full day of teaching and sat on her lap while being petted in the evening. Good-naturedly, Mary accused her mother of stealing her dog, especially after Betty transported the "kidnapped" K-9 across two state lines when we moved to California, with the added threat of the international boundary of Mexico but a short drive away. Eventually, Betty promised to buy Mary another dog when she had a proper place to keep it—but that is another story that I will leave to my daughter to tell, should she ever want to do so.

Our home in Citrus Heights had a swimming pool that the previous owners had covered with a floating solar blanket. One day Trapper was playing with a tennis ball that bounced and came to rest on top of the cover and of course, he was right after it. I started to intervene but, standing at the ready, decided to wait and see what would happen. His weight was such that the blanket did not collapse but eventually started to sink, ever so slowly. You should have seen the look on that dog's face. Was the world coming to an end, or what? He certainly had never experienced a "sinking feeling" before. He was soon in deep enough to dog paddle to the stairs and climb out of the pool, no worse for wear. A few days later, I placed him in the deep end of the pool and again, he successfully dog-paddled to the stairs. He never got into the pool "voluntarily," but his ability to find his way out of the pool calmed my concern about his safety. I also removed the solar blanket, eliminating the risk that Trapper might be trapped under the blanket should he accidentally fall into the pool.

If you wanted to get Trapper excited, all you had to do was say

the word “walk.” It was my custom to walk two miles a day, which amounted to four laps around my block, and Trapper was always eager to go with me. One day we did a lap around the block and had started on the second lap when Trapper sat down and would go no farther. No amount of coaxing would move him, so I took him back to the house, put him in the yard, and went on my way. From that time on, one lap was his maximum; he was always excited to go, but after one-half of a mile, he was done. He was willing (make that excited), but he was not a pup any longer. He was feeling his age and the pain that came with it.

He was alone quite a bit of the time, since Betty taught during the day and I traveled much of the time on church business. Our yard was well fenced, and Trapper had the run of it. He was able to go in and out of the garage through a doggie door, and when we were away for a day or two or even longer, the teenage girl next door looked after him. She did a good job, and we knew that if something happened, her parents would step in to fill the void—but still.

By that time, we had also retired and we were traveling more and for longer periods. Trapper’s health had continued to decline significantly, and we were beginning to have concerns about the trauma it might cause the girl next door if she came over one day and found Trapper dead. It was, of course, my responsibility to do something about it. After Betty and I talked, I took him to the vet. Trapper looked trustingly at me, as I held and petted him before the vet administered that final shot. Once done, Trapper was gone before one could snap their fingers. He would no longer experience pain, and I’m certain that it was the right thing to do; I owed that to him. But still, as I write these words, my eyes well up with tears. In that completely different context, I think of the words I used to speak to Raider, “Good Dog!” And that he was!



CHAPTER 28

Praying, Learning, Choosing and Serving

DURING THE MIDDLE OF 1959, I RECEIVED A CALL FROM MY PASTOR WHO SAID THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO MEET WITH ME. When I hung up, Betty asked me what he wanted, and I said that he wanted to meet with me, but didn't say why. Then I was surprised to hear myself saying, "But he wants to tell me that I've been called to the priesthood office of Elder." After discussing that with Betty, I accepted the call and signed up for a correspondence course that was designed to prepare me for ordination. At the conclusion of each lesson, there was an open book exam that I mailed into headquarters where it was graded and returned. As I recall, there were twelve lessons and I only missed one question—which was *definitely* the fault of my pastor. The missed true or false question went something like, "As a newly ordained Elder, it would be a wise to pattern your life after your pastor." Now I had a great pastor. He was a dedicated disciple, an effective church leader and a man of high integrity and moral fiber. I quickly marked the answer "true." When the corrected exam came back—it had a big red check mark next to that question with a margin notation that read, "*Bob, don't put your trust in man, they will let you down. Put your trust in Jesus Christ.*"

I believe that was the most helpful thing I learned from the entire course because while my pastor never let me down, others have—but never my Lord. Rather, he has lifted me up every step of the way. I was

ordained to the office of Elder in Berkeley, California, on December 13, 1959. The Holy Spirit was there in great abundance, and on that day Betty and I took another “big step” forward with Jesus.

Whenever someone calls me Bobby, it has something to do with my past. Such was the case at one of our church’s World Conferences when a delegate asked if I was Bobby Anderson. When I said that I was, he told me that he had a message for me from Sister Alice. He had visited her in a rest home in California some weeks before. When she learned he was going to be at the conference, she asked him to look me up and tell me that she had kept her promise to pray for me every day. At first, I had trouble recalling when she had made that commitment. Then it flooded into memory, and I remembered her coming to me after church one Sunday just as I was about to be shipped out to Japan and Korea with my National Guard unit. She had tears in her eyes as she took both of my hands in hers and spoke that promise; it had been over 20 years ago.

Throughout the years, I have often shared my testimony as to how I have felt and benefited from the prayers of others on my behalf. That was especially so during times of great need, particularly as I was slugging it out in combat. However, I had no idea that that good sister had continued to pray for me long after my return home. Let me tell you, that was one meaningful and humbling conversation that Brother and I had on the conference floor that day. When I asked for her address, I learned she had passed away shortly after the two of them had visited. I wished I could have thanked her, and I could have. I just had not taken the time. It gives me pause to wonder how many others like her I had “passed by” on the way. That good sister was certainly a valiant prayer warrior and a dedicated disciple who, to the very end, was reaching out in testimony. Her chosen messenger, however, was one who had gone where I had failed to go. Two powerful messages were heard that day, and I had two high-water marks for which to stretch.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch in San Pablo, things were happening fast and furious. I was now the President of the LeRoy Heights Improvement Association, President of the Board of Directors of the San Pablo Boy’s Club, the Vice President of the Board of Directors of the Contra

Costa Boy's Club, as well as being on the board of the Contra Costa Community Chest (the forerunner to the United Fund). During that time, I was also honored with a Life Membership in the California Congress of Parents and Teachers for my service to children and youth.

Later, I further served on the Board of Directors of the California Council on Alcoholic Problems, the Sacramento Interfaith Service Bureau, the Happy Valley Conference Center, the Northern California Foundation Fund, and I also served on the Central Pacific Endowment Fund. Earlier I had served two terms as the Mayor of Spartan City.

I received an invitation to join the Richmond Elks Club. In our area, that was “the club” to belong to, both politically and businesswise. There definitely were advantages for me to accept the invitation. Whatever expenses were involved, Pillsbury would have gladly covered, and it would provide me with an opportunity to “rub shoulders” with the movers and shakers of our community. It would also be beneficial to the Boy's Clubs, since the Elks were heavy contributors to both the San Pablo and Richmond clubs—and we are talking big bucks here. In addition, it would look good on my résumé.

However, I had a dilemma. At that time the national Elks organization did not accept blacks into their membership. That was incongruent because the Richmond Elks were leaning over backwards to support the Richmond Boy's Club whose membership must have been at least 90% black. I applauded them for that, as well as for all of the other outstanding things they did for our community. After praying about it, however, I chose not to accept the invitation. My lasting regret about that is that I was not upfront with them as to why I made the decision I did. I should have spoken out, but my concern was that my reason for declining might negatively affect their support for the Boy's Clubs. That is one area where I wish I could take a “do over.” I should not have taken the “safe way” out. Perhaps more importantly, I should have trusted their integrity. Those were good men who were members of an outstanding organization, and I should have trusted them. *Gentlemen, my apologies!* Of course, that is all old history because the Elks now welcome blacks into their membership. I salute

them for that change, especially since they made it long before other organizations were strong-armed into doing so.

There was another organization that I chose not to join. However, before I go further, let me apologize to all Veterans' organizations by saying, "Honest, guys and gals, I really did not mean it." During the first two summers that I was back from Korea, I worked for Tri-Engineering. There was a guy there who kept after me to join the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW). Let me tell you, he was *persistent*. I mean that guy did not know the meaning of the word "No!"

I got through the first summer okay, but when I came back to work the second summer, there he was again. One thing I will say for him, he was really a believer and supporter of the VFW. Finally, in desperation, I said, "Look, I don't smoke and I don't drink and I don't chase after women. So, what can your organization offer me?" He got a blank look on his face and said, "Well, we'll bury you when you're dead." I never did quite figure out if he thought I was already dead or if he was talking about some time in the future. Again, I apologize to my comrades-in-arms for my brashness that day. That said, I want to affirm to all of you that I am well aware of all the good these organizations do. I am thankful for your hard work, patriotism and splendid service that you offer to all of our Veterans (including myself) and their families. While I have never joined any Veterans group, I do support them both politically and financially. Keep up the good work!

While things were going fairly well in San Pablo, there were a few problems. Most importantly, we were concerned with the quality of the schools. Another problem was that the local newspaper editor had taken a liking to me, and I was getting all kinds of press coverage. At first, I thought that was because of my good looks. Then someone suggested that I was being groomed for political office. "*Political office!*" I thought. That certainly was not anything I wanted to be involved in. Maybe now would be a good time to "get out of Dodge."

It was at that point that the Pillsbury Company promoted me to be the key account manager for the five major chains in the Bay area. That position accounted for about 60% of our business and was staggering,

given the fact that there were 21 other salesmen assigned to our office who, combined, brought in the remaining 40% of our business. I'd like to say that the difference in those staggering figures was due to my remarkable salesmanship, but the truth of the matter is that these figures were established long before I arrived on the scene and spoke to the market dominance of the chains. For me, that position was the top of the sales ladder, and I had claimed it in a little over five years. Now get ready for the *stunner!*

Being proactive, I went in to see my sales manager about moving to Fremont, California. The head offices for most of the key chains I had responsibility for were located there, and Martin liked his salesmen to live in the territories they were assigned. There were several reasons for that, but perhaps the biggest had to do with travel time; to maneuver through Bay area traffic was especially horrendous.

Martin gave his blessing, so Betty and I went house hunting. We purchased a 2,000 square-foot house with 4 bedrooms, 2 baths, a double garage, and built-ins in the kitchen. Betty also made certain that it was in a good neighborhood with excellent schools. In fact, a brand-new high school was right down the street. It featured an Olympic-sized outdoor heated swimming pool that the kids took to like ducks take to water. We were sitting pretty and, at that point, thought it would be our "permanent" home. There would be no more moving, and it was here that we would raise our family. That reasoning was rather naïve when I look back upon it, but that was our thinking and that was what we wanted.

Then the other shoe dropped! It made absolutely no sense, and I have never been able to figure it out (unless God was at work in one of His mysterious ways). Pillsbury paid for household moves, so I went in to see Martin about arranging for the moving company. I was stunned when he said the company was not going to pay for our move. I reminded him that we had talked about that and that he had approved my move to Fremont. "Well," he said, "I just said that would be okay; I didn't say anything about the company paying for it." I knew he played games, but what kind of game was this? I was his top salesman who had just been

promoted to calling on the major chains, and he was renegeing on what we he agreed to do.

Well, I was not going to play his game, so I said that either he kept the agreement we made or I would resign. He suggested that we “sleep on it” for a couple of days. I agreed to that proposal. What he did not know was that I had recently been approached about going to work for a brand-new startup company, and I was intrigued by the offer.

I went straight home to talk with Betty about what had transpired and the next morning called the person who had approached me to see if they were still interested. They were, and the next afternoon I had an interview with the J. Nelson Prewit Company. When I walked out the door, I had a very attractive offer. The next morning I met with Martin and learned that his position had not changed, so I submitted my two weeks’ notice and immediately called Betty to bring her up to date. My second call was to the startup company to accept their offer.

Just before my two-week notice was up with Pillsbury, the company announced a huge sales promotion. It was the “mother of all promotions,” and here I was leaving and Martin had no one on hand to take my place. It was crazy, but somehow I felt bad. Pillsbury had been good to me, but I told myself it was not my problem and, besides, I was flying back to the East Coast in two days to meet Mr. Wilson, the founder of the other corporation. Then a strange thing happened. The Prewit Company called and told me that Mr. Wilson was going to Europe on an important business matter and would be away for two weeks. The voice on the other end of the line also told me that Mr. Wilson sent his regrets. He wanted to meet me personally, and our meeting would take place upon his return. Then, as if to ease concerns, the voice half jokingly went on to say that this would be like having an extra two weeks of vacation with pay. I could use the time any way I wanted, but I might want to pick up my new station wagon. It was waiting for me at the dealer.

Now to be perfectly honest, I was angry and disappointed with my former sales manager at Pillsbury. However, he had taught me a lot, and while my respect for him had diminished, I still liked him and I

knew he was in a spot, albeit of his own making. I remember saying to myself that I was bigger than that, so I swallowed my anger and offered to stay on for an additional two weeks in order to handle the big promotion with the chains. I was surprised at his immediate reaction; he jumped right on it.

I sold a humongous amount of product and probably saved Martin from doing a lot of explaining to the head office. It also gave me the opportunity to say proper goodbyes to the chain store buyers that I had worked with. That proved beneficial down the road. The other good news was that I received two weeks' salary from each of the corporations, and the extra funds more than paid for my household move. Today we'd call that a win-win situation! More on this later.

Jay Wilson (not his real name) came from a background in advertising and had a crazy notion that you could sell products to mothers through their children. Remember now, this was in the early days of television, so that was cutting-edge thinking. The problem was that he did not have a product to sell. Then the thought struck him that kids hate to take baths, and mothers hate to clean tubs. That idea, in turn, led to the creation of a new bath-time product that targeted children. The kids loved it; after all, if Captain Kangaroo hyped it, they *had* to have it. If the kids had to have it, so did the store buyers, who certainly did not want the kids' mothers going somewhere else to buy it. Besides, it had a good profit margin and was flying off grocers' shelves.

I signed with Prewit because I figured it might be a ground floor opportunity and was told that other products were in the pipeline. On paper, I had responsibility for 11 western states and Hawaii, but the real work took place in the 7 key television markets within my territory: Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Diego, Denver, Portland, Seattle, and Salt Lake City. I never got to Hawaii until I went on my own dime. However, on the bright side, I was a hero to every kid in my neighborhood under seven, because I “knew” the Good Captain and many of his friends.

In every single letter that Betty and I wrote to each other while I was overseas, we said that when I got home we would always stay together. Nothing was going to separate us. However, as it turned out, all of the

sales positions and promotions came with huge spans of territory that had to be covered. Surprisingly, we handled those traveling demands well, and in hindsight, I see that the Lord was at work preparing us for what was to come.



CHAPTER 29

Moving On

PILLSBURY AND PREWIT MERCHANDISED THEIR PRODUCTS DIFFERENTLY. Pillsbury used a direct sales force, meaning that the sales representatives worked for them. Prewit, on the other hand, marketed their product through food brokerage firms that contracted with companies to represent their products in the geographical area that they serviced. They sold a wide range of products from various companies, with the sales representatives' paychecks coming from the brokers who employed them. My job was to work with these brokers and their sales force by suggesting ways that they could best represent our product, while at the same time evaluating the job they were doing. In short, I made sure we were getting what we were paying for. During this time I was also learning about another end of the business—knowledge that later led to a new job offer.

One of the principles that Wilson believed in was to do everything first class. His background was in television advertising, and he strongly believed that everything was about image. I flew first class, stayed in the best hotels, ate in the best restaurants, and had a generous expense account. I know that sounds great, but the luster tarnished quickly. Sometimes I found myself in a five-star restaurant, poring over the menu, trying to find something that would taste different. Just ask any “road warrior” about this. I did a good job for the company, and they treated me well. After working for Prewit for about a year and a half, however, we still had only one product. I felt that without a larger product line, the company would not succeed.

About that time, the Joseph Howard and Company asked if I would be interested in heading up their sales force. I was given a very attractive

offer that I accepted. It was a good decision in many ways, especially since Prewit sold the company about four months later. Now here is another stumper. During a lunch with the owner of the firm, I asked why he had contacted me about becoming his sales manager. He told me that Martin, my old Pillsbury boss, had recommended me. Go figure!

Again, the Lord blessed me in my new position and business flourished. Personally, my family and I had excellent benefits; I made good money and was at the top of my game. More importantly, I was home every night, had weekends off, and determined my own work schedule. The big advantage, however, was that the family was happy and doing well; the future looked bright.

The Lord was also blessing us regarding the church. I had served as the pastor of the Fremont congregation for two years and found the people to be loving, caring, and supportive. That was true, especially, as we leaders became more involved and competent through training and guided experience. The congregation grew from an average attendance of 50 to around 100. We purchased property on which to build a church and successfully completed a two-week Vacation Church School. However, what I got most excited about was that in *each* of those two years, the congregation had a 14.2% baptismal growth rate. Praise the Lord!

Our congregation met in a rented hall on Sundays. When we decided to hold a Vacation Church School, two questions begged for answers—namely, where would it take place and who would direct it. Betty had the answers. It would be at our house, and she would lead it. So, for 2 weeks, Monday through Friday, every inch in our 4-bedroom home was overrun as more than 50 children, teachers, and staff just kept going, going, and going like the Energizer bunny. In fact, things were so busy at our house that I had to go to church on Sunday to get some rest.

When you put something like that together, it takes a lot of planning and coordination, along with tons of cooperation and adult hands to achieve a successful outcome. Happily, our people supported that event with over 25% of our adult membership lending a hand. In addition, just about all of our kids participated in the activities. Attendance was high from beginning to end. Most importantly, the kids were excited

and filled with enthusiasm as their loving and dedicated teachers taught them, both by word and example, about the love of Jesus.

