

# **A Pilgrimage of Joy**

**W. Carl Ketcherside**

## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
1. Early Years.....	8
2. Marriage Evangelism.....	36
3. Debates at Home - Fellowship Abroad.....	61
4. The Beginnings of Change.....	95
5. The Change Continues.....	131
6. God’s Peace in Turbulent Times.....	157
7. The Last Years of Mission Messenger.....	190

# Introduction

W. Carl Ketcherside was at last persuaded to put into serial form the story of his life, which he chose to call “A Pilgrimage of Joy.” The title itself speaks well to the life of this unusual man, for his earthly sojourn was indeed that of a pilgrim, which to him meant that his life was a plan of God and that his destiny was to fulfill the purpose God had for him in this world. He was a man who was “on his way” to something higher. He was a sojourner in a world that was not his home, but as he passed this way he was joyfully involved in making his own contribution to what he called “this interesting world.”

His life was a pilgrimage of joy largely because he made it so by his winsome sense of humor, his contagious enthusiasm, and his undying optimism. If these ingredients – humor, enthusiasm, optimism – do not always make for a joyful pilgrimage in this world, they certainly did in the life of Carl Ketcherside. He was an “up” person who never saw a “down” day. He was a delight to be around, and he had a knack for making people feel good about themselves when in his presence.

Before he brought his monthly journal, *Mission Messenger*, to a close in December, 1975, after 37 years of publication, we agreed that he would begin immediately to write regularly for my publication, *Restoration Review*. He announced to his readers that while his paper would no longer be published, they could keep in touch with him through my paper. Many of his readers who were not already taking *Restoration Review* became subscribers. From 1976 until his death in 1989 he wrote regularly for my paper, his last articles being published posthumously. I think some of his best writing was done in these years in the pages of *Restoration Review*, perhaps because he was free of the ordeal of having to edit his own paper. And in my paper he knew he was free to say whatever was in his heart and mind, with no strings attached.

I urged him to begin writing his autobiography in serial form on a monthly basis, and to continue as long as seemed appropriate. He wrote for four years (40 installments), supposing that would be sufficient. I encouraged him to continue until he finally wrote for six years, concluding his 60th installment, “Last Time Around,” in December, 1981, which chronologically brought his life story up to the time he closed down *Mission Messenger*. If the series appears a bit disconnected in places, which it may, it should be remembered that it was first published in serial form and without defined parameters.

What is important is that Carl has told his own story in his own way. He was encouraged to make it a kind of intellectual autobiography, reflective of the changes in his thinking through the years. The reader will see that he does share the drama of some of the changes that turned his life in a different direction, from that of a “wing commander” of a narrow sect, a term he frequently used to describe his old life as a sectarian, to that of an envoy of peace, unity, and fellowship through forbearing love. This is especially evident when he describes his own life as a polemicist and how he changed his mind about debating his own brothers in Christ, and when he tells how, after 25 years in the ministry and baptizing thousands, he at last on a wintry night in a little chapel in Belfast, Ireland invited Jesus into his heart, renouncing forever his sectarianism.

It was understood that Carl eventually would write a prologue to his autobiography, bringing the events of his life, along with some of his most recent thinking, up to date. But he never got around to writing that final word to his “Pilgrimage of Joy,” which would have been reflections on his life during those last years. It turned out to be more than 14 years from the time he ended his narrative with the demise of his journal to the time of his death.

One purpose of this introduction, therefore, is to fill that 14-year gap with a summary of what he did during those years and in what ways his ministry developed. It will of course have to be brief, for Carl’s life, along with his wife Nell’s, was as busy as ever once he closed down their journal. As Carl put it, he was as busy as ever but the pace was different. He continued to write extensively for several journals. Within a month of closing down his own paper he had several essays for *Mission, Integrity*, and *Christian Standard*, as well as for *Restoration Review*. He was especially pleased to do a series on the American Bicentennial for the *Standard*.

Up until the last few years of his life he had traveled and lectured among the colleges and churches as much as ever, and he made several significant journeys abroad. But the most important change in his life in the post-Mission Messenger years was the founding of Cornerstone in 1983, an inner-city mission in St. Louis, which appears to have captured his heart and mind more than any task he had ever set his hand to. It soon dominated his and Nell’s life, and they would have it no other way. If Carl’s view of ministry changed in those last years, I think it would be that he came to see a greater need for work among the poor and needy than among the established churches. He turned down invitations to hold seminars and give lectures in order to join Nell and others in passing out blankets, food, and clothing at the Cornerstone. He taught as many classes, but now it was mostly in the inner city and at Oak Hill Chapel, his home congregation.

He may have become sort of “burned out” on visiting so many churches for so many years. In the innards of his beloved St. Louis he was among the rank and file, and that is what he preferred. But he was no less active. He was always revving it up, always on the go, always doing something, up to the day he died. In those last days, when he was giving so much of himself, a friend who was concerned about his apparent fatigue threatened to call his doctor. “You leave that doctor alone,” he insisted, as he proceeded to the Cornerstone. He died the way he would have preferred, with his boots on, with his heart on the present and his eye on the future. After one more busy day, he committed his soul to God’s safekeeping, got in bed, went to sleep and woke up in heaven. A neat way to do it if one can manage it!

If there is a diary on that last decade and a half of his life it would be in the many letters he wrote to people all over the world. He was an inveterate letter writer, many of the letters being written in longhand, which reflected his gifted penmanship, which won him prizes in his youth. His handwriting did not change with the years. His hand was as steady and eloquent at 81 as it was 37 years earlier when we first began to correspond. Many people have mentioned to me through the years two things that impressed them about corresponding with Carl: that he would bother to write to *them*, and that he had such a beautiful hand. He delighted in writing love notes, especially to those who were critical of him, and it was common for him to write words of commendation to the author of an article or a book he had read.

We corresponded regularly for almost four decades. Realizing that his letters would one day have historic value, I carefully preserved them, hundreds of them. Carl's letters are a mirror of the real person that he was, occasionally prideful but always showing his strength. Here are a few lines from some of them, all taken from the last 14 years of his life:

Anticipating what he might write in his autobiography about his association with the Daniel Sommer family, who played a significant role in our history, he wrote in 1976:

I suspect that in dealing with the Sommer family I shall let loose some news not previously known. It is certain that I will show the influence of editors in perpetuating division.

Reuel Lemmons, longtime editor of the *Firm Foundation*, was often critical of Carl's more open views of unity and fellowship. He editorialized Carl as "Blind in One Eye" and would not allow him space to reply. They pilloried each other in their papers. But Carl was never vindictive nor did he hold grudges, as this note early in 1989 would indicate:

I am saddened by the passing of Reuel. Now our disagreements of the past seem as a dead leaf blown by the wind. I am especially sorry for his good wife who has been a chronic invalid for years. I earnestly pray that the brethren will help and sustain her.

Sometimes he was philosophical, as in this note on the occasion of the release of the hostages in Iran on the eve of President Reagan's inauguration:

To be free, as the hostages said, is the greatest blessing in the world, and I am sure that the hostages to systems feel the same way. What a great thing God is doing for us in these days!

And he was sometimes introspective, as in this reflection in 1981:

It is kind of frightening to think that all of us are leaving our imprint upon the record. It should make all of us a little more careful when we realize that years after we slumber in the earth men will borrow what we have said and use it to His eternal glory or to His detriment. It makes us all feel much more humble as we are called upon to touch the sordid lives into which people have become trapped and snared and to which they are held hostage.

This paragraph on part of his itinerary for 1980 is typical of the three attributes already referred to: his humor, enthusiasm, and optimism:

I leave for Palisade, Colorado next Wednesday and will be in all kinds of gatherings there. It is a great opportunity to really go all out in the work in that section. Then the next week I am going to Portland, Oregon for a couple of meetings. It is evident on almost every side that God is at work through His Spirit bringing about better days. I am thrilled with what I am looking at all over America and Canada. Would Alexander Campbell have loved these days!

If Carl was an inveterate correspondent, he was also a consummate reader. He was usually reading several books at one time, as indicated in this 1981 paragraph:

I am currently reading three books. This is a regular practice of mine. Two of them are 'Karl Marx: A Christian Assessment of His Life and Thought' and 'C.S. Lewis: Mere Christianity.' I find both of them highly fascinating. The erudition of the latter is extremely impressive. The third book seems also to be vastly interesting since it contains a kind of panoramic survey of a land in which I grew up. The book is 'Pioneer Women: Voices from the Kansas Frontier' by Joanna L. Stratton. The introduction is by Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. It is fascinating. It gives you a new impression of the strength and courage of women. Not that I needed that, because I have always believed in it.

Concerning a stay in the hospital he wrote in 1986:

I spent a week in the hospital with a surgery for prostatitis. But I refused to be kept in bed too long, and through his marvelous grace led my roommate back to Jesus and visited all 21 rooms in Section 1100. I met all kinds of people from all over and we had some thrilling talks about Jesus. You can talk to people in the hospital easier than anywhere else. We are having a great time as we grow older.

He had a way with words, even in his letters. This comment on the Flew-Warren debate, which was held in my home town and billed as "the debate of the century," is vintage Carl Ketcherside:

Your article on the debate was terrific. That was a first-class fiasco and a goldbrick if ever there was one. I think those who promoted it thought that it would place 'the Lord's Church' in the forefront of defense of truth in the evangelical scholastic world and most of them did not even know the debate of the century was being held. It was like inviting the whole world to a gigantic fireworks explosion and then having the firecrackers fizzle and the Roman candles backfire. No wonder people are confused. What with one affirming there is a God and acting as if there was, it is enough to blow your mind and put you in orbit.

In those latter years he was always reporting on his ministry at Cornerstone, which became his first love:

Nell and I (well, myself at least) are having a 'ball' at the Cornerstone. I'm getting ready to teach a Bible Study on Monday mornings. We were there yesterday and helped some of the most sorrowful looking people I have ever seen. Worst are the abused wives. I had experience in a drunken husband stabbing his wife and the children were back home the next day. It goes on continuously! We gave away more Bibles last week than at any time since we turned the place from selling spirits to giving away the Spirit. The river of life is flowing as He said that it would.

He was always writing about Nell. Not only did he tell her every day how much he loved her, but he often told Ouida and me how much he loved her. We were kept posted on her several serious illnesses through the years, and rejoiced that in 1988 she appeared much improved. Then in August of that year she went home to be with the Lord. A few days later Carl wrote to us about the end:

Nell left us very suddenly. She died almost immediately of a massive heart attack. I arose and opened the bathroom door, not having heard a sound from her. She was lying doubled up with

her head between the stool and the tub. I tried to get her to say something but she was gone. She detested formality so much that at her large funeral services at two places – here and at Flat River, I spoke briefly to the crowd, introduced Sue (Mrs. Sue Burton, their daughter) who read the poem enclosed, the four grandchildren sang her favorite song. I asked for those who wanted to pay tribute to her to raise their hands and speak, and we followed with a few words from a brother. I went back to work teaching the next morning. It was hard.

Yes, it was hard. After 60 years of having Nell at his side it was a bit too much for Carl to go it alone. He himself now had less than a year to live. In a letter postmarked the day he died, May 24, 1989, which is probably the last letter he ever wrote, he summarized the agony of the lonely months that had passed: “I am disappointed in myself. I thought that I had the power to overcome grief or anything else which was my lot. I found that I simply do not have.” In the same letter he wrote of his engagement to Fran Woodside, a widow in his home church, a former Roman Catholic whom he had baptized into Christ. She had been a friend to both Carl and Nell for several years.

He explained his need to marry to the folk at Oak Hill Chapel: “The loneliness finally got to me. I asked Fran to marry.” He said he did not want to live with his children nor in a nursing home. He and Fran would take care of each other and serve God together. They even planned a Hawaiian honeymoon. But it was not to be, for the end came for Carl several months before the proposed marriage. But again this is vintage Carl Ketcherside, who even at 81 was living on the growing edge, excited by the present and awed by the future.

At our last visit together in Hartford, Illinois, only a few weeks before his death, he was pleased that I was not among those who were critical of his plans to marry. He knew that I understood that a man can be devoted to a woman for 60 years, and then, once she is gone, marry another without in anyway reflecting upon the first marriage. On that occasion he extolled the virtues of his late wife and reconfirmed his love and appreciation for her, and then said as he gestured helplessly, “But she isn’t here anymore.” It was a touching testimony to the beauty and importance of marital companionship. Since Carl’s death I have kept in touch with Fran and find her to be a brave woman who has frequently been smitten by life’s vicissitudes, one who has learned to yield to the power of God’s healing.

The most significant single event in Carl’s life during those last years was his attendance in 1983 at the International Convention of Itinerant Evangelists in Amsterdam, Holland. His enthusiasm for this conference is indicative of the changes that God had wrought in his life through the years, and is reflective of the contribution he was able to make to his own people. If the experience back in 1951 in the little church in Belfast had liberated him from sectarianism, the world evangelism conference in Amsterdam in 1983 confirmed his commitment to the church catholic. It was a rare ecumenical experience for a man who had been years preparing himself to appreciate it. In four installments in the 1984 Restoration Review he tells about the conference and what it meant to him. His evaluation is a commentary on his own pilgrimage of one blighted by the factional spirit to one enlightened by an ecumenical outlook. It is his own testimonial that it is only the love of Christ that can break down partisan walls and make believers one in heart and soul.

There were evangelists present from 174 countries, representing virtually every Christian community in the world. Many from the Third World were so poor, being ministers who supported themselves by some trade, that they were provided a change of clothing during the convention. Carl tells of talking with evangelists, sometimes by translation, from Namibia, Zambia, South Africa, India, Sri Lanka, and several South American countries, to name a few, and he was in seminars with some of the great evangelists of the world. He listened to men who were experienced in witnessing for Christ to Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, atheists and communists. He heard Michael Green of Oxford, an Anglican, at one session and the Metropolitan of the Russian Orthodox Church at another. He sat with Baptists from Yugoslavia and with ministers from the Armenian Orthodox Church.

For ten days he was with leaders from denominations that he had not even heard of before. It was at a gathering of the church universal, the first of its kind in history, and he was impressed that it had but a single theme, Jesus Christ and him crucified. They were there to encourage each other and to learn better how to witness for Jesus Christ in today's world. Carl was an enthusiastic participant, describing it as "a mind-blowing experience." The great truth that he had shared with so many for so long proved true for him in Amsterdam in a special way, that "Wherever God has a child I have a brother or sister."

He tells how one morning as he was walking to one of the sessions he was approached by two men on the street, Arabs, who were curious about the conference, and, seeing Carl's identification badge, asked him what it was about. Carl missed the session so as to spend an hour with the men. He told them that the meetings were not about a what but about a who. He told them that Jesus Christ was the only answer for our ripped-off world. What Carl told those Arabs is a fitting description of what had happened in his own life, and it points up the message that he gave to his own generation. He moved from all the "whats" of sectarian opinionizing to the "Who" of the Christian gospel. When we first met he was majoring in the "whats." When he died he had given the best half of his life in majoring in the "Who." And what a difference that made, not only in his own life, but in the multitudes that his ministry touched!

Home from Amsterdam, he was asked by his critics what such a conference could possibly accomplish. His answer, as I see it, is a suitable commentary on the significance of the life and ministry of Carl Ketcherside:

I think we must face the fact that, like the generation contemporary with Jesus, many of us are blind and cannot see afar off. Long life and continuous drudgery in one of the more legalistic sects of this day have blurred our vision and dimmed our sight until 'we see men like trees walking.' We need 'the second touch.' Surgery for the spiritual cataracts which cause a milky film across our minds would help. Because of my past orientation I also went with no little skepticism. It was all blown away after my arrival.

In Amsterdam he saw demonstrated on a large scale the liberating truth that had long undergirded his plea for unity, that we can love and accept people, and enjoy the fellowship of the Spirit with them, without approving of everything they believe or practice. At that great conference he found confirmation for what he had long taught others, that we are to make nothing a test of fellowship that God has not made a condition for going to heaven. The only unity that is ever possible is unity in diversity.



Carl Ketcherside admitted that his vision was once blurred by sectarian bias. He once saw men like trees walking. But he received the second touch from the One who kept on changing his life and clearing his vision. And that second touch led him on his pilgrimage of joy.

—Leroy Garrett

# 1. Early Years

## IN THE BEGINNING

I was born early in the morning of May 10, 1908, in a little two-room miner's cabin in a poverty-stricken village called Cantwell, nestled in the eastern foothills of the Missouri Ozarks. My advent was at a very inauspicious time during the presidential tenure of Theodore Roosevelt, for I made my debut on the heels of the great financial panic of 1907, a matter to which I gave little thought at the time. My father was William Ketcherside and he had married Anna Marguerite Hansen some eighteen months before I entered the scene as "a howling success." There were five other children to follow to compose a family circle of three boys and three girls. All of us are still alive as I write these words.

All of the Ketchersides (or Ketchersids, for some dropped the final "e" about the year 1800) are descended from one progenitor, Thomas Ketcherside, who came over from Scotland shortly before the time of the American Revolution. His family settled in Virginia and North Carolina. Our branch of the clan emigrated to Missouri after it became United States territory as part of the Louisiana Purchase, and took up land in the then wild country called the "Black River region." The third highest peak of the Missouri Ozarks appears on our state map as Ketcherside Mountain.

Like a lot of pioneers, the men were hard and tough. They prided themselves on the amount of raw whiskey, called rot-gut, which they could gulp down and upon their ability to settle brawls with their fists in bare-knuckle fighting. My great grandfather deserted his family and "shacked up" with a Cherokee Indian woman who had been abandoned when her family died on the frightful "Trail of Tears" march in which many thousands perished while crossing Illinois and Missouri enroute to the Oklahoma Territory.

My great-grandmother was, so I am told, a gentle Scotswoman who still retained the dialect of "Auld Scotia." She kept the family together, and although none of them ever went to school, or learned to read or write, she invested them with a degree of integrity and a reasonable sense of respect. My own grandfather, Woodson Ketcherside, even as a lad, demonstrated qualities which later endeared him to all who knew him. When he first saw my grandmother, Lavina Moses, she was a mere girl, working barefoot in a rocky hill field and wielding a heavy hoe.

As an orphan, she had been indentured to a man for whom she was required by law to work for her "board and keep" until she became eighteen. The lot of such "bound children" in the days before orphan homes was often a difficult one. Taking compassion upon her when she was fifteen, my grandfather-to-be paid off the sum assessed for the final three years and obtained her release. He bought her a pair of shoes and a simple dress and they were married when he was seventeen and she was still but fifteen. I think their union was one of the happiest and most contented I have ever seen. With the opening of the deep-shaft lead mines near Bonne Terre, they moved to a rugged hill farm some three miles from that struggling town, built a log cabin and began to rear their growing family in a kind of wilderness setting where hardship was a way of life and the wolf of hunger was seldom far from the rude door swung on leather hinges.

There was but little chance for an education and the Coonville school, a couple of miles distant, was in session only sporadically as a wandering teacher came through and arranged to teach a few weeks for a meager pittance while “boarding around” a week at a time in the homes of the scholars in the area. Since the chief aim of the community rowdies was to “run the teacher off” and they felt a sense of abject failure if one remained more than six weeks, opportunities for intellectual development were decidedly limited. The rustic homes were utterly devoid of reading materials. There were no newspapers, magazines or books. Only an occasional Bible was to be found and it was regarded with superstitious awe, as containing a passage which would instantaneously stop nosebleed when read by someone who knew its location in the sacred text.

There were no churches and no regular meetings for religious devotion or instruction. Only when an itinerant Methodist or Baptist preacher rode in along one of the trails and announced “preaching in the schoolhouse” did the folk gather to be exhorted to flee from the wrath to come. A boy was sent on a mule to inform the dwellers in remote cabins about the great event and all came, more for the diversion than for the spiritual uplift. The preachers were hardy, with faces deeply tanned and hands that were calloused. They worked in the fields or in the timber side by side with those who “put them up for the night” and prided themselves that they could lay out a row in the field or hew a beam as straight as “the best of them.” They were also fearless and had no qualm about stepping off the platform to walk back and grab a disturbing ruffian by “the nape of the neck and the seat of his breeches” and throw him unceremoniously into the schoolyard. Then dusting off their hands they would invite anyone else who wanted “some of the same” to step forward and request it before they resumed preaching.

As a little lad I used to listen spellbound as my grandfather, who was a master story teller, recounted incidents related to school and church in the backwoods. Always reverential, while being as courageous as a wildcat, he told about the times he had pitched in to help the preacher, and with the aid of a stick of stove wood or a window-prop had *converted* a lot of toughs from an upright to a prone position. He liked best to tell of a Methodist preacher who was very small in stature and who rode his jaded horse into the community after the last three meetings had been “busted up” by a gang of roughnecks.

The wiser heads tried to dissuade the short, thin man from announcing a meeting but “he allowed as how he could handle it with the help of the Lord.” The schoolhouse was crowded to capacity the first night with the better element in fear and trembling, while the boorish louts were scuffling with and pawing at each other in the back. The little preacher stepped behind the teacher’s desk and called for silence in order to begin a song to the praise of God. The noise in the rear became louder and more raucous. Nervous tension filled the air.

The preacher calmly said, “We will adjourn to the schoolyard. Follow me, please!” As he walked down the aisle, he was followed by the wondering audience, some of whom whispered that he was scared out and giving up. Without saying another word, when he reached the schoolyard, the preacher stooped down and picked up three walnuts from under a tree, and then yanked a six-shooter out of his hip pocket. One by one he threw the walnuts in the air and without a miss shot them to bits. Then he picked up three more and threw them high into the air at once and cracked all three. The fragments of the walnut shells rained down on the heads of the gaping crowd.

Taking six bullets out of his side pocket the preacher again loaded his gun. His fingers did not tremble. He looked up and said, "We will return to the house. Follow me, please!" The awe-stricken rustics all trooped in behind him. It was still as a morgue when the preacher took his place again. Not a sound disturbed the deathly quiet. Laying his trusty six-shooter on top of the Bible he announced, "I propose to discourse with you tonight about the Prince of peace and I will tolerate no interruption." There was no interruption to tolerate. If someone shuffled his feet the preacher merely glanced at the gun and the shuffling stopped. The meeting lasted three weeks and "the mourners" were all over the place when "the altar call" was made.

In this kind of rural environment my father finished the third McGuffey Reader and mastered the first part of Ray's Practical Arithmetic. It had to be done "in hitches" as someone later explained it. While still a child he contracted smallpox during an epidemic, and due to lack of proper care, since there were no doctors to summon for advice, one of his eyes was permanently impaired and the muscle in one leg shriveled away and left that limb shorter than the other. This did not interfere with his hunting or "frolicking" as the old-timers referred to almost any activity except hard work. He became a crack-shot with a gun and regularly carried off every prize from the shooting-matches. He also became a fiddle-player of note and this made him extremely popular at the hoe-downs which generally continued all night or until someone got "likkered up" and started a "knock-down-and-drag-out."