Betty was also the publicity director for our Fremont congregation. One day we opened the local newspaper and read that the religious editor announced that, starting the following week, she was going to do a 16-part series on the denominations in our area. The next day Betty went in to see if our church was one of the 16. We were not, and Betty asked if we could be included, if possible. The editor said that it was a strange thing; she had announced she had 16 articles and then discovered she only had 15. Yes, she said, she would be happy to include our denomination.

Betty asked what we could do to help, and the editor said that she was writing the series independently. The only help she needed was to obtain some books about the beliefs of our denomination. A quick call to Herald House, the publishing arm of the church, satisfied that need. When the article on our church was published in the local paper, I was blown out of the water—it was (and still is) the best independent article on our faith group that I had ever read. I sent copies of the article to church headquarters with the suggestion that an appropriate person acknowledge her good work.

A few weeks later when Betty called at the newspaper office, the editor saw Betty and excitedly hurried over from her desk to greet her. She was Catholic and had just received a glowing letter from the President of our church, expressing his personal appreciation and congratulating her on such a fine article. To her, that was no little thing. She said that that letter was like receiving one from the Pope!

The letter was prominently displayed in the foyer of the newspaper's building for a number of years until the religious editor announced that she was moving on to another paper. It was at that point that a dispute arose over the ownership of the letter; was it the property of the newspaper or the religious editor? I suspect that there was much more involved than a piece of paper, but it certainly became the focal point of the argument. I have no way of knowing how it was resolved, but if I were a betting man, I'd have put my money on the editor.

Stay with me now, there is more to the story. Each year the local

Chamber of Commerce sponsored an event that involved many of the city's civic groups and churches. Most of the work for that activity fell to the secretary of the chamber, who happened to be Jewish. She had just finished having a number of signs painted for the event when the church editor called her attention to the fact that she had confused our denomination with another of a similar name. Her reaction was to brush the editor's observation aside by saying "same difference." Later the editor asked the secretary how Father Levi was doing after his fall. The secretary said that he was doing fine, but sounding a little indignant, added that it was *Rabbi* Levi—not *Father* Levi. "Same difference," said the editor and the signs were repainted.

Have you ever found yourself in a situation where you got something that you did not really want? To set the tone for what is coming next in my story, let me reaffirm a few of things. First, when I was overseas and Betty and I wrote our love letters to one another, the one thing that we said repeatedly was that when I got home, we were always going to be **together**. Second, I never aspired to any position or office in the church, and that would certainly go double for Betty. Our allegiance has always been, and continues to be, to our Lord, and our ministry has been one of response to His love and the leading of the Holy Spirit. Our desire was and is to be a faithful Disciple, and God has richly blessed the ministry that we have offered in His name and through His power.

As I look back in our lives, I can clearly see the hand of God pointing us to this place. Hindsight is always so much clearer than the here and now. The church was asking us to go into the ministry full-time. If it were just the church doing the asking, the answer would have been a resounding, "Thanks, but no thanks." We were already offering positive and affirming ministry, and going into the ministry full-time was not something that we wanted to do. The price was far too high. It meant taking a two-thirds pay cut with no raises except for cost of living; it meant uprooting our children, selling our family home and moving frequently. Worst of all, it meant being away from home 80% of the time. Let me put this into perspective. In the business world, I worked for a company where frequently I had *days* when my business expenses would be greater than

what my family received from the church for an *entire month*. That was quite a disincentive, but the big issue for us was that I would be away from Betty and my family 80% of the time—which equates to over 21 years of being away during my 33 years of full-time service. That’s a long time for a couple who vowed to never be separated again.

Understand that I am not complaining. We knew what we were getting into when we signed on the dotted line. This is just an attempt to explain *why* we were so reluctant to do so, and that brings us to the *big* question: Why did we do it? Read on.

One night Betty and I came home from a congregational priesthood and wives’ gathering. Betty went into our living room while I went to my study to put my briefcase away. When I came back to the front of the house, Betty was sitting on the couch crying. My first reaction was, “What have I done now?” I asked what was wrong and she said, “Nothing.” But she just continued to cry. I probed deeper and she finely said, “I don’t want to do it!” “Do what?” I asked. Out came the words, “I don’t want to go under Appointment.” That phrase meant going into the ministry full-time.

I was surprised at my immediate reaction. I felt a combination of surprise, frustration, and anger. I thought, “Who said anything about going under Appointment?” That certainly was not a part of my game plan, but what I missed was that this was about God’s plan, not mine, and that He was laying the groundwork.

Later we were at a church conference in Berkeley, California. Betty and I were sitting in a pew when a man tapped me on the shoulder and said that Apostle Couey would like to see me. I found him alone in a classroom where he greeted me and asked if Betty and I would consider accepting Appointment. “I might,” I said, “but Betty never would.” He asked that we pray about it. I headed back to the pew where I had left Betty. She was crying again and immediately said, “They want you to go under Appointment, don’t they?”

The Lord came to each of us in very powerful and individual ways. This was not something we wanted to do; we would have preferred to serve faithfully in what we were doing. The Lord’s call, however, was

clear and persistent. In February of 1964, we responded and accepted Appointment and served in that capacity for 33 years.

With the exception of a 10-month stint at the School of the Restoration in Independence, Missouri, for graduate studies, all of our assignments were to the West Coast of the United States and Canada.

Those included the following (dates are approximate):

- Los Angeles Stake, February 1964-April 1964
- Central California District and Coastal Missionary Development Area, May 1964-March 1968
- Coastal and Mojave Missionary Development Areas, April 1968-August 1969
- School of the Restoration, September 1969-June 1970
- Southwest Washington District, July 1970-May 1973
- Apostolic Field of William E. Timms, April 1974-March 1975
- Pacific Northwest Region, March 1975-April 1983
- Ministerial Reassignment, (Cancer-free, to offer ministry as health allowed) May 1983-December 1984
- Pacific Southwest Region, January 1985-March 1990
- Central Pacific Region, April 1990-May 1996

In addition to the above assignments, I often served as a guest minister in other jurisdictions throughout the United States and Canada. Those invitations usually involved preaching, teaching, and facilitating at reunions, retreats, workshops, and seminars, and supporting youth caravans and camps. In addition, I was also in demand for specialized ministry in the areas of outreach, witnessing, planning, communication, counseling, and personal ministry. I also did dishes, babysat, and picked up trash, along with whatever else needed doing.

In 1994, Betty retired from the Roseville California School District. Then two years later, in June of 1996, with 33 years under my belt, I retired from Appointment, but I have continued to offer ministry as time and circumstances have permitted.



CHAPTER 30

A Funny Way to Run a Railroad or Appointment and Compensation

THE CHURCH HAD A UNIQUE WAY OF COMPENSATING ITS APPOINTEES. At the beginning of the year, the family prepared a budget based on “just need and wants” and submitted it to the Presiding Bishop (Chief Financial Officer) for approval. Adjustments were made and payments, referred to as family allowance, were then sent directly to the family. The principle was that church headquarters supported the family, but not the Appointee. So, my needs were not included in the yearly budget. My support came from the jurisdictions and members of the areas where I served. From those funds, I contributed an approved amount to the family budget. This supposedly reimbursed my family for what it cost to have me around when I was home. For as long as I can remember, that amount was \$25 per month and was dutifully reported each month on my Elder’s expense report.

It was soon apparent that we had a problem because, try as we might, we couldn’t live on what the church was sending us. When we entered Appointment we sold our house in Fremont, and the profit from that sale was deposited in our bank account. We were using that house fund to supplement our family allowance, but the fund was nearly depleted.

We thought the financial experts at headquarters knew what they were doing and were sending us adequate funds, but neither Betty nor I could figure out what we were doing wrong.

So we asked for financial counseling, and they sent a retired Bishop to our home to see if he could help us. After examining our financial records for 15 minutes, he said that the problem was obvious—we were not receiving enough money from headquarters. He recommended that they increase our family allowance by a certain amount and that the church also reimburse us for what we had spent out of our house fund. The Presiding Bishopric increased our allowance, but not to the degree the retired Bishop recommended; and nothing was ever mentioned about reimbursement.

We had accepted Appointment because of compelling individual testimonies to the effect that this was what the Lord wanted us to do. Since then, the leadings of the Spirit confirmed that to us on several different occasions. It had been about two years since we took the field, and during that period the church had placed a dozen or so new families under Appointment. We suddenly received a letter stating that the church could no longer support the number of Appointees we had, so a reduction in force was necessary. The letter went on to say that if we were thinking about leaving Appointment, now was the time to speak up. When I read the letter, I was heartsick. Betty and I would be fine. We were already having trouble making ends meet with what the church was sending us, and by making a couple of telephone calls I could be back peddling my wares in no time. However, those new people and their families had given up established professions and careers to “answer the call.” They had burned their bridges and were just not as saleable as I was. The pill would be a bitter one to swallow and the fallout among those families, their extended relations (most of whom were church members), and hundreds of church friends would be far reaching and long lasting.

So I thought that the thing for me to do was to make some calls, get my ducks lined up, and then write my letter of resignation. At the very least, perhaps my leaving would save one family. That night I woke up

with a start and said to myself, “Bob, where’s your faith? You are here today because this is where God planted you! Trust in Him to make the decision!” So, I did, and I never heard anymore about it. Of course, I kept praying for the good disciples and friends who were no longer in the Appointee ranks.

Having said all this, let me hasten to say that the Lord has always more than honored His part of the bargain with us, and we were always richly blessed. The blessings continue to this day.

I became very well acquainted with Interstate 5 and its connecting byways as I drove some 40,000 miles a year, making the rounds in my assigned areas. Occasionally, someone would ask about my job description, and I would always smile and say it’s the 3P’s (Pop In, Pop Off and Pop Out). Incidentally, it was rumored that if you wanted to know where the cheapest place to buy gas was in the area, I was the guy to ask.

Our first assignment was to the Los Angeles Stake, and it covered the area east of the Pacific Coast Range between San Diego and Ventura. It was a temporary 3-month assignment, and I understood that I would be reassigned following the April World Conference. I commuted the 350 miles from our Fremont home to Los Angeles on a basis of 3 weeks there and 1 week at home. Mostly I preached, taught classes, visited and started to learn the ropes of Appointment.

I had grown up in the LA area, so I was able to visit with many old friends. Another advantage was that my dad, sister, niece, and grand nephew lived in Simi Valley, just outside of LA, so I got in some family visiting. One night my dad took me out for a prime rib dinner. I bit down and a front tooth broke. That affected my speech, so for the rest of the time I was in LA, “I Whistled While I Preached.” I was right in vogue since Disneyland was right down the street!

At the 1964 World Conference, my assignment was changed to the Central California District and the Coastal Missionary Development Area. Both of these jurisdictions were east of the Coast Range and roughly covered California from Modesto and Monterey in the north to Bakersfield and Santa Barbara in the south. Incidentally, those areas covered some of the world’s most magnificent scenery. I kept wondering

how I ever lucked out by being assigned to such a beautiful part of God's creation. I finally decided that it must have been because of my righteous living, or maybe my humility.

There were also two advantages there. Yosemite was within the boundaries of the District. Betty had spent quite a bit of time camping there with her folks and had chosen that national park as our Honeymoon location. Now we were able to piggyback some trips to the park, while at the same time visiting members. You may also recall that Betty was born in Santa Barbara. Her grandparents were also long-term residents there, and she had spent many a summer and weekend living in their backyard. She loved the beach and ocean. Our family enjoyed some great times camping in that familiar spot and at nearby state parks—along with the tradition of having Grandfather Cash's Fried Bread on Saturday mornings, a mighty tasty tradition I might add.

Betty's parents, Ben and Beth, lived in Van Nuys, a hundred miles to the south and had their travel trailer parked in the Cash's backyard. So, Betty and I had "deluxe" accommodations, while the kids slept in "shelters" that their great-grandfather had erected for just such occasions. El Capitan State Park is just north of the city and at that time had a great beach. (Sadly, it was washed away by a major storm, never to return.)

The park accommodated trailers, so on many occasions, Betty's dad hauled his trailer up to El Capitan and set it up for us to use for a week or more. It was almost always parked in a prime location. One summer Claudia was baking some brownies in the trailer, while the rest of us were frolicking on the beach, and we heard a loud BOOM! We rushed to the trailer to find her okay, but a couple of cushions were slightly singed. Sometimes that butane is tricky, but she still made the best brownies around. Her chocolate pies are to die for; which reminds me, I haven't had a piece of that pie for a while. (Hint, Hint!)



An Angry Daughter, Woman in a Wheelchair, and a Stormy and Dark Night

ONCE RECEIVED A CALL FROM A VERY ANGRY DAUGHTER OF ONE OF OUR CHURCH MEMBERS. She told me that her mother had been a faithful member of the church all of her life, but now that her mother was in a rest home, the church was ignoring her. I said that I did not understand that since the pastor of that congregation was retired and was very diligent in offering ministry to our people. Nevertheless, I told her I would get back to her. It just so happened that I had a trip scheduled to her mother's area later in the week. On my way to that congregation, I stopped off to visit with that elderly member. When I entered her room, she had a smile on her face and said, "Oh Brother Anderson, I'm so glad to see you. No one ever comes to visit me." We talked for a while and when I left, I called her pastor to tell him about my visit with his parishioner and about the telephone call that I had received from her daughter. I could hear the concern in his voice when he said, "Bob, she just doesn't remember. I see her at least once a week, and I just visited with her yesterday." I thanked him for his ministry and diligence and

went on my way. On the way home I stopped off to pay the good sister another visit. When I walked into her room, she said, “Oh Brother Anderson, I’m so glad to see you. No one ever visits me anymore.” The next day I called her daughter and told her what I had discovered, but I had the distinct feeling that she did not believe me. I understand that a short time later she visited her mother and then moved her to a facility in another state that was closer to where she lived. Sadly, I never heard from her again.

On another occasion, I was walking down the hall of a rest home to visit one of our members. The hall was filled with residents in wheelchairs, and they were parked there for long periods of time. That was many years ago, and I’m thankful that such facilities are much better than they used to be.

Suddenly a woman called to me, “Young man, young man!” I stopped to greet her. “What are you doing here?” she asked. I told her that I was a minister visiting one of our church members. “What’s the name of your church?” she asked and when I told her, she said, “Why that’s the church I belong to!” “It is?” I asked, smiling. As we visited, it became pretty obvious that she was not a member. However, being a bit on the compulsive side, I sent her name and birth date to our Office of Membership Records. As I suspected, they had no record of her. I probably stopped by that rest home three or four times a year, and every time I neared the place where she usually sat, I heard the excitement in her voice as she cried out, “Here comes my pastor! Here comes my pastor!” I would stop and we would visit and pray together. Then one day there was no such greeting, and I learned that she had gone on to be with her Lord. Sometimes when I preached, I shared that story and explained that I believed the reason that she said she was a member of our church was because she thought that if she wasn’t, no one from the church would visit her—and sadly, she was right!

The day before leaving on a ministerial trip, I received a notice that a member was living in a small town on the coast. In fact, the town was so small that I had no idea where it was and had to look it up on the map. It turned out that it was about 125 miles north of the farthest

congregation where I would be offering ministry that coming Sunday. I would drive right by it on my way there and again on my return. That trip was a little unusual in that I was making it in order to represent the World Church at two congregational business meetings: one on Sunday morning and the other on that same Sunday evening. Do not ask me why we did that; those congregations were perfectly capable of conducting those meetings without my help, but it was policy and you can't fight City Hall. To get the most "bang for my buck," my itinerary called for me to arrive at the first congregation on Saturday night; be at their 10:00am Sunday business meeting; preach at 11:00; and then visit with the people while enjoying a great potluck. Then it was back in the car to race north to the second congregation. There I essentially did the same thing I had done earlier in the day, except that their business meeting was at 6:00pm and I preached at 7:00pm.

Normally I spent the night, but on that trip I needed to get home to attend a Monday meeting with some city officials. After the time-honored tradition of another potluck and more visiting, I climbed into my car for the 150-mile *trek* home. Up to that point, the weather had been good. However, as I pulled out of the church parking lot, rain began to pour, and I began to have misgivings about how I had poked fun at the old geezer who was working on that ark. By that time, it must have been 10:00 at night, and home was at least another 3 hours up the road. To make matters worse, it rained harder the farther north I drove. The highway was drowning in water, and the storm ditches on either side of the highway flowed like the rapids that Betty and I had traversed the previous summer. Then I remembered the notice from membership records that I had stuck in my pocket. When I looked at it, the information was sketchy. It just gave the names and noted where they lived in "such and such apartments" in the small town I was approaching. On my way down I thought that I might stop off to visit them on my way back, but that was ridiculous. It was now after 11:00 and the rain continued to pour. I dismissed the notion and continued on my way. But the matter kept nagging me, and suddenly I saw the highway sign pointing to the town. As I pulled off the highway, I spotted

an all-night liquor and gas station. Pulling up as close to the front door as possible, I made a dash through the torrent of rain and asked the lone attendant if he knew where these apartments were.

“Sure,” he said. “Go down that road and turn left at the second street, then take the next left and they’re right there.” Sure enough, there they were, but they were not the kind of apartments I was expecting—you know, the kind that might have the names of the residents on the mailboxes. Lining both sides of the street were 24 World War II units that at one time most likely served as “company housing.” To complicate things, most everything was pitch black, except for one lone porch light. “This is crazy,” I said to myself, as I stepped out of my car and into a puddle of water that quickly rose above my ankle. A man answered my knock. I named my church and told him I was a minister and that I was looking for a family by the name of John Smith. At that point, he grabbed my hand and said, “Thank God that you’ve come. We’ve been praying that someone would.”