He got a job underground when he was not yet sixteen years old and this meant working ten hours per day, six days per week, for eleven cents an hour. Every day, at a time depending upon which shift he worked, he went to the changing-room where he took off his street-clothes, hung them up on hooks, and then put on his wet, dirty, slimy miner's garb. He went to the large can of carbide, filled his lamp, hooked it on the front of his cap, stepped on the cage and made his descent into the bowels of the earth.

Perhaps because he was so young, and felt the need to prove himself among the older hard-bitten miners, he developed a vocabulary of profanity which would have shocked people in almost any other part of the world. When I was grown and returned to "the Lead Belt" as the area came to be called, grizzled old-timers would search me out and say, "I knowed your Pap when he first went to work underground. He could out-cuss a mule skinner." They said it with a note of envy such as one uses when he speaks of another who has achieved a degree of proficiency in a coveted art which the speaker has not been able to reach.

The young William Ketcherside, if one may judge by the posed photographs taken by wandering photographers, was a rather handsome swaggering young specimen of manhood. When he was "on top" he smoked a pipe filled with Bull Durham, always allowing the string of the tobacco sack to hang from his shirt-pocket in the latest style. When he was underground he could not smoke because of the danger from powder and dynamite, so he took up chewing Brown Mule, and practiced spitting through his front teeth. He was a foul-mouthed and obscene product of a place and a time where you had to be as tough as a hickory sapling to survive.

When the Spirit of God got through to him and transformed him it was one of the most thorough and traumatic changes I have ever known. It is also one of the first things I remember and, of course, it affected my whole future on earth. I must tell you about it, but before I do I want to

tell you about my mother, whose parents came to this land as immigrants from the “Old World” as Europe was then designated.

## MOTHER AND HER DANISH KIN

My mother’s grandfather was Lars Hansen. He was born of peasant stock in Denmark on February 28, 1829, the year that Hans Christian Andersen gained recognition for his first stage play after he came to Copenhagen from a boyhood of poverty and persecution at Odense. We never knew the original family names of the women our ancestor married in Denmark. Our only existing records show that the first was Mary and she bore him four children – Lars Peter, Christina, John and Nelson. The first became my own maternal grandfather and after he began to grow up, his father became known as “Old Lars” to distinguish him from his son.

After the death of Mary, “Old Lars” married a woman whose name was Karen, and who was eleven years younger than himself. They had a little girl and boy, and it was while the latter was still quite young the lure of this New World became too great for them to resist. The stories of emigrants who found breathing space and living room among the hills and on the wide expanses of prairie and plain sounded a clarion call in a world which had been bled white by the Napoleonic Wars. The Hansens saved what they could and sold what they had and purchased steerage tickets for the family.

My grandmother often told me of the hardships encountered on the six-weeks trip. All food had to be brought along and in their case it consisted mostly of hard-tack rye bread and cheese. The latter became so moldy it had to be scraped before it could be eaten. All became ill and were so sick and nauseated they could hardly minister to one another for weakness. The little boy died and had to be buried at sea. The emaciated little body was sewn up in sailcloth by a sail-mender. At dusk the little knot of emigrants ascended to the deck where the master of the ship read the Lutheran burial service, at the close of which the weighted body was gently eased overboard and sank from sight in the rolling waves.

On the long journey the Hansens became friends of another emigrating family bearing the name of Mabuice, and learning that they were coming to a place called Missouri, they resolved to stick with them. They eventually settled near Bessville, halfway between Marble Hill and Marquand, a land of rolling hills and spring-fed streams. Three more children, all girls, were borne by Karen, who died on November 14, 1877, still only thirty-seven years of age. “Old Lars” lived on for eleven more years, before he passed away on his fifty-ninth birthday. He was regarded as an aged patriarch in those days when the life-span was much shorter than it is now.

Young Lars Peter had gone to school in Denmark and in the new knowledge conveyed in the village school. He readily learned English but never lapsed in his usage of the tongue he first knew. All of his life he subscribed for newspapers published in Denmark and though they arrived months after they were printed he devoured their contents greedily. He became an adept penman and his letters were models of Spencerian neatness.

When he married Sophia Christensen he found himself with a companion of “the old school.” She thought it was a sin to teach children to speak English. She wanted life to be exactly as it

was in the towns and villages of Germany and Denmark. To be a Dane in those days was to be a Lutheran, and as the Hansen children were born and grew old enough they were sent to the parochial school where all recitations were in German and the catechism was the most important class of all. On Sunday the ritual was conducted in German by stern pastors who tolerated no questioning of their authority. The colony in which my mother grew up was a little island in an alien sea of humanity. It was a culture transplanted and imposed upon another culture.

At the age of twelve Anna and her sisters were in the field following the plow in the spring, and in the harvest they were shocking wheat. In the fall and winter the girls hired out in the homes of the wealthy where they were sometimes treated as drudges, arising before daybreak and working until long after darkness fell. The pay was two dollars per week and board. The two dollar wage was dutifully turned over to the parents at the end of every seven days.

One of the older girls, Hulda, met and married a man who worked in the mines and they established a modest home in a "company house" in Cantwell. It was while Anna was visiting for a few days in the home of this sister that William Ketcherside first saw her, a lovely, rosy-cheeked German Fraulein who spoke a delightful dialect which she never completely lost during her lifetime. He courted her with the same zest with which he went at everything else and she agreed to marry him only upon condition that he got the full consent of her father.

That was not easy. A good deal of correspondence must have ensued for the general attitude of people in the German colony was simply stated, "I'd rather follow a girl of mine to her grave than to see her married to a man who is not a Lutheran." The idea of allowing Anna to marry a young agnostic must have produced a great deal of furor, but finally the parents had to give in. Many years later I read the final letter of consent written by my grandfather to the man who was destined to beget me and give me life. It was couched in formal verbiage and was dignified, and almost stately.

It required that the young man who wanted to marry Anna respect her Lutheran faith and never ask her to forsake it or exchange it for something else. It bound him by a solemn covenant to have all the children properly christened by an ordained Lutheran minister, duly instructed in the catechism and confirmed in the Missouri Synod Lutheran Church "as God has instructed in his holy word."

It was probably no great issue with the ardent swain. He knew very little about God, less about the Bible and nothing at all about the Missouri Synod Church. Eighteen months after the wedding when I was born, he made no objection to my being christened. Later my mother told me about it. One of my aunts made my long white christening dress and my mother carried me in her arms almost three miles on a hot day to the Lutheran Church where I was christened by the Reverend Mr. Peterson. The christening certificate is now quite yellow with age. More than fifty years later I went to visit a Lutheran clergyman in a little Arkansas village only to find out that he was the assistant who helped out in the service. It probably took two of them to hold me still and keep me quiet.

I was born in our humble home. There was no hospital anywhere near the area and even if there had been no woman would have gone to it to deliver a child. Many years after the event my

grandmother told me about my arrival. When my mother began to feel the pains signifying that her time had come, my father went to get my grandmother who had herself delivered several hundred babes in cabins in the woods. Every woman felt safe if "Aunt Viney" was present during the ordeal. An uncle was dispatched to get Dr. McClellan who was delayed somewhat because his horse had unhooked the stable door and headed for the pasture. Fortunately, with my usual good spirit of cooperation I postponed the happening until the principals were present and we got the signal, "All systems go!"

My mother had prepared a homemade cradle out of an I.E. DuPont de Nemours powder box which my father had carried home from the mine, and she told me later that I was the loveliest child she had ever seen. She also told the other five the same thing in turn. Nine months after I was born she learned she was again pregnant, and when her second son was born she named him Larsen Rudolph in true Danish fashion as she had named me William Carl in honor of my father and the crown prince of Germany.

Ours must have been a typical home in a mining community. My parents loved each other although I have a faint recollection of my mother weeping as she rocked one of us, because of some misunderstanding which had caused my father to "fly off the handle" and use profanity. Sometimes she shed tears because of her yearning for a sight of the faces of those whom she loved in the community where she was reared, and especially because she was homesick for her father and mother. I wonder now if she missed regular attendance at the Lutheran Church, and if there was a pang in her generous heart because she saw us growing up with no catechetical instruction.

Christmastime must have been especially depressing to her. It was a great season in the German community. For days before there was baking and preparation of all kinds. The house was filled with the pungent odor of spices. There was always a huge tree cut down in the forest and hauled home to be erected in a corner of the living room close to the fireplace. It was strung with popcorn and cranberries for there were no commercial hangings. Christmas brought good feelings and mellowness, helped no little by frequently imbibing homemade wine and brandy brought up from the cellar.

Compared to all this Christmas in a mining village was a drab affair. The decorations consisted of drawings by the children on ruled tablet paper. There was hardly room for a tree but we managed a little one. It was not easy for our parents to select something for us because the company store did not feature a variety. Each child received an orange and a peppermint candy cane. To make it really Christmas there was a little book or a ten cent toy, a jumping-jack or a set of blocks.

The thing that really topped it off was the box that came from down on the farm of our grandfather. It always contained a dressed goose. No one in the German community ate turkey for Christmas. There was smoked sausage, stuffed and prepared by grandfather himself, for he was a sausage maker of wide reputation. When the box was delivered from the railway station we could hardly wait to open it and see the things which had been selected from the farm and included. Our mother laughed and cried in turn as she took the things out and laid them on the oilcloth-covered table.

Perhaps I recall her times of melancholy more than her moments of joy. There must not have been too much time to devote to the luxury of feeling sorry for herself. There was washing to do on Monday while she bent over the grooved board in the big tub, a board well-rubbed with pungent homemade soap. There was ironing to do on Tuesday with the flatirons heating on the cook stove out in the smokehouse. There was always sewing and mending. The garden had to be tended and fruit and vegetables had to be canned in Mason jars, or sometimes dried in the sun. I can recall mother's frequent repetition of the old homely proverb, "Man works from sun to sun, but woman's work is never done." Yet she always found time to show her love for us and when we were hurt we could go to her with full confidence that she would stop whatever she was doing and gather us into her arms.

### **"KETCHERSIDE TOWN"**

It is difficult to describe a mining town in the early part of the twentieth century to those who live in our present urbanized culture. The village in which I was born, Cantwell, was one of a string of towns on the surface of the earth loosely following the vein of lead hundreds of feet below. There were no city limit markers for there were no city limits. Cantwell, Desloge, Flat River, Elvins, Esther, Rivermines, and others were flung down in a heap as if some giant hand had deposited them with no attempt to gather them into orderly units. Six miles from Cantwell, in the other direction than the towns mentioned, lay Bonne Terre, which means "good earth," so called by the French because of the richness of the ore deposits.

Most of the villages were not incorporated. There was no city government and "every man did that which was right in his own sight." Families tended to huddle together in the same village and Cantwell was sometimes called "Ketcherside town" because some dozen or more frame shacks were occupied by members of our clan. The land was known as "company ground" because it was owned by the mining interests out of New York. There was a row of company houses, all built exactly alike, and anyone who rented them had the five dollars per month extracted from his check on payday.

One could build his own house by leasing a piece of ground from the company for ninety-nine years, with a carefully spelled out notation in the lease that the right to all minerals below the surface belonged to the company. The company also retained the right to set up a diamond drill anywhere for the purpose of prospecting for ore. A diamond drill had a bit which was set with diamonds and which, by rotating, could cut through the hardest rock, sending a one-inch core to the surface which could be analyzed in the laboratory to determine the direction in which the underground tunnel for taking out the ore should be directed. When a drill was set up it operated night and day and nearby residents did not sleep soundly until they became adjusted to the jarring noise.

There was a company store in our village where all the miners traded "on time" as credit was designated. Each family had its own account book, and when the storekeeper assembled your purchases on the counter he entered the amounts on a ticket in your book to keep in the spring clip which hung on the wall by the comb case above the wash pan. Everyone used the same towel and comb, and no one used a toothbrush.



On payday the miners lined up at the store to cash their checks and make a payment on the grocery bill. When such a payment was made each miner received a little striped sack of candy called "a treat." It was rumored that if you paid in full you received a double portion, but I cannot testify as to the truthfulness of the rumor because we never paid in full. The company store created a way of life for many people and made of them economic slaves as long as they existed. The idea that you could "buy now and pay later" was dangerous for families like ours which were always on the brink of poverty. The first thing I did when my father was killed was to take the meager amount of insurance remaining and pay off his obligations. It may have been the first time my mother was completely free from debt.

One of my earliest recollections of my boyhood is that of the saloons and the vice associated with them. The saloons were tough joints. They bore such exotic names as "The Blue Goose" and "Klondike" although the one which stood in full sight of our house was called "The Star." Every payday was characterized by a drunken brawl. Frequently the men staggered outside and we saw them crack the skulls of one another with beer or whiskey bottles, the foaming contents mingling with blood and gore flowing from gaping lacerations.

There were always prostitutes hanging around outside the saloon although no one called them that. The men called them "chippies" while the women called them "painted hussies." I used to look through a crack in the fence and watch them take half-soused men into the woods and while I did not know what it was all about I was aware, from what the adults said about them, that it was not "nice."

I remember two occasions which caused those who were referred to as "decent women" to rejoice. One occurred when a little tiny woman got fed up with the "goings-on" and took an axe-handle and laid in wait for the woman who had solicited her husband. Although the chippy was about twice her size and hard as nails, she "worked her over and beat the tar out of her" as I learned by lying on the floor with my ear glued to the crack under the door. This source of information almost proved my undoing, for one day when the gossip was not especially interesting I fell asleep, and someone threw the door open and flattened me against the wall.

The other time of gladness occurred early on a Christmas morning when the village was awakened with the yell of "Fire!" The Star saloon was aflame. A goodly number of neighbors gathered in front of our gate to watch the welcome sight. Bottles burst like machine-gun fire and bottle caps whined through the air like bullets. The women alternately cried and laughed for joy, hugging one another and saying it was a divine judgment and the greatest gift God could have given on Christmas. The saloon was never rebuilt and the chippies all left except for the two who continued to receive customers after dark at the third house up the street from us, the one next to the chat dump, as the massive tailing-pile composed of crushed rock from underground was called.

Life was not unpleasant for us although we were under stern instructions never to step a foot outside the yard without permission. Every yard had a wire fence around it because the area surrounding the village was "open range." This meant that anyone could turn his cows and hogs out to roam at will. Animals were not fenced in, but fenced out. Each family had its own earmark, which meant that all of its animals had pieces cut out of their ears for identification.

One man might say to another, "If you see a sow with a bit on the front side of the right ear and a swallow-fork in the left, please tell me, as it is my hog, and I want to put her up."

Sometimes in the middle of the night a family of razorback hogs would put their snouts under the fence and pry up the wire and creep in under it. They would literally clean out a garden before daybreak. Most of the houses were built up off the ground and set on rock pillars at the corners. This was to avoid damp rot and termites, but it also provided a shady place for the dogs to lie and scratch fleas. One morning our neighbor arose to see that her garden had been devastated during the night. As she looked out of the kitchen window she saw the north end of a southbound lanky sow protruding from under her house. She carefully heated a dishpan of water to the boiling point and poured it on the rear half of the razorback but was wholly unprepared for the cataclysmic result. As the sow departed for fairer regions she knocked the back porch off the house and took with her the underpinning from one corner, leaving the bedroom aslant and the furniture slowly slipping down toward the outside wall. Life in the village was not always drab and unexciting.

Although we could not go outside our yard we could always play with the children on either side "through the fence." There were two girls on one side and a boy and girl on the other. Their mothers "took in washing" and worked hard over the scrub-board every day. We were never allowed to mention their fathers because both men were in "the state pen." One was doing time for murder and the other for stealing stuff from the lead company. This last was not regarded as a crime by anyone except the lead company.

Every day we made mud pies and other articles and played store. We cut "money" out of the pages of a Sears-Roebuck catalog hanging in the toilet, and used bottle-caps for "change." The situation was complicated due to the fact that everyone wanted to be the storekeeper and take in the cash. We settled the question by putting a counter on each side of the fence and the storekeepers sold to each other. As my little sisters began to grow up they always wanted to play house, and wanted their brothers to be the papas and come home with their dinner buckets and kiss the dolls like our father kissed us. It was years later that I realized the neighbor children never wanted to play house. They had no father to come home and kiss them.

As I think back upon my childhood I recall one woman who said to my mother, "All children are different, but Carl's differenter than any youngun' I've ever seed." That was because of my utter fascination with printed words. It became an obsession with me. I carried the mail order catalog around with me and every time someone came who could read, and there were not that many of them, I'd thrust the catalog into their hands, point to a description of an article and ask, "What does that say?" In my innocence, bred of ignorance, I sometimes pointed to something embarrassing, and they would quickly flip the pages over to the farm machinery. I soon learned which pages were off limits although I did not then know why they were.

I had to do the buying at the company store by the time I was five because my mother could not read English. When I bought something, if there was no other customer in the store, I'd ask Mr. Watson to read the labels on the cans and boxes. He not only did so but taught me to read on *Clabber Girl* baking powder cans, *Arm and Hammer* bicarbonate of soda boxes, and *Old Dutch Cleanser* and *Bon Ami* containers. He saved reading material which was undeliverable in the

little post office, and apparently told others about me because they brought their Horatio Alger books to pass along to me. If there were too many to carry home with the groceries I'd leave the groceries at the store and take the books home first. I knew my mother would make me go back after the groceries but might not let me go back for the books.

One of the proudest days of my life was the one on which I started to school in the little two-room village educational plant. The folk had managed to save and secure my first pair of new store-bought knickerbockers, as knee-length pants were called. My blouse, as boys' shirts with a puckering string at the waist were then called, was home-made. So was my underwear which bore the bold label across the seat, "Gold Medal Flour – Eventually, Why Not Now?" I took my lunchbox in one hand, and my slate and Elson-Runkel first reader in the other and marched off bravely. I stopped at the corner and looked back. Mother was standing in the door. The early morning September sunshine bathed her presence. She was drying her tears with her apron. She knew life would never be the same. And she was right!

### **UNCLE L.E. AND THE SAND-HILLERS**

The great change in our lives, one which was destined eventually to affect almost the entire Ketcherside clan, actually began with one man. My father's brother, Lewis, always called by his initials L.E., was very close to him. He was less than two years younger, and in their boyhood days they had been inseparable. My uncle was married the year that I was born. Even before he was married he had begun to sense a yearning deep inside himself for some relationship with the power to provide hope and assurance by enabling him to overcome tendencies and temptations which troubled his sensitive soul. The new responsibility as a very young husband drove him to talk to my father about his feelings. My father laughed in his face and made crude jokes about it.

The Baptist Church was the only one in our village. In the period between revivals it was always in the doldrums, but twice per year, in the spring and autumn, a fire-eating preacher was imported and all of the members were infused with new life and got on a spiritual high. Backsliders wept over their lapses. Alcoholics vowed to renounce liquor. Sinners were exhorted to flee from the wrath to come. The night L.E. went to the tent which had been erected on a lot adjacent to "the church," the preacher happened to be a rough-looking specimen from the backwoods, who chewed tobacco and murdered the King's English. But he knew the Bible!

As he reeled off verse after verse from memory, L.E. was fascinated, and then captivated by the fact that God had spoken, and that we had access to His words, written down in plain English so every man could read them for himself. It was the first time in his life he had ever known what the Bible really was. That night, sitting in an audience of perspiring villagers, under a hot canvas, he resolved that, if God spared him, he would learn the divine will for his life.

He did not sleep that night, but lay awake thinking, meditating and praying. The next day underground he went about his tasks mechanically, and as soon as the whistle blew he ascended on the cage, and left the changing-room to go straight to the home where the revivalist was staying. Years afterward, when we worked together very closely, he told me all about it more than once, and always with the smile for which he was noted. He told the preacher he had already prayed all night and day. The preacher asked him what he felt and he said that he felt

like he wanted to do what Jesus said and do it at once. After about an hour, the backwoods evangelist said it wasn't much of an experience, as experiences generally went, but he reckoned it would have to do. That night the Baptists voted to accept his experience and qualify him for baptism. The community was dumbfounded. To convert a Ketcherside was like the bringing of Saul of Tarsus to bay. And at the end of the revival the converts were all baptized in the swimming-hole in the small river. L.E. went straight home, changed into dry clothing and started in on the Bible.

Two weeks later he announced to the local Baptist preacher that he wanted to preach the gospel he had obeyed. At a district meeting of Baptist preachers it was agreed that he was an unlikely candidate, but there was no way of discouraging him short of shooting him. It was decided that, since he was too poor to go away to college, and did not have the entrance requirements anyway, not having finished the fifth-reader, he should study for a year at home, at the end of which time he would stand for examination before three ordained Baptist ministers, and if he met their approbation he would be licensed as a supply preacher for the unstaffed rural churches.

During that year L.E. became a real problem to all of his friends and relatives. Some of his former cronies were convinced that he was "touched in the head." He gave up going to shooting-matches, which gave the other contestants a chance to win. He wouldn't play cards. He quit drinking beer. My father said he was making "a damned nuisance" out of himself and if he didn't quit spouting the Bible at everyone he met he would lose the only worthwhile friends he ever had and end up with no one to talk to but a bunch of sickly, white-livered Christians. My father considered this a fate to which death should be readily preferred.

At the end of the year L.E. put on the suit he had worn at his wedding, the only dress-up clothing he owned, and met with the Baptist tribunal. They questioned him for three hours and it soon became apparent that he knew far more about the Bible than did his questioners. For every query his reply was "The Bible says." When one of the preachers said about one quotation, "I don't remember ever seeing that in the Bible," he picked up the man's book from the table and read it to him. At the end of the examination his questioners retired to a room for consultation. They left L.E. sitting at the table awaiting their decision about his future course.

When they returned the spokesman said, "We cannot approve of you to do supply work or recommend you to the churches. In fact, we are convinced you would kill every Baptist Church in the district if you advanced the ideas you have set forth today. You are not a Baptist at all but a Sand-hiller." L.E. had never heard of a Sand-hiller, so he asked what one was. The reply was unhesitating. "A Sand-hiller is a special brand of Campbellite, and the worst enemy the church has, and you sound just like one." The answer did not mean much to L.E. He did not know what a Campbellite was either, but he left the place with a firm resolution to find out.

The following Tuesday he was assigned a new man to help carry the tripod and set up the drill which rested on it, and with which holes were drilled in the face of the underground wall for tamping in explosives. While they were eating lunch from their dinner-pails at noon, L.E. said to the man, "Did you ever hear of a religious bunch called Sand-hillers?" "I sure have," answered the man, "I'm one of them myself." He then proceeded to tell him this was a nickname given to them by the Baptists because they had originated down in the sand-hills about thirty miles south,

and some of them had moved into the mining area to find work. He arranged for L.E. to meet a merchant who was an elder of the Church of Christ, and the first evening they talked together they continued their speech until midnight. L.E. walked the three miles to his home and arose early to work all day in the mines.

He was hungry for the word, and began to attend the meetings in Flat River, a five-mile round trip each time. There was no preacher but anyone of the men in the congregation could teach, exhort and admonish. Sometimes as many as three would take turns speaking briefly. They convinced L.E. that one could be just a Christian and a Christian only. He became convinced of their plea to be simply the church mentioned in the scriptures. But when he expressed a desire to be affiliated with the little group a lengthy interrogation ensued, led by some who insisted he would have to be baptized again. He resisted on the basis that he had obeyed the Lord. Most of the members were ready to accept him, but two or three became very belligerent, and to avoid further friction he finally consented to be immersed. In later years he always said, "I was baptized twice. The first time was to obey Jesus Christ, the second time to placate and appease the Church of Christ."

Almost single-handedly he changed the village of Cantwell. He visited every house in town, including the one occupied by the saloon-keeper and his fashionable wife. He invited everyone to gather in his front yard each evening to hear the Bible explained. It was somewhere to go and relieve the tedium and the people came. Many of them carried hickory splint-bottom chairs on which to sit. Others sat on the ground or leaned on the picket fence. With a kerosene lantern hanging on the porch post and casting its sickly gleam upon the printed page, while moths and other insects flitted about, L.E. read and expounded. He was one with his audience. Many of them had known him from the time he was a lad. He went down into the mines with them everyday. He had helped them all with any task that was too great for them. Now he shared with them every night what he learned during the day.

When his shift underground was finished he took time to talk with men and women about their souls before he slept. He baptized his brothers and their wives. He baptized his two sisters. The day he baptized "Blind Emmy," his cousin who had been born sightless, the whole community walked down to the creek for the occasion. When the poor blind woman was brought up from the water she raised her hands toward heaven and began to shout for joy. Caught up in the emotional excitement of the moment they led her up the road toward the village, shouting as she went. Some tried to quiet her, thinking she was "going out of her mind." But it was as if she had not heard them. Other women began to weep, and men began to cry out to God to have mercy upon them. Years later, when I led "Blind Emmy" from door to door to sell "products" she told me that she saw Jesus "as plain as day." I wondered how one who had never seen the form of a man and had never even seen her own face in a mirror, could see Jesus. But I didn't say anything or ask any questions. I am glad now I did not.

An electrifying current swept over the community with the exception of one home – ours! Being a Lutheran, my mother could not attend the studies in the front-yard up the street. She would like to have gone because she loved people and the socialization before and after the study would have meant a lot to her. Women used such occasions to trade seeds for flowers that others admired, or to tell what they were eating out of their gardens, and all of this would have meant

much to mother. But it would also have caused her to “go back on her raising” and she couldn’t do that.

When my father went and sat outside the circle of light across the dusty street, he returned home aggravated and angry. He told my mother that his favorite brother had somehow allowed bats to occupy his belfry and to observe it was a crying shame that an otherwise good man would permit himself to be ruined by religion and waste time in which he could be doing something useful for people, by standing on his front porch talking like an idiot.

Years later when we were all one in Christ, mother told me that she knew even then that L.E. was having an effect on my father. He became too angry and fumed around too much. Moreover, he poured a pipe full of tobacco out of the Bull Durham sack, lighted it, took one draw on it, and then absent-mindedly knocked it out against the heel of his hand. That had never happened before. My father became short-tempered and snapped at my mother when she spoke to him. He had never done that before either. The Spirit was moving in for the kill!

## **THE DAY MY FATHER WAS BAPTIZED**

It was early evening and the sun was only beginning to slant toward the west when my father came out of our little house to sit down on the top step and smoke his pipe. My brother and I sat down on the bottom step on opposite sides so each of us could lean against his legs. This was almost a ritual. Miners who worked the day shift always ate an early supper and then sat out in the front yard to relax and try to cool off before time to go to bed and get some rest as a preparation for going underground the next morning. In the curious jargon of the miners, who had their own word for everything, this was called “hog-eying” but I do not know why.

I only recall that my brother and I were always glad when our father came out to “hog-eye” and it made us feel proud to sit down and lean against him. Miners did not tell people they loved them, but our father did not need to do that. It would have seemed a little silly to say something you already knew. While we were sitting there, not saying anything, but just glad to be together, our uncle L.E. came by and stopped at the front gate. We all liked him a lot! He never became angry and he knew how to treat folks. He even talked to us boys as if we were grown-up men. That is why we felt kind of sad inside that he had “gone nuts over religion” and started “going to church every time someone jerked the bell-rope” as our father said.

We knew he was on his way to another meeting in Flat River and that he would climb the huge chat dump and cross the high railroad trestle which had been haunted ever since a miner slipped from it one night and was killed when he landed on the rocks below. Some of our neighbors heard his ghost shriek as it was falling again on dark nights. Uncle L.E. leaned on the gate and talked a little about veins and stopes and levels and other underground stuff, and then said, “Well, I’d better be shoving off. I dare you to come and go along with me.”

The two of us on the bottom step looked at each other and grinned. We knew what our father would say even though we hated to see him cut our favorite uncle down. We couldn’t believe what happened. Our father knocked his pipe out against the edge of the top step. He got up and we thought maybe he was going to fight our uncle. But he said, “I never took a dare in my life,

and by God, I don't intend to take one now. Wait till I get my hat." We watched the two of them walk off together toward the chat dump and we were hurt and angry. We felt betrayed and sold out. Tears came to my eyes. I hated religion which broke up good times that were quiet and peaceful and which took a father away from his boys.

The next evening we were just playing around in the yard waiting for our father to come out and "hog-eye" so we could sit beside him and lean against him. But he didn't come out very soon and when he did he had his hat on. We watched with foreboding as L.E. came again. We walked to the gate with our father. He patted both of us on the head. We could feel the roughness of his palm with the hard calluses from the pick and shovel. I watched until the two of them climbed the chat dump where they were momentarily silhouetted against the evening sky and then they disappeared from sight. I ran blubbering to the backyard. I jerked a bean-pole out of the garden and began to savagely beat the rear wall of the summer-kitchen. The neighbor kids were on their knees looking through the fence. One of them yelled, "Whatcha doin'?" I acted as if I did not hear. I wanted to die.

It was about a week later, and we were sitting at the supper table when my father said to my mother, "Annie, I am going to be baptized." My mother did not become angry. She spoke softly but firmly, "I knew you would be, but please do not ask me to go and see it. And don't ever ask me to change from what I grew up in. Never!" My father said, "I'll take the boys to see it." Mother replied, "I can't keep you from doing that, but don't forget you signed your word to rear them in the Lutheran Church, and please remember what you've said about this religion that L.E. has talked you into."

It was about a mile over to the company pond and when we got there on Sunday afternoon a crowd of strange people had already gathered and were waiting. They stood around talking until one of the men took out his watch, looked at it, and then held up his hand to get attention. He began to speak about how my father had repented of his sins. I didn't like that because I did not know my father had any sins. The man continued that he had made the good confession and was going to be buried in baptism. I didn't like the word "buried" either, because when people were buried you didn't see them again. The crowd began to sing a song called "Happy Day" and my father walked out into the water with a man. When they got to the right place they stopped, the man raised his hand and said something and then buried my father out of sight. It was years later I realized that I never again saw the father who was buried.

All of the Cantwell people who had gone to the pond walked back with us, and they all talked to my father whose wet clothes clung to him as he walked. We turned in at our gate and my father went in and changed into a dry outfit. When he came into our other room, he lifted the lid on the cook stove and threw his pipe into the glowing embers. He threw his plug of chewing tobacco and his sack of chewing tobacco and his sack of Bull Durham into the trash sack by the wood box. One of his nephews dropped by and my father gave him his fiddle together with an extra supply of resin for the bow. "I'll not be needing it again," he said. Two days later when he gave away his treasured Marlin shotgun, my mother became convinced he had lost his mind.

On Monday evening my brother and I were out in the yard again. We did not know if our father would come out or not. Our fears were relieved, for he came and sat down on the top step. We

sat down on the lower one as usual. He did not have his pipe but he had a book which L.E. had given him. "Boys," he said, "this is a Bible and it is the word of God. God lives up in heaven and he loves us, and because he does, he gave us this book to tell us how he wants us to live. I don't know much about it yet but I intend to learn what's in it, and I want you to know also. I'm going to read it out loud and that way we will all learn."

We leaned against him and listened as he read. He took it slowly, like one treading unfamiliar ground and that was good. After awhile he closed the book and said, "That's enough for this evening." He began to ask us simple questions about what he had read and when we knew an answer he patted us on the head and made us feel good. I knew then that my fears had been premature. I still had my father and this was the best way to "hog-eye" in the world, with someone you loved reading to you. I wished that our mother could share with us but she couldn't. She said she didn't trust the Bible written in English, and she wished we could understand it in German like Herr Luther had fixed it up. When she talked about other men she called them "Mister" but she always spoke of her favorite hero as "Herr Luther."

Almost every day L.E. stopped by and he and my father talked about the Bible and turned to it to read things they had found in it. My brother was too young to care, but I lay on the grass between them when they brought their chairs out under the cherry tree and listened to every word. They were always explaining to one another what they thought something meant and you could tell they loved it. I loved it too, although I didn't know all it was saying. And every day our father read to us. God came to mean about everything to us and nothing else really mattered.

L.E. and my father wanted to start a church in our village. They said it was too far for everyone to walk to Flat River. They decided to start meeting in a grove of trees, and they made seats which were just planks laid across two-by-fours. The two men went to every house and invited everyone to come for the first Sunday. I had never really been to a church because my father had promised before I was born that I would be raised in the Lutheran church. But now he said to my mother, "I'd like to take the boys with me when Sunday rolls around." We added our pleas and mother said, "All right, go on. It isn't really a church anyhow when a bunch of people meet in the woods."

It was hot and dry and dusty when Sunday morning came, but when we got to the grove it was cool in the shade. The Ketchersides whom L.E. had baptized were all there. Some others he had baptized were there also. The songbooks which had been loaned by Flat River were passed out to the grown folks, but L.E. said, "Give the boys books also." It made us feel big to have our own books with the name *Voices for Jesus* on the front. A man had come from Flat River with the books to lead the singing and when he had finished, my father read a chapter and then prayed. L.E. gave a little talk, my father following by telling about a verse he had read and what he thought God was saying in it.

An old man got up to "wait on the table" but he started to cry and couldn't say anything, so L.E. got up and said the tears were nothing to be ashamed of for the old man had been baptized when he was a boy but had not seen the table of the Lord set for years. He called on my aunt to give thanks and she prayed better than any of them. Later, my father told me it was because she was in practice, that she had prayed every day for him for ten years. Before we finished we all got up



and walked to the table and put money on the white cloth. My brother and I marched up with the others and put the pennies on the table which our father had passed on to us. I looked longingly at mine lying there by the dimes and the one quarter. I wished I could have kept it and gone with it to the company store but there was no way I could do it.

After everyone had shaken hands and hugged one another and cried and laughed we all went home with grandfather and grandmother. My father let us walk with them while he went home to help our mother carry the baby. I heard one of the men say that my grandfather was in “hog heaven” because so much company was going to his place. He loved company. While the women were busy in the kitchen the men sat out on the front porch which was shaded by a clematis vine filled with flowers. They talked about getting a place to meet before the rains set in. L.E. was an excellent carpenter and he suggested buying an old saloon building, cutting it in two, and moving it to a lot in the village and joining it together again. No one had ever seen this done, but he was convincing. They agreed to borrow the hundred dollars for purchase of the saloon. L.E. said that we would give those who came a different sort of drink than they had ever been served across the bar.

## **LIFE IN OUR FIRST MEETINGHOUSE**

It makes a difference when a congregation gets a meetinghouse of its own. There are some things about it that are good, and there are others that are not. The plan to purchase the old saloon building and move it to a new location worked like a charm. Even though it was before the days of chain saws, the men cut it in two and then fitted it back together on the lot which was a few hundred feet from the location of the Baptist building. To make it look more like a “church building,” a bell-tower was erected on the front which never housed a bell. It was a luxury which could not be afforded.

The very first meeting in the new location was noticeably different. It was more formal and “churchy.” We had been meeting in the grove on good days, and in the little living-room in our grandfather’s home on cold and rainy days. The grove was the best place. Sometimes while we were singing grandfather’s favorite song, “My latest sun is sinking fast, my race is nearly run,” you could look up at the fleecy white clouds and imagine that they were “the angel band” ready to bear you away on their snowy wings to your immortal home. Occasionally, one of the dogs would chase a squirrel right down among the benches and up a hickory tree behind the Lord’s Table. There is only one other thing on earth that can equal a dog in enlivening an open air meeting, and that is a three foot blacksnake.

Even on bad days it always was interesting. The children sat on the old rag carpet which “Aunt Peggy” had made on a loom. If they got tired they could stretch out and take a nap and no one cared. Aunt Peggy was a half-Cherokee Indian who had befriended our grandmother when she was an orphan girl and later on came to live with my grandparents. The deep wrinkles in her brown face bore mute testimony to a life of toil and privation. Aunt Peggy didn’t “go to church” but when the church came to her on rainy days she did not budge from her splint-bottom chair in front of the fireplace. She smoked a little clay pipe “during meeting” the same as at any other time, and it was interesting to see her make a “V” out of her fingers and put them to her mouth and spit. She never missed, and if a stray fly was unfortunate enough to walk into range along

the hearth, she neatly picked him off with an amber jet, regardless of what the worshipers around her were doing at the moment. I remember that during prayer we children always kept one eye closed for God's sake, and the other one open and focused on Aunt Peggy who seemed almost as old and even more interesting to us than God at the time.

When we moved into the "church building" we children felt "boxed in" and things might have seemed very dry if it had not been for our grandfather who sometimes enlivened the scene because he was so deadly serious about everything that pertained to God. He had been crippled by a premature blast underground which had injured his spine when rocks rained down upon him, and although he surprised the company doctors after they had predicted his death, he was doomed to walk quite stooped and bent over the remainder of his life. The company gave him token employment in the warehouse where one of his tasks was to reduce the rodent population. On Wednesday he moved sacks of cattle feed and boxes of other commodities all day long and killed whatever rats he could with a long stick.

The old man was dog-tired when he came to meeting and almost as soon as he sat down in the corner of the front seat he fell into a deep sleep. It was while our uncle L.E. was on the platform that grandfather suddenly jumped to his feet and began poking under the seats and flailing about with his cane while shouting, "Get him! Get him! There he goes! Hit him! Hit him!" Uncle L.E. called out to him but he did not hear. He was having a "rat-killing" good time in his sleep and took a healthy swipe at our bare feet which we hastily drew up in the seat. After my father had captured him and shaken him back to the world of reality and sat him down in his accustomed place, the proceedings seemed quite dull by comparison and we watched him anxiously, hoping he would fall asleep again. But he did not and the fun was over for that night.

Even when he was awake our grandfather often got things gloriously mixed up or said them backwards. It was the idea of L.E. that the whole congregation should be taught the whole word, and to achieve this objective he would read and explain a chapter while the audience followed along with open Bibles. Of course our grandfather could not read, but he always listened intently with his hand cupped behind his ear. Once when the subject matter was Judges 15, which records how Samson slew a thousand Philistines with the jawbone of an ass, L.E. finished the text and asked that the books be closed while he questioned the hearers. When he got to my grandfather, he asked, "Pap, can you tell me how Samson slew the thousand men?" The old man was happy that he knew the answer. "He hit 'em over the ass with a jawbone, son, yes sir, that's the way he killed the whole passel of 'em," was the reply.

I could write all day and not exhaust the fascinating things that took place in this little gathering of humble and sincere people, but I must not tarry that long. Even the lives of us children were changed by the religious emphasis which now involved us seven days a week. We turned from playing house or store to "playing church." Each morning we saved the left-over biscuits which were generally thrown over the fence to the pig, and these, together with a glass of water formed the emblems of our memorial service. The grape arbor was our "church house" and the congregation consisted of my younger brother and sister, two dolls (one of which was losing sawdust from a gaping wound in the lower abdomen), and myself. Our pup came to the first service, lying on the ground with his head between his paws, and seemingly enjoying it. But after we baptized him in the galvanized tub under the rain spout he forsook the church and

returned to the world. Our father told us not to feel badly about it because the Bible said, “Without are dogs.”

Our meetings were held every thirty minutes and began with snatches of songs sung from imaginary books and led by my little brother. Sometimes he forgot the words and would have to improvise but that did not matter. We made a joyful noise unto the Lord. I was the preacher and I laid it on loud and heavy with such phrases as I could recall, and when I ran out of the remembered phrases, pounding the box in front of me and exhorting the two dolls to repent and be baptized. Regardless of their repentance, they were baptized several times daily, while we stood around the tub and sang, “O happy day that fixed my choice.” The neighbor children next door watched through the fence, feeling left out and not knowing what we were doing. With their father in the “state pen” they had never seen a religious gathering.

The acquisition of “our own place of worship” as folks phrased it, made it possible for us to have “protracted meetings,” and start seriously to separate the chaff from the grain in the village, so that the chaff could be burned with unquenchable fire, while we stood by and watched from the golden portals. The first “evangelist” I ever heard was Daniel Sommer. He was booked for a meeting at Flat River and the brethren there “loaned him” to Cantwell to help our little group “get started off on the right foot.” He was an imposing figure, sixty-five years old, and priding himself upon his physical strength and endurance. He wore a knee-length double-breasted alpaca clerical-style coat, and when he took his stand on the platform he thrust his right foot forward and placed his hand in the front of his coat in a Napoleonic pose and his voice boomed out with authority.

Although I was but a mere lad when I first heard him I can recall lying on the grass under the shade of a tree and listening to him as he talked to men during the daytime. He felt he had saved the church from complete apostasy by reading his composition “An Address and Declaration” at Sand Creek, a rural congregation near Windsor, Illinois. In it he called for withdrawal from those who endorsed and condoned the church holding festivals to raise money, select choirs to do the singing, man-made societies for missionary work, and the one-man imported preacher-pastor system. He could quote from memory his closing sentence, “If they do not turn away from such abominations, we can not and will not regard them as brethren.”

The church had split before I came along and instrumental music had received the blame since it was visible to the eye. Now, Brother Sommer was preparing to “arraign the new digressives” on a hundred items. The “new digressives” were those who opposed instrumental music and missionary societies but who were “aping the sects” by creating a salaried ministry, or hireling pastor system. Brother Sommer envisioned the “so-called Christian colleges” as posing the greatest threat to the simple faith. He referred to them as “preacher factories” and warned that they would some day control the church through their alumni groups. One of his favorite words was “arraign” and he seldom finished an article in opposition to someone without formally “arraigning” him for a long list of items.

I suspect it gave us an ego trip to have someone come from as far away as Indiana to speak for us. In a day when a lot of people had never even been to the county seat, Indiana seemed as far away as the North Pole. When you added to it the fact that the speaker had been to college and

was the author of several books as well as being an editor of a religious journal, it was enough to make your head swim. Even the Baptists couldn't top that so they stayed away from our meetings as we did from theirs. They stayed away because they couldn't stand the truth; we stayed away because we couldn't stand to hear error advocated.

The second preacher who came was William Grant Roberts. He had studied to be a debater and had gained a reputation as a "bold challenger of the sects" and as being "rough on rats." Sectarians and rats were in the same category. In every public discourse, Brother Roberts debated with an imaginary adversary, carrying both sides of the controversy. He never lost such a discussion. Secure in the truth and standing firm on the rock he constantly rebuked denominational pastors who were not present for "spewing out their flopdoodle gush" as he referred to false doctrine.

He specialized in debating Mormons and Baptists, but took on anyone, sometimes having to study up to see what some group believed after having signed a proposition. If anyone asked him if he was hesitant about mixing with a formidable opponent, he assured them he would "tack his hide on the barn door with the bloody side out." His debate in Flat River with a Methodist preacher by the name of Mothershead was characterized by such sharpness and sarcasm, that a complete generation had to pass before the hostility was alleviated. We won the debate and lost the world!

## **CRITICAL TIMES DURING WORLD WAR I**

The little congregation made its greatest progress under the efforts of the men who constituted it. No other argument for the power of the gospel was as strong as that of the lives of men who had been completely transformed. Rude miners, listening to a man imported from afar to convert them, had little hope of ever becoming like such a well-dressed professional who harangued them nightly, but they could identify with those who daily descended into the shaft on the same cage with them. So effective did L.E. become that when he was assigned a new partner on his drill the rest of the miners said, "Well there goes another future member of the Campbellites." And they were more often correct than not.

L.E. and my father were not content to keep the gospel in our village. They thought it should be sounded out and not sounded in. They lived for the study of the Word and wherever they could band together a few saints in some backwoods schoolhouse they "set them to keeping house for the Lord." On Sunday one of them would go and instruct the people and I can recall that, as a lad of less than seven years, I walked six miles with my father to a schoolhouse out in the timber, and I walked back home again in the hot afternoon sun. I was so tired I fell asleep on the floor just inside the front door and never knew who transferred me to the pallet on which we children slept in the summertime.

It appeared that God was smiling upon the little group when catastrophe struck for us, and the whole course of life was suddenly and rudely changed. We had moved out of the shack in which I was born, into a four-room house closer to the company store. My father, in a moment of reckless abandon, had made an offer of six hundred dollars for the house, and his bid was accepted. My mother was unquestionably proud of it. She moved in, with the fond hope of

sometime purchasing a Congoleum floor covering for our living-room, and by dint of saving and hoarding nickels and dimes she was able to accumulate the six dollars required in a few months. When the rug was unrolled, smelling new and fresh like linseed oil, we were not allowed to walk across it, but had to step carefully around and walk on that portion of the floor which was not covered.

My father had always been troubled with a cough. Sometimes at night he would have to get up and sit in a chair, but no one thought much about it for all of the miners, with few exceptions, coughed hard and long. But when my father could no longer get his rest, regardless of the shift he worked, my mother persuaded him to go see Dr. McClellan. He was reluctant to do so, thinking it was both foolish and an unnecessary expense. But he finally consented to go and when he returned home we knew something was seriously wrong. Our mother went about her work crying, and we could hear her talk to my father about “making a move.” Years later I learned that our family physician had diagnosed “Miner’s consumption,” since no one used “silicosis” in those days. My father was told that his only chance to survive was to get out of mines and go to a colder climate.