It turned out that he had a job offer that he needed badly in another state, but he needed a document from the State of California to finalize the opportunity. Sacramento promised to send it, but after repeated calls and promises, it had not arrived. He was running out of time and was at the end of his rope. “Could you possibly be the help I was praying for?” he asked. “Possibly,” I said and gave him the name of a friend at the Capitol and suggested that he mention my name when talking with him. Then I climbed back into my car and headed for home. As I drove off into the darkness, the rain stopped! The next day, I called my friend in the Capitol to tell him that Mr. Smith would be calling. My friend told me that Mr. Smith had already called, obtained the document, and walked it through the necessary channels. It was on its way via overnight delivery. Imagine that!



CHAPTER 32

Central California

WE CONTINUED TO LIVE IN FREMONT UNTIL OUR HOUSE FINISHED ESCROW. We made a profit, deposited it in our savings account, and then headed to Fresno to look at rentals. The first house we looked at reminded me of Betty's family home, and I knew then that it would be her choice. But, of course, she had to look at every rental in town.

The first house was located in an older, well established, and maintained neighborhood that at one time had been "the place" to live in Fresno. It had two bedrooms and a bath upstairs and a bedroom and bath downstairs, plus a room that I could use as an office. In addition, it was fenced and Betty's research indicated that the schools our kids would attend were good. The rent was only \$100 per month. The kids also wanted to get it because it was just two blocks from Baskin Robbins! We signed on the dotted line.

A retired couple who lived in San Luis Obispo owned the property. It was their family home where their children were reared, and we soon learned of their strong attachment to it. The manager was a long-time neighbor who lived five doors up the street. Unfortunately, the tenants that preceded us had misused the house, and it needed a lot of fixing up to be livable. In fact, it took me a full day of hard scrubbing to get the bathtub presentable. We dedicated the better part of a week to get the house shipshape.

Betty and I were working away when the doorbell rang. It was the manager. The owners were in town and wanted to come by to meet us. "Sure," we said. "We would like to meet them as well." About 20 minutes later, the owners arrived. We all toured the house and were outside by the garage when Betty noticed the woman was distraught

over the current condition of her family home. Betty engaged her in conversation and then said something like, “Don’t worry, we’ll fix it up and take good care of your home. When you’re over this way again, please stop by for a visit.” I noticed a tear coming from the woman’s eye.

At that point, I remembered a question I wanted to ask the manager. Our house in Fremont came with a built-in stove, and it went with the house when we sold it. So, we were without a stove. I had noticed that there was an old stove in the garage, and I asked him if we could use it until we had time to get a new one. He said that the previous renters had abandoned it, and he did not care what we did with it. That evening, the doorbell rang again. It was the owner. His wife had told him that the stove in the garage would “never do.” So, they had purchased a new one for the house, and Sears would be here tomorrow afternoon to install it. Sure enough, the following afternoon a Sears’s truck arrived and installed not only a new stove, but a top-of-the-line model as well. Now my eye was the one releasing a tear.

The fuses in my fuse box were blowing faster than I could replace them. I understood that the wiring in the house was old and was not designed to handle all of the electrical gadgets I had plugged into it. So, I tried to manage the electrical demand by turning things off and limiting what I had running at any one time. Instead of getting better, the situation seemed to be getting worse. I called the rental manager for advice. He sent an electrician out who said it was a good thing we had called because we had a fire waiting to happen. The bottom line was that the wiring had to be replaced. As I recall, that ran around \$1,600, which was \$400 more than the rent we were paying for the entire year. Once replaced, everything was dandy, except for the property owner’s wallet. I felt bad but figured that was better than having their beloved house in ashes or something worse.

Most of our neighbors were on the elderly side and seemed to like the idea of having a younger family in the neighborhood, especially one that had kids. Our neighbors sometimes hired our children to do various projects for them, and I was pleased when the kids became aware of a need and responded to it without benefit of payment. On the first

Halloween we were there, the kids wanted to go “trick or treating” to a different neighborhood with their friends. I bundled them up and watched as they went door-to-door, gathering treats along the way. When we got home, Betty said that our neighbors had been calling to ask if our kids were going to go trick or treating, so out we went for round two. They came back with bags full of candy bars a foot long, and it was obvious that our neighbors had prepared well for the occasion.

The only other young family on our block was a Mexican family with two children. They lived across the street from us. I call them Mexican because they were proud of their heritage and preferred that designation. Furthermore, before you mail me your letter of outrage denouncing my political incorrectness, you might be interested to know that my immediate family consists of four black Ecuadorians, a Chinese, and two others whose birthplace is other than the United States. You can make that three, if you consider Texas to be a foreign land.

The Mexican family and ours were friendly with one another, and Mary played with their kids. When Betty returned to Fresno City College to get her Associate of Arts degree and later was a substitute teacher, our Mexican neighbor (I will call her Maria) provided childcare for us. Spanish was the language spoken in their home, and later when Mary took Spanish in high school, her instructor ventured a guess that she spoke the language without an accent because of that early childhood experience.

However, things did not always go well. One day Maria brought a pot of chill over, saying that she had made it *especially mild* since she knew we were not used to spicy foods. The steam is still coming out of my ears!

Next door to us lived an elderly lady and her adult son who was the breadwinner. Mrs. Atkins liked to quilt, and she was always searching for used clothing that she could use in that endeavor. We wanted to be supportive, so early on we started giving her various kinds of clothing that she could use for her hobby. In addition, friends gave us clothing to pass on to her. She liked to make baby blankets that she sold for \$16 each. Betty suggested that we start buying them when we needed a baby shower gift. On our income, \$16 was a little steep for such a gift, but it

was an attractive, useful, and easy gift to purchase. More importantly, we wanted to support and encourage her.

Over the three years that we were in Fresno, we gifted about a dozen or so blankets to our friends who were expecting. We felt very good about doing that, and our friends were delighted. Betty saw the joy on the honoree's face as she opened the gift, and we occasionally had the pleasure of seeing the blankets in use. Most importantly, Mrs. Atkins had the resources to enjoy doing an activity that she so enjoyed. It was what we might call today a "Win, Win" endeavor, but still, it was a little pricy.

A few years later, an assignment change took us to Washington, and I went to visit a church member in her place of business. It was a retail operation where she sold items that had been hand crafted and placed in her store on consignment. Among the items were baby blankets. Thinking that I might have found a source for new baby gifts, I moseyed over to take a look. They were selling for over \$100! That was almost 5 times the price of Mrs. Atkins' blankets. "So much for doing a good deed," I thought, and I rushed to a mirror to see if my bandito's mask was showing.

During our second year in Fresno, the owners of our rental property said they would like to sell the house to us and suggested a price. If we had accepted, I would have had to check my bandito's mask again. The price was ridiculously low. Those people were astute business people, and I'm sure they were aware of the value of the house. But it was their former family home and they wanted a family to live in it who would value, appreciate, and care for it. Their memories were important to them. I told them that we would love to buy their home, but church policies made that impossible. They told us that we could continue to rent the house for as long as we wanted. I think they liked us!

Mine was a missionary assignment, and it soon became apparent that changes needed to take place. Every few years headquarters would come with a new missionary tool that would be purchased by congregations and then, unfortunately, placed in a dark closet to gather dust. Rarely was anyone given training in how to use the new tools or motivated to use them; I know I never was. So, I set about doing something about it.

The task was fourfold: to gain the support of pastors and other leaders; to identify and recruit potential missionary leaders; to train them in conducting positive and affirmative sessions with those seeking a more meaningful relationship with Christ; and to encourage positive outcomes in helping people become disciples of the Lord Jesus.

I started by visiting with District Presidents and pastors in their homes to explain and sell my vision. I requested their feedback, input, and support. I also challenged them to pray for and be on the lookout for “teachable” missionary leaders who had the potential to lead the outreach program in their congregations. I promised to get back to them to hear their recommendations. Together we would identify those that we believed would benefit from an Evangelism Workshop and would also share our outreach strategy, teach key missionary principles, and give hands-on training in conducting home meetings. As they shared in the workshop, participants were observed and prayerfully considered. The Holy Spirit was called upon to help identify those with the greatest missionary potential. Once identified, they were encouraged to avail themselves of additional training, always with an eye towards growing them into successful missionary leaders.

When they were ready, their task was to arrange for a series of seven weekly home meetings with an inquiring person and their family. The model called for us to team-teach the lessons—I handled the odd-numbered lessons; and they facilitated the even-numbered ones. The lessons combined the use of turnover charts with an open scripture method that I had developed to complement the charts. These sessions were straightforward and easy to teach—especially given the benefit of the workshop training and the modeling of earlier presentations.

We operated on the principle that it was the Holy Spirit—and not we—who brought about the conversion experience. So, everything we did fostered a climate where the Holy Spirit could freely operate. Following each session, we would go to a quiet place to talk about what had transpired. The emphasis was always on reinforcing those things that we had done right. This reinforced behaviors and techniques that should be repeated and enhanced self-confidence and a sense of accomplishment.

In addition, we never dwelt on what went wrong—after all, we were witnessing of our Lord and how could that be wrong? Instead, we focused on the principle that there was always room for growth.

During these one-on-one sessions, much teaching and learning took place. The “new bucks” had a lot to learn, and I was their “Master Teacher.” But all learning is a two-way street, and they taught me a thing or two along the way. Whenever I learned something from others, it was publicly acknowledged and incorporated in our sessions. Over the years they taught me so much that everyone thought I was brilliant—well maybe not everyone.

Having successfully completed the seven meetings, the next step was to have the newly trained missionaries become the trainers. They followed the same approach with their new partner and group as we had done in the first seven sessions—only this time they were the “Master Teacher” and made the even-numbered presentations while those “in training” facilitated the even-numbered sessions.

This process also allowed me to duplicate myself in that, once trained, the “new missionaries” would take responsibility for the outreach program of their congregation, while at the same time training others to assist in that effort. I was then free to introduce the program into other jurisdictions. Success bred success, and over time, more and more congregations adopted the program.

The Lord richly blessed us, and that first year the Central California District led the domestic field (the United States and Canada) in percentage of baptisms. The Coastal Missionary Development Area actually had a higher percentage, but for some reason headquarters did not include development areas in their baptismal reports. The following year another jurisdiction had a higher percentile figure than ours, but the district actually had a larger number of baptisms that year than they had for the preceding one. The Coastal Area also had an increase in baptisms. Now, please, do me the favor of reading the following lines in this paragraph very carefully because it is important to me that I make a point here. Percentages of baptisms are only numbers and mean nothing in themselves. What is important is what they represent: **people who**

have committed themselves to the Lord Jesus—*this is what I am passionate about!*

Another thing I am passionate about is the commandment of Jesus in Matthew 28:19-20. Known as the Great Commission, it reads:

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always, unto the end of the world. Amen.

More about this later.

Finally, there was a paramount principle that was above all others. I have continually stressed that *it's the task of the Holy Spirit to bring about the conversion experience*; we were just along for the ride. It was our task to provide an environment and set the tone so that everyone would be free to clearly hear and respond to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.



CHAPTER 33

Called as a Seventy

HAVING ACCEPTED FULL-TIME MINISTRY, IT WAS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT AT THE END OF TWO YEARS THE CHURCH NORMALLY ASKS AN APPOINTEE TO SERVE EITHER AS A HIGH PRIEST, WHICH WAS AN ADMINISTRATIVE ROLE, OR AS A SEVENTY, WHICH WAS AS A MISSIONARY. I always assumed that my role would be as a High Priest because my degree was in business administration. I had been a successful business manager, and most of my previous church leadership roles had been of an administrative nature.

It was time. I was approaching my two-year anniversary and was driving home to Fresno from a week of ministry in Santa Barbara. I had just passed a huge stretch of farmland when suddenly the Spirit of the Lord came upon me so strongly that I could hardly get the car off the road. I pulled over with tears streaming down my face, as the Lord let me know of my call to the Seventy. About two weeks later, I got a letter asking me to accept that call. On April 21, 1966, I was ordained to that office at our World Conference in Independence, Missouri.

Since then, various leaders have suggested that I be ordained to different offices, but I have declined, believing that if the Lord wanted me to serve in a different office, He would let me know in an equally stirring way. Today I still serve as a Seventy, although I am now in a category referred to as being Superannuated. That's sort of like being retired but being able to minister when and if I choose. Over the years, I have also served as the Secretary to both the Second and Fifth Quorums of Seventy and as a member of the Seventy Standing Educational Committee. In addition, I have been included in the *Who's Who in the West* and *Who's Who in Religion* publications; as a Seventy, I am also a

member of one of the leading councils of the church.

At the 1966 World Conference, my assignment changed. I no longer had responsibility for the Central California District but instead had two Missionary Developmental Areas to shepherd, serving as both the Administer and Missionary. The Coastal Area boundaries remained the same and, roughly speaking, the Mojave Area to the east of the California Coastal Range ran from Ridgecrest in the North to Desert Hot Springs in the South—plus all of Clark County, Nevada. We continued to live in Fresno. That meant that the closest congregation I was responsible for was about 150 miles from my home. The farthest one away was about 350 miles in a different direction. Either way, it was a very long commute.

The first thing I did in the Mojave Area was to conduct a survey of its congregations. When I reached Las Vegas, I sent Betty a postcard of dancing girls. My message read, “Work, work, work. Nothing but work!” The next day on my way to another congregation, I passed Boulder Dam and sent her a card of the dam with the same message on its backside. Later that day, I came across an old broken down gas station that appeared to be on its last legs. I stopped for a soft drink and purchased a postcard that featured the station. On its reverse side I scrawled, “It’s 114 degrees in the shade. Wish you were here!”

About that time, I was having some back trouble. My doctor had prescribed a seat cushion that contained metal strips to offer my back further support. It felt good and was doing its job. At my next congregation, I had a good visit with the pastor and his wife, toured the church, and had a delicious lunch. Afterwards, the pastor walked me to my car where he discovered that my IQ was somewhat limited. The metal strips within my seat cushion had been baking (through the windshield no less) for those many hours. When I sat down on it, I performed such an accelerated movement that I still hold the world record for passenger car dismounts! Instead of a gold medal, I had welts a foot long.

I had a lot to learn about the desert, and our pastor at Rosamond, outside of Mojave, California, was just the guy to teach me the ropes.

He was a master electrician and could work anywhere he wanted, but he loved the desert and he loved his people. He and his family rented an Old Catholic adobe church that must have been over 100 years old. They lived in one part of the building and used the rest of the building as the sanctuary. The congregation was a small group made up mostly of low-income people. I believe that the pastor and his family covered the rent and much of the other expenses of the congregation.

He was the only minister in that congregation and was also the pastor and only minister at Ridgecrest, which was 100 miles distant. His usual practice was to preach in Rosamond on Sunday morning, travel to Ridgecrest after lunch where he would visit with his flock, preach that evening, and then head home. Occasionally, a visiting minister would preach on Sunday morning in Rosamond, but he was seldom available to travel to Ridgecrest. After feeding the guest minister, the local pastor would climb into his car and head out for the other congregation.

I visited his congregations about four times a year and always preached in both congregations. I was concerned about his expenses, so I insisted that we take the church car. That meant that I did the driving. As we traveled together on Sunday afternoons, he pointed out things that I never would have noticed. Over time, I gained a deeper appreciation for that part of God's creation. As I drove back at night, however, he would scream at me saying, "If you keep trying to dodge those jack rabbits, you're going to get us both killed!"

One day a pastor of a congregation located in another jurisdiction and about 100 miles from Rosamond called me with an SOS. It seemed that on a particular Sunday all of the ministers in his congregation were going to be away. He asked if I could possibly come to speak on that Sunday. As it happened, I couldn't because I was scheduled for Rosamond. I had an idea, however, and I told him that I would get back to him. I called the Rosamond pastor and asked if he would be willing to preach at the SOS congregation while I preached at his congregation. Then we would meet up on Sunday afternoon and travel to Ridgecrest together. "Only if you promise not to try to dodge jack rabbits on the way back," he cajoled. So, that's what we did. Several weeks later, I was at a large

meeting of our ministers who had gathered from a wide assortment of congregations. I was talking with our Rosamond pastor when the SOS pastor came over to thank me for “saving” him. Most of us at that gathering knew one another, but it just so happened that neither of those men knew each other. I said that the SOS pastor was talking to the wrong guy. I introduced the two men and then told the SOS pastor that the Rosamond pastor was the man who answered the call and preached for him on that Sunday. At that point, the SOS pastor grabbed and shook the Rosamond pastor’s hand and thanked him profusely, while at the same time lamenting how difficult it was to operate a congregation with only five ministers.

Another story about desert life took place on the first Sunday that I preached at Rosamond. Remember now, the building was an old adobe church. Prior to the start of the service, it was my practice to place my Bible on the top shelf of the pulpit in order to have it handy when needed. When the time came for me to speak, I arose with great dignity, stepped to the pulpit, made eye contact with the congregation, and reached for my Bible. Then I heard the pastor say, “Brother Anderson, be careful of the black widow spiders.”

In my travels, I put a lot of mileage on the car. I often used that time to reflect, ponder and pray. I am also very much aware that the Lord had graciously spared my life on numerous occasions, some of which you may have read about in these pages. On one particular day, I was reliving events where I knew God had prolonged my life when a sudden thought rushed into my consciousness, “*What about the times I didn’t know about?*”

I had arrived in town two hours early for my appointment, so I decided to get some lunch. I pulled into the parking lot of a restaurant that I frequented, and as I brought my car to a stop and looked into my rearview mirror, I saw a man walking diagonally across the parking lot towards me. He came to the driver’s side of the car, paused briefly, and said, “It isn’t safe for you to be here.” Normally when something unusual like that happened, my first thought was that someone was pulling my leg. That time was different because there was a collaborative feeling

that accompanied the man's words. I sat there for a while, as I watched him continue across the parking lot and disappear into an alley. "What the heck," I thought. "There are tons of restaurants in town." I started the car, put it in gear, and went on my way. The next day I learned that at the exact time I would have walked into that restaurant, a man was brutally attacked in the foyer.

Betty's priority when Claudia was born was to be a stay-at-home mom. So, she postponed her full-time college studies but continued to take college courses, as time and circumstances permitted. Over time, she attended 16 different colleges. (I know because I am the guy that wrote away for her college transcripts every time she enrolled in a different institution, supposedly because I was the better typist.) While we were in Fresno, California, she earned an Associate of Arts degree from Fresno City College. With that degree, she was able to obtain a provisional certificate to teach as a substitute teacher in California.

Her first assignment was a doozy. It was a contract to be a long-term substitute. The location of the school was in a disadvantaged area where attendance was low. She was told that there were no lesson plans because the regular teacher did not know how to write them. So, from the time she walked through the classroom door, she was literally flying by the seat of her pants. The good news was that she took to teaching like a duck takes to water. She not only loved it, but she did a masterful job. As I recall, the permanent teacher never returned, and Betty's contract stretched out over many months until the close of school.



CHAPTER 34

More Transfers

DURING THAT SUMMER, WE WERE SENT TO INDEPENDENCE, MISSOURI, WHERE I ATTENDED GRADUATE SCHOOL FOR A YEAR. Betty was hired almost immediately as a substitute teacher and from the get-go was in constant demand. It seemed that the only difference between her and a teacher with full credentials was that Betty was going from school to school for far less money. When June came, we received another transfer. That one was expected and took us to the Vancouver, Washington, District.

Bright and early one morning we were off for Vancouver in a cloud of dust. We had two cars and had planned for Betty, Claudia, and me to share the driving with the goal of completing the 2000-mile trip in three days. Towards the end of the second day, we stopped for an early dinner. We should have spent the night there, but my plan called for us to reach Boise, which was still 60 miles down the road. So, we pushed on. That was a mistake because when we arrived in Boise, an Elks convention had booked up everything, so there was no room in the inn.

At the next town, we were also greeted with “no vacancy” signs because of an Indian powwow. The next town had no available rooms because of a rodeo. By now we had been on the road a long time. I drove the lead car and Betty followed in the second car. It was now dark, and as I looked in my rearview mirror, I saw that her car was weaving. Just then, I saw an entrance to a state park. Quickly, I pulled in and looked for a park attendant but found none. We unloaded our sleeping bags and spent the night on the ground. Claudia, who has never been known for her enthusiasm about camping, said that we were breaking the law and we were all going to be arrested. The next morning we woke up

and discovered that a dozen or more people had joined us for the night. We still didn't see a park official, so we went on. About 10 miles down the road we came to a very steep grade filled with switchbacks. As I cautiously maneuvered down the grade, I wondered if—given how tired we were from the previous night—we would have made it down to the bottom in one piece if we had pushed on.

As for Claudia's camping enthusiasm, I recall a greeting card that I once received from her. She wrote something to the effect that our family camping trips had given her a great appreciation for five-star hotels. Actually, her father, while not vocal about it, was not far behind her in that regard. That brings to mind another story of interest. When I was in high school, I took the Strong Interest Inventory, which was designed to give me guidance in making career choices. My involvement in scouting shined through, and when the inventory came back, outdoor work was rated high on the list. Two or three years later while at Graceland, I took the inventory again. That time, however, outdoor work hardly made it on the scale. I had experienced a complete change of attitude, undoubtedly because I lived in the fields of Japan while training with the Army and later served on the line of Korea. Betty and the Boys, however, loved to camp. Being such a great husband and dad, I sucked it up on occasions, and we packed our camping gear and headed out into the great outdoors. Of course, it was also a relatively inexpensive way to go on vacation. The other kind of camping that I endured were church camps, which for the most part were less primitive. They offered great opportunities for ministry, so I bit the bullet. Besides, those came with the territory. Anyway, I survived. If you compiled a list of "happy campers," most likely Claudia and I would not be on it.

Crossing over into Oregon, the scenery was beautiful. As we started down the Columbia Gorge we were enthralled with its beauty, the majesty of its waterfalls, and the pristine waters of the Columbia River. "Wow," I thought. "Talk about God's country!"

To save money, Betty and I arranged for our family to stay at the church's reunion grounds in Battle Ground, Washington, while we looked for a house to rent. The grounds had rustic individual cabins and

an adjacent kitchen, although the restrooms required a little jaunt. It was not the “Ritz,” but it met our needs and gave the kids a place to run, play, explore, and even fish under the watchful eye of their older sister and the caretakers who volunteered to keep an eye on things. We found a place to rent within a few days and looked forward to the arrival of our furniture. We had not, however, anticipated being involved in a couple of youth camps and back-to-back family camps. Those stretched our campground stay to over a month. Overall, it was a good experience, but believe me, we were ready for our own beds when we finally pulled into the driveway of our new home.

The Southwest Washington District consisted of eight congregations located in an area east of the mountains that ran from the Oregon border to Olympia, Washington. My assignment was to serve as the District missionary. Using the model that I had successfully developed in previous assignments, I set about to identify, recruit, and train missionary directors. The effort paid good dividends, and once again, my District led the domestic field in the percentage of baptisms. Along about that time, the World Church stopped publishing these figures, but I am happy to report that the Lord always blessed us. The areas for which I had responsibility always did well in terms of baptisms, at least as they compared to other jurisdictions within our faith movement.

During the third year of that assignment, the new apostle decided to have me focus entirely on the four northern congregations. We had some success, most notably the purchase of a building for the Olympia congregation. I would also like to share a story with you, especially since I still have trouble believing that I said what I said. I had just finished having lunch with a captain in the fire department (I’ll call him John) and his wife. John and I were talking in the living room while his wife tidied up the kitchen. She was a long-term member, but he was not. I knew that he attended regularly and gave good support to the congregation, but he had never chosen to unite with the church. Many a good missionary had shared with him but was unable to get a baptismal decision. It seems that John was throwing up a smokescreen about a problem that, in truth, was not really an issue for him. The missionaries

were therefore trying to respond to an issue that did not exist. It reminded me of the time I tackled a running back for an 18-yard loss, while the guy with the ball tiptoed into the end zone, untouched.

John was a crusty old guy, probably 15 years my senior, and I really liked him. As we talked, I asked why he had never been baptized. He said it was because he could not swallow a particular belief in the church. Suddenly I was shocked to hear myself say “*John, don’t give me that crap. I know better!*” I could not believe I had said that. I do not talk that way, and I especially do not talk that way when I’m wearing my “preacher hat.” That day, however, the Holy Spirit put those words in my mouth. After blurting them out, I heard his wife call out from the kitchen, “John, that’s not true. Tell Brother Anderson what happened.” And he did.

The story went something like this. Many years before, one of our ministers told a very pointed story during his sermon that mirrored John to a “T.” The minister concluded by saying that because the person in the story had chosen not to be baptized (in our church), he went to hell. “Boy!” I said, “He was really shooting at you,” to which John replied, “That’s #@*%# right!” I continued, “If someone said something like that about me, I would really be pissed. But, in truth, the preacher had it wrong. That’s not what the church believes.” We continued the conversation a little longer and I said, “John, I’m wondering if you’d be interested in knowing what the church really believes about this issue?” He hesitated, and then said, “Yeah, I guess I would.” I wanted to give him some breathing room, so I said that I needed to leave for another appointment, but if he wanted to talk about it, I would be available the next week. I returned the following week and after chatting for a couple of hours, he decided to be baptized. The sequel to the story is that on his way to the baptismal service, he had an automobile accident, but after exchanging insurance information he continued on his way. He had an out, but his decision was firm!

The following year my assignment was changed again, that time to the Apostolic Field. I spent the year traveling all over the Western part of the United States and Canada, teaching missionary classes and workshops.

These went well and the evaluations were extraordinary, but results were minimal. The follow-up just wasn't there.

From October 1973 through March 1974, there was a severe shortage of gasoline in the United States due to a QAPEC embargo, and it was interesting how different states were affected. On the West Coast it was a pain, but it was possible to get gas in Washington and somewhat easier in California. However, in Oregon it was "dry bones." During this time, I was scheduled for a three-week missionary trip to southern California for which I needed my car, so I had a problem as to how I was going to get there. Oregon was the problem.

I calculated how far I could drive in Oregon, without getting gas, before I would have to cancel the trip and return home. Gas stations had devised a flag system to let motorists know if they had gas: green if they had it; red if they didn't. Driving along Interstate 5 that day it was nothing but red. I was already beyond my turnaround point when I exited the highway and drove into a gas station. When the woman attendant greeted me, I told her that I had seen her red flag. However, I explained, I was a minister and needed to get to Southern California. Did she know of anywhere I could get some gas? She told me to drive around back, and when I got there, she had a five-gallon can of gas that she poured into my tank. When I asked what I owed her, she said "nothing" and told me to have a safe trip. When I protested, she said that it was still nothing and that I would be able to get gas in California. Thanking her again, I pulled out of her station and continued my trip with no more gas problems.

On my returned home I wanted to stop at that station and thank the woman again for her help and generosity. When I got to the turnoff, I exited the freeway, but the station was not there! How could that be? I have a good sense of direction and once I have been somewhere, with few exceptions, I can return there. I'm like a homing pigeon that way. I spent about a half-hour looking (make that, searching) for the station, and in subsequent trips to the area I searched again and again, always to no avail. It's as if that station never existed.

In March 1975, I was assigned to the Pacific Northwest Region where,

with minor adjustments, I remained until April 1983. I do not recall that anyone officially gave me the task to head up the Regional missionary program. However, somehow that is what took place, although I always viewed myself as a facilitator rather than as a director of those key missionary leaders. *Concusses* was our motto.

We followed the same pattern that was effective in other jurisdictions; namely, that of *identifying, recruiting, training, and supporting*. Over time, missionary directors *were* active in most congregations. A new wrinkle was the adding of four area missionary leaders who gave support and leadership to four or five congregations. These area leaders and their spouses came together twice a year in a retreat/planning activity that took place on the coast and in effect gave directions to the missionary thrust of our region. They were a good group to work with because they were knowledgeable, motivated, dedicated, and skilled leaders who, by their very presence in our congregations, fanned the spark of evangelism.

In terms of training, we were always up against two factors—time and money. Those with whom we worked were volunteers, and there was only so much that they could afford to give. Still, we felt strongly that they needed more training. Given our restraints, how could we do this? In one of our area leaders meetings, we hit on an “out of the box” concept. We would do the training at one of our District weeklong reunions where housing, meals, etc. were already in place. Those in training could bring their families to participate in the regular reunion activities, while the missionary leaders were taking classes during the day. In the evenings, those being trained and their families would share together in the reunion experience. It was not ideal, but at least we were not asking our missionary leaders to leave their families for a week’s training in some distant location. We decided to run the concept up the flagpole to see what kind of reaction we got.

I talked with the Regional Administrator who supported the idea. Next the Apostle gave his blessing. With those administrative approvals, the decks were cleared for action. We decided to give the proposal a two-year planning window and chose to hold it at one of our reunions that traditionally had smaller attendance figures and where the District

President was overwhelmingly enthusiastic about hosting the event. Other jurisdictional leaders climbed on the bandwagon, as did our congregational missionary leaders. At our next area leader's meeting we reached a consensus that we would go ahead with the activity. A three-year schedule of classes was identified, and teaching assignments for the first year were accepted, with the agreement that assigned instructors would report their class development progress at our next area meeting. In the meantime, all of us were to talk up the event.

A year later, we had a change of Apostle. At our first Regional staff meeting he announced that we would *not* hold that training event. I pressed him, to my detriment, but received no reason for his decision. He was the boss, and having served in the Army and worked in the business world, I fully understood the chain of command. Still, when I think about it, my heart is saddened as to what could have been.



CHAPTER 35

Working with Good People

ONE OF THE TOOLS THAT CAME OUT OF THESE KEY MISSIONARY LEADERS MEETINGS WAS THE PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY IN DAILY EVANGELISM (PRIDE) WITNESSING SUPPORT GROUP PROGRAM. Published in 1980, it was among one of the first such programs offered by the church and grew from a beginning of six structured exercises to twenty-four. The congregational groups were led by local facilitators and met monthly. Sample topics included identifying concerns and exploring themes such as one's feelings about witnessing, sharing testimonies, and effective prayer. Darrell Hagaman, Alex Kahtava, Bob Slasor, and yours truly created the exercises, and Tracy Knight designed the program's binder.

Over 100 church leaders from the Pacific Northwest and British Columbia participated in a weekend workshop at Lewis River Campgrounds where the program was introduced. There they were treated to a sound/slide presentation that Betty and I developed. In the audience were two brothers, Brian and Gary Gibson, from BC. After the slide presentation, and unbeknownst to the other brother, Gary came to me and said he had some slides that he thought would improve the presentation. Then Brian wandered over and said that he had a sound studio in conjunction with his business. If I was interested, he said he would call in some professional people to lend their voice and recording skills to the audio. At that moment, I decided to give up show business, and we soon had one humdinger of a slide show. I was even privileged to

be in Brian's studio when the sound track was recorded. Is God good or what? This new audio-visual tool was used to introduce the program to our congregations.

My thanks to all who had a hand in making the PRIDE program a huge success. That especially goes to those who did the grunt work as congregational facilitators and to those who shared, and continue to share, their personal testimonies of their Living Lord.

Our weekend workshop literally went out with a bang—although we did not hear it. On Sunday, May 18, 1980, the north side of Mount St. Helens, our neighboring volcano, erupted. An eruption column rose 80,000 feet into the atmosphere and deposited ash in 11 states. Fifty-seven people were killed, including innkeeper Harry R. Truman, who was not a member but whose memorial service took place at our Longview, Washington, church. Hundreds of square miles were reduced to wasteland, causing over \$2.88 billion (in 2014 dollars) in damage.

Mercifully, for us, the explosion occurred on the north side of the mountain. Otherwise, I along with hundreds of other people most likely would not be around to talk about it. The damage to the metropolitan areas of Vancouver, Washington, and Portland, Oregon, would have been devastating.

We were approximately 50 miles from the mountain. It is an interesting fact that those of us at the campground did not hear it and were unaware that it had occurred until someone telephoned to see if we were all right. At the same time, the church was holding another weekend activity at our Samish Island Reunion Grounds, 150 miles distant and to the north of Seattle and they heard the explosion.

As the workshop director, I was responsible for over 100 people, and I needed to make some decisions based on very limited information. I considered keeping the grounds open and encouraging folks to stay put but then ruled that out since I had no idea what the mountain would do next. However, that option was available to anyone who wanted to choose it. There were also workshop participants who lived in "safe" areas who offered to serve as hosts to their stranded brothers and sisters, but as I recall no one chose either of those options. Everyone just wanted to

get home as soon as they could. Interstate 5 was closed down somewhere north of Vancouver, as were the vast majority of arterial highways. Those living to the south of Vancouver seemed to have only limited highway restrictions; I understood that Highway 101 (running north to south along the Pacific Ocean) was open, but clogged with traffic.

Since I traveled the area extensively, I was asked for advice about the best way to proceed north. I said that if I were making the decision, I would take Interstate 84 east from Portland to Umatilla and then cut north through Richland and Yakima. So much for my prophetic vision. What I did not know was that the ash from the eruption was drifting to the east, covering everything in its path. It was also being sucked into automobile engines and disabling them. The good news was that everyone got home safely, although some were a few days late. God was good to us that day. He always is.

At that time, US 101 consisted of hundreds of miles of very narrow one-lane road that fed into a toll bridge spanning the Columbia River at Astoria, Oregon. Traffic was being diverted to that highway, and I understood that it was backed up for over 100 miles. It didn't help that a toll taker who, until ordered differently, was dutifully collecting the 25¢ toll for every car that passed over the bridge.

The only damage to our house was ash covering our roof. I gave it a good washing down and paid our daughter, Mary, and one of her girlfriends to clean out the gutters. That was a difficult task. The buckets of ash they collected were extremely heavy, even though they used small buckets. For example, a one-inch layer of ash weighs 5-10 pounds per square foot when dry but 10-15 pounds per square foot when wet. The procedure was to climb up a ladder, fill their buckets with ash, climb down the ladder, deposit their load in the ash pile, and repeat the process over and over again. It was a full day's work for both girls; they worked extremely hard and certainly earned their money that day.

I wondered about my insurance, so I called the insurance office to get some information. Now, to be fair, I didn't talk with my insurance agent but with one of the women in his office. Even though I had no damage to my house, I asked her if it would have been covered by my

homeowner's policy. She said that in order for damage of that type to be covered, I would have to have a rider on my policy. When I asked her how much such a rider would cost, she replied that they would not write that coverage *until they determined that there was no risk*. No wonder those guys make so much money, but I bet they took a real beating from the Mt. St. Helens catastrophe.