It must have been a frightening experience since there were now six children and one of them a babe in arms. Somehow they broke the news to us and it seemed incredible. My father had written to the *Apostolic Review*, edited by Daniel Sommer, and had stated in its columns the need to make a change. He expressed a desire to locate where there was a “loyal congregation” in which he could assist by taking his turn in teaching and doing personal work. He received a reply from Marshalltown, Iowa and after several letters were exchanged it was decided we should go there. The congregation offered to help my father find a job and a house in which to live.

Only one who lived in a tightly-knit village at the beginning of the twentieth century can understand the unforgettable shock created when a family was forced to leave for another area. In our present mobile society it is absolutely impossible to portray.

For days before we left, relatives and friends gathered to help pack and weep, and generally get in the way. The women clung to our mother and tears flowed freely as they wailed and expressed the thought they would never meet again.

Mother took all six of us on the train to see her immediate family and our grandfather Hansen met us at McBride’s Station with the big wagon drawn by a span of skittish mules. It was great fun sitting on the old quilt placed over the bed of straw in the back and riding the six miles to the farm. Our grandmother, who was very heavy, came waddling out of the house, speaking German with such rapidity that even our mother could not keep up. She had cooked every Danish and German recipe she had ever known and we ate to repletion. I drew the biscuit with the fly in it. There were no screens for the doors and windows and I never recall eating at that grandmother’s home without having a fly in one of the biscuits.

All the folk from the transplanted old world colony came to bid us farewell. My mother was always one of their favorites. Grandfather, who was a great wine maker, freely handed around samples of his handiwork and as the night wore on and tongues became more lubricated it

sounded like a wedding celebration in a Bavarian bierstube. The next day we left, but as we looked back we could see all the members of the family standing on the front porch and waving.

When we left the village of Cantwell it was as if someone had died. We went on the local train to Saint Louis where we changed to the Wabash line at Union Station. I had never seen such a throng as filled this great structure and how our parents managed to get six wide-eyed children through the shoving mob I shall never know. As we passed through the great midway, a newsboy was standing at the top of the stairs hawking his papers. I have never forgotten the words he was yelling, "Saint Louis Globe-Democrat, telling of the allies' great victory in France!" The British troops under Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig had made a breakthrough.

I must spare you further details of the journey, vivid as they are to me. One of the leaders, S.M. Brees, met us at the Marshalltown station in a huge Velie touring car and took us to the home of another elder, Alexander Campbell Blake, with whose family we were to lodge until our furniture arrived by train and could be unpacked. The people were all good to us, but we were out of place, like strangers in a strange land. Even the polite formality seemed cold to us. We were hill-folk, villagers and country people, wholly unsuited to a city existence in the north. We were glad when we could move into the humble place we had rented on the outskirts of the city.

There were some things we had never had before, such as electric lights, running water in the house, and a bathroom. At first it seemed awkward and inappropriate to have "a privy" inside the same house in which you lived, but we soon became accustomed to it and were especially thankful for it on days when the rain came down in torrents or an Iowa blizzard swept across the land. I suspect that my parents sensed from the start that it was an untimely move, but it was too late to do anything about it then. We were broke, and we suffered as only the poor can suffer during wartime.

Our father secured employment scraping or fleshing hides at the H. Willard Son and Company tannery. It was a dirty, stinking job and his cough was intensified by the dampness of the place and the vats in which he had to labor. Crippled though he was, he took a job with a moving and storage firm and stuck with it through a cold winter. We could barely make ends meet. The wartime economy had driven sugar up to the incredible level of twenty-five cents per pound. Flour was rationed and government stamps issued for other commodities. And, right in the midst of our other woes, the influenza pandemic struck us all down. Each day the paper told us of hundreds of deaths. In many areas there was no one strong enough to dig graves and the corpses accumulated. We were sure that some of us would die but we survived, although we were so weak and anemic we could hardly stand.

Through it all we never failed to study the Word daily and to cling to our faith in God as our only hope. My father attended every meeting of the saints, taking the two of us boys with him when we were able to walk the long distance on the crunchy snow. There was never a meeting that prayers were not offered for the war to cease and our men to return home. On every side people could be heard referring to the Kaiser as "the antichrist." It was freely predicted that these were the last days and that World War I was the battle of Armageddon. It was believed that the conflict would be terminated with the coming of Jesus. I shall never forget the celebration of the signing of the Armistice on November 11, 1918, four years, three months and fourteen days after

Austria-Hungary began it all by a declaration of war upon Serbia. In those four years there were a total of 37,494,186 casualties, men killed, wounded and missing.

I was ten years old when it ended, and already it had been decided we could not make it in the city. For a year we had survived on an unvarying diet of pork neck bones and potatoes, with only an occasional dish of kraut to relieve the monotony. It was all we could afford. We would have to admit defeat and go to a smaller town.

It was not all a loss, for in Marshalltown I was introduced to the first Carnegie Library I had ever seen. I read a book per day and sometimes more. A free library opened up for me a great new world in which I stuffed my mind like a hungry urchin would his stomach at a picnic.

We moved to Gilman City, a little north Missouri town, where the only dwelling we could rent was an abandoned railroad section house. When we moved in, the weeds were higher than the windows and our first task was to clean the debris and trash out of the house and cut the high growth in the yard. The place never really became fit for human habitation and was so close to the railway tracks that the trains at night sounded as if they were coming through the side of the building. The house was infested with rats and the yard with snakes. The job my father expected did not materialize and the help we received from congregations which he was invited to visit on the weekends was not sufficient to sustain us.

Once again, we took up our trek, seeking for a solution to the rugged problem of life. This time we settled in Chillicothe, Missouri. There are two things which stand out in my mind. One is the gathering of coal which fell off railroad cars as they swayed along the tracks. Our success meant the difference between being cold or warm in the old rattletrap house. We did not have the money for fuel. Another, is the fact that the congregation, which was in trouble when we went, divided soon afterwards. A little group of us met in an old upstairs room above a store. Division brought sadness and disillusionment. A number of people simply dropped out.

## **MEETIN' HOUSE RELIGION**

It has long been a thesis of mine that those who are not formally educated tend to preserve the wisdom gained by experience in easily-remembered proverbs. When any situation arises which demands comment, one of these capsules can be prescribed, and it will quickly put life into proper perspective. Our mother, having grown up in an immigrant colony, had a "saying" for every behavioral problem. She even made us clean up food on our plates by quoting, "Willful waste makes woeful want."

Sometimes her proverbs were contradictory, a fact which did not trouble her in the least. If someone we knew moved around from pillar to post and did not hold a job she was ready with "A rolling stone gathers no moss." But if another was too content to toil away interminably at the same ill-paying task she nailed him with, "A setting hen grows no feathers." In spite of our poverty and the difficulty of survival she maintained our morale and boosted her own hope by constant repetition of the old cliché, "It's a long road that has no turn in it." We had been on the road of life going from bad to worse long enough. So a slight bend in the road came in sight.

Our father, who had tried everything that was honest to eke out a living in Chillicothe, including becoming a “Watkin’s man,” selling household products, had meanwhile been helping rural and village congregations everywhere within range. He received a letter from Pike County, Illinois, asking him to come and conduct a couple of brief meetings and, imbued with a desire to preach the gospel, he went, after arranging with a good storekeeper to supply our needs “on time.” We received enthusiastic letters from him. The meetings were going well. He was baptizing a number of people. He wanted us to see the area.

That is how we happened to move into the rural area in Illinois, called Old Pearl, where I was privileged to attend a one-room country school for a few months. It must have been a growing settlement at one time, but when the railroad went through almost three miles away, a new Pearl sprang up on the Illinois River, and the old one was stopped “dead in its tracks.” We bought a ten acre orchard and our place was in full view of the schoolhouse and the “church building.” The two of them stood side by side. In every direction, along roads which were dusty in dry weather and “shoe mouth deep” in rainy weather, stretched larger farms. The pastures were watered by gently-flowing creeks and the timbered portions were the shelters for every kind of native wild animals.

It was evident, from the very outset, that we were “back home” again. The friendly, helpful and humble people were our kind of folk. In an earlier day, this broad sweep of prairie leading toward the steep bluffs which stood like a frowning fortress above the Illinois River bottom-land, had been inhabited by sturdy Anglo-Saxons with names like Willard, Jackson, Johnson and Calvin, and others betokening the trades of original ancestors, such as Miller, Wheeler, Draper and Waggoner. Generally hard-working, frugal and neighborly they received us with open arms. At the very outset, they had a homemade ice cream party for us to which they brought not only well-filled freezers, but all kinds of food staples – sugar, flour, home-canned vegetables and fruits, smokehouse hams and bacon. We had never seen such a supply of food, and when they all left our mother cried unashamedly, while the rest of us stood and looked at the huge stockpile while still shivering from the ice cream with which they had regaled us.

Every school district in the area had a “Church of Christ.” A few congregations met in the local schoolhouse, but most of them had erected plain structures in which to meet. Older preachers like “Uncle Henry Maynard” and “Uncle George Williams” had taken the plea that one could be a “Christian only” into the region round about, until there was a group of saints meeting about every three to five miles in every direction. Many of the people did not know there was any other kind of “a church.” They supposed that all who were not unbelievers “spoke where the Bible spoke and remained silent where the Bible was silent.” There was no apparent rivalry. When one congregation had a “big meeting” all attended it and the house was filled to overflowing, many of the men having to remain out in the yard and listen to the message through the open windows.

No congregation had a “hired preacher.” The term “local minister” was not in their vocabulary. The “one-man imported pastor system” was regarded as an innovation. It was a departure from the simplicity of the faith. It was not according to the ancient order. Each congregation had elders and no one was appointed to this function who was not “apt to teach.” These men were not ambitious for power or glory. They shared the public edification with any man who was



gifted at all. Each Lord's day, as Sunday was invariably designated, after the study of the lesson, one of the elders would say, "Is there any brother who has a word of exhortation? If so, an opportunity will now be given for it." Sometimes three men would speak briefly in turn. If a visiting brother was present he was specifically invited to speak. If no one arose to speak one of the elders was prepared to teach and admonish.

As I look back upon those days there comes to my mind the mental image of toil-worn men sitting on the front porch at dusk, reading the sacred volume. I recall being in homes on cold wintry days where men who had spent hours feeding and doing the chores, now sat down close to the heating-stove to study the Bible, until the warmth stole over the bodies and lulled them to sleep while the book slid gently to the floor. Since I had been completely through the Bible at least twice, when some remote point was "brought up in the meeting" the teacher might refer it to me. Frequently I knew the answer. This did two things. It drew the commendation of the older folk and strengthened the resolution of the males who were my age to beat me up, the age-old and effective recourse of country boys to a "smart city kid."

A passage from the Roman letter keeps coming to my mind. "I myself am satisfied about you, my brethren, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able to instruct one another." I think that may describe the way we were. No one threw his weight around. The brethren were tolerant of one another. When old "Pappy Davis" decided it was not "scriptural" to stand for prayer, no one was upset if he kneeled while we stood. When he was called upon to lead in prayer, the one who was presiding asked us all to kneel.

There was a cooperative spirit. The sisters took a month each in preparing the loaf for the Lord's Supper, and shared their recipe for making unleavened bread. We used two glasses to pass the fruit of the vine, and during a protracted meeting when a lot of visitors were present we added two more. Near the close of the service, while a hymn was being sung, everyone marched up and "laid by in store" by putting his money on the white linen cloth on the table. Before returning to their seats they shook hands with everyone on the front seat. There was a lack of pride and affection which contributed to the idea that it was a family reunion of the saints of God.

Because we had moved in the middle of the term I finished the year in the little schoolhouse where eight grades were crowded together in one room. There was a "recitation bench" in front and the teacher called each class to come in turn and occupy that seat while its members recited whatever lesson was scheduled. By the time one reached the eighth grade he had heard every textbook reviewed eight times. Although I was destined to attend but a few months, that little school, taught by Lee Carter Maynard, made an indelible impression upon my mind.

Two significant things happened soon after we moved into the new community. The first was that my mother began to attend the meetings of the congregation. I am sure she had been lonely, but here she was accepted, and the genuine concern of the other women made her want to be with them. She told us it represented no change upon her part and that she simply went to be with the rest of the family, but she was talking to herself as much as to us.

The second thing was my decision one Sunday to be baptized into Christ. I was sitting in my accustomed place with the other boys of the community. Nothing unusual was occurring. The songs were not more exciting. The short talk by one of the elders was a routine one. But there came to me, out of nowhere a feeling of deep depression and remorse that I had not audibly confessed before men my faith in Jesus. Suddenly I knew that he had not just died for sin, but for *my sins*. There was a tugging at my inward being to enroll in His service. It was as if I were receiving a clear summons to follow His leading.

After the meeting was over I hurried away home. I did not want to talk to anyone. I felt miserable. I could not eat luncheon and as soon as I could steal away I went to one of my favorite spots for meditating, under the shade of one of the apple trees in a remote corner of the orchard. All afternoon I sat there, inwardly presenting the consequences of acceptance or rejection. It was as if two forces inside me were locked in violent struggle. Two voices were calling out of the depths. Finally, I surrendered to the urging of the Spirit, and at once felt an inner peace and quiet I had never before known. It was as if a heavy rock had been lifted off my being. That night, unaware that I was bare foot and dressed in bib overalls, I confessed to the little group of humble farm-folk that I believed with all my heart that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God.

One week from that time, on a sun-drenched Sunday afternoon, we gathered at the old swimming-hole in the creek which flowed through John Willard's pasture. The cows which were lying in the shade of the sycamore trees continued to chew their cud placidly, undisturbed by this unusual intrusion. The little group of onlookers who had assembled sang the words "Shall we gather at the river?" One of the elders, a neighbor whom all of us loved, Jesse Jackson, led me into the stream with the silvery minnows darting this way and that, and immersed me into that glorious relationship involving the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

My mother was there, and I suspect her mind went back to the time when she dressed my baby form in the long white christening-dress and carried me so far to have me christened by the Missouri Synod Lutheran clergyman. But she merely wiped away her tears, and hugged my wet body without saying anything. We climbed into the big wagon in which we were to ride back home, and my wet clothing felt good as the sun's rays beat down upon us. But it was the cool, refreshing feeling inside of me which meant the most. What a thrill to be one spirit with the Lord!

## **MY DAYS AS A BOY PREACHER**

My surrender to the claims of Jesus over my life launched me almost at once into a round of new experiences. On the Sunday following my baptism I publicly read the scripture lesson which was a regular feature of our assembly. A week later I led in public prayer. The autumn "protracted meeting" was conducted by J.C. Bunn, an esteemed evangelist who was born in our general region and who was in demand among the congregations. On the final night of his series he announced that I would speak one month from that night. Apparently he had consulted with the elders but the announcement came as a complete surprise to me.

By this time I had graduated from the rural school and was attending classes in town, a distance of some three miles. I was barely twelve years of age. Since I knew of no effective way of getting out of speaking I decided to use the theme "Counting the Cost" and after outlining what I wanted to say I began rehearsing on my walk through the woods and fields each morning and evening as I went to school and returned home. Interest began to grow as word was noised abroad and on the Sunday evening I was to speak the house was completely crowded out and many had to remain outside and listen through the open windows.

When I ascended the platform, dressed in knee trousers, I was so short my head could hardly be seen above the reading stand by the seated audience. One rural wag told me later the only way he knew I was back there was by seeing my hair moving back and forth above the stand. He said it was standing on end. I was afraid of but one thing, that I might run out of material and have to dismiss the audience prematurely. There was no danger! I spoke almost an hour, and later when one farmer was asked what he thought about my preaching he said, "It is the most exhausting experience I have ever had. You can't sleep worth shucks while he is talking and you don't get home in time to catch up on it before morning."

As soon as I had finished, an elder from the Green Pond congregation came up and asked me if I would speak there the following Sunday, and another from Bee Creek arranged for me to speak there two weeks from that date. Soon I was busy every Sunday of each month, and people came from far and near to see a "boy preacher" with the same curiosity which would have attracted them to a carnival sideshow to see a two-headed calf.

One week my father was conducting a series of meetings in a rural location far out in the bottom area of the snake-infested region close to the Mississippi River. Word was conveyed that the humble farm-folk wanted to close with a basket dinner followed with an afternoon meeting with both my father and myself as speakers. It was the first time my father had heard me make a public address and it was a blessing indeed for me to be thus associated with him, knowing as I did the zeal he had for Christ and the sacrifices he had made for the cause which he loved more than life.

One afternoon when I arrived home from school, I found my mother sitting on the front porch visiting with Sister Schlieper, whose husband was an elder of the congregation at Bee Creek. Anna Schlieper was a remarkable person. Her father, Klaus Martens, a carpenter in Germany, brought his family to America when Anna was five years of age. The immigrants settled in a region known as Mozier Hollow, in Illinois. Nominally members of the Lutheran Church in Germany, they did not actively identify with any religious group in the new world. In the little colony of people whose roots still reached back to "The Fatherland" Anna married Edward Schlieper and they began their home under extremely modest circumstances.

"Uncle Tom" Rody, a plain country-type preacher came into "the Hollow" to conduct a series of meetings, and because every such gathering was a social event, the Schliepers went. Although the preacher was far from being a "ball of fire" the simple message made an impression upon the shrewd mind of Anna Schlieper and she and her husband were immersed in the nearby stream. The wife immediately began to plunge into the revelation of God, and although her husband was not as interested as herself, she bombarded him with her findings until he became an apt student

of the Word. By the time we moved to Illinois the entire Schlieper family was in the faith and pillars in both the community and the little congregation which met in a building occupying a plot of ground carved out of their farm.

I shall always believe it was an act of divine providence which caused us to move to that region of Illinois. No one else on earth was as well adapted to reach my mother as Anna Schlieper. Two days after the latter had read to her from the German Translation of Martin Luther, I was summoned to the classroom of the high school principal, G.B. Garrison, who informed me that my mother was to be baptized at two o'clock that afternoon and I was free to attend if I wished. I walked the more than two miles out the railroad track to the bridge over the creek and turned up the country road to the "baptizing hole." I was alternately weeping and praying as I went. In my childish inexperience I had no vocabulary with which to express my profound gratitude unto God. I still do not.

After my mother had been immersed, and we returned home so she could change from her wet garments, I wanted to tell her how much I rejoiced inwardly, but all I could get out was a stammering "Mom, I'm glad!" Both of us started crying and continued until it seemed silly to go on, and then we started laughing, almost hysterically. After that we both understood and did not need to talk about it any more. Our family was one in Christ Jesus. When my grandfather heard about it, he revised his will without my mother's knowledge. He never wrote to us again and when his will was read after his death, my mother's name was not even mentioned. She had been a favorite child, loving and obedient, but once she obeyed the call of Jesus it was as if she had never been born. The sectarian spirit crushed out parental affection as it destroys all love and makes those who would kill you think they are doing God a service.

Occasionally I am asked by those who have created institutional handmaidens to suckle, rear and train the children of God, how we made out before men created these special agencies and auxiliary bodies as functional nursemaids. The answer is simple. Each congregation was regarded as a school of Christ and a college of the Bible. All of the soldiers were given the same identical training. All were taught the use of the various portions of the sword. No one was sent as a recruit to an "officer's training school" to come back and wield the weapon and wear the shield for the whole company. Benjamin Franklin had taught the brethren to "teach the whole truth to the whole church and those with leadership ability will rise to the top as cream rises on the milk."

Intensive studies of the Bible were conducted in many congregations during the winter. Brethren within driving distance attended with eagerness. Classes were held morning, afternoon and night. Training was afforded boys and young men in the public presentation of the Word. Stiff tests were given to see if the message was getting through. These studies often lasted for weeks and provided a welcome respite in long winter months. Brethren who were apt to teach were in constant demand.

In this number was A.M. Morris, whose studies at Hale, Missouri, and Winfield, Kansas, are still mentioned by old-timers. Brother Morris wrote the books *Prophecies Unveiled* and *Reason and Revelation*. They were widely read in all religious circles. Once when he was on a train, William Jennings Bryan, the Democratic candidate for president came through the coaches

meeting and shaking hands with the passengers. When he learned the identity of Morris he publicly introduced him as the man whose books had taught him more about the Bible than any other volumes he had read. He urged the passengers to secure a copy of *Reason and Revelation* and read about it.

Daniel Sommer, J.C. Bunn, Stephen and Silas Settle, and D. Austen Sommer were all recognized as teachers. The latter, like his father, produced a number of books, among them one called "How to Read the Bible for Pleasure and Profit." It was cleverly done and he used this as a guide in his four-week study which I attended at night the winter after I was baptized. He was not as adept in teaching as some of the others, but one does not criticize the serving when he is starving for the food.

I learned a great deal, as a mere lad, sitting with older farm-folk who marked and underlined the Bibles so they could recall the things they had learned. They were often slow readers and had to point to each word in turn. Sometimes they mistook the meaning of a passage as did the dear old sister who was reading the passage which declares that "Jacob stole away from Laban unawares," and read it with emphasis, "And Jacob stole away from Laban in his underwear." But I doubt there has ever been a substitute quite as effective as the training of the whole community of saints to function by the use of every gift. As Peter put it, "Each one should use whatever spiritual gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms."

As the months went by I was called upon to go farther and farther from home to speak at congregations, some of which I had scarcely heard about. Each Saturday I would walk to town and board the train for some destination where I was scheduled to address the brethren on Saturday night and Sunday morning, returning home again on Sunday evening. Frequently, after taking my ticket, a conductor would come back and question me to see if I was running away from home. On occasion a brother would come to meet me at the railway station and return home without me, telling his wife that no one got off the train but a little boy and he did not see "hide or hair" of anyone who even looked like a preacher.

Our uncle, L.E. Ketcherside, arranged for me to come and speak there each night during the Christmas vacation. I stayed in his home and we talked long and often about the cause we loved. He was a master at relating his experiences and also at personal work. We developed a closeness which was never strained through the years. Several decades later he died of a massive brain hemorrhage as he was going from door to door distributing faith-building material he had printed on his trusty mimeograph the day before. As I spoke words of tribute in his honor at the funeral service my mind drifted back to the wintry nights when the two of us walked through the crunching snow at Centralia.

I recalled that the speaker's stand was so high that I had to stand on a box to see the audience. There were not more than thirty persons present but it was a great meeting because I was with those whom I loved.

## 2. Marriage Evangelism

### MARRIED AND BROKE!

By the time my thirteenth birthday arrived and summer vacation had rolled around I was scheduled for meetings in three states. This meant I would be away from home until school started again. I had already baptized several persons, most of them my age. A number of others who had “come forward” were immersed by elders who were afraid that, because of my size, I might drown them in the process, or vice versa. At least two of the meetings were in tents. This was before the time of amplifiers and loud-speakers so I had to develop my voice range which was not easy for one my age. Meetings were held all seven nights of the week and often three times on Sunday. There was not much time for respite.

It was not all serious business, and years later, older brethren would recount to my embarrassment, how, when I was preaching in a country schoolhouse or other rural setting, I would be out playing leapfrog or marbles with other boys of my age, and they would have to come out and tell me I had better stop and wash up at the pump because it was time for the meeting to begin. Since many of my engagements were in farming communities or small villages, and I stayed in a different home every night, sleeping under all sorts of conditions and eating all kinds of food, I received training which stood me in good stead later as I traveled in other parts of the world.

It would be interesting to me, but boring to you, if I were to recount the meetings in which I engaged for the next two or three years, so I will resist the urge to pursue that course. There are some places which return vividly to mind. Among them is Bonne Terre, Missouri, which took me back to within six miles of my birthplace. Here, where the remnants of the Cantwell congregation were to be found, I stayed in the home of my paternal grandparents while speaking each night to a capacity crowd. Often the building could not contain the listeners. Seventeen persons were immersed, some of whom still live and are active in the work of the Lord. The spiritual enthusiasm in the town was at a high pitch and the saints were blessed.

Another place I especially remember was a rural congregation called Walnut Hill, south of Springfield, Missouri, located near Battlefield, so designated because of the fierce Civil War battle in which the famous General Nathaniel Lyons, of the Union forces, was mortally wounded. It was not historical lore which impressed the place upon my mind, but the fact that the group of saints there purchased for me my first suit with long trousers. When I went in to Springfield with one of the elders, Brother Bussard, he sprang a complete surprise on me by taking me to a clothing store on South Campbell Street where he outfitted me in a suit with a vest. The price was fifteen dollars and there was no sales tax.

Then, with two more years of high school before me, my father decided to move to Topeka, Kansas. An elderly gentleman, Peter Griggs, offered him a contract to manage Mount Auburn Cemetery, and he found the lure of a regular income irresistible. He called me by long distance telephone and I went to Topeka where I met him and exhausted my little bank account by making a down payment on an old house outside the city limits which I thought of as “that

tumble-down shack in Athlone.” It had no indoor plumbing and was in a state of decrepitude. It was all we could afford. When my mother saw it she said, “Poor people have poor ways,” and set about trying to make it more livable. My father had great plans for developing it when we got on our feet. We never got there and the “dream castle” never emerged. He spent every spare minute preaching and settling squabbles at places which did not reimburse him enough to pay the grocery bill.

When I started to Highland Park High School I was in a different world than I had been in while attending the little two-teacher high school in Pearl, Illinois. But there was no speech department and when I took it upon myself to enroll in the National Oratorical Contest I had to do all of the work on the speech myself. In the elimination contest I was obviously at a disadvantage and did not even win an alternate position. First place was captured by George Chumos of Topeka High School, the fluent son of a Greek immigrant. When I learned that he had been coached by Miss Carmi Wolfe, head of the Speech Department, I enrolled in Topeka High School where I had to pay my own tuition.

The following year under the expert tutelage of Miss Wolfe, I captured the city contest, the state contest, the regional contest, and lost out in the one which would have sent me to Washington to compete in the finals, held in the House of Representatives. When I graduated from high school I went to Topeka Business College on a scholarship. I studied banking and accounting and ended up taking a position with the Columbian Title and Trust Company, as a researcher for abstracts. I spent my noon hours poring over the old Indian treaties and government land grants. But after less than six months had passed, the call of the whitened fields became so great, I could not resist. I resigned my position, much against the will of the company officials and returned to traveling as an evangelist.

God was gracious unto me and my efforts were crowned with what “our brotherhood” regarded as success. There were “additions” in every meeting. New congregations were being started and when divisions occurred, as they frequently did, we were able to consolidate “the faithful ones” who “came out from among them” to preserve the doctrine in its purity.

I was nineteen years old when I went back to Flat River, Missouri, for what turned out to be one of the most eventful meetings of my life. Every evening when the bell sent its mellow tones out across this mining town the people began to surge toward the building. It was literally “standing room only” every night. I stayed with an uncle in Bonne Terre, about seven miles away but I was in Flat River daily, visiting the members and doing personal work. My song leader was Arvel Watts, one of the best I had ever known, but the greatest thing going for him, as I soon discovered, was that he was the older brother of Nellie Watts. I had always liked girls, and even at my tender age had imagined I was in love with a number of them. But that was before I saw Nell, a raven-haired brown-eyed beauty, whose simple charm swept me off my feet and left my mind reeling.

J.W. Watts, whose first initials stood for John Wesley, was reared in a home of “shouting Methodists,” as was his wife. But when he heard Daniel Sommer preach he was baptized into Christ at once and was already a member at Flat River when my father obeyed the gospel. By the time I grew up and returned to Flat River for the meeting, he and Arvel each owned a store,

and Nell was working as a clerk in her father's place of business. There were six children in the Watts family, as there were in my own father's family, and the home was one of genuine Christian commitment, under the direction of a stern but just father whose word was law, and who tolerated no "monkey business."

It was Nell's mother, I think, who first suspicioned that I was ending up at the store every day just before noon, not so much because I was interested in food, but to see her daughter. When she mentioned her feelings to Nell's father he said it was silly, and that in spite of the fact I wasn't yet dry behind the ears, I had too much sense to marry at my age. Meanwhile I could see no indication that I was making any headway, and the meeting was fast drawing to a conclusion. One of Nell's sisters did not help my state of depression by informing me that Nell had long ago announced that she would never marry a preacher or a traveling salesman.

It was on the final afternoon of the meeting that Nell's older sister and her fiancé suggested that they would take me back to Bonne Terre after the meeting. He was the local Oldsmobile dealer and drove a new coupe with a rumble seat. As Nell and I rode along in it I extracted from her a promise that she would write to me if I wrote to her. She said she would answer any letters she received. That's where she made her mistake.

I wrote every day. Some days I wrote twice. Four more months went by and I found a few days in which I would not be preaching. I arranged a date in advance and during those few days we agreed that we would marry. I do not think I ever made a formal proposal. We simply seemed to take it for granted that we would marry. I went on my way rejoicing but now sent every cent I could spare to Nell who placed it in a special account so that we could purchase a car and later our furniture. A few months later I returned so we could make final arrangements. I had been writing every day and printing a little sixteen page quarterly dedicated just to her, but now the days seemed to creep by.

Finally, the time came to get the license and make the final preparations, and on Sunday afternoon, we were married in the living-room of the Watts' home, with my uncle, L.E. Ketcherside, officiating. It was a very simple ceremony, lasting but a few minutes. There were no special decorations. We left immediately enroute to Topeka, Kansas, where my folks lived. On the way we stopped overnight at Nevada, Missouri, where we resolved to make our home.

After a few days in Topeka, we started for California, where I was scheduled for three meetings. There were no motels and most of the roads were unpaved. We expected to camp along the way and had a tent and all of the equipment with us. But the second night out, at North Platte, Nebraska, I became violently ill and developed a high fever. The next morning I drove as far as the little town of Sutherland, a distance of twenty miles, and it became apparent I could go no farther. We drove down the dusty main street until we saw the sign on a dingy little building, "Frank Shambaugh, M.D., Physician and Surgeon." Dr. Shambaugh examined me and diagnosed my condition as appendicitis. He suggested that we get a room in the little unprepossessing two-story hotel, and he would pack me in ice in the hope that the inflammation would subside and I could return home for surgery.



After seven days in the little hotel it was obvious there was no improvement and something would have to be done at once. In a private home converted into a three-room hospital I underwent surgery on Sunday afternoon. I was frightfully nauseated from the ether. Each morning Nell came to remain with me through the day. Each morning she went back to the hotel room by herself. When I became able to drive we took a test run out through the country and the next day started for Topeka. We were financially broke. Our last cent was gone. We were in debt and I was too weak to work. But we were both alive and we were together.

A short time later we rented our first place, a little three-room meagerly furnished apartment in an old house at Nevada, Missouri. Here the members took us to their hearts and we found real joy in sharing our lives together. The congregation continued their plan of mutual ministry, for they had never hired a preacher. The elders and other brethren of ability edified the saints. I simply took my turn with them, but it was not necessary that I be present on Sunday. I was free to go out and take the message to others.

### **AND BABY MAKES THREE**

I have been casting about for the right word to describe our relationship with the community centered around Nevada, and I have decided upon the term “idyllic.” When you look it up in your dictionary you will see at once why I selected it. If you will permit me to backtrack a little, I should like to tell you we moved there on November 7, 1928. After we had remained at my father’s home until I recovered strength following my surgery, we returned to Nell’s home, so she could vote for a president the first time. The election was on November 6.

The choice was not an agonizing one. She voted for Herbert Hoover. His opponent was Al Smith, four times governor of New York. As if that were not enough to condemn him in the eyes of mid-westerners he was also a Catholic and a “wet” during the days of prohibition. Moreover, he wore a brown derby, and the thought of someone in the White House with that kind of hat seemed ridiculous. So Nell voted for Hoover. I was not quite old enough to vote. The Republicans campaigned on their record of increasing prosperity under the Harding and Coolidge administrations. They promised to end poverty and make possible “a chicken in every pot, a car in every garage.” None of us realized we were facing a depression in which every car would go to pot and most of us would be raising chickens in the garage.

Nevada is the county seat of Vernon County, Missouri. We moved there because it was about halfway between our parental homes. When we did the rural flavor was still quite pronounced. Both the Missouri Pacific and the Missouri-Kansas-Texas railways ran trains though the town so that it was linked with every part of the United States by connecting lines in great industrial centers. But Nevada was still a country town. Saturday was the big day of the week. Farmers with produce to sell parked around the courthouse square and dispensed their wares from the backs of their vehicles. There were still hitching racks for those who drove teams.

Sidewalks were crowded with people who visited all day, going home only in time to do the chores in the evening. Harmless gossip flowed freely and tidbits of news were exchanged. When two persons met the general form of greeting was, “Have you heard?” and the newcomer was given the latest news. It was a day when one could speak on the courthouse lawn and be

assured of a crowd eager for something to provide a diversion from whittling and spitting tobacco juice at a mark on the ground.

The small congregation meeting in the plain little white frame structure on North Main Street was composed primarily of farmers with a sprinkling of railroad employees. It was under the care of three elders – Brethren Kryselmier, Billings and Journey. The first was a retired “hog-head” as everyone called a railroad engineer, the second was a dairyman, and the third a farmer. They did not “hire” me to move to the town to work with the church. They were surprised when I told them I was coming to their town, a decision I reached while holding a meeting for the congregation the year before. I suspected at the time they were glad to hear it, but they did not make a great fuss over the announcement.

No congregation among us had “a minister.” I was regarded as an evangelist. There was a clear understanding that the primary task of an evangelist was to proclaim the good tidings to those who had never obeyed the gospel. When a congregation was planted, the evangelist remained to train and prepare his converts until men with the qualifications for bishops arose among them. We were imbued with the idea enunciated by Benjamin Franklin, the gospel preacher, who said, “Feed the whole church the whole word, and leadership will rise among the members as cream rises upon the milk.” When men exhibited the qualifications required of bishops they were elected by the multitude of the saints and ordained by the evangelist.

At this juncture his work was terminated as he commended the congregation and the elders “to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.” The evangelist was then ready to move on or to band together another group in the locality and duplicate the process. The idea of hiring out to preach the gospel to a congregation of saints with bishops at so much per week, no more entered our minds than it did those of the believers in the days of the apostles. Such terms as hiring or firing preachers, contracts, vacation stipulations, were as foreign to our spiritual vocabulary as they were to the new covenant scriptures.

When an evangelist was a member of a local body of disciples, he held no office or priority in that congregation. As a member he took his turn in edifying and exhorting, but a great deal of the time he was laboring with new or weak places which needed his talents and advice. It seemed silly to concentrate the strongest talent in a place which needed it least. In war the greatest firepower is directed to the weakest spots. During the first winter I was in Nevada I spoke about once every six weeks. At other times I sat with Nell and listened to the other brethren admonish us. But I was making personal calls in every part of the country. I mapped out areas and visited the farm homes of all who lived within the perimeter. I talked to them about the Lord and began to hold Bible studies in rural meetinghouses, grange halls and school buildings at night. Frequently I was invited by the schoolteacher to come and speak to the children during the day. I came to know hundreds of people.

In the town I secured permission to speak one day per week to the crew working in the roundhouse of the Missouri Pacific Railway. While they were eating lunch together I spoke to those who were willing to come. It soon became so much a part of their life that I broke up the card games on the day I was there. I spoke frequently at the chapel for the mental patients in the

State Hospital north of town. Soon I was becoming a kind of regular fixture at the noon luncheon clubs of the Rotarians, Kiwanians and Lions. When a speaker cancelled out on them they called me. The railroad men elected me chaplain of the combined Boosters Clubs of the Joplin and White River Divisions of the Missouri Pacific.

As a result of these contacts I was immersing men and women in ponds, lakes, rivers, and even stock tanks in feedlots. So many railroaders became Christians that on Sunday "the caller" could come and hand in a list of workmen needed on an emergency train and we could make up his crew of engineers, firemen, brakemen and conductors, from the congregation. We even had the Railway Express representatives. I was thrilled with life, filled with zest, and ready to believe that we could take the world for Christ.

Then, during the sixth month of our marriage, Nell discovered she was pregnant. I was still soaring on imaginary wings at the thought of being a husband, and now a new dimension was to be added. I would be a father. It was all kind of mind-boggling to realize that at my age I was going to be entrusted with rearing a future president of the United States. I was overwhelmed with the thought that we would have a baby of our very own. As the weeks passed into months and Nell's body began to swell with the new life within, she became as beautiful to me as she appeared grotesque and ungainly to herself. I shall never forget the night I placed my hand against her abdomen and felt the fetal heartbeat of our joint production.

We knew we could not continue another winter in an apartment so cold that ice froze at night in the bucket of water in the kitchen. And then, just as if an unseen hand was guiding our destiny, a small five-room house became vacant directly across the street from the meetinghouse. We rented it and moved in. There was nothing good or fancy about it. Our furniture was not adequate for it, but this did not affect us. The folk in the congregation were good to us and the baby shower provided the needs of one about whom we had dreamed but had not yet seen.

There was no hospital in the city so we made arrangements for the delivery at home, following instructions of the dignified and elderly Dr. Love, who seemed to be altogether too calm for such a momentous task. It was early in the morning of September 18, 1929, when Nell prodded me awake to tell me that the hour was approaching. I could not find the light switch in the dark and fell over everything in two rooms trying to get to the telephone. When I finally got the doctor awake to give him the news of the century, he told me he would get dressed and be along as soon as he fixed himself a cup of coffee. I could not understand how anyone could stop to drink a cup of coffee while facing the most momentous event of his whole career. I was walking the floor, trying to remember what I had read in doctor books about delivering babies when he knocked on the door.

He was as much a master of delivering young husbands of their fears as he was in delivering young wives of their babies. He told me he would need some things done and issued some orders for me to prepare this and that. While I was bustling about doing it he sat down in our only comfortable chair and took a nap. It was only after it was all over and he had gone that I realized he had asked me to do things which he never referred to or asked about again.

We had arranged for our aged sister in Christ, Mrs. Richard F. Edwards, to come and help us with the baby. She was a precious and gentle soul who had borne a number of children of her own, and had assisted with the birth of many more. She was present soon after the doctor arrived, and proceeding efficiently in spite of my getting in her way. She was helping Dr. Love in the actual delivery when, all of a sudden, he said, "Well, well, it's a fine big boy." It was, too, because the scales registered nine-and-a-half pounds.

Nell seemed to take it fine, but I was completely worn out from the ordeal. I shall never forget the sense of well-being which was mine when they laid Gerald Bernard in my arms for the first time. Nell selected the name, choosing it because we could not think of anyone in either of our families who ever bore such a name. I do not recall that anyone has ever called him Gerald since that morning. Somehow he became tagged with "Jerry" and that is what it has been ever since. A completely new phase of life had begun for us. I found myself humming a snatch of the song made famous by "Little Jack Little" a famous radio performer of the time, "... the baby makes three, we're happy in my blue heaven."

When I had recovered sufficiently to walk to town I went to the office of Dr. Love and told him I had come to pay my bill. He got out his account book and said, "Let me see. I examined your wife four times here in the office during her pregnancy, and then came to the house and delivered the baby, and have made two trips back since to check on things. I'm afraid I shall have to charge you thirty dollars in all, but if you think that is too much I can take the baby in on it."

I have known a lot of experiences in life. Some of them have been tragic. Others were joyful. But for sheer pleasure mingled with constant concern there is nothing equal to rearing a baby. Every degree of fever arouses grave apprehension. Every little cry at night is heard and brings you from a snug bed to tramp across a cold linoleum. In reality, babies are tyrants. They are utterly and wholly selfish. It is better to realize this and be truthful about it. They scream until they grow livid in the face and quickly change to gurgles of contentment as soon as you pick them up and start talking softly in the special vernacular of baby-talk which they love. If you do not pick one of them up soon enough he shifts into the tactic of holding his breath. You become frantic. The fact is that no baby ever died from holding his breath. He always catches it just in time to go one living and employ the same ruse next time.

Babies belch in your face and burp down your back just when you are preparing to leave for a special meeting and haven't time to change suits, if you are fortunate enough to have another one. You arrive smelling like the custodian in the sour cream division of the local dairy. Babies sleep all morning and arouse only to mess up their diapers just when you have poured the coffee and sat down to luncheon. The timing of a baby is uncanny. He can be trusted implicitly to disrupt any plan and wreak havoc on any schedule. And he is worth every minute of it!

His first attempt at crawling, the first time he yanks the table cloth off and sits amidst the wreckage gaily flailing away at it and scattering gravy with both hands, the first stumbling step, the first bumbling word, all of these are mileposts in a career, the topic of telephone calls with which to bore patient listeners, the subject of letters with which to thrill the hearts of distant grandparents. Regardless of one's educational attainments, he will learn more about life by

living with a baby than by sitting in ivy-covered towers of scholasticism listening to bearded professors.

But the world has to go on even if you have a baby. No moratorium is declared on the making of history while you play with your offspring. Six days after Jerry was born Lieutenant Jimmie Doolittle made the first all-instrument plane flight. A new era was ushered in. One month later the stock market crashed. Millions of shares were dumped. Billions of dollars were lost. On October 29 panic selling increased. The ticker tape was almost three hours behind. Thousands of investors saw their fortunes completely wiped out. Some of them jumped from office windows to shatter their bodies on the concrete far below. Men who were wealthy a few days before blew their brains out rather than face life as paupers. Fear and foreboding gripped the country.

Men began to speak of national bankruptcy. It was as if some evil genius had suddenly taken control. The feeling of ominous threat was heightened when a strange fire broke out in the Executive Office building in Washington, D.C., on Christmas Eve. We were tottering on the brink of "The Great Depression."

## **FORD COUNTRY**

This year of 1930 will be long remembered by those who are old enough to remember it. It was a time of disaster. A great drought lay like a pall over the Ohio and Mississippi River areas. Food resources were depleted, and unemployment and disease took a frightful toll. The census taken during the year determined that a population of 123,202,624 occupied the then forty-eight states, and by autumn President Hoover reluctantly had to admit there were 4,500,000 unemployed. Within a year the amount doubled.

On December 11, the largest bank failure in the United States occurred when the Bank of the United States closed down in New York City, leaving almost a half million depositors stranded. A few days later The Chelsea Bank and Trust Company failed to open the doors of its six outlets and in rapid succession twenty-eight banks in the south and mid-west went under. In the next twelve months there were 2,294 bank closings.

To add to the nation's woes in 1930, great fires broke out in various places. One such holocaust at the Ohio State Prison in Columbus resulted in the death of 318 convicts. The state capitol of Bismarck, North Dakota, went up in flames and the loss was estimated to exceed a million dollars. In spite of all this, those who lived the simple life in rural areas seemed to suffer least. Always cooperative and willing to share, they accepted the situation with a cheerful calm which belied the fright stories in the newspapers. The little congregation at Nevada continued to grow in members added, as well as in grace and knowledge of the truth. As one brother said, "You don't notice a depression if you've never known anything with which to contrast it."

When our baby was about six months old we began a tour which enabled me to conduct meetings previously arranged in four states. He proved to be a good traveler, sleeping much of the way, lulled into slumber by the motion of the automobile. At Topeka, Kansas, we stayed with my folk and during the meeting each night the principal question was who would get to

hold the baby. This was the age of “protracted meetings” in Churches of Christ. They were called that in order to distinguish them from “revivals.” This was a sectarian term which no self-respecting preacher among us would use. The meeting in Topeka drew capacity crowds, a not too difficult thing because of the limited seating space.

After some tearful farewells, we went next to Marshalltown, Iowa, where I had lived briefly as a boy. Once again we were blessed with good audiences although our cause had never particularly prospered in the area. It was a pleasure to see once more a number of those whom we met when we moved to the area from the little Ozark mining town years before.

The next stop was at River Rouge, the home of the great Ford automobile plant in the Detroit, Michigan area. Already Henry Ford was a legendary character, although he would live for seventeen more years. In 1893, after spending all of his leisure time in experimentation, he built his first automobile in a carriage shed. In 1903 he founded the Ford Motor Company. During the year of my birth he began production of the “Model T.” It was so popular it became the butt of jokes by stage comedians and everyone passed along the latest one accompanied by loud guffaws.

Someone in a crowd would say, “There was this preacher who drove a Model T, and got stuck in the mud on his way to church. He pried it out with a rail from a nearby fence, but when he got up to preach, mad and muddy, he began by saying, ‘Anyone who drives a Model T, will probably go to hell.’ In the back of the house a man stood up and said, ‘Amen!’ The preacher said, ‘How come you said Amen when I predicted anyone who drives a Ford will go to hell?’ The man replied, ‘Because if she gets you there, she will bring you back.’” Fords were always spoken of in the feminine gender. It was rumored that this was because they were so difficult to get started. Some said it was because you had to pet them to keep them working. They were familiarly called “Tin Lizzies.”