Coming down through the redwoods, I crossed a bridge that connected the two areas of our Happy Valley church campground in Santa Cruz, California. A stream gently flowed under the bridge and the serene scene encouraged one to slow down, take in the surrounding beauty, and ponder and commune with God. On that occasion, a man was leaning on the rail, viewing the flowing water below. He seemed to be in deep thought and contemplation, but I still tarried to greet him and wish him well. He seemed to want to talk, so I lent a listening ear. He said that he had spent a lot of time at Happy Valley in the past and, since he was in the area, he just wanted to stop by for old times' sake. He had many fond memories.

Then the floodgates opened and he poured out many years of disappointment, frustration, and what he considered to be unfairness and betrayal. There had been an unwanted divorce, and a church Administrator had taken away his ministerial license. Many people he had considered friends turned away from him. For years, he felt isolated and betrayed; yet he felt the prodding of the Holy Spirit to return to the church he loved so deeply.

I did not speak much on that occasion. I just listened and conveyed that I understood what he was saying. Then I said something to the effect that although he did not know me, I was a member of one of the leading councils of the church. On behalf of the church, I wanted to apologize for any harm or injustice that the church may have caused him. I gave him my card and invited him to contact me if he wanted to talk more. He thanked me, and we shook hands and went our separate ways.

He never called, but about three months later, I visited one of our congregations in the northern part of the state and there he was! We greeted one another, but nothing was said about our exchange on the

bridge. Later, I asked the pastor what the man's story was. He didn't know for sure, but he understood there had been some sort of trouble years ago. The man had since been inactive for a dozen or more years. Then one Sunday he walked into church, and the congregation embraced him with open arms. He had been coming ever since. For the next three years, I was in and out of that congregation. He was always there, and every time I saw him, I could not help but think of the Parable of the Lost Sheep. It was not accidental that the two of us were on the bridge that day. God loves us, and Jesus continues to seek us out when we stray.

Another visit took me to Fort Ord, California, where I was stationed prior to seeing combat in Korea. My purpose for being at the Fort that day was to confer with the Post's chaplains. The visit was productive, and as I walked across the parade ground towards my car, I reminisced about the time I was there and especially about my experiences on the front line of Korea. Suddenly a canon fired, and I hit the ground in my Sunday-Go-To-Meeting suit. It was five o'clock and they were retiring the colors. A smiling Sergeant First Class stood over me and offered his hand as he spoke to my bruised ego. He said I would be surprised by how many combat vets reacted in that very same way whenever that cannon sounded off.

Most members of the church had their membership in a particular congregation, but some who lived in isolated areas had non-resident memberships status. They usually had little contact with the church and often got lost in the shuffle, but they needed ministry, too. I decided to try to contact them by sending a letter to inform them I was going to be in their area on such-and-such day and if they were available, I'd like to stop by for a visit. I also told them to let me know if there was anything special that they would like to talk about. At that time in our history, the church had what was commonly called a tithing statement that members could choose to complete and file with the chief financial officers of the church, also known as the Presiding Bishopric. One reply that I received was from an elderly woman who wanted help with that "filing." I thought, "Me and my big mouth!" I had a lot of people to see and a lot of ground to cover. Nevertheless, I had made the offer, so I tucked

my adding machine under my arm and off I went. As it turned out, that activity was very worthwhile; I met many great people and, as often is the case, I received much more from them than I was able to give.

When I reached the residence of the woman who had requested help, I was struck by the poor quality of her housing. It was nothing more than a plywood shack and was in disrepair. My knock was answered by elderly women in an overcoat. I thought she was on her way out, but she invited me in and we had a good conversation. Her furnishings were modest and I felt a cold chill inside. About then, I realized that she was wearing an overcoat, not because she was going out, but because it was cold in her home.

As we talked, I learned that she had no form of transportation and her only source of income was a meager Social Security check. Each month she faithfully mailed a check to church headquarters. She sent it, rather than placing it in the offering basket, because her nearest congregation was too difficult to get to both in terms of miles and geography. When I inquired how often she was able to attend church, she said that if she was lucky, maybe two or three times a year—“lucky” meaning that someone provided her with transportation. Then I looked at her tithing statement and became shockingly aware that she was sending over 25% of her meager Social Security income to the church.

Now I do not know who she thought I was or by what authority I could tell her what to do, but *I will never forget the painful look on her face* when I told her she was giving too much money to the church. She just looked at me and pleadingly said, *“Please, Brother Anderson, let me give it. The Lord has been so good to me!”*

Betty and I were having a casual conversation one morning when out of the blue she suddenly announced that she did not want to move until Mary, our youngest child, graduated from high school. That was two years down the road, and the likelihood of my not receiving an assignment change before then was about equal to my hitting a bases loaded home run out of Yankee Stadium. After all, we had lived in the state of Washington for 12 years. While I had had 5 different assignments during that time, none had required a household move.

That kind of tenure was unheard of and, without question, I was due.

Previously, I had arranged for Bill Dodd to conduct an evangelism workshop for our region. He was the Regional Administrator for the West Central States Region. He arrived a day or two early before the big event and was staying with Betty and me in our home. One night he told us that his region was contracting with American Church Growth to use their highly successful program in his jurisdiction. He went on to say that he would like us to come to Denver to spearhead that effort. I was intrigued by the offer, but Betty had spoken. I thanked him for his invitation and expressed my interest, but in view of Betty's feelings, I also said I needed to decline. He seemed disappointed, but said he understood.



CHAPTER 36

Health Issues

ONE DAY THE PRESIDENT OF THE BRITISH COLUMBIA CANADA DISTRICT AND I WERE TRAVELING TO PRINCE GEORGE FOR THREE DAYS OF MINISTRY. I was driving when suddenly I had a vertigo attack. Fortunately, we were only traveling about 35 miles an hour, but it was still all I could do to get the car to the side of the road where I hit a telephone pole that snapped in two. That was good fortune because the pole prevented us from winding up in a drainage ditch that contained about two feet of water. Thankfully, neither of us was hurt and the car was still drivable. After we completed the necessary paperwork, we limped into a Ford dealership where we learned that that the car was safe to drive back to my home in Vancouver, Washington. I felt no effects from my vertigo experience, so we decided to continue our trip the next day. However, we used the District President's car and he drove. The venture turned out to be very beneficial and worthwhile, and the trip home was uneventful.

The day after my return home, I saw my doctor. He surprised me by saying that that kind of thing is common and that there was a good chance that it would never happen again. He suggested that I stop driving for a month. If I had no reoccurrence, I could resume driving safely. That was good news, but our church physician at headquarters wanted a further evaluation. That evaluation confirmed the opinion of my primary physician.

The following month I traveled to our church headquarters in Independence, Missouri, for our World Conference. There our church physician had me see a specialist who said that I could have another vertigo episode at any time. Based on that, the church physician ordered

me to stop driving. My problem was that I was covering Oregon, Washington, British Columbia, and part of Idaho. Just how was I going to do it? Well, the old-time missionaries did it before the church gave us cars, so I guessed I could do it as well.

Letters explaining my situation were sent to the pastors and church Administrators. I would still come, but they would have to provide transportation for me once I arrived. They all wrote, "Come on down!" and I busily started to develop a three-month travel plan. Then came the big day when I climbed onto my first Greyhound bus, only to be greeted by a sign that advised me that the bus schedules would change in two weeks.

Of course, I was back to the doctors. That time I think I saw every specialist and was put through every machine that they had in their system. All tests confirmed the opinion of my primary physician, but the church physician still wanted another evaluation. However, other things were at work here, so stay tuned.

At our 1982 World Church Conference, church officials approached me about heading up the Missionary Office at our church headquarters in Independence, Missouri. I talked with the minister who currently held that position, and he said it was a good assignment. It was an 8:00am to 5:00pm weekday position, and the weekends were free, unless I wanted to accept preaching assignments or conduct some workshops. I wondered if I could make a greater impact there than in the field, and the truth was that I did not know. I did know, however, that after traveling 80% of the time, it would be very nice indeed to be home with Betty every night. Still, it just did not feel quite right. I needn't have worried about that question; my first cancer diagnosis loomed around the corner.

A year or so earlier, my telephone rang. The call was from a man who lived near our church campgrounds. He was not a member of the church and I had no idea how he got my telephone number, but he complained about the rundown condition of some of our camp cabins, as seen from the camp's frontage road. I agreed with him, but he was talking to the wrong person. I had no responsibility whatsoever

for the campgrounds. Nevertheless, we agreed to have lunch. During that time together, we hit it off pretty well and I uncovered some other issues unrelated to the church that were bothering him. We continued to get together for lunch about once a month, and our relationship grew. Incidentally, I talked with those that had responsibility for the campgrounds. They were well aware of the problem and were working on it. It was complicated because of owner issues, but eventually the problem was pretty well resolved.

When I came home from Korea, I had a fungus growth in my toenails. Every doctor that I saw tried to correct the problem, to no avail. Thirty years had gone by, and the only problem that it caused was that points were deducted when I entered bathing beauty contests. When I saw a new physician at Kaiser, he took one look at my toenails and whipped out his pad to prescribe some new pills for me to take. Two weeks went by and I started to feel stomach pain, so I went back to see him. He was on vacation and the other doctor that I saw said to discontinue taking the pills and come back if the pain persisted. It did return, so I went back.

Further tests revealed that I had cancer and that the tumor had perforated my bowel. Surgery was performed and when I awakened, I was in *excruciating* pain. Someone was holding my hand and I heard a voice say, "It's okay, Bob. This is Tom." I realized that it was my "lunch buddy" who was a surgical nurse at Kaiser. Isn't it interesting how God works? Isn't it wonderful that He gives such assurance? I then heard Tom say, "Doc, can you give him some more pain medication? He's a friend of mine." The medication flowed and the pain receded. The next day Tom visited me in my hospital room and said, "Boy! Did you get me into trouble!" "How did I do that?" I asked. He replied, "I asked the doc to give you more pain medication and said that you were a friend of mine. Later he told me that in this hospital they give pain medication to all their patients, and not just to my friends." Still, it was a good feeling to have him at my bedside. What is that saying about casting your bread upon the water?

Later my oncologist visited with me in my hospital room. He told

me that he was prescribing “hard chop” chemotherapy, and at the end of that treatment, I would be given three tests. If all three came back negative, I would be finished with treatment, but if any of them came back positive or inconclusive, I would need to go through second-look surgery. I certainly did not want to repeat the pain that I just went through. He must have seen the look on my face because he quickly added that we would not worry about that now. Instead, we would cross that bridge when we came to it. That was easy for him to say! I also felt some vibes from those around me that the situation was much more serious than they were letting on and that maybe I would not get to cross that bridge.

My big concern was what would happen to Betty and the kids if I did not make it. I had a \$10,000 G.I. life insurance policy that would help, and I vaguely recalled something about the church’s offering a lifelong widow’s benefit that was earned after 15 years of service. The problem was that I was a few months short of 15 years, so I gritted my teeth and said, “Come hell or high water, I am going to reach that magical date.” Later I found out that I was wrong. The requirement was only 10 years; I could have died and it would not have made any difference.

The day came for me to cross that bridge. Two of the tests came back negative and the other was inconclusive. Second-look surgery was called for. I did not want to go through surgery again, so I said to the doctor, “The surgeon said he got everything. Two of the tests came back negative and the other inconclusive, so I am probably okay. If I choose not to have second-look surgery and I am not okay, what would the prognosis be?” The oncologist replied, “I will give you about three months.” I said that I would think it over and get back to him.

The decision was really a no-brainer, but I wanted to talk with Betty before I gave him my decision, so I climbed on the bus and headed for home. I had a change of bus in Vancouver, and when I reached that stop, I decided to walk a few blocks to my favorite pie shop to treat myself to a piece of lemon meringue pie and coffee. It was there that I reached my decision. I would not burden Betty with it. If something went wrong during the surgery, she would have enough to cope with without dealing

with any misguided pangs of guilt. Once I decided, I walked to the pay phone and made the call. The good news is that the second time around, the operation was a breeze.

One thing about the church is that if you were having a health problem, they took good care of you. The church physician and the Human Resource Director came from Independence, Missouri, to visit me in the hospital. There was more to it than that, but the net result was that my assignment was changed to Ministerial Reassignment. That meant that I was relieved of all ministerial responsibilities and was to focus on getting well. The door, however, was left open a crack. If I felt well enough, I could perform limited ministry of my choosing.

During that recuperation period, I wrote a Temple School course on *Establishing New Congregations*. Temple School is the continuing education arm of the church, and that was the first such course that they offered on the subject. This might also be an appropriate place to mention that during my ministerial career, I had a hand in planting six new congregations.

Prior to my coming down with cancer, the pastor of our Portland, Oregon, Metropole had invited me to help them develop a missionary program for their congregation. The Metropole was not a part of my assigned area, and I did not have the time to help when they asked. I did have time now, and I felt that I was well enough to take it on, although there were times that I doubted the wisdom my doing so. The problem was transportation. I was still prohibited by the church from driving, and that meant I had to leave the driving to the person who was manhandling the municipal bus. That was okay, but it also meant that I had to catch the bus. That translated into a four-block walk from my home to the nearest bus stop. Then I transferred twice and had to hoof it another two or three block to the Portland church. There was more than one time that I wondered about my sanity, as I stood in the driving, cold rain while waiting for my bus that always seemed to be late. I suppose there were at least a couple of reasons for my doing that. I had an inward need to witness for my Lord. And then there was that stupid refrain that kept running through my head, "When the going gets tough, the tough

get going.” Perhaps it was my way of assuring myself that I was going to beat this thing.

The folks in Portland were very supportive. They provided me with an office and even brought in a recliner where I could rest, should I feel the need. One of the members, John Berger, organized a prayer support group on my behalf. The group of about a dozen or so remembered me in their daily prayers and gathered weekly for the duration of my illness. They even planted a tree in my honor. It has grown enormously, and I only hope that my ministry has also benefited others, even as the shade of that tree has. I did not attend any of their group prayer sessions, except for the last one. I did, however, feel the strength, encouragement, and sense of well being that came from their efforts. When my oncologist gave me the all-clear notice, I suggested to John that one final session take place to celebrate the success of their ministry. In that session, each participant shared their well wishes as they presented me with a token gift to symbolize their remarks. It was a remarkable experience, and the gifts are now displayed in a frame that humbly hangs in my apartment.

There was one time, however, that I enraged a number of our Portland members. The substation of the Portland Police Department was across the street from the church, and I set up a little “drama” to illustrate one of my sermons. When I stood to preach, I had arranged for one of the ushers to come to the podium and whisper in my ear. One thing was clear—I now had everyone’s attention. I then said that one of the officers from the station across the street had come to the church in search of volunteers to look for a missing 10-year-old girl. Dozens of people got to their feet and started for the exits when I called them back and confessed that my announcement was a ruse. There was no policeman, and the police department was not searching for a lost girl. I explained that there were all kinds of children and adults in our neighborhood who were “lost to Jesus” and just like the lost sheep in Jesus’ parable, they needed to be searched for, found, and claimed.

The problem was that many in the congregation were so furious with me because of my little drama that they didn’t “hear” what else I had to

say. Believe me, I got a well-deserved earful after the service. That'll teach me to get cute!

Anyway, having overcome the cancer, I was declared “fit for service.” However, I still had the driving problem to lick. Betty’s brother, Chet, and I had become close friends in high school, and that friendship has grown and become stronger over the years. As I have mentioned, he enjoyed a brilliant career as a physician in the Army, rising in rank to Brigadier General, with three tours in Vietnam. In addition to serving as the Assistant White House Physician to President Nixon and then to President Ford, he commanded three major military hospitals. He also always kept a close eye on our family.

In that regard, he offered to arrange an appointment for me with the House Institute in Los Angeles. That medical practice was acclaimed as the world leader in dealing with problems such as I was having (or at least that the church physician kept insisting I might have). With prior authorization from the church in hand, Betty and I traveled to the Institute where we were ushered into an examination room. A short while later a physician entered, asked a few questions, and then declared that I was perfectly fit to drive. However, since we were here, he ordered some tests. After the tests and \$4,000 later, I received the news that the original diagnosis that was given to me by the first physician I saw four years earlier was confirmed. I was fit to drive. With that, the church gave their approval for me to resume driving. Since then I learned that the physician who examined me was none other than Dr. House himself. In the 50 years following his diagnosis, I am approaching the milestone of having driven a million miles without another vertigo incident. I might also add that since the early 1950’s, I have had only one moving violation. That was for going 37 mph in a 35 mph zone, but that’s another story and in no way does it imply that I have not deserved other citations. This story also supports what I have been saying all along in this book—that it is good to have friends in high places. Thanks, Chet!



CHAPTER 37

Returning to the Scene of the Crime

IN LATE 1984 MY NEW SUPERVISING MINISTER ASKED WHERE BETTY AND I WOULD LIKE OUR NEXT ASSIGNMENT TO BE. WOW! That was a first; no one had ever asked me anything like that before. I said that both Betty and I had been reared in California and that, other things being equal, we would like to return. I actually thought that that would never happen since we had been assigned there before, and “returning to the scene of your crime” was unheard of. But, miracles of miracles, a short time later we received an assignment to the Pacific Southwest Region. We were headquartered in Sacramento, California. The big plus of that assignment was that I was well acquainted with the area. We had lived in the San Francisco Bay Area for a little over 12 years prior to entering full-time ministry, and my second assignment under appointment was to the Central California District, which abutted my new assignment. That meant they knew me and I knew them, so I was able to “hit the ground running.” The downside was that my predecessor had messed up.” That called for damage control through restoring faith, mending fences, and cleaning up after him. Happily, that was not too much of a hindrance.

Since we were moving to back to California, we needed to sell our home in Vancouver, Washington. The church took over the sale of the property and, based on the average of two of three real estate appraisals, it was determined that our equity amounted to \$50,000. That amount was required to be rolled over into our next house purchase. Since the church was paying the bills, they also determined how much we could pay for a new home in Sacramento. They came up with a figure

of \$89,000, which was utterly unrealistic for the Sacramento housing market. Beyond that, we had to deal with various church policies, a sky-high 15% interest rate, our need to protect our equity, and the lack of Midwest understanding of the California real estate market.

Over a 6-month period, I looked at over 500 houses, all of which were discarded for one reason or another. Then my real estate agent called and wanted me to look at a house that was listed for \$105,000. I said that there was no way the church would approve that amount, but the agent insisted that we look at it. It appears that God was at work in that the house was perfect. It even had a swimming pool. Having a pool was on Betty's wish (make that fantasy) list. The church, however, would never approve that house, except that we could assume a 6¼ loan (as opposed to the 15% going rate), which would drastically reduce the monthly payments. What was the catch? Why was the house still on the market? The answer was that the sellers needed a \$50,000 down payment so they could purchase their new house in Florida. BINGO! Guess who had \$50,000! As for the swimming pool, I told everyone that it was a baptismal font, which, in fact, it was on a couple of occasions.

Another problem was that the assignment was effective immediately, and the church wanted me in Sacramento yesterday. Several things conflicted with that. We needed to sell the Vancouver house, and Betty was under contract to her school district until the middle of June. Beyond all that, I believe an unspoken but real concern of Betty's was what would happen should I have a health relapse. We finally decided that I would rent an apartment in Sacramento and commute on a three-week there and one-week home basis. The plan worked satisfactorily. During the Easter break, Betty came down to Sacramento and had the opportunity to see the house with the pool. That also gave me the opportunity to show her off. Like always, she lit up every room she walked into and the people loved her.

My assignment was as a Seventy (missionary) to the Sacramento and Shasta Sierra Districts, and my immediate objectives were to become acquainted. Then we needed to build credibility, learn what was already taking place, and get a handle on ways that our people wanted to reach

out to the un-churched community. I was also interested in identifying potential missionary workers.

We set up a series of three two-hour sessions in each of our congregations; each session took place a week apart. I was there to listen and learn; they were there to share information and to tell me what they wanted to do. We were all there to respond to the leadings of the Holy Spirit and to come up with a workable missionary program for our Districts.

When all of the congregations had finished their three sessions, I set aside three days to fast and pray and to ask the Lord for His direction in creating a missionary program for the two Districts. I worked long and hard, and the plan fell into place. As I committed it to paper, I felt good that this was really a grassroots plan—a plan of the people and, more importantly, a plan with God’s fingerprints all over it (that is, if He has them).

That night when I retired to bed, I did so with a good feeling—a feeling of accomplishment. However, the next morning I sat up with a start and said to myself, “Bob, you’re crazy! You can’t do all that in a year.” And I was right! Looking at the plan, it was obvious that there was no way that it could be accomplished in a year. There, lying on my desk was a *five-year plan* that the Holy Spirit had fashioned. With His help, it was more than doable!

The next step was to take it to our people in a series of Sunday congregational meetings. My spies told me that the people were looking forward to these meetings, but when they learned that I was also going to preach at 11 o’clock, their enthusiasm waned. Anyway, the good news was that our people accepted the plan overwhelmingly as they recognized that this was not a “cookie cutter” plan out of headquarters. The one I presented strongly reflected their input, and they took ownership for it.

During the next few years, missionary leaders were identified, recruited, trained, and offered continuing support. The training process was similar to those mentioned elsewhere in these pages. In addition, Witness Workshops took place in each congregation after which Witnessing Support Groups were organized. In addition, new congregations were

established, and continuing education was offered. The plan worked beyond expectations, and the flow of new members into the congregation by way of baptism added to the forward sense of momentum.

Over the years, I have had the opportunity—make that privilege—to have a hand in developing dozens of Seventies, along with scores of witnessing disciples who have helped to lead hundreds into a more meaningful relationship with their Lord. *There can be no higher calling.* In that regard, let me acknowledge and thank those who worked so diligently in *helping me along that disciple's path.* It is always a two-way street.

A problem we Christians face is the popular notion that “everything we do is witnessing.” That usually translates into no specific witnessing taking place. Again let me recall our Lord's Great Commission:

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always, unto the end of the world. Amen. - Matthew 28:19-20

As much as I like potlucks, those verses say nothing about them. The emphasis is on Going, Teaching, and Baptizing (GTB). That includes your neighbors and everyone else that you know. Until we diners at the potlucks get to the GTB (Going, Teaching, and Baptizing) part, please do not think of these events as witnessing—leading up to witnessing, maybe, but not witnessing. You might also want to think about the many other good and worthwhile things we do that we sometimes confuse with witnessing. If they are worthwhile, keep doing them, but do not let them substitute for GTB.

Several years ago, I was surprised to learn that a man who was very involved in one of our congregations had never entered into the waters of baptism. When I asked him about it, I was shocked to hear him say, “No one ever invited me.” Believe me, *he was invited on the spot* and was baptized. For years prior to his death, he was a valiant witness of his Lord; and let me tell you, if you knew Charlie, you got an invite.

Throughout my career, there were always those who wanted to make me an Administrator and ordain me to a different office. For that reason, when I got a new Administrator, I made it clear that I felt a very

strong missionary calling as a Seventy and that unless the Lord told me otherwise, that was where I would stay.

Geoffrey Spencer was now my supervising minister and in all my church experiences, past and present, he was the minister that I most admired and loved. One day he came to me and said that he knew how I would feel about it, but he needed me to serve as the President of the Sacramento District. He was right—the District did need me in that role at that time. Because of the way I felt about him, I had to say yes. However, I did so with the understanding that I would remain a Seventy and that my primary responsibility would be outreach. A few years later, the Central Pacific Region (CPR) was organized, and he asked that I accept leadership for that newly formed jurisdiction. With the same conditions as before, I reluctantly accepted and now served in the roles of a Seventy, District President and Regional Administrator. Somehow, it did seem fitting that I would be the leader of a new jurisdiction whose initials were CPR.

I was meeting with a group of pastors over which I had administrative responsibility. Sitting next to me was Geoffrey Spencer, my supervising minister and who, in my estimation, was a “pillar among pillars.” During the meeting, a question arose about the unacceptable behavior of one of our fellow ministers. Because it occurred in an area under my supervision, it was my responsibility to respond to it. There was no doubt about the impropriety of the minister as it related to church policies and procedures, so in answering the question, I “went by the book.”

When I sat down, Geoff leaned over and very quietly asked, “Where was the gospel in that?” Nothing more was said, but it was a lesson that hit home. Never again did I give a harsh answer like I did that afternoon. When faced with a difficult decision, the first question I asked myself was, “How does the gospel apply to this?” My friend and brother, Geoff, in his quiet way had taught me a lesson that benefited many along my journey trail, but then, that was one reason that he was a “pillar among pillars.”

That was also a period of theological growth and change in the church.

One of the major issues confronting us was the ordination of women. The pains of that issue, together with other concerns, were being felt more in the conservative Midwest than it was in the more liberal area of the West Coast.

Eventually, large numbers of the church broke away and formed new groups because of the issue. That said, the members in my area largely stayed put, but this is not to say that we did not have problems. Frankly, I felt that this issue was made worse by directives that kept coming down from headquarters as to how to handle the conflict. Of course, in fairness, I only saw that issue from my vantage point.

However, it seemed to me that the ordination of women was a “cultural” rather than a “theological” issue. In our faith group, our belief is that through the process of revelation, God calls people to represent Him and the church. That is the way I was called, and that is the way that I, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, called scores of others to ministerial positions. My point is that if God calls someone, He calls him or her. Who am I to challenge His wisdom? The question then is not about a person’s characteristics such as age, gender, race, educational level, etc. but if the call is divine. As an administrative officer, pastors submitted ministerial calls to me for approval. And there were a few that, in good conscience, I could not approve—but never because of that person’s inherited characteristics.

The only problem that I had with the calling of women was a concern as to how it might negatively affect our people, and I felt that God would pave the way when and if He saw fit to do so. At our 1984 World Conference, our Prophet received divine inspiration that the time had arrived, and he had prepared a Document to be considered by the conference.

The approval of such a documentation was complex. The first step was to deliver a copy of the document to each Quorum and Council of the church for consideration. It was hand delivered in a sealed envelope to the secretary of those various bodies. I was serving as the secretary of the Fifth Quorum of Seventy, so I received the envelope for our Quorum. The moment the envelope touched my hands, it was made known to me

what was inside. My immediate reaction was the thought, “Not now, Lord. We’re not ready.” There was quite an uproar on the conference floor that afternoon, but the next morning a spirit of calm and assurance came over that deliberating body. The document was officially accepted “as God’s will for the church” and thus became binding upon our body.

When I returned home from the Conference, I found that our people were handling the issue fairly well, except for three women along with members of their family. They had very strong convictions and strongly opposed it. Those good women had every right to feel as they did, but I knew they were hurting. They were a part of my flock and I was concerned about them, even as I was concerned for their brothers and sisters.

Usually, when people received a call to the ministry, it came through their pastor. However, if the person was a family member, then the call was initiated by a higher administrative official. Unrelated to the above issues, I had previously become aware of such a call for a woman in the congregation who was the daughter-in-law of the pastor. That was not unusual but standard procedure, since every initial call required spiritual confirmation from a higher administrative officer. Over the years, I had previously affirmed scores of such calls. In that particular case it was necessary that I be the one to initiate the call, so the Apostle was the one who offered the affirmative approval, together with the “courtesy” approval and blessing of her father-in-law and pastor.

The final step was to approve the call at a business meeting that was to take place some weeks down the road. In the interim, the Holy Spirit was at work and opposition to the ordination of women mellowed, including the positions of the three women who at first had felt so opposed to it. Interestingly, the pastor then felt led to initiate calls for those three women. I confirmed them and they, along with the pastor’s daughter-in-law, were overwhelming approved by both the congregational and district conferences for ordination. Subsequently, they were ordained and have served with distinction for many years. An interesting note here is that one of the women, along with her husband, who both so strongly opposed the ordination of women, conducted my wife’s memorial

service. Is it not amazing how the Holy Spirit brings about healing?

As I mentioned in earlier pages, Betty and I had lived in the San Francisco Bay Area prior to our new assignment. Therefore, we were already well acquainted with many members who lived in the area. Lawrence McDonald (Mac) was one of those. In my opinion, he was a great man, filled with wisdom and integrity and was an outstanding and hard-working disciple of his Lord. It was also my opinion that his vision and fortitude were largely responsible for much of what the church had in California, including our Happy Valley Conference Grounds, which is one of the finest such campgrounds that the church operates.

He was a treasure trove of information and knew virtually everyone and everything having to do with the church in California. He was also a thriving business owner, and I believe that just about everyone he employed was a member the church. Much to his credit, I never heard anyone say anything negative about him. We had lunch together about once a month. Theologically speaking, I like to think of myself as somewhere in the middle, while he was on the conservative side and was deeply concerned about changes that were taking place in the church. Our lunch conversations were freewheeling, honest, and forthright. At times we butted heads, but we always left the restaurant as friends and brothers with our next lunch date scribbled in our calendars.

If there was a “Mother Church” in Northern California, it was Sacramento, which frequently was referred to as 24th and K. Its membership was evenly divided between those who considered themselves conservatives and those who had a more progressive leaning. It was a good, strong congregation, and the people worked well together. However, when the issue of women in the ministry came to the forefront, our more conservative members considered leaving the church to unite with a newly formed fundamental group. One might say it was like the “straw that broke the camel’s back.” One of the major problems was that the conservative groups in the Midwest were putting pressure on moderates to side with them. Unfortunately, some of our World Church leaders were taking a hard line on this, and to my thinking, were playing right into the hands of the conservatives by pouring gasoline on the fire.

The way I saw this was that the conservative horses had left the barn, and they were not coming back. What we needed to do was to give them our blessing and leave them alone. After all, we were in the business of providing ministry to people, and if they felt more comfortable meeting with a conservative group, well and good. They were receiving ministry, and with tensions reduced, the 24th and K congregation could better focus on pursuits that were more productive. However, some at church headquarters did not seem to agree with me and again, in my opinion, added to the agitation.

Mac and I discussed this issue at several of our lunch meetings, and on one occasion he said that the only thing the Sacramento conservative group wanted was to be left alone. That seemed acceptable to me. I asked him if, assuming I could arrange this, he would use his influence to encourage our conservative brothers and sisters to stop pressuring our moderate members to join them. He said he would do that in any case, and that, in fact, he already was. So, an arrangement was proposed. After consulting with the moderate pastor at 24th and K, we formed a pastoral group that our people could be a part of, if they so chose. Technically, they were members of the 24th and K congregation, but the group was free to offer *appropriate* ministry as they saw fit without undue interference from headquarters. I am happy to say that that both sides kept their end of the bargain, and the arrangement worked well. At one point, however, I had to tell my supervising minister that I would step down unequivocally as the Administrator and, if need be, would resign Appointment if church officials did not honor the agreement.



CHAPTER 38

Betty Made a Difference

WHEN CLAUDIA WAS BORN, BETTY STOPPED GOING TO COLLEGE BECAUSE SHE FELT A NEED TO BE A FULL-TIME MOM. Now all of the kids were in school and one day she said to me that if we were ever going to get our kids through college, she was going to have to go to work. We sat down and talked about it, and she felt her best option was to teach full-time. In order to do that, she needed a teaching credential, and that meant she needed to go back to the university to obtain a bachelors degree. She enrolled in Portland State University, and frankly, with everything on her plate—including my being away 80% of the time—I don't know how she did it. But she not only did it; she did it with honors. Later she went on to earn a masters degree in education, also with honors. True, the family pitched in and helped as they could, but she was the one who carried the load, both at home and at school.

When she graduated, teaching jobs were scarce, but the Evergreen School District picked her up almost immediately. When June came, she was teaching two classes of kindergarten per day, all with an overload of students. Over a period of 13 years she taught at Sifton, Burton and Sunset elementary schools. She moved from kindergarten to second grade after the first seven or eight years because, in her words, she was getting too old to get up from the floor. However, it is my strong feeling that the real reason was to fulfill a special gift and calling she had to teach reading. (More about this later.)

Space limitations do not permit the naming of the scores of councils

and committees that she served on, many of which she chaired, or of the innovating programs she initiated. She was also a stickler for what she felt was best for the children in her class and district and in several instances took on the district power structure about programs that they wanted to initiate. A prime example of this was the issue of alternate day kindergarten. The interesting thing about that was that the district Administrators highly respected and honored her, in spite of her opposition to what they wanted to do. If you were keeping score, she won more than she lost. However, if she were here, she would correct me by saying that it was the *children* who won!

Speaking of winning, all four of our kids received university degrees, with three of them going on to receive advanced degrees. It's a good feeling to see that educational tradition is being carried on by the grandkids. With Betty, education was a high priority. While the kids pulled more than their own weight, all I can say is that it was a good thing they had a sacrificial mom and that they inherited her smarts.

The kids were now of age and out on their own. In 1985 the church transferred Betty and me to Sacramento, California. I'd had some health issues a couple of years prior to that, so Betty chose to take the year off from teaching to make certain that I was going to be okay. Towards the end of the year, she said she would like to go back to teaching. However, she wanted the school to be close to where we lived. She drew a circle with a five-mile radius on a map and started contacting school districts. There were a great many teachers looking for work that semester, but almost immediately she had an offer to teach second grade at Sergeant elementary school. It was a mile-and-a-half from where we lived, and she taught there until she retired in 1994.

One thing was for sure—if you had Mrs. Anderson in the second grade, you knew how to read when you went to the third grade. I remember standing next to Betty when a mother in tears thanked her for teaching her son how to read. She explained to us that all of the experts had said he never would learn to read. Perhaps he was not reading the classics after being taught by Betty, but he was reading; and his mother considered it a miracle. In addition, should you be into trivia, here is one

for you. She taught Simba of *Lion King* fame (Jonathan Taylor Thomas) how to read—and again, if she were here, she would correct me by saying she “taught him to read with emotion.”

A year after Betty retired, the third grade teachers complained that the new students they were receiving could not read. Then somebody recalled that Betty had retired a year earlier and it was no longer a mystery. It was widely known that she had a gift for teaching reading. The monument marking her resting place is inscribed with the words: “She taught hundreds to read.” There are those who taught with her that say that number is understated.

In 2012 Larry, Sasha, Maxi, and Boris established a scholarship in Betty’s honor at the University of Texas at Tyler. The scholarship is called the *Betty Anne Ward Anderson Scholarship in Reading* and is designed to explore new ways to teach reading and to help teachers become more effective in doing so.