In 1927, the “Model T” was discontinued and replaced by the “Model A.” By the time it was produced, Ford had turned out fifteen million cars, all the same color. His motto was, “Select any color you want, provided it is black.” We went to Detroit because originally the congregation of River Rouge was primarily composed of people from Flat River and the rest of the Missouri Lead Belt. In 1914, Ford raised the wages of assembly line workers from \$2.50 to \$5.00 per day. The general consensus of opinions was that he had gone crazy and would ruin the country, since no man alive was worth \$5.00 per day. People flocked to Detroit from every section of the country. Congregations were depleted elsewhere, while those who went to work for Ford formed congregations of folk “down home” to relieve their loneliness in a strange environment composed of different ethnic groups.

We stayed with Charles and Leray Stewart, because Leray and her sister Opal were part of the group of young people at Flat River with which Nell had been associated. It was a great time to be alive and we became endeared to this generous young Christian couple who took us in. As I write this, they are still living near Ludington, Michigan, where Charles has been an elder for many years at the second oldest congregation in Michigan, in a rural setting nestled amidst the great cherry orchards which make that section famous.

The River Rouge meetinghouse was filled every night. There were probably as many who came to see Nell as to hear me. Homesickness for southern Missouri was written upon many faces. Everyone was asking about relatives. It was like “old home week.” One night when the place was so crowded that chairs filled the aisles, the Bruce family came over from Windsor, Ontario, just across the Detroit River in Canada. Adam and Peggy Bruce had immigrated from the Slamannan District, a colliery region in Scotland made famous through the preaching of the gospel by James Anderson. With them was a younger brother of Adam, George Bruce, who had just arrived from Scotland and who spoke with a brogue so thick you could “slice it with a knife.”

They insisted that Nell and I come and spend the day with them as they had an urgent matter which they wanted to discuss. We settled upon a day and drove across the beautiful new Ambassador Bridge, which spanned the Detroit River. It had been open but a few months, the ribbon having been cut on November 11, 1929. It was 1850 feet long and 47 feet wide and had cost \$20,000,000. We had never seen anything like it. In Windsor, which gave us the feeling of being “strangers in a strange land” we had difficulty in finding the hospitable home of the Bruces.

Although more than forty-six years have passed as I write this, I can still remember our luncheon, as if it were yesterday. Peggy Bruce was an excellent cook and she had prepared a Scotch meat pie. No one can bake such a pie as those from “the land of the thistle” and it was delicious. We topped it off with cantaloupe à la mode, and since we had never seen this combination before it was a gustatory delight.

As soon as we had finished eating, Adam and George Bruce and I went out on the front porch and sat down to talk about the cause we loved. It was not always easy to unravel their Scots dialect, but my ears became more accustomed to it as we conversed. I learned about the congregations in the Slamannan District which lies between Edinburgh and Glasgow. They told of the drift of city churches into new ways and new thought patterns which were too liberal for many of the brethren. I learned about Walter Crosthwaite who resisted the inroads of modernism and called for the brethren to stand for the old paths. Certain congregations had declared themselves as opposed to any further erosion of the faith. They had come to be known as “the Old Paths brethren.” There was a fairly well drawn line between themselves and congregations affiliated with the British Association of Churches of Christ.

It was the feeling of the Bruces that I should visit Scotland and help to strengthen the brethren. They felt that my position on “mutual edification” as opposed to the congregational importation of a preacher to act as a “one-man pastor” at a stipulated fee would establish a rapport with the brethren in Great Britain where the practice of “mutual ministry” was regarded as the scriptural way. I think my age may have had something to do with the proposal. They undoubtedly felt that one who was young would be able to adjust and adapt to the congregations in “Auld Scotia.” George Bruce declared he had never heard anyone preach with the power I manifested. I had just passed my twenty-second birthday.

We drove back to Detroit to the little frame house of the Stewarts with its three large windows in the living room and its lattice-work concealing the area under the front porch (our way of

identifying the place) and as we rode along we talked about George Bruce's intention of putting the wheels in motion in his native land. He did as he promised but none of us knew that before our plans could be carried out the Second World War would burst upon the world and we would sail upon the *Queen Elizabeth* on her first trip as a passenger-carrying vessel after having been used to transport troops, some of whom would never return. I would be thirty-nine years old, and Jerry, now nestled in his mother's arms would be eighteen years of age.

We can never assess, at the time, the purpose of God which brings about what appears to be a chance meeting. But as I look back upon it, I realize that had I not met George Bruce during the few weeks of his sojourn with his brother, I would never have gone to Scotland, England, or North Ireland. If I had never gone I would not be writing this account at all. I would have continued to be a narrow factional leader, debating my brethren and arrogantly defending division among the saints as the only means of achieving doctrinal purity. My life would have been a journey of frustration instead of a pilgrimage of joy.

The meeting at River Rouge closed on an exultant note, the house jammed with listeners. We drove from Detroit to Flat River, Missouri, where my next meeting was scheduled. On the way we learned that Jack Sharkey had lost his heavyweight championship to the German, Max Schmeling, by fouling him in the fourth round. When the pictures of the fight were given a re-run the year following it was found there had been no foul. But it was too late!

The meeting at Flat River began on a happy note. The building in which my father had first heard the gospel and stepped forward to pledge his allegiance to Christ was filled from the first meeting. Nell's brother Arvel was the song leader. He was one of the best with whom I have ever worked. Enthusiasm grew with every session and actually turned into spiritual excitement. Every evening people could be seen walking in small groups toward the meetinghouse, converging upon it from all directions. Sometimes it was almost filled before the first bell was rung thirty minutes prior to the time scheduled to begin. When the final bell was tolled to indicate the service was starting the space inside was all taken and people were outside looking in through the open windows and door.

A number were baptized into Christ and some of them were my kinsmen after the flesh. The interest was heightened by the fact we had just come from Detroit to which the "economic exodus" had taken so many from the Lead Belt. Now their loved ones "down home" swarmed around us wanting to know if we had seen this one or that one. The meeting was greatly aided by the presence of saints from Bonne Terre where I had conducted such a successful effort while still a "boy preacher." Among the elders from Bonne Terre were Henry and Cornelius Mabery, pioneers of the faith in the area around Mine La Motte before moving to Bonne Terre. Always active in the service of the Master, they grounded their families in the faith until now a fourth generation is carrying the banner which they unfurled among the ranks of unbelievers.

Before we returned to Nevada I conducted a series of meetings for the little band meeting at Crystal City, Missouri. My uncle, L.E. Ketcherside, had done personal work, going from door-to-door in Crystal City and the twin-city of Festus, until he succeeded in banding together a little group to "keep house for the Lord." It was not an easy task. Crystal City was named after the huge glass factory, located there because of the abundance of raw material used in the



manufacture of plate glass. The work had attracted many immigrants from Southern Europe who were willing to work in the heat cast off by the huge furnaces. Many of the older ones were members of the Roman Catholic or Orthodox Churches and could hardly understand English when they were sober, which was not often.

Festus was originally a settlement known for its saloons and the prostitution which flourished in conjunction with its liquor dispensaries. The town was called "Tanglefoot" because of the unsteady gait of its citizens when full of cheap booze. As a better element moved in it was thought that such a name would only perpetuate the disreputable character of the place. The people met together to select a new name under which they could be incorporated, and it was unanimously decided they would have a man open the Bible and the first proper name which caught his eye would become the official designation. The book fell open to Acts 25:1, "Now when *Festus* was come into the province ... " It is a good thing it did not flip open to Isaiah 8:1, or Tanglefoot would have become Maher-shal-al-hash-baz. With its zip code it would have been hard to get on an envelope.

In spite of the hardships which he faced, and which never really discouraged or daunted him, my uncle kept on until he had a congregation meeting. He taught them until they were able to take care of themselves. None of them were educated but they had a zeal for the Word, imbued by their mentor. Charles Simms became a leader and a preacher of the Truth, and other humble brethren could speak effectively to the edification of the saints. I held my meeting in a house erected by my uncle on the rear of the lot owned by one of his sisters, for he could not only plant a congregation, he could also do carpentry work as few others I have seen. When the meeting was over we drove back to Nevada after an absence of more than three months.

## THE GLORY OF MUTTON HOLLOW

Upon our return after more than three months of absence we found the congregation of saints at Nevada in an excellent state. Under the guidance of the bishops, and with the cooperation of the other brethren, the morale was high and the size of the audiences remained at such an excellent level there was serious talk of erecting a new meetinghouse. In every congregation of that day, almost fifty years ago, especially those with a rural constituency, there were always brethren who had scruples and qualms about certain things. However, at Nevada, the others did not try to press an opposing view but graciously accommodated themselves so they would not "set at naught a brother" and thus peace was maintained.

It was decided to bring a luncheon one Sunday and spread tables in the rear of the meetinghouse at noon so all could eat together and be present for an afternoon session in which to discuss the subject of erecting a new house. One brother objected on the ground that his conscience would not allow him to eat in "the Lord's house" or in a place secured with "the Lord's money." No one argued with him about the fact the Lord's house consisted of living stones and not of concrete and boards. In deference to his conscience they rented a hall for the meal and everyone was happy. Two years later, the weak brother had become strong enough to outgrow his scruple on the matter and we could eat together in the basement without objection.

The word for scruple is from the Latin *scrupulus*, and refers to “a little pebble in the shoe.” Such a foreign object pains no one but the wearer of the shoe and those who do not feel the twinge must slow down until the weak brother can walk with them. Eventually, he may recognize that the pebble is not an essential part of the shoe and remove it to his comfort and the quickened pace of himself and others. The fact that we walk in the Spirit does not mean we all have the same gait. We should neither drive our brothers away nor run off from them. It is the stronger who must slow down for the weak cannot walk any faster until they also become strong.

It was decided we would wreck the old meetinghouse and salvage any material possible and erect the new one ourselves, since we had several brethren who could oversee the construction. The sisters would take turns providing food for the workers at noon. There was a sufficiently large crew the day we started so that we wrecked the old building and stacked the material in one day. When we began the new one, several men from the community with carpentry skills volunteered their labor. Some of them were immersed into Christ before the new structure was completed.

Only one incident marred the proceeding. When the framework was up some of the brethren sitting around eating their luncheon suggested we should take out insurance upon it to cover the cost of construction in case of wind, fire or other damage. One brother hooted at the idea and protested emphatically. He declared that it was the Lord’s work and the Lord would protect it. He insisted that nothing adverse would happen either to the structure or to anyone working on it, and to take out insurance would be to show a lack of faith in God. He said, “It would be a shame to insure the Lord’s property with unbelievers.” Three days later he fell off of a scaffold and broke his arm. We took him to an “unbelieving doctor” to set the bones.

Although the new auditorium seated more than twice as many as the former structure it was filled to capacity the very first Sunday night. It had been so long since a religious group had outgrown their structure that people flocked in to see what was happening. In spite of our narrowness and provincialism, or perhaps because of it, the number of the disciples grew.

One of my favorite areas in “God’s vineyard” was the Missouri Ozarks in the region around Springfield and south to the Arkansas line. I held my first meeting in “the Queen City of the Ozarks” when I was a mere lad. It was in a tent on North National Boulevard. After thus being introduced to the region I began to conduct meetings in rural areas off the beaten track. At Walnut Hill the community gave us an excellent hearing and I liked the place because after the evening services we could turn the dogs loose in the timber along the James River and go coon hunting the rest of the night. Here I also got my first taste of fox hunting.

It was during one of my visits to Springfield that brethren from Nixa, a village some twelve miles south, came to interview me to hold a three week gospel meeting for them. When I began on the third Sunday in September I inaugurated a custom that became an annual affair and continued until I had held thirteen meetings, baptizing some two hundred persons. In this little community of about three hundred population there were three or four religious edifices, but the largest was owned by the Church of Christ.

There were three elders – John Bennett, Otis Stine and Jonas Parsons. The first-named had been a rural schoolteacher until retirement. Then he became president of the local bank and general advisor to the community. Since I stayed in his home during many of these meetings I became well acquainted with him and met scores of people who came to him to help them draw up legal documents and even to write letters for them, since some of them were virtually uneducated and could not “put their thoughts down on paper.” The congregation was given prestige by the number of people who studied the Word every day and became proficient in it. A wealth of talent was developed and the congregation grew strong under the guidance of their shepherds.

Every year during our annual meeting I was invited to speak in a number of high schools in the area. I recall that a few of them had makeshift buildings and inadequate classroom facilities, but the concern of the teachers and their dedication to their profession made up for the physical lack. Some high school students were from such poverty-stricken homes they came to school barefoot, bringing lunch pails or sacks containing cold biscuits and sorghum molasses. No days were ever wasted during my three week preaching stints for people arranged meetings and announced them by word of mouth so that I spoke from the porches of country stores or at sawmills and grist mills where native people gathered. The men chewed tobacco and listened with gravity while the women held the children and heard me gladly.

When such meetings were not possible all of us gathered at the home where I was to eat the noonday meal, the women bringing food to spread together, and while there were no formal meetings we sat and talked together well into the afternoon. These were times of simple enjoyment where hearts were cemented together by the love of God and all of us grew in knowledge of the Book as we discussed controverted passages. They were especially profitable to me because of the simple unadorned lives of the people enriched by their constant contact with the divine revelation. Some years I stayed in a different home every night of the three weeks, and often I have blown out the kerosene lamp and tumbled into a bed where the tick was filled with straw or corn shucks, and slept like a log because of physical exhaustion.

The baptizing was done in the beautiful crystal-clear James River. One Sunday afternoon a huge audience gathered on the gravel bar to see twenty-three persons immersed into the relationship involved in the name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Often baptism was performed at night. Cars would be driven to the spot and parked so their lights could be focused on the river. Fish could be seen swimming in the depths. Night birds blended their plaintive calls with the songs of the believers.

Not all such gatherings were as peaceful as this. A year before Nell and I were married, I pitched a tent near Bull Creek and stayed a week by myself. I had been in the “Shepherd of the Hills” country, made famous by Harold Bell Wright, even prior to this, when I was seventeen. This was before the days of the tourist invasion and the only way to travel the region was in an old taxi driven by Mrs. Pearl Spurlock who lived in Branson and made daily trips through the area to accommodate people who stopped over between trains. Most of the roads were merely gravel-strewn trails and the sites featured by Wright were still existent.

Mutton Hollow was an unspoiled wilderness, and one could view its glory from Sammy Lane’s Lookout. Preachin’ Bill’s barn stood to indicate where his log cabin had been and one could

walk up “the trail nobody knows how old” to the cabin of Uncle Matt and Aunt Mollie. Uncle Ike, the postmaster at the crossroads, was still living, a bearded patriarch with a Harvard degree who chose to live in solitude but who was anxious enough to visit with me when I met him. The country got into my blood and I decided to go back and camp by myself away from any habitation, and think things out. I selected the right place. Every day I could see the blue haze dropping down on faraway hills and every evening while sitting by the campfire I could hear the eerie hoot of owls and the lonely cry of the whippoorwills.

I saw but two persons in the whole week. A couple of moon shiners came to investigate and assure themselves I was not a revenue agent searching for their stills. They cautioned me not to go up the hollow across the creek from my tent and ask questions afterward. When they learned I was a preacher they immediately proposed that I speak at the schoolhouse on Friday night since the community “hadn’t heard no preachin’ since God knowed when.” They offered to “norate it around” so I consented.

I didn’t realize that such occasions were usually used as an excuse for resumption of feuds although I noticed when the hour drew near for the meeting to begin a lot of the men were talking a little too loudly and the smell of liquid corn pervaded the air. The women and children went inside and so did a few of the men. The rest lounged around outside and their voices could be heard as I announced the first song. Since few knew it and there were no books, I sang but one verse. It was just as I was preparing to read an introductory chapter that someone outside called through an open window to a man inside, using an unmentionable epithet, and daring him to come outside. Without hesitation the one who was challenged climbed up on the seat and dived through the open window, knocking the prop out as he went.

In a matter of seconds the place was in an uproar with everyone pressing toward the door. Outside the drunken frenzied mob was already engaged in a free-swinging melee. It was not necessary to choose up sides. Everyone knew what side he was on when he arrived. Rocks flew freely. The moonlight glinted off the sharp blades of Barlow knives. When two sheriff’s deputies arrived, those who could not walk were loaded into cars and taken to Branson to be sewed up.

Later I became good friends with some of the “feuders” who had served terms in the state penitentiary. One in particular was a mere lad when he and his father lay flat on their stomachs at the edge of their woods, resting rifles upon the fence rails to shoot down a neighbor and his two sons working in the field. They did it to fulfill a “blood oath” laid upon them by the boy’s grandfather while he was dying from a gunshot wound. When I met the one-time boy he had “done his time” and had been released. He had married a girl from the hills and they welcomed me to their home. I baptized the whole family as well as some members of the opposite clan. When I was preaching anywhere within forty miles the former “sworn enemies” came together to hear me, bringing as many of their neighbors as they could get on the truck.

The year of 1931 was memorable in our lives for several reasons. For one thing, Nell again became pregnant and suffered a lot from nausea and discomfort during the summer months. We were fortunate that we had been virtually adopted by George and Minnie Kryselmier who not only came to get Jerry often because they adored him, but also had us at their house for meals

with great regularity when George was home from a trip on the Missouri Pacific which he served as an engineer. Minnie was a superb cook with an old-fashioned flair and we would visit at the table for a long time unless there was a special radio program on WLS “the Prairie Farmer Station” in Chicago. Since we were too poor to own a radio ourselves, any specially announced program was an excuse to visit the Kryselmiers, who generally honored the arrangement by inviting us to eat with them. We never rejected the invitation.

It was in 1931 we bought our first house. A rather lovely six-room bungalow with a large porch in front became vacant and was offered for sale at \$3,100.00. I had never been on a salary and never charged for my services. I simply took what the brethren gave me as I have continued to do through the years. At the time I was averaging about \$25.00 per week and we had another baby on the way. But we wanted a place of our own, so we borrowed \$300 for the initial payment from Nell’s brother Arvel, and began the monthly payments which we continued more than ten years. Nell and I were both troubled about being in debt. To this day we dislike owing anyone anything “but to love one another” and we sense a real relief when a bill is paid.

It was early in the morning of December 10, 1931, that Nell awakened to tell me she had felt her first pains. At this time I had developed a better “husband image” and proceeded with arrangements with more method and less excitement than when Jerry was born twenty-seven months previously. I summoned Dr. Stanley Love, son of the man who delivered Jerry, and he arrived with greater alacrity than did his father. It was a good thing he did because Nell was in labor but little more than an hour when our baby girl joined the family circle to be given the previously agreed upon name of Sharon Sue. She weighed ten pounds, and Sister Edwards, who again helped us in this critical time, commented upon what a well-formed and happy baby she was right from the start.

Jerry suffered no emotional trauma because a new life had come to share the attention of his parents. We had carefully prepared him in advance until he experienced the same joyful anticipation as ourselves. When Sue was awake he would stand by her little bed and try to get her to smile at him. It was no great task as she was ready to do so with the least personal attention. Life again became a smoothly functioning routine for all of us except that Nell once more had to include the daily bathing of and attention to a chubby little cherubic being.

## **THE PARTY AND ITS RINGLEADERS**

I sometimes wish I could omit this chapter but to do so would leave a void and create a distorted picture. I will deal with a division and my part in it, although division in the family of God has come to be so abhorrent to me I would like to forget my own unfortunate participation in it. In order to explain what happened I must give you a great deal of background. I do so with the realization it may not make sense to you. If you are patient enough to read it, however, you may be enabled to envision the role of personalities and their political maneuverings in the frightfully-divided Churches of Christ.

Although I did not realize it at the time I was baptized, this historical movement was already fractured into fragments because of the legalistic concept which had captured the minds of its adherents. Divisions do not happen. They are caused. Parties form around men who promote

the separation and insist upon the segregation of their adherents. In the movement growing out of the ideal of restoration as enunciated by Thomas and Alexander Campbell, most of the divisions centered around men of prominence. In almost every instance they were editors of journals. They could use their journals as propaganda media and the United States mails as a distribution method. No party could long endure without an editor and a “loyal paper.”

Isaac Errett wielded influence through *Christian Standard*. David Lipscomb edited *Gospel Advocate*. Austin McGary edited *Firm Foundation*. Daniel Sommer edited *American Christian Review*. The name of this paper was changed at various times to *Octographic Review*, *Apostolic Review*, and back again to *American Christian Review*. It was into the segment of “the disciple brotherhood” represented by the *Apostolic Review* I was introduced when baptized. At the time I did not know there were others. I supposed, in my childhood idealism, that all Christians were together, united in a common bond of faith, and that wherever you saw a meetinghouse with “Church of Christ” over the door you would find a welcome and a hand of fellowship to cheer you.

Daniel Sommer was a unique personality. Born of German immigrant parents, on January 11, 1850, he lived for ninety years, and formed a human bridge between the early restoration pioneers and my own time. He was contemporary with Alexander Campbell for sixteen years, and entered Bethany College four years after the death of its founder. A rather slow, but methodical student, he resolved to master the content of divine revelation and to proclaim it “without fear or favor.” He viewed the spirit of departure from the original design of the scriptures as a sad and doleful commentary on the influence of pride and ambition among the disciples of Christ and began to raise his voice against the innovations he felt would make impossible the “return to the primitive order of things.”

By the time he was forty years of age he was wielding a trenchant pen and a vigorous voice against the employment of “unlawful methods resorted to in order to raise money for religious purposes.” He decried such things as bake sales, rummage sales, plays, performances and festivals. He attacked select choirs, instrumental music, missionary societies, and the “One man imported preacher-pastor to take the oversight of the church.” It was his opposition to the developing clergy system which crystallized his objection to what he referred to as “so-called Christian colleges.” Since David Lipscomb College and Abilene Christian College were both liberal arts schools, teaching nine-tenths secular subjects and one-tenth Bible, he deplored the designation Christian and coined the term “religio-secular institutions” to describe them.

I have in my possession a yellowed sheet listing exactly a hundred errors of “the new digressives” as he labeled defenders of the colleges to distinguish them from the “old digressives” who endorsed instrumental music and missionary societies. But I think his main objection lay in the charge that the colleges were “preacher factories,” taking “beardless youths” whose chief claim to fame was “a gift of gab” and who, after receiving a certain amount of polish and a degree, could hire themselves out by the year to minister to churches for a set fee. He believed such a system would make the churches dependent upon hirelings, and instead of developing a well-trained militia, would so weaken the saints they would have to secure mercenaries to defend themselves against assaults of the enemy.