Betty was always very active outside the classroom. She was the Vice President of the Teachers Association, chaired the Kindergarten Teachers Committee, worked to develop mentoring programs, was on the Curriculum Study Task Force, and served on and chaired a wide variety of other task forces and committees. Her biggest projects, however, were to chair the District’s Teachers Association’s efforts to support a statewide initiative to ensure educational funding and to obtain air-conditioning for all of the classrooms in the district. In support of the latter proposal, she stood in a school board meeting and proposed that, given California’s 90-100+ degree heat, all classrooms should be air-conditioned. If the school district could not afford to air- condition school classrooms, then the air-conditioning systems in the district’s administrative offices should be disabled. Both the funding and air-conditioning initiatives were adopted. Today children in her former district can read books and receive instruction in the comfort of a cool classroom—all of which were made more possible by the passing of those two initiatives. That, my friends, is a legacy worth having!

She was also active in church leadership roles at the local, district, and regional levels. She served at various times as a Church School teacher,

Church School Director, Vacation Church School Director, Publicity Director, Women's Leader and Retreat Director, as well as on the Regional Missionary Council. She was also on the Board of Directors of the Happy Valley Conference Grounds. While on that board, she fought for and obtained a state-of-the-art playground for the children.

The years had flown by, and our 50th Wedding Anniversary was approaching. Our children wanted to do something special for us to celebrate that Golden event. Several suggestions were made, including an around-the-world cruise. But Betty said, "I want a party." That did not surprise me because she always enjoyed a good party. She loved people, enjoyed sharing with them, and everyone, especially me, loved being around her!

Our children and grandchildren took two years to plan the party and did a masterful job. They put together a sit-down dinner, complete with orchestra and dancing. It took place at one of the finest venues in Sacramento with 160 guests who came from all walks of life and who traveled from many parts of the United States and beyond, at significant personal expense, to honor us that night. If you were among those friends, thank you again for the blessing you bestowed upon us. If you are among our children, grandchildren or other family members who made all that possible, then double, triple, and beyond, thanks to you!

In earlier years, people would often ask me if I had any hobbies, and my reply was always the same—traveling. When you stop to think about it, that seemed odd since I traveled on church business about 80% of the time. However, Betty and I enjoyed traveling together, and as I reflect back over the years, we did a lot of it. Broadly speaking, both of us set foot on four continents. If we allowed for my solo time in Japan and Korea, we could add a fifth. The two continents missed were Africa and Antarctica. Somehow they did not come to mind when we discussed our bucket list. Speaking of that bucket, I am pleased to note that with the exception of visiting a few Scandinavian countries, our bucket list was empty before Betty made the big trip home to be with her Lord.

We also visited 19 countries throughout the world and 47 American states, many of which we visited several times. National parks were

big on Betty's list. When I asked her where she wanted to go on our honeymoon, it was Yosemite. We visited close to 50 of these national treasures, several on multiple occasions.

Our highest travel priority, however, was to visit family. We figured that if we were going to have a close relationship with and be influential with our grandchildren, they had to know us. Of course, we wanted to continue the same kind of relationship with our children and their spouses. Our target was to visit the homes of our four children at least twice a year. We made a point to attend special activities and sporting events where our grandchildren rose to stardom. (Understand that that stardom evaluation is a completely unbiased statement of fact.)

When our older grandchildren graduated from high school and went away to college, those universities were added to our itinerary and were usually coupled with other sightseeing and/or visiting opportunities. For example, when we traveled from Sacramento, California, to the Pacific Northwest, we usually stopped off in Ashland, Oregon, for a few days and took in several Shakespearean plays. When we traveled to the East Coast to visit Robert at Princeton University, we played the tourist, saw the sites and sometimes took in one or more Broadway productions. In the kitchen area of my suite hangs a sign that reads, "There is no beauty so great as beauty shared." With Betty on my arm, I found that to be true.

The Hawaiian Islands were a special place for us—particularly Maui. It was here that we celebrated our 25th wedding anniversary. We returned there a half-a-dozen times—always for multiple weeks and a few times for a month or more. Our favorite place, however, was Whale Pointe in Depoe Bay, Oregon, where we own a 1/13 interest in a fractional condominium that gives us four weeks a year, one week during each of the four seasons. We went there since 2001 and missed but a few weeks. Betty no longer drives to the coast with me, but I continue to look forward expectantly to those weeks when I'm there, and her presence is strongly felt. Of course, her presence is always with me; but, somehow, there is something extra special about that place. Perhaps it is because Betty loved it so.

During one of our visits to Maui, I was backing out of a parking spot when a man in an old beat-up pickup truck deliberately pulled up behind me. I stopped, but not before my car made minor contact with his truck. The man excitedly jumped from his vehicle and screamed that I had crashed into his truck and had caused damage that would cost \$500. I immediately smelled a scam. After all, what tourist wanted to lose a day in paradise to deal with a minor collision? I was sure that if I had negotiated, the man would have quickly been willing to “forget the entire incident” for a cash settlement of 10 cents on the dollar. A quick look at my rental car showed no damage and as for \$500 worth of damages, I seriously doubted that he could get anywhere near that amount for the entire truck from a local scrap dealer. I took a 3x5 card from my breast pocket and walked to the front and then to the rear of the vehicle where I recorded his plate numbers. Both plates were shiny and clean. It was obvious that they had recently been installed on his truck, and the truck probably had not been washed for over a year. I told Betty to call 911, to tell them *who we were* and to request *immediate* police assistance. Then, turning to the man, I said, “Sir, I’m Deputy Chief Anderson of the LADAP, and it appears that the plates on your vehicle are stolen.” With that, the man brushed past me jumped in his truck and sped off in a cloud of exhaust fumes. For the purest among you, when I was a teenager I was the Deputy Chief of the **Los Angeles Deputy Auxiliary Police**. If Betty had reached 911, the first two things they would have wanted to know was who we were and what we wanted. That day the score read LADAP one and the Maui Scammer zero. Score one for the “Gipper.”

When we visited Yellowstone National Park, we were driving down the road and saw a buffalo walking on the shoulder. Traffic was light so I pulled up alongside the animal and slowed to keep pace with the buffalo’s progress. He gave me no attention and just continued walking along, minding his own business. I kept driving alongside him for about a half-mile and then told Betty to roll down the window to take a photo of the beast. We were so close she could practically reach out and touch the animal, and it would have made a great shot, but she refused to do

it. Later she told me that she was afraid that her actions would spook the buffalo and that it would attack our car. When she told me that, I could not help but wonder whatever happened to my beautiful and adventurous girlfriend who crawled out of a seventh story window of the Van Nuys City Hall to sit on a protruding flagpole. Of course, she was right about the buffalo, but not about the flagpole. I consoled myself by knowing that while I may have lost a great photo of a buffalo, I gained a super story to tell, especially since I heard the buffalo say as I pulled away, “I wish I had a buffalo nickel for every tourist that pulled that stunt.”

My other buffalo story comes under the heading of “gullible” and has to do with my writing a letter to Betty on April 14, 1951, after traveling on a troopship from the US to Japan. It is included in our *Love Letter* books and I have been surprised at how many people have inquired if what I wrote was true. In that letter, I wrote: “*We debarked from the USS Meigs on Friday about 10:30 AM and I would have wired you (Betty) except that they loaded us on the train before I had the chance. Some train! I will not say it was old, but it was brought over here by the US and they forgot to take down the sign that read, “It is unlawful for passengers to shoot buffalo from the car window.”* One person even asked me if they really had buffalos, in Japan and I said, “Sure, if you count water buffalos.”

I could say something of interest about every national park we visited. For example, some 50 years ago we were driving along a road in Yosemite when Bob, who must have been around five, shouted that he had seen a bear. “I don’t think so,” I said. He shouted back, “Oh, yes I did!” I asked, “What was the bear doing?” Back came the reply that the bear was in a garbage can. “Yep, you saw a bear,” I said. By the time we turned around and went back, however, that bear was long gone.

I also recall a stay at the Lodge in Crater Lake National Park, Oregon. After dinner, Betty and I sat on the back patio and watched the sky for hours as brilliant shooting stars continuously raced downward. What a spectacular sight, equal only to the gleam in Betty’s eyes. Finally and reluctantly, we called it a night as the heavens continued to explode in all of God’s glory.

Betty’s dad, Ben, always wanted to travel to Alaska, and one day

Betty said that we would take him if he would plan the trip. Many times I had warned her to never sign a blank check, speaking here not of dollars (we went Dutch) but of a time commitment. Well, plan it he did! We ended up with 16 glorious days that included most every form of transportation there was, with the notable exceptions of spaceflights, mule train, and camel rides. We flew up, rode the rails, toured by bus, hiked, cruised the rivers, walked in our sleep, and even took a tourist dogsled ride. We saw Denali National Park, panned for gold, explored towns and ogled Can-Can girls made famous by dime novels, and even went to the “end of the world.” Then we joined Betty’s brother, Chet, his wife, Sally, and their daughter, Lynda, along with Betty’s sister, Mary, and her husband, Dan, aboard a cruise ship and steamed (well maybe dieseled) for home. I later told Ben that if he had not been a college professor, he could have been a travel agent.

When we were in England, *The Phantom of the Opera* was easily the hottest venue in London. Betty and I were walking about and stumbled across a sandwich board in front of a ticket agency that advertised tickets for that night’s performance. “Let’s get tickets,” said Betty. Visualizing English pounds disappearing from my wallet, I agreed that we could go in to get information and that she was let me do the talking. “Okay,” she replied, and we went inside. I said to the agent, “Your sign outside states that you have tickets for tonight’s performance of *The Phantom of the Opera*.” “That’s right,” he said. I heard a familiar voice from behind say, “We’ll take them!” I will not say that the tickets were expensive, but I understand that our purchase completely disrupted the balance of trade between our two countries.

As I recall, there were three balconies in the theater, and our tickets were in the top row of the third balcony. Forget about nosebleed, I needed oxygen! It was a remarkable experience, and we viewed it from a vantage point that relatively few others ever had. I believe we saw two other Broadway productions of the “Phantom” in the US, and while they were both excellent, they were no match for what we saw that night in England. The best part, however, was that Betty had such a marvelous time. One thing about us Anderson men, we know how to show a girl a good time!

When we flew, I always asked Betty to wear her red jacket so I could find her more easily in an airport crowd. We also sat in aisle seats across from one another so I could readily assist her. One time, I was sitting next to a young woman and her son, who was probably about eight years old. We had just reached cruising altitude when a man came down the aisle to ask a favor. He explained that I was sitting next to his girlfriend and her son. When they had planned that trip, it seemed that he would be unable to go, so they only purchased two tickets. Then things changed and he could make the trip, but the only seat available was in first class. He wondered if I would trade seats with him. Suddenly I heard that familiar voice again. “We’ll take it!” said Betty. So, I slid over into her seat and she trotted off to first class. Showing a girl a good time was getting old—but I would have it no other way.

However, there were times when I put my foot down. One time we had just arrived at the ARCO arena in Sacramento, California, to see an ice show. We were at the top of the arena and our seats were at floor level. To make matters worse, there were no hand railings. That was a daunting task for me because I have no balance mechanism. I only had the broken bones, hundreds of facial stitches and piles of emergency room bills to support my disability status. There had to be handicap access, and while talking with an usher about that, I suddenly discovered that Betty was no longer with me. I searched for her for about 10 minutes and finally saw her in her red coat. She was in her seat at the bottom of the stairs. I could not believe how helpless I felt. If something happened, there was no way I could get to her. I was stuck with a macho feeling that it was my responsibility to be there, should she need me.

The arena staff took me to an elevator and then escorted me to my seat. When we got home, I told how her running off had made me feel, and that was the last time I would ever take her to the ARCO arena. That was a particularly tough decision, since the arena was where the Ringling Brothers and Barnum Bailey Circus played when they came to town. Betty loved the circus. I wanted to take her, and over the years we had missed very few performances. Now I simply would not risk taking her anywhere that I could not adequately care for her. I had to be

diligent, and it was a growing problem.

Since Mary was frequently in New York City on business, we decided to enlist her help in planning one of our trips to visit Robert at Princeton University. The plan was to do the tourist thing for a week in the city and then to visit Robert the following week. Mary scouted out hotels, made our reservation and purchased us discount tickets to five Broadway shows, one of which was *The Lion King*. We were all set, and a few weeks before we were to leave, terrorists crashed two airliners into New York's Twin Towers on 9/11. The result was destruction and a massive loss of life.

The United States immediately closed all commercial airline travel in the country. Compared to the massive damage done to so many of our fellow citizens by that act, our problems were all but nonexistent. We had two questions regarding to our planned trip. First, when would the airliners resume flying? Second, given the situation in New York City, did we want to make the trip? We decided that we did want to go if it was determined that it was safe to fly, so we went.

We had visited New York on several other occasions, so we were acquainted with the hustle and bustle of the city. We immediately noticed the stark contrast in the almost “ghost town” atmosphere of Time Square. One of the things that Betty noticed was the disrepair of the Times Square sidewalks. When she mentioned that to Mary, our daughter replied that because of the crowds, there had never been a time when she could even see the sidewalks.

When we arrived at the theater that was playing *The Lion King*, there were dozens of school buses parked on the streets. Taking our seats in the balcony, we found that the theater was overflowing with excited children. Tourists had canceled their tickets, so the production company had offered them to the local school districts. What a *magnificent gift* it was to Betty and me to be able to experience the joy and delight on the faces of those children that night. Never again will any theater vibrate with such joy and excitement—and never again will any cast (professional or otherwise) perform before such a delighted, exuberant, and appreciative audience.



CHAPTER 39

Decisions to Retire

DURING A ROUTINE COLONOSCOPY IN SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA, IN 1993, IT WAS DISCOVERED THAT I HAD COLON CANCER. Surgery took place in December. The surgeon stated that the procedure was successful; he had removed all of the cancer. He also said that I should get another colonoscopy in five years. The following year my daughter-in-law, Sasha, who is an oncologist, asked if I had received a follow-up colonoscopy. I told her “No. One was not due for another four years.” Hearing that, she told me to see my surgeon immediately and to get another colonoscopy—no excuses!

I went in to see him and told him what Sasha had said, but he countered that another test was not called for. I kept insisting, and he expended a lot of energy trying to dissuade me until I finally said, “Listen. If you do not want my daughter-in-law in here banging on your desk, you will order that test.” He gave me a referral to the specialist in charge of the colonoscopy department. That doctor repeated what the surgeon had said but finally relented and ordered the procedure. The bottom line was that if it had not been for Sasha, I would not be writing this today. The surgeon was wrong when he said he had removed all the cancer. I had a huge life-threatening growth in my colon that he had missed.

The follow-up surgery took place on February 8, 1995. Eight 5FU chemotherapy treatments followed and more were scheduled but were cancelled after the eighth injection because I had serious side effects. The two bright spots emerging from all of this are that I am still here and that while they were poking around inside of me, they removed my gallbladder. That, supposedly, headed off a gallstone attack.

*Now for an important word from our sponsor: GET A COLONOSCOPY!
Do it now—it's a lifesaver!*

With all this going on, Betty decided to retire. She made a lot of noise about her reasons for doing so, but her real reason was so she could keep an eye on me. Everyone supported her decision, but there was a lot of disappointment among her school Administrators, parents and colleagues. She would be sorely missed; everyone valued and loved Betty.

As for my situation, I was serving as the Regional Administrator, District President, and Seventy of the Central Pacific Region. In that role, I covered large chunks of California and Nevada and felt that the popular tune “On the Road Again” was written in my honor. It was also a period of unrest and conflict in the church, and I felt a huge responsibility to lead our people through that turbulent period in our history. They were my sheep; I was their shepherd, and there wasn't much time left—the compulsory retirement age of 65 was fast approaching.

The trouble with my flock was you couldn't trust them. To my surprise I was suddenly aware that the vast majority of my sheep were choosing not to be led astray or be negatively impacted by the unrest of the day. There I was, ready to throw myself on the grenade to protect my flock, but by their actions they were saying, “It's okay. We can do without your Band-Aid.” Boy! Talk about deflating a superhero's ego! There were hotspots, to be sure, and many good people were hurting, but the Holy Spirit moved among us in miraculous ways. The hot spots were quickly extinguished, or at least cooled down.

So I talked with my supervising minister and told him that I was considering taking early retirement at age 64. He was very uplifting when he replied, “*I thought you were already retired!*”

Headquarters granted approval, and our people were very gracious. They honored Betty and me wherever we went. The wonderful thing was that since Betty was now retired, she was free to travel with me as we crisscrossed the region to say our farewells. We had a wonderful time, and on one occasion she said, “This is just like high school!” She was referring to all the parties she used to go to as a teen. In addition, it was especially sweet for me to be able to share that experience with

my beloved, who had stayed in the background while I rode the “Glory Train” for many years. Make no mistake about it. We were a team, and her contribution to the team was much more than I was ever able to offer alone.

So if you are reading this and you were one of those “party throwers or goers,” then, as Bob Hope used to sing, “Thanks for the memories!”

In addition, speaking of memories, I am very grateful for that extra retirement year that I chose to take. We did a lot together, and that “bonus” year was overflowing with magical experiences and blessings.

For my retirement trip, we chose to go to Australia, New Zealand, and Fiji and we had a glorious time. Prior to leaving on the trip Betty had made the decision that later in the year she would have hip replacement surgery in Tyler, Texas. One day during our travels she said out of the blue that she wanted to be Administered to (James 5:14) in preparation for the surgery. “Absolutely,” I said. “Have you given any thought as to whom you would like to offer the prayer of blessing?” She said without hesitation, “Dale Luffman.” “Dale,” I thought. “That is a good choice.” Even though he lived in Missouri and we lived in California, somehow we would work it out.