So formidable was his attack that before 1890 it was decided to “call the hand” of “the digressives” and fling down the gauntlet. The place chosen was the Sand Creek meetinghouse, a rural setting but a few miles from Windsor, Illinois. Here each year huge audiences gathered for a homecoming. A special train ran from Chicago, picking up people enroute. Several thousand gathered for the famous weekend. On August 17, 1889 Daniel Sommer stood up to read a document he had written. He called it “An Address and Declaration” which was a take-off on “The Declaration and Address” of Thomas Campbell penned exactly eighty years before.

It was a protest against “objectionable and unauthorized things taught and practiced in many congregations.” It listed four specific “corrupt practices.” Instrumental music was not one of them. The thesis closed with these words: “All such that are guilty of teaching, or allowing and practicing the many innovations and corruptions to which we have referred, and after being admonished, and having had sufficient time for reflection, if they do not turn away from such abominations, that we cannot and will not regard them as brethren.”

From now on the die was cast. Although the missionary society had been organized fifty years before, and instrumental music introduced forty years before, for the first time they became an open and formal test of fellowship. Representatives from five congregations affixed their signatures, not realizing that in so doing they were formulating a creed by which brotherhood was to be reckoned. A rash of court suits broke out to secure the property and in many of these Brother Sommer was called to act as a witness and testify against what he called “modern schoolmen.”

Hardly had some degree of calm been restored by mutual exclusiveness, when those who deplored the use of the instrument were plunged into another bitter contest. This time the point of contention was “the religio-secular college.” The Western Bible and Literary College had been planted at Odessa, Missouri and since there was strong opposition to it by many congregations in the area two debates were arranged between B.F. Rhodes and Daniel Sommer. These were held at Odessa and Hale, Missouri. As a result, J.N. Armstrong, who was president of the school, challenged Brother Sommer to a written examination of the issue.

Twenty essays were presented by each writer in a debate which began on March 15, 1907 and carried over into the year I was born. The written discussion was marked with bitterness and interspersed with accusations and counter-accusations. On page 299, Brother Sommer wrote: “About six years ago I began, with much reluctance, to oppose a certain class of colleges, for they had been projected by men whom I supposed to be my brethren. But I have tested six of them, and have proved them to be reckless of truth, on the college question, and slanderers of me personally. As a result I cannot regard them as brethren, and do not so designate them except through force of habit in form of expression.”

In closing his part of the discussion, Brother Armstrong said: “He is trying to divide a people who are as nearly one in doctrine as it is possible for true, loyal hearts to be; a people who are one on every question of religion save in their misunderstandings of the teachings of Christ .... Could he do it, brother Sommer would lead the *Octographic Review* readers, a small company compared to the great body of disciples that advocate the schools, to reject as Christians this body of disciples, notwithstanding it stands with the *Octographic Review* on nearly every other

question discussed in the Church of God. Following such a principle every preacher in the Church would build up his individual sect.”

At the time I was convinced that “the *Octographic Review* family” was the body of Christ to the exclusion of all others. There were real problems. Any party dominated by a strong personality, regardless of the sincerity of that person, treads a narrow line and walks on thin ice. The publishers of the *Apostolic Review* could wield a powerful influence on men and congregations and did so. Division is a natural result of such an arrangement. In Long Beach, California, men who were powerful preachers came under suspicion – A.M. Morris, W.P. Reedy, Ralph C. Yadon, Stephen and Silas Settle. Charges were preferred and a disgraceful scene enacted in the Long Beach meetinghouse where rival factions held meetings simultaneously and tried to “sing each other down.”

The “brethren out west” as they came to be known, started their own paper, a rival journal to “the Review,” and those who supported the latter regarded the other as traitors. They were referred to as “the Long Beach element” or “the Morris faction.” The charge against them was that they had “gone soft on the pastor system” and were hiring preachers at a stipulated salary to take over the pulpits. Men who had been regarded as “faithful” for years were suddenly branded and no longer called for meetings.

To complicate matters further, trouble began to surface in the Sommer family, not a new thing. Because one could not get a “clergy certificate” for reduced rates on the railroads if he derived part of his income from the sale of books or from editing a paper, Daniel Sommer placed the editorship of the paper in the hands of his wife. Her name appeared on the masthead for years – Mrs. K.W. Sommer, Editor. She did not take her position lightly and when her husband became involved in a church trouble in the west she cut him out of the paper and refused to print his articles. “There was no small stir,” as the inspired writer would phrase it.

Even before that happened, D. Austen, a son who resented having been left off of the family editorial staff, started his own paper which he designated the *Macedonian Call*. In it he frequently slated articles at the *Review* and when his mother died, and his two brothers and one sister (Chester, Allen and Bessie) took over, he increased his attacks. Because he was traveling much of the time as a preacher he found an opportunity to sow the seeds of doubt about the moral, spiritual and scriptural soundness of his brothers, and a great many long-time readers became suspicious. They watched the paper carefully for indications of a trend away from the traditional views. In 1932 they thought they had found such indications.

The June 21, 1932 issue carried an article simply signed “Review Publishers” and entitled “Can’t We Agree on Something?” It began with the words, “To those of the Churches of Christ who desire a plan for Unity, we submit the following for your consideration.” Fifteen points which had been controversial were discussed. The document proposed that colleges, orphan homes, and societies be disassociated from congregational relationships and maintained by individuals. “The Church Contribution is not for that purpose.” It suggested that the “Church Contribution” be used for “spreading the Gospel and taking care of the poor.”



Each congregation would decide for itself how much preaching or mutual edification it would have. Bible classes were not to be organized into separate departments, and those who opposed them could stay away from them without censure. Actually, the statement was somewhat innocuous and tame when looked at in retrospect, but it became explosive in the atmosphere in which it was launched. No sooner did it hit the mail than D. Austen Sommer zeroed in upon it and called for all “loyalists” to rally round the flag to do or die for the cause we loved.

Although the publishers of the *Review* replied to the attack by saying it was simply a rough draft of suggestions intended to encourage a restudy of our divided state with a hope of alleviating it, the opposers (of whom I was one of the most vocal) labeled it a written creed. The description of it by the publishers gave us a handle and we called it “The Rough Draft” and this made it possible to identify the supporters and the denouncers of it. Daniel Sommer disclaimed any knowledge of the composition of the document but came to its defense when he became aware of the rabid opposition.

His intervention did not help. D. Austen Sommer said his father was in his dotage and had become soft on the issues because of his age. He pointed out that Alexander Campbell had done the same thing with the missionary society, but Daniel reminded everyone that when Campbell embraced the society he was the same age as D. Austen. Everywhere there were cries that the *Review* had betrayed the church and “let down the bars so the college preachers could come in and wreck everything, including the faith.”

I was twenty-four years old when the storm broke and in my partisan enthusiasm was the one who accepted the challenge of the 82 year old Daniel to debate the issue. Fortunately, the debate did not materialize, but in our correspondence he expressed his sadness that I manifested so much zeal with so little knowledge. He also told me he had hoped his mantle would fall on my shoulders, and that he had earlier thought of Austen as his successor, but was disappointed that he had proven himself to be “a splinter off the butt-cut of humanity.”

The situation of the Sommer family became more intense. All communication between D. Austen and the others broke down. Meanwhile the cry was raised among us to force every preacher to take a stand on the “Rough Draft” and to publicly declare himself. In many articles the quotation appeared, “Mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which you have learned.” In others we were reminded, “If any man come and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, and neither bid him Godspeed.”

With such a spirit rampant among us, division became inevitable. Separation was regarded as the will of God. Maintenance of purity of doctrine by segregation from the compromisers was urged upon every side. The agitation for a mass meeting to be held in a central location to deal with the question became almost universal. There were no doubt some cool heads who cautioned care but they were in the minority and they were shouted down. We wanted action. It was time to show your colors, to put up or shut up! The day for deliberation was past. I think I was one of the ringleaders and I stayed in the thick of the fray by letters and articles. Parties must have “issues” to survive and in the absence of real ones they create their own!

## ST. LOUIS, HERE WE COME!

The stage was set for a gathering of preachers and other interested persons to discuss what steps should be taken to unite our forces against the “Rough Draft.” Kansas City was a central location. An invitation was extended by the elders at 26th and Spruce Streets to use their facilities. W.E. Ballenger, a widely recognized preacher and a member of the congregation presided over most of the meetings. Man after man mounted the platform to speak against “the departure from the faith” of the *Review* publishers.

It was generally agreed the *Review* was gone. The time had come to look elsewhere for “brotherhood leadership.” Since the *Macedonian Call* was already being published and D. Austen Sommer had stood firm against his brothers we decided to back his journalistic effort. Those who continued to write for or report through the columns of the *Review* would be regarded as having departed from the faith. A document entitled “The Rough Draft – Its Sponsors – Also Its Outworkings – Why We Are Against It” was drawn up by D. Austen Sommer. A great many men signed it. Like John Hancock, I wrote my name big and bold. I also collaborated with Brother Sommer in drawing up another paper analyzing “the Rough Draft” and urging all who loved the Lord to lift up their voices against it.

Our action served to create another schism in an already divided movement. It also doomed the exclusivistic Sommer faction to death. Our actions were injudicious and our reactions unwarranted. I was wrong in what I did. A lot of things I wrote and said in the time of tension were absurd. I do not try to excuse them on the basis of youthful immaturity. I was sectarian in attitude and filled with pharisaic pride. I helped to create another arrogant and hostile party even though I acted in all good conscience. That I became a recognized leader in it was a tribute to my dogmatism and aggressiveness. I am ashamed of both of them. They only added to the sin.

If we had regarded the so-called “Rough Draft” as merely another newspaper article and allowed people to read it for themselves without trying to inject political prejudice into their minds it would not have caused a ripple. But when we took up our cudgels and attempted to beat brethren into submission we made a grievous error. It was a sin to call a general meeting in Kansas City for the purpose which prompted it. And it was a sin to create another party among those in the undivided Christ. That it fell my lot to become a “chief of sinners” in promoting the resultant mess is no comfort.

Legalistic sects secure no peace by division. So long as the spirit which prompted and encouraged the division remains, they only lay the groundwork for additional strife. Before it was all over Brother D. Austen Sommer, motivated by fear of the growing popularity of *Mission Messenger* which I published, became increasingly hostile to my work and refused to even meet with me to effect a reconciliation. When I laid my whole sectarian spirit down before the Conqueror of my person and heart, some of the brethren with whom I had long been associated as a champion, took up arms against me, regarding me as a Benedict Arnold or a Judas Iscariot. They were acting as sincerely as I had acted when I engaged in the same tactics and they were employing toward me the methods I had taught them by precept and example. One should not complain too much if he is fed from a spoon he polished himself. But there is something wrong

about a system which breeds jealousy and envy instead of love, and which forces us to reject those who grow closer to Jesus, while accepting those who stagnate or wither on the vine!

Our new association flourished. Some of the most outstanding preachers of the gospel in the 1930's were a part of it. They were men who knew the Book and were powerful proclaimers of its message. There was no dearth of congregations and they were scattered from the Atlantic to the Pacific. In Missouri alone there were 120 congregations with which we could labor. Our cause was relatively strong in Indiana, Illinois and Ohio. We were now "the faithful church" as distinguished from the "Rough Drafters." We were separated from each other by a newspaper article and the interpretation we placed upon its value. It is of such fragile cobwebs that sects are born with the strands being reinforced by human pride, fear and stubbornness.

It was during this period I was called upon to make a decision which would affect the remainder of my life. I went to St. Louis to conduct meetings for the brethren who met at 7121 Manchester Avenue. There were two meetings, each of two weeks duration. The first was in the autumn of 1934, and there was such an ingathering of souls that, after the meeting ended the brethren had to remodel the building and install a balcony to take care of the increased attendance. While I was there the leaders approached me about moving to the city which was known as "The Gateway to the West." They wanted me to labor with them by personal visitation to build up the cause. I promised to think about it but the bigness and noise of the city with its frightening influence had little appeal to me.

During the next two years the labors in Nevada and the harvest field were very satisfying and rewarding. Our children were growing and the relationship with the saints was pleasant and encouraging. In spite of this the suggestion planted by the brethren in St. Louis was beginning to appeal to my sense of purpose.

The congregation in St. Louis began with five women who had moved to the city from rural areas. The leading light was Bertha Robinson who came from north Missouri. With the help of her sister Mabel she began the work. Nell and I are agreed that, of all the people we have ever met, Bertha Robinson was the most saintly. Neither she nor her sister ever married, but both were truly wedded to the Lord and to Him gave their unstinted devotion. They did home baking for a select clientele and were famous for their cakes and cookies which graced many parties given by the socially elite.

When they moved to the city they never missed a Lord's Day of remembrance of Jesus. They set the Lord's Table in their home and were led to find three other sisters who had gone to the city and who met with them. Realizing that many would not meet in a home they decided to rent an upstairs hall on Vandeventer Avenue. They placed a modest advertisement in the classified section of the Saint Louis papers, alternating in the three news journals. Every Sunday Bertha prepared the items for the Lord's Supper and carried them on the streetcar to the meeting site. Here the five women sang hymns, prayed, studied the Word, and encouraged one another in the Lord. For weeks they petitioned God to send them a brother who could help by conducting the meetings.

The first man to attend was Edward Burtchinger, a Swiss gardener and yard man who had been brought to the United States to care for the grounds of a large estate. He was more of a problem than a help. He could not do anything in the public meetings and did not believe the women should. Bertha Robinson questioned him about every item in turn, but he could not sing, would not teach, and contributed only his presence and objections. The women, confronted with the dilemma of offending God or man, quickly reached a decision. They continued to carry on the meetings as before. Brother Burtchinger still attended.

The first real break came when Robert Morrow moved to the city from near Dixon, Missouri, having been reared in the faith in a rural congregation where all participated, he was capable of edifying and exhorting. With his advent others soon followed. The little group multiplied in number until they decided to purchase a place of their own. They soon learned of the meetinghouse at 7121 Manchester, located one block from the city limits, and with excellent trolley service from all sections of the city. This was an important consideration in a day when few families owned automobiles.

I first spoke for the brethren there when I was still a “boy preacher” and was passing through the city enroute to a meeting in the Lead Belt area. When I came back in 1934, which was eleven years later, I was 26 years old. The congregation was growing in numbers and in knowledge of the truth. There was an array of talent and I have seldom seen such a wealth of teaching and speaking ability. Robert Morrow lived next door to the meetinghouse and acted as a wise counselor. He was aided by a number of brethren who had gravitated to the city from Missouri and Illinois – Wilson, Thompson, Bilyeu, Janes, Smith, Baldwin, and many others, capable proclaimers of the Word. The greatest asset, however, was the number of young married couples, and the alert and spiritually aggressive young people, many of them still in high school.

The brethren wanted me to come for two reasons. First, they held the concept that congregations should be small and active, keeping every member occupied and busy in spiritual things. They wanted me to train every man to function in whatever capacity he could, and when the congregation attained to approximately 150 in regular attendance, take 30 or 40 and plant them as a nucleus in a new locality. They spoke of moving into the world by colonization, with the idea that the original congregation would supply the new group whatever was necessary until they could stand on their own feet.

As we discussed it, they used the illustration of a strawberry plant which puts out runners on all sides and starts new plants, until eventually a garden plot is covered and the fruit is abundant. The idea was not to erect huge material buildings, but to keep them small, and when the congregation outgrew the facilities, to plant a new one rather than to “tear down the barns and build greater.” Repeatedly it was said that when bees fill a hive they swarm and the number of hives increase as a result. It was believed that so long as the brethren could maintain a family feeling, visiting one another in their homes and in hospitals, all sharing together at picnics and basket dinners, there would be less loss by attrition and desertion.

All of the men, some of whom were skilled in business and held trusted executive positions, felt that the same principles which were being used to weld together into a team the workers in industry, could be applied in modified form to build a congregation into a fighting unit in the

army of the Lord. As they outlined it, my work as an evangelist, would be to go with each new group that was planted, remaining to teach and train them until they could function on their own. When bishops had been developed, selected by the saints, and ordained to function, my work in that congregation would end. I would then be free to go elsewhere and duplicate the process.

There was a general consensus that nothing could weaken a congregation quite so much as hiring a man to do the work which God ordained for all the members, and while rapid numerical growth would be experienced by such a method, it would amount to increasing the number of weak and dependent members whose trust was more in man than in God. My task would be with new congregations where I would work myself out by working others in.

Secondly, the brethren felt that my knowledge and insights, which they greatly over-estimated, should be made available on a wider scale so that young men could be imbued with a desire to take the Good News to a world of suffering mankind and could be trained for more effective service in their communities. It was proposed that I teach an annual Bible Study to which men and women might come without charge for enrollment or tuition. In connection with such a study I would teach public speaking, vocabulary expansion and word studies, employing the Bible as the only textbook.

The prospect was appealing since many congregations had young people of promise who were anxious to learn the word of God more perfectly. It appeared to be an opportunity to strengthen the future potential leadership of the churches. I had already decided I would like to have our children reared in a large city environment where they could have cultural benefits not available in a more restricted area. St. Louis was a historic spot which attracted men and women seeking jobs, from every section of the Missouri Ozarks, as well as from states like Arkansas, Kentucky and Tennessee.

What I did not realize at the time was that we were considering becoming a part of the restless current flowing from rural areas to urban centers and that we would be on the cutting-edge of a tremendous national transformation which would eventually upset and destroy many of the traditions we had cherished. It seemed wise to move because I could better promote the cause to which I was dedicated. As I talked with the brethren the question of support arose. I expressed my opposition to making a contract or having agreement on a fixed salary. I told them I was willing to come and they could provide for my needs as they saw fit. One of them said, "You make the move and we promise you we will not allow Nell and the children to starve." It was the only financial agreement we ever had.

In years to come as they attempted to give me increasing amounts I repeatedly refused them accepting only what was essential to meet our immediate needs. When they insisted on exceeding this, Nell and I simply returned it to the congregation with our thanks. I felt that if I took more than our need required, God would cease to bless us. I did not want to become a "peddler of the gospel." I wanted to share what I had to offer and I was content for the brethren to "share with him that teacheth in all good things."

I suspect now that my decision to move was a traumatic experience for Nell but if it was she kept it in her heart. We liked Nevada. We liked our simple house. We loved the people very deeply.

It was heartbreaking to leave them. Many of the older ones wept, thinking they would see our faces no more. They were especially reluctant to give up Jerry and Sue and imagined all sorts of dire things which would happen to them in the city. The whole congregation felt a kind of proprietary interest in the children.

Our plans to move were complicated somewhat by the fact that I was to become involved in my first major debate. I had previously engaged in skirmishes of a local nature and had probably become too fond of this kind of thing. I had gone looking for “trouble” at tent meetings of various kinds and had gloried in the fact that sometimes the Pentecostals had threatened to call the police and have me arrested.

Now I was to meet Rue Porter, a brother of renown, especially in southern Missouri and Arkansas. He was a skillful tactician on the forensic platform. Men who knew him well and who were on his side, predicted he would skin me alive and hang my pelt on the barn door. I regarded all such prophecies as a part of the “psyching process” practiced on opponents. But since this was the beginning of numerous battles I will give a fuller account in my next chapter.

## 3. Debates at Home - Fellowship Abroad

### THE DEBATING YEARS BEGIN

The little town of Ozark is the county seat of Christian County, Missouri. It is built around the courthouse square, and is a lovely and peaceful community except when a trial of note takes place in the courtroom. Perhaps the most exciting of such events was when the leader of the "Bald Knobbers" was sentenced to death a number of years ago. Bald Knobbers were a lawless element ruling the hill country by threats and violence. They took their name from the rock-strewn treeless crests of hills where they hung their signal lanterns when getting ready for a foray. When the law finally caught up with them, the leader was sentenced to "hang by the neck until dead" and the sentence was carried out on an open scaffold erected in the courtyard. It attracted about the largest crowd ever seen in Ozark.

It was in Ozark I debated Rue Porter four nights, March 23-26, 1937. The debate resulted from a chain of circumstances. The congregation at Ozark had only one elder left, Charles F. Boyd, a respected attorney, and for a number of years the County Superintendent of Schools. In 1933, while I was in a meeting at Nixa, he arranged for me to conduct a similar meeting at Ozark the following year. As the date for the meeting was approaching he was visited by several members of the congregation who had recently moved into the area and who demanded that he cancel it. They objected that I was not a "loyal preacher," being an opponent of orphan homes and colleges created and maintained by the brethren. They did not want their names associated with that of an "anti." Brother Boyd firmly insisted he would not dispense with the meeting purely on the basis of their protests.

As time for the meeting drew near a number of them walked out and formed a rival congregation which began meeting in the Klepper Funeral Home. I conducted the meeting for which I had been scheduled, and while I was there announcements were posted about town to the effect that Rue Porter, of Neosho, Missouri would hold a meeting at the other place. Meanwhile I received a letter from Elton Abernathy who had graduated from Abilene Christian College and was associated with the Speech Department of the University of Iowa, suggesting that we discuss the whole question of "extra institutions" at Springfield, Missouri. He proposed a public debate there during the Christmas holidays of 1936.

I accepted at once and secured the promise of wholehearted cooperation from the brethren in Springfield who opposed the institutionalizing of the teaching and charitable functions of the body of Christ. While I was preparing for the encounter I received a letter from Brother Abernathy bowing out of the discussion and apologizing for even suggesting it. The brethren whom he purposed to represent had notified him they did not want these matters discussed in their area and would vigorously oppose such a debate. It was at this time word was conveyed to me that Brother Porter had publicly stated in a meeting at Ozark, held under the auspices of the brethren who were meeting in the Klepper Funeral Home, that we did not have a man among us who would dare to stand on the same platform with him and debate these matters.

I immediately wrote to him and told him I was picking up the gauntlet he had flung down and would gladly engage in a discussion with him. We agreed upon all of the details without lengthy correspondence. The Works Progress Administration had erected a lovely large Community Hall in the center of Ozark and we decided to use its spacious auditorium. There was no other place large enough to accommodate the audience. Excitement ran high and almost a thousand people crowded into the little town each night for the event.

Although I had never met Brother Porter, I knew a great deal about him and all of it was good. He was in the generation preceding mine, being twenty years older than myself. He was approaching his forty-eighth birthday, and I was less than two months away from my twenty-ninth. During the debate he constantly referred to me as “the boy.” Brother Porter was one of a special class of preachers produced by the Churches of Christ in Arkansas and the Missouri Ozarks during that era. Many of these had no college training, but they knew the text of the Bible so thoroughly they could reel off whole chapters of it in one sermon, giving “book, chapter and verse” for every point of emphasis as they constantly reminded the audience.