On the last day of our trip, we flew out of Fiji for home. Our trip had been like a Disneyland Adventure (only it was real) and we had seen and done so much that I wished we had more time. Yet I was tired and glad that we had only one change of planes before arriving in the good old USA. That stop over was in Puerto Rico. As Betty and I sat in the airport waiting area, I felt a hand on my shoulder and as I turned...there stood Dale Luffman.

Some might call this a coincidence, but I call it, *Blessed Assurance!*

Betty’s hip replacement took place in Tyler in March of 1989, and we came close to losing her. The surgery had gone well and she was in a recuperation unit when our daughter-in-law, Sasha, included her in her morning cancer patient rounds. Sasha found Betty in a state of distress. The “you know what” hit the fan as help was quickly marshaled under Sasha’s direction. Betty seemed no worse for wear, except that from that time on, she had a fear of being alone in the hospital. In July of 2004 she

was diagnosed with breast cancer and received a breast lumpectomy at the Sutter Hospital in Roseville, California. Later she proudly wore the pink badge that proclaimed her as a cancer survivor.

In Tyler there was a woman who had a “One-Woman Ministry.” Somehow, she learned of a black man who lived 100 miles away who had fallen on hard times. (I’ll call the woman Helen and the man Sam.) Sam’s wife had died and he had lost his farm. Thanks to the generosity of a former neighbor, Sam lived in a rickety trailer underneath a shade tree. Sam also had a large, life-threatening cancerous growth on the side of his face for which he was not receiving treatment. It was for that reason that Helen drove the 200 round-trip miles to call on him, and it was just the first of many such trips.

The next day Helen was in Sasha’s office, seeking help for Sam. Sasha saw Sam the following day and agreed to treat him since she had determined that the cancerous growth had to be surgically removed immediately. Sasha called her husband, Larry, who is a dermatologist MOHE surgeon. Larry arranged to see Sam that day afterhours and arranged for some of his staff to stay late so that he could perform the surgery in the surgical operating room in his own medical clinic.

A few days later Helen stopped by Sasha’s office to thank her and asked if there was anything she could do for her. Sasha thought for a moment and said that Helen could pray for her mother-in-law, who would shortly be having heart valve surgery in Tyler. Helen said that she would and left the office. She returned a short time later to ask detailed questions about Betty’s surgery, such as when and where it would take place, who would be the physicians attending her, etc.

The time came for Betty’s surgery, and the plan called for some additional tests to take place the day before her operation. On that day, Sasha would be with me and on the day of surgery, Larry would be there.

So the day before the surgery, Sasha and I were sitting in the hospital waiting room, which was very large and overly crowded with anxious people awaiting word from hospital staff as to how their loved ones were doing. Doors would swing open and doctors in operating garments quickly entered to talk with those who were waiting. While attempts

were made to be discreet, I could determine if the news was good or bad from people's reactions. With each pronouncement, I offered a silent prayer of blessing for the "hearers" and those attending to them.

Suddenly it was our turn. It was way too early for the messenger to be here. He said that the cardiologist wanted to visit with us in a private waiting room. I looked at Sasha, and her face was filled with concern, as she mouthed the words, "This is not good." She was quickly on her feet and was half-running as she caught up and kept pace with the messenger. I hurried along a few steps behind.

About ten minutes after reaching the waiting room, the cardiologist arrived and told us that that this was only the second time in his long career that this had happened to him. "Betty is fine and does not need surgery," he explained and went on to say that he had conferred with the surgeon and he agreed with the diagnosis. He added that even if we wanted to go ahead with the procedure, he would not do it.

As Sasha and I were walking through the hospital lobby her cell phone rang. It was Helen wanting to know how things were going. I heard Sasha say, "Her husband is right here." I talked to Helen and have not heard so many "Praise the Lords" and "Hallelujahs" since I mistakenly walked into a Four Square revival meeting. She was crying and shared that as she prayed for Betty earlier in the day, the Lord gave her assurance that Betty would be fine. Is God good, or what?

Later we learned that Helen was a member of a very large Internet Prayer Ministry and that she had enlisted that group to pray for Betty. That explained why she had wanted the "who, what, when, and where" details of Betty's procedure. At that very hour, hundreds (if not thousands) were praying for her; and that number did not include those of our faith community who were doing the same. If, by chance, you were one of the "Prayer Warriors" who prayed for us on that occasion, please accept my eternal thanks—as well as my appreciation for the many others you have so richly blessed through the power of your prayers.

Looking back at the 24 months that followed, I cannot believe that we did all that we did, and we had a *great time*. Indeed, Irving Berlin's *God*

Bless America could well have been our theme song, as we traveled “from the mountains, to the prairies, to the oceans, white with foam”; seeing and doing and joyfully celebrating with more friends and family than many do in a lifetime. The best part was that we did it together.

Then during the middle of 2007, Betty’s Sacramento cardiologist said that it was now imperative to have her heart valve replaced. She decided to have the procedure done in Sacramento in September of that year. The surgery went well, and three days later she was up and around and feeling great. Then she was stricken with a highly serious staph infection. The prognosis was so dire that the attending physicians set about preparing me for her demise. However, God had made known to me that she would survive, so I thanked them for their professional judgment and went on to share my faith testimony that I would take her home.

It was a tough 3 months. She spent 35 days in the ICU and an additional 2 months in a rehabilitation care unit. While she was in ICU, I rented a room in an adjacent facility, took my meals in the hospital cafeteria and virtually lived at her bedside. Recalling her fearful experience in Tyler, it was important to me that she always felt a sense of loving and caring security around her. On rare occasions when I needed to leave her alone for a short time, I told her that I was leaving two angels to guard her door. The angels were a symbol of God’s ever-loving and watchful care. At other times when I needed to attend to off-campus responsibilities, friends and family came from a group of volunteers that our daughter, Mary, had organized. Again, if you were among these volunteers, please accept my undying gratitude for your watchful and loving ministry.

The rehabilitation care unit had its advantages and disadvantages. On the plus side, it was 20 minutes from our home, was accessible 24/7, and had an excellent physical therapy staff. On the downside, it was lacking in adequate and caring staff care, particularly on the night shift. The nurses’ station was close to Betty’s door; she could clearly hear them. According to her, they spent a lot of time visiting with each other, even to the point of ignoring calls. In terms of the night shift, she complained of very long waits and of poor attitudes and substandard care when they

did come. So I brought her cell phone to her, plugged in my cell number as the emergency number and told her to call me if she had a problem. I also told her that if she could not reach me, she should call 911. The 911 number was never dialed because she was always able to reach me. When she called, I was there in a flash, raising hell. The next morning I was raising more hell with the director of the facility. It took about a half dozen incidents before the night staff and Administrator realized that I wasn't going away. Then things magically got better, not only for Betty, but, according to my spies, for the other patients as well. Betty also told me that it got to the point that if they were legitimately delayed, then as quickly as they became available, they would rush in. The first thing they would ask was, "Have you called your husband yet?" The moral of this paragraph is that every patient in a hospital or care facility needs to have an assertive advocate available.

I was now sleeping at the house since it was so close. Every night when I returned home, I composed an affirmation statement on an 8.5 x 11 sheet of paper and taped it to the wall of Betty's room the next morning. Soon we had quite a collection. First, the staff paused to have a look-see, and the news spread. People were coming in from every part of the facility to view the latest affirmation. Even a few ambulance drivers stopped by. In fact, we got so busy that I considered charging admission.



CHAPTER 40

God's Promise Fulfilled

ON DECEMBER 21, 2007, GOD'S PROMISE WAS FULFILLED AND I TOOK MY BEAUTIFUL BRIDE HOME. Greeting her was a sign in the garage that read:

“Welcome home, Betty! Walk right in!”

And, walk in she did! It had been a long road. Betty fought hard and was richly blessed with good medical support. She never fully recovered, however, and in coming years she continued to go slowly downhill. She was always happy and upbeat, and we both cherished the extension of life that our Lord so graciously gave us. We traveled widely, seeing the sights, reliving history, enjoying the theater, experiencing renewal at religious festivals, sharing in family reunions, and participating in Robert and Jessica's wedding. We continually held hands and stole kisses at every opportunity—regardless of what our granddaughter, Carmen Elizabeth, might have thought.

We traveled from ocean to ocean and visited over 30 American cities. We poked our noses into Canada and scheduled multiple visits to the Santa Barbara Breakwater and to the lava rocks of Depoe Bay, Oregon, that provides the foundation for our fractional timeshare. At one point, I mimicked a popular TV commercial and jokingly asked Betty if she would like to go to Disneyland after she gained her strength back. A huge smile came across her face as she answered, “*Forget Disneyland! We're going to Maui!*”—and go we did for an entire month.

However, the times I cherished most with Betty were the quiet ones when we simply sat at our kitchen table and shared a cup of coffee in the morning. I also looked forward to nighttime when we whispered our “Love You’s” before drifting off to dreamland and upon awakening the next morning. I still honor those practices daily.

I planned to be her Care Giver when I brought her home. Then I lost my balance, took a tumble into our fern bed, and broke both arms. That was the bad news. The good news was that I miraculously avoided the tall sprinklers that were protruding a good six inches above ground. The other good thing was that suddenly earthly angels appeared. There were so many that I dare not try to name them out of concern that I would not recall all of their names. There are, however, four exceptions. Ted and Winnie Martin rode to the rescue on numerous occasions, and Ralph and Judy Cameron stood at my hospital bedside and calmed my frustration and anxiety by saying, “Don’t worry, Bob. We’ll stay with Betty 24/7 for as long as it takes.” And it took 33 days.

This was a wake-up call and I suddenly realized that I needed to get Betty into a secure environment where she would feel at home and be comfortable and cared for after my death. The guy always goes first, right? Well, that doesn’t always happen, but usually. Anyway, I did not want her to have to deal with my passing and then have to relocate to a new and unfamiliar care facility at the same time. The housing market was not in the best shape, but somebody was looking out for us. We had two bona fide offers that met our asking price in a matter of days. That’s how we got into assisted living.

As it turned out, the Lord called her home first. I am thankful for that because, considering her pain and the beginning of her memory loss, she would have had a much more difficult time handling things than I have had.

One time we were in Tyler, Texas, visiting the family over the Christmas/New Year holiday. Betty had the television set tuned to the Rose Parade when Boris wandered in. “What are you doing, Grandma?” he asked. Betty replied that she was watching the Rose Parade, which was a family tradition. It was a tradition because her father was a

horticultural instructor, and every year he would make the trek to Pasadena to see the parade. When Betty was old enough, she tagged along. She was a veteran parade watcher who knew the ins and outs of that glorious floral exposition as few others did. So, Boris curled up next his grandma and watched the parade. Shortly thereafter, his mother, Sasha, came in and asked what he was watching. He replied, “I’m watching the Rose Parade with Grandma—it’s a family tradition.”

Several years later Betty’s health had deteriorated, and she said that she wished she could go to the parade again. In view of her health status, I was concerned about taking her since I was not sure if I was physically up to caring for her on such a rigorous excursion. I searched on my trusty computer for a tour where I would have support if it were needed. I *gulped* when I saw the prices, but Cartan Tours had a three-day trip that would fit the bill. As I write this, my eyes are misty recalling the joy on Betty’s face as she watched that parade in person for the last time. Clearly, it was worth every penny.

I wanted to purchase a video of the parade so Betty and I could relive that experience from time to time; but, for some odd reason, nothing seemed available. In searching the web, I discovered a Rose Parade video that I could purchase from KTLA, a Los Angeles television station that broadcast the Rose Parade every year. There was no information as to how I could order it, however. I called the station only to learn that the promo I had watched was for a previous parade and that they were no longer offering those disks for sale.

However, the man I was talking with transferred me to another department and that department manager offered to have a video of the current year’s parade made for us. Shortly thereafter, the disk arrived, but there was no invoice enclosed. I called the station to find out how much I owed them. When I reached the manager I had previously spoken with, he said that he hoped we had enjoyed the disk and that there was no charge. I was truly moved. How often in this fast moving, commercial world do people exhibit such kindness to people they have never met? I am truly indebted to those good folks at KTLA, and it is no wonder that KTLA was always my favorite television station while I was growing up

in Southern California.

Today the Cartan Tours “Name Necklace” that she wore on that 2008-2009 Rose Parade Tour hangs from the mirror of her former dresser. It’s a constant reminder of the joyful time she (we) had on that trip and of the good people who made it possible for us to relive that experience many times over. I especially enjoy watching it because it includes street level footage of my beloved Betty sitting in her wheelchair, watching the Rose Parade pass by as her wish was being granted.

Fourteen years after I retired, we moved into The Quarry, an assisted living community in Vancouver, Washington. They allowed small pets, but Betty and I were not in any condition to care for one—the “underfoot” risk factor was just too great. However, Betty still wanted a dog, so we agreed with Claudia that we would purchase and register a dog in Betty’s name, but Claudia would care for it at her place. That way, the dog had lots of room to run and play with Claudia’s other dogs. Betty named the dog Breaker (after the Breakwater in Santa Barbara). We saw him when we visited at Claudia’s place or when she brought him over to our suite for short visits. He was and still is an active dog and certainly was not the lapdog that Trapper had been. Still, Betty had her dog and was always glad to see him, and anything that made her happy made me happy. After Betty passed on, Claudia continued to show him until he earned his Championship and then located him a loving home in Bellevue, Washington.

The dining room supervisor at the Quarry is a *super* guy by the name of Patrick Magee. When we were talking about this book, he jokingly said that he would like to be in it. So, here, he is—*immortalized* and symbolic of the love, care, and extraordinary service so graciously given by current and past staff members to the residents of our Quarry community. Thanks, guys and gals, for a job well done. My hat is off to you!

When Betty started teaching, I sent her a single, long stem red rose with a written card every Monday morning. It was my way of telling her that even though I was away and could not be with her, I was thinking about her, and I loved her with all of my heart. I am still sending her weekly flowers—but now they are bouquets that come on Fridays, the

day after they clean sweep the Santa Barbara cemetery grounds. A well-meaning friend questioned the wisdom of my going to the expense of doing this. I just smiled and explained that I send the flowers because it gives me such joy to do so. I wish like anything that I could take Betty into my arms and hold and kiss her and tell her how much I love her as I used to do—but I can't. So now, since she is with me in Spirit, we spend time together over morning coffee just as we always did on the days I was home. We visit and whisper “I love you's” throughout the day, and I hold her photographs tight as I kiss her dear sweet lips. It's nowhere near as good as the real thing—but it's the next best thing. Then on Fridays, when the weekly email arrives from Alpha Floral of Santa Barbara with the picture of the colorful flowers adorning Betty's resting place, my day blossoms. Who knows? Maybe somehow she is aware that I am sending her flowers and keeping my promise to love her always. Maybe so, maybe not, it really does not matter; the important thing is that I know!

A long-standing tradition in Betty's family was walking the Breakwater in Santa Barbara. It was said that if you stopped by her grandparents' home and they were not there, you would find them at the Breakwater. Even today, when one or more of my children and I visit Santa Barbara, their visit is not complete until they take that stroll. Ben was also a Breakwater advocate. At least once a week he gathered some close friends from his retirement community, and they went on a Breakwater outing. Because his health was failing, he had given up his apartment and had moved to the health center of his community where he received round-the-clock care. Our daughter-in-law, Sasha, had fallen in love with Grandpa Ward and she often traveled thousands of miles to visit with him.

Sasha and Larry visited him in 1993. He wanted to go to the Breakwater, so they checked him out of the health center and gathered some of his friends for the excursion. It was a beautiful day, and they enjoyed their time together. When they were loading him into the van for the trip home, he looked skyward and uttered the words, “*Isn't that beautiful?*” and in an instant, God took him unto His self.

Nineteen years later, it was Betty's turn to “make the trip home.” In

my Christmas letter of 2012, I wrote:

“This letter is not about death—rather it is about love and celebration and unspeakable gifts. In this regard, let me share with you a remarkable testimony of God’s love and goodness. Betty’s health has rapidly deteriorated and her death is imminent; her body has taken on her breathing and she is unable to speak. For many hours Bob, Carmen, and I have been at her bedside; and eventually the two of them take a break and leave the room—as I remain; gently stroking her forehead and telling her how much I love her. It was as if Betty had been waiting for this moment—a time to be alone with me. Slowly she turns her head towards me, our eyes met in a *penetrating* moment, and with what appears to be great effort, she clearly mouths the words ‘*I Love You*’—*and in a split instant, she is gone to be with her Lord.*”

There are two reasons I have chosen to place these two life-changing events here together, back-to-back in this book; notably it is their striking similarities, along with the *surprise* of the calendar—both took place on February 27.

At some future time, I would not be surprised to learn that on February 27, 2012, Betty’s dad, along with other family members, met Betty at the entrance to the Santa Barbara Breakwater for one final stroll just before her Lord escorted her through the very gates of heaven. One of these days I will take that stroll with her.



Author's Note

FOR THE MAJORITY OF MY LIFE, THE CHURCH THAT I BELONGED TO AND SERVED WITH WAS KNOWN AS THE REORGANIZED CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS. The church was often confused with our friends in Salt Lake City whose theology and administrative practices have always been vastly different from ours. Beyond the confusing nature brought about by the similar names of the two denominations, many of our people thought that our name was too long and did not clearly speak to the current mission of our church. At our 2000 World Conference, the legislative body took action to change the name of the church to the *Community of Christ*. This act was widely acclaimed by our membership and has served us well.