They made great sacrifices of time and comfort, going often into remote rural areas for meetings, and being away from home for weeks on end. They held meetings in schoolhouses, brush arbors, and in the open air, as well as in little white meetinghouses. Often they were underpaid, sometimes taking a side of bacon, a gallon of sorghum molasses, or garden produce as part of their remuneration. Many of them gratified their hearers by “skinning the sects” and nothing pleased them more than to goad the Baptists into a free-for-all, and a verbal tug of war! Of course there were Baptists who loved it also, and men like Ben M. Bogard of the Landmark Missionary Baptist Church held there was no closed season on Campbellites. These country preachers on both sides were as “keen as a briar” and each one knew exactly what his opponent would say in reply to his arguments.

When Brother Porter and I met he had already engaged in twenty-five debates, all but one with Baptist preachers. He chose as his moderator, Joe Blue, another well-known hill country preacher and debater. I selected as my moderator W.G. Roberts. He was always ready to tangle with anyone in debate but specialized on Mormons. His favorite proposition was: “Resolved that Joseph Smith was a polygamist, a thief and a liar.” He was ready to affirm it at the drop of a hat and if no one dropped a hat, he would throw down his own and affirm it anyhow.

My initial meeting with Brother Porter was when I shook hands with him on the platform the first night. In appearance he reminded me of Abraham Lincoln. His was the first affirmative, so he would both open and close the debate. The proposition he affirmed read: “The erection and maintenance of orphans homes, such as Tipton Orphans Home, Southern Christian Home, and others of like character, for the purpose of housing and otherwise caring for orphan children, is authorized by the New Testament scriptures.” When the hour arrived to begin Brother Blue called on Brother H.H. Kiestenkamp of Rolla, Missouri to lead in prayer. Each side always called on a visitor favorable to their position. Neither side recognized an opposing preacher as worthy to talk to the Father.

After his preliminary remarks during which Brother Porter defined the terms of his proposition, he turned to the scriptures which he insisted authorized the building and maintenance of orphan



homes. They were James 1:27, Ephesians 2:10, Galatians 4:18, Hebrews 13:16, and Romans 12:13. He declared that James 1:27 “will be the rallying ground and the center of the controversy, as the place around which every argument I shall make will be built. I propose to make but one argument on this entire proposition. One argument!”

My reply will be obvious to the reader, and I made it! When we are to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, Brother Porter denied that the word “go” included a missionary society. By the same kind of reasoning, when we are told to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, I denied that the word “visit” included a charitable organization or society. Moreover James 1:27 not only enjoins one to visit the fatherless but to keep himself unspotted from the world. I asked Brother Porter what kind of an organization he would recommend for the last half of the verse.

The reporter for the Springfield newspaper who covered the event did a lengthy write-up after the first night. It featured the debate on the front page with headlines and carried over to the back page in a kind of blow-by-blow account. The cartoonist who accompanied the reporter did caricatures of both debaters. As a result of the publicity the feeling was a little more intense the second night. As I pressed my respondent, Brother Blue interposed several times while I was speaking. Brother Porter and I never “lost our cool” but some in the audience were not so calm. After the discussion for that evening was ended the people refused to leave. They stood about in small groups assessing the merits of the speeches. An elder passing by one small knot of brethren, overheard one remark, “That Ketcherside ought to be taken out and tied to a tree and whipped.”

On the third night it was my turn to lead out. The proposition read: “The erection and maintenance of schools or colleges, such as Abilene Christian College, David Lipscomb College, and others of like character, for the purpose of teaching the Bible and other branches of learning in connection, is contrary to the New Testament, and should be opposed as an innovation in the church.” My moderator collaborated with Brother Blue in urging the hearers to leave the debating to the men on the platform and not to “get warm under the collar” as some did the night before. He called upon D. Austen Sommer to lead the prayer and then introduced me for the first affirmative.

After defining my terms in formal fashion I said, “I shall demonstrate that the Bible College is the introduction of something new into the Church of Jesus Christ and should be regarded as something not apostolic, and therefore, contrary to the New Testament Scripture.” I then proceeded with a chain of scriptural passages which had about as much bearing on my theme as the ones cited by Brother Porter did on his. I reinforced my charges with quotations from Alexander Campbell, J.N. Armstrong, David Lipscomb, the Freed-Hardeman College Bulletin and the Abilene Christian College Bulletin. Some of these were a little careless and unguarded in their statements and played right into my hands. I had researched them meticulously and had them indexed like a Philadelphia lawyer.

Brother Porter was indeed a worthy respondent. He placed the questions we were discussing in the realm of opinion, saying, “These are questions of an individual nature. They are for the Christian to decide as an individual. It is a matter of opinion not a matter of law. No, sir, it isn’t

a matter of law.” His position was that a teacher in one of the schools was simply an individual exercising his right and duty to teach the Bible as he would in the home or on the street. Brother Porter told who did not own the schools, but he never told who did.

When the fourth night of discussion was ending and time was called on Brother Porter, he said, “Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, the debate is over. May God bless every one of you. Carl, I want to shake your hand as a manifestation of my friendliness toward you. I love you, and will be your friend for as long as we live.”

I replied, “Thank you! I appreciate greatly the opportunity of discussing these issues with you, and I hope the time will come when all of God’s people may be one in Christ.” When I said it, I knew there would never be oneness until Brother Porter and all who stood with him reached the conclusion that I was right and they were wrong, and came to do obeisance and confess their error for endorsing such things as the orphan homes and Christian colleges.

But my respect for Brother Porter, already great, increased with the passing of the years. When he grew old and was unable to continue in active labor in the vineyard because of his infirmities, an appeal for financial assistance was made to pay for his heavy doctor and hospital expenditure. Nell and I wrote him about our prayers on his behalf which were fervent and sent a check to help in his time of distress. His reply was gentle and gracious, and when I heard that he had been summoned to meet the Lord I felt a real sense of personal loss. I expect to meet him some day in a land where there will be no further challenges and fellowship will not be judged upon the basis of earthly knowledge or of human conformity.

I doubt that the debate changed many minds. People left with the same prejudices they had when they came. The same congregations remain in Ozark although four decades have come and gone and most of the principals in the original cleavage are asleep with their fathers. The division has taken on new dimensions with the passing of time. It has solidified and crystallized. There is little remembrance that the saints once ate together at a common table.

But the discussion launched me as a debater in a factional orbit. I think now that I thought more highly of myself than I ought to have thought. This feeling was no doubt enhanced by the fact that congregations with whom I had labored in Springfield, Saint Louis and Kansas City publicly challenged Brother Porter to meet me in their cities. He at first indicated he would but then declined to do so. This stimulated my unholy egotism, especially when I learned from a reliable source that several preachers told Brother Porter that if he debated the issues with me in these centers he would set the cause back fifty years.

I confess with some little regret, and even a sense of shame, that I delighted in such confrontations. I liked being the “gun-toter” for a small party and taking on the best that the big “main-line” churches had to offer. Before I became convinced of the detrimentality of debates to the cause for which Jesus died I debated most of the recognized gladiators of that era – G.C. Brewer, G.K. Wallace, Sterl Watson, W.L. Totty, Flavil Colley, and others.

We were lawyers for the prosecution seeking to interpret as a legalistic code the revelation of God given in love. All of us, without realizing it, were casuists, justifying what we did and

condemning what others did, and doing so arbitrarily. We were defending a pattern which was not there and seeking to impose a binding dogmatism which God did not impart. But we had to go through this stage. It was a part of the maturing process for a movement seeking for status in a world made up of ancient religious forms which were hallowed and respected because of their age. We could, like children, call attention to our presence by fighting one another. I suspect the world looked on with amusement at our antics. I now look at them the same way!

### **“HE BEING DEAD, YET SPEAKETH”**

I am writing this chapter on the forty-eighth anniversary of our wedding. I am doing so because it is also the thirty-ninth anniversary of our arrival in Saint Louis. Nell and I had come to the city a few weeks before and rented a modest cottage on Page Avenue, and then returned to Nevada to go through the traumatic experience of closing out one phase of our earthly sojourn. By the afternoon of June 23, 1937, the moving van backed out of our graveled driveway and started the journey across the state. Soon after, we followed in our automobile, and after staying all night at a motel enroute, arrived at our new home the next morning to find the movers there awaiting our coming.

Almost immediately we were caught up in the work of the congregations. I use the word in the plural because the brethren had decided not to wait our arrival to plant another community of believers. About fifty of them banded together and purchased a modest meetinghouse at 5344 Lillian Avenue, in the northern part of the city. A great many of the most talented brethren were associated with the new effort, but there were men of promise remaining with the original congregation, some of them still quite young. The older congregation held its midweek meeting on Wednesday night and the new one on Thursday night. On each of those nights brethren from both places were together exploring the Word. On Sunday nights there was an exchange of speakers and it was as if one large family, living in two houses, met together for visitation and sharing.

The Thompson and Bilyeu families bought a sizeable acreage in the beautiful and fertile Florissant Valley, and Brother Leonard Bilyeu developed five acres as a kind of playground for the brethren. Every fourth of July, all of the brethren from congregations on both sides of the Mississippi River gathered for a day of physical relaxation and spiritual uplift, and in late autumn all returned again for a wiener roast and a time of rejoicing in the presence of one another. There was a closeness among the families such as is seldom seen, and although rigid discipline was maintained in the congregations, it was not heavy-handed and authoritarian.

I began at once a door-to-door visitation in the area adjacent to the Manchester site, and soon a number of brethren joined together to place an invitation in every home in a carefully mapped-out territory. Meanwhile the brethren in the northern part of the city were knocking on fifteen hundred doors, and when I was free I went to work with them, helping to take a religious census which became a valuable aid in our future endeavors. Both congregations began to grow numerically and the fruit of hard work and fervent prayers could be seen. I do not recall ever seeing a more makeshift baptistry than the one at Manchester Avenue. It consisted of a steel stock tank installed beneath the floor of the speaker's platform, but scores of people were immersed into Christ and no one ever made a complaint about the inconvenience.

Before the first year was ended it became apparent that we were ready for the second phase of our plan. We had two congregations functioning without a special minister and with a leadership which knew how to involve the membership in active participation. A different speaker delivered a message of edification and exhortation each Sunday morning and evening, and the classes at midweek meetings were taught by various brethren who made diligent preparation. Open expression of different views was encouraged in the studies, and although firm opinions were set forth, I do not recall any rudeness or imposition. I took my turn in speaking, but most of the time I listened and learned from clothing salesmen, production line workers, bookkeepers, night watchmen, bakers and others. All of them drew upon incidents in their own lives to illustrate the message for the rest of us and we were thus permitted to hear a great many modern parables.

It was now time for us to share our life in the Lord on a wider basis. The brethren met for several lengthy sessions to talk about and plan the approach we should take in helping to develop the talents and abilities of those who were eager to prepare themselves for greater service. At the outset it was agreed that we would not organize anything. I would simply teach the Word of God with the Bible as our only textbook. The studies would be made available to any person, regardless of age, who wanted to come. There would be no tuition or charges of any kind. We would have a six-weeks course in the winter, on the same schedule as the public schools, starting at 9:00 a.m. and closing at 4:00 p.m. Each week there would be two night sessions of two hours each. One of these would be held at 7121 Manchester Avenue, the other at 5344 Lillian Avenue. All day classes would be at the Manchester Avenue address because of the accessibility to modestly priced eating places in the area.

Members who wished to do so would open up their homes and rent sleeping quarters to students. Other students would find such facilities in private homes near the place of study. This was never a problem and as time went on many of the students made a profound spiritual impact upon the homes where they rented rooms. One day each week the sisters from each congregation would bring home-cooked food at noon and serve it in the basement to all who wished to partake. It was expected that on these two days there would be sufficient food remaining so the out-of-town students could eat again that evening. So many persons were directly involved that the congregations were alive and active and all were sharing in a great learning experience.

A good many preaching brethren attended, and a number of young men and women who had just graduated from high school came to study before entering college or university. From the outset it was agreed we would not try to develop a certain class of brethren. We were afraid this would lead to a clerical caste. We decided to abide by the dictum of Benjamin Franklin, the gospel preacher, who said, "Teach the whole Bible to the whole church, and the leadership will rise to the top as cream rises on the milk." Ten congregations in the area opened their pulpits every Sunday to men who were attending, and thus heard a different speaker every Sunday morning and night. Some of these never intended to become evangelists, but many of them did become elders at a later date.

It soon became apparent that we could extend the period of intensive study and we doubled the time to three months. We did a great many interesting things together although the class grew to

approximately one hundred. Every Thanksgiving Day we studied until noon and then went to a nearby Masonic Temple where we had rented a huge dining hall for the occasion. We had a basket dinner followed by a program of edification in the afternoon at which anyone could speak briefly about what was upon his heart.

When we studied about the death of Joseph and the embalming of his body, I took the whole class for an afternoon at the beautiful art museum. I had been accorded the privilege of lecturing on Egyptology in the “mummy room” and frequently the talk on the technique of embalming, made especially vivid by the sarcophagus on display, attracted a number of tourists and visitors who thought it was a regular feature presented by museum personnel. When we reached Exodus and Leviticus, we went on Friday night at sunset to Temple Israel where we occasionally outnumbered the Jewish worshipers at the first Sabbath service. I became so well acquainted with the senior rabbi, Dr. Ferdinand M. Isserman, that he frequently announced, “We have Dr. Ketcherside and numerous of his disciples with us tonight, and after the blessing of the Torah I am going to request that he come forward and bring us a greeting.” I never failed to express our gratitude to the Jews present because their fathers had guarded the sacred oracles and given us the Messiah to sit upon David’s throne.

Every passing month in Saint Louis brought new triumphs of the Spirit, but there was an air of foreboding over the country which aroused fear and unrest in the hearts of the people. The name of Adolf Hitler began to appear on the front page of the newspaper every day. In March 1938 the German regime annexed Austria. In September goose-stepping troops occupied the Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia. In the same month Neville Chamberlain, prime minister of Great Britain, sought to halt further inroads by signing the Munich Pact, representing a policy of abject appeasement. Hitler continued his ruthless acts of aggression and Chamberlain was forced to declare war on Germany on September 3, 1939.

Meanwhile we continued with “business as usual” in Saint Louis, although most of us realized that the United States would become actively involved. As President Roosevelt began to step up the preparedness program people began to move to the city, attracted by jobs and higher wages. The meetinghouses were filled on Sunday. The contributions grew perceptibly. Meanwhile, when Germany invaded Norway and the British forces were defeated, Chamberlain gave way to Winston Churchill, who told the British people, “I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears, and sweat.”

All over the country, factories began to hum with intensified acceleration. Munitions manufacturing plants worked around the clock. Bombing planes were turned out with the precision of clockwork. Great army camps began to spring up in strategic locations, and it was at one of these posts my father became the first civilian casualty of World War Two, losing his life on October 25, 1941. He had hired on as a carpenter supervisor at the largest wage he had ever drawn in his life. He had dreams of paying off his debts in a very few weeks. For the first time in his life he would be free of the burden of owing money to others. He told my mother that as soon as he made enough the two of them would take a vacation and return to the place where she was born and lived as a girl.

He was sent to Neosho, Missouri to do construction work on Camp Crowder, but he was able to work but three days. The heavy autumn rains had fallen for days on end and the field was a quagmire. On the third day after his arrival, my father was working on a high scaffold bolting sections of a huge pre-fabricated dining-hall together near the roof. A shudder went through the structure and those who could leaped from it as it began to collapse. It drove the body of my father four feet into the earth and almost every bone was broken. He survived long enough to whisper his name and that of my mother through the bloody froth bubbling from his lips, and then the spirit fled from the crushed and broken tabernacle.

I went to Neosho to meet my mother and claim the body and we rode back to Topeka together. I think we were numbed by our loss. When the mortuary closed the night before the memorial service was to be held, I asked permission from the mortician to stay for a few minutes. He allowed me to do so, and we were alone for the last time on earth – a boy and his dad. As I looked at him it seemed that he moved. It appeared that his chest raised and lowered as if he were breathing in gently the precious oxygen which we all inhale without thinking about it. But I knew it was fantasy. I would never be able to speak to him again in the flesh. He would never hear me preach again, and I would never hear the good news from his lips. I made him a promise that I would keep the faith until we met. I closed the door softly and walked out into the night.

When we arrived in Saint Louis and I examined the mail there was a postcard from my father. It was written the night before he was killed. He told me how pleased he was to be in a place where there was a congregation which he could help without taking any financial aid. He also told me that he was sorry to have to be away from home and then added a phrase which seemed almost prophetic: “Sometimes we have to be absent from each other so our joy will be greater when we meet again.” I still have the card. At the time when I first saw the old familiar handwriting, I thought, “He being dead, yet speaketh!”

A short time later I wrote an article for a special issue of *Macedonian Call* which was devoted largely to the life and death of my father. I am taking the liberty of sharing with you the first rather lengthy paragraph:

“I stood with bowed head beside an open grave a few weeks ago. The sun had hidden her face, and a gray sky wept tears, as the chill of the autumn afternoon crept into the blood of those who stood to look down upon the mountain of flowers surrounding a simple casket. I stood with my hand upon the shoulder of one of the dearest women on earth to me – my mother, for there before us cold and rigid in death lay her husband and my father. The last song had been sung at the mortuary a short time before, and now a faithful brother in Christ was speaking his final words. Many of those who stood near were wiping away the tears which stole silently and unashamedly down their cheeks. But I could not weep for him who had gone on before. One does not weep for the hero who dies in his struggle for principle, who surrenders his armor to the only enemy strong enough to conquer him – death! I have often wondered as I stood beside other graves as the speaker, just how I would feel when I stood beside one as a mourner. I knew now, and somehow the emotion was different than I had imagined. For mingled with the indescribable pang of regret that I would never hear my dad speak again, there was an almost glorious feeling, an uplifting thought bordering on happiness, that he died triumphant,

uncompromising. I knew now what Paul meant when he said, ‘We sorrow not as others which have no hope.’ The world is emptier today than it has ever been for me, and heaven seems strangely closer than I ever conceived it. But overcoming that feeling of personal loss is the joyful thought that the grave cannot always be victorious over our beloved dead.”

My father had been doing personal work in Riverside, California, going from door to door, soon after Daniel Sommer died. He knocked on the door of one of the elders of a congregation composed chiefly of members from Texas. This man said, a little contemptuously, to my father, “I see where your leader died.” Dad replied, “Yes, and if you will read a little further in the same book, you will see that he rose again.”

### ***MISSION MESSENGER Begins***

I am sure we made a lot of mistakes in the work in Saint Louis. Many of these were the result of attitudes. I can see now that we were quite exclusivistic, the first symptom of the sectarian spirit. It is probable that we could not have done too much to promote unity of the brethren at the time because the climate was not right. Bridges must be built from both sides of the stream. Our approach to unity was quite simple. If everyone else gave up what they thought and joined in with us we would be together. There was no other way because we were the Lord’s people. Our way was “the way that is right and cannot be wrong.” We were no different in this respect than other factions in the area. All of us thought that our group was the one which heaven had established and all recognized the others as apostates and teachers of heresy.

There was a constant open season on proselytizing. We rejoiced when one from another group “learned the way of truth more perfectly” and took his stand with us on “the old Jerusalem gospel,” as we liked to think of our puerile system of traditions and opinions. We were all agreed upon one thing, even if we could not agree upon anything else. Instrumental music had originated with the family of Cain, was perpetuated by Satan, and was the sign and seal of spiritual departure and degradation. The Christian Churches had sold themselves to sin and when one of their members came around us we “Mistered” him while we reluctantly “Brothered” all who opposed the instruments even if we had to do it with our fingers crossed because they were “brothers in error.”

It is obvious now that we had little consciousness of a vital personal relationship with the Lord. We were all affiliated with an institution whose chief men were skilled in legalistic nit-picking and who could “make out a case” for our procedural policy. Righteousness was not so much right standing with the Lord of glory, but standing right on the issues in which we gloried. We were very negative in our attitude toward the Holy Spirit and sought to confine him not so much to a compilation of printed pages, which would have been bad enough, but to our own understanding and interpretation, which was worse. This meant that if the Spirit did not work within the limits in which we worked and to which we assigned him, it was not the Holy Spirit at work at all, but Satan.

Not everything was bad, and we inaugurated some life-touching experiences. Perhaps the period from 1942 to 1947 constituted one of the busiest five years of my whole life. During that time the brethren started the third congregation. Taking about three dozen folk from Manchester

Avenue who lived in the vicinity of Webster Groves, they planted them in a decrepit structure purchased from a defunct Pentecostal group. Emery Smith, who had moved to the city from Salem, Missouri, agreed to look after this group of humble people, and from the start they had “a mind to work.” Brother Smith, who supported himself by hard manual toil at Missouri Bitumen Corporation, spent his spare time training, counseling and strengthening the saints. Because of their relative poverty the congregation at Manchester Avenue supplemented their contributions so they could meet their financial obligations.

Members of the other congregations went from work each evening to labor on the building. The sisters brought the evening meal and served it and there was a thirty minute prayer and praise service every evening while eating the “love snack,” after which all returned to the task to continue until midnight. We grew as a spiritual temple even as the material building became more habitable. On December 18, 1946, the brethren at Manchester Avenue met to discuss the planting of the fourth congregation, and to pray for God to open up an effectual door for the fulfillment of their plans. It is interesting to recall that I was not even in the city when any of the congregations were started. All of them were started by the elders who told me about it when I returned from work elsewhere.

I developed a series of tracts to use in sowing the seed. We took advantage of the latest printing techniques, employing modern typefaces and illustrative material. We used these in “saturation bombing,” marking out areas of the city in which we covered every house. Brethren carried a supply with them, distributing them at work, passing them out on streetcars and buses, putting them in letters to friends and using them wherever opportunity was presented. At Manchester Avenue a tract rack was erected close to the sidewalk and kept supplied. Other congregations in distant states learned about them and asked to purchase them, so that we began printing them in lots of 50,000 at a time. Even to this day, in out-of-the-way places I still run into stray copies of “This Way and That Way,” “Daughters of the Horseleech,” and “Human Ostriches.” They are yellowed and faded now!

In 1943 we started a thirty minute radio program called “The Church of Christ Hour.” It was aired on Sunday afternoons. Three singing groups alternated, and when I was out of the city, Hershel Ottwell directed the program and presented my talks from the script I had prepared. Hershel and I had known each other from boyhood in Pike County, Illinois. He was younger than I, but had been present when I presented my first talk at Old Pearl, where his family also attended. He was a great fellow-workman and did an excellent job on the radio. One cannot afford to make too many errors in a live presentation. I do not recall Hershel making any. The program averaged a pulling power of 400 letters per month. The greatest return for a single speech was 468 pieces of mail.

The manager wrote to inform us that the program was by far the most popular on the station. We never mentioned money and never asked for a contribution, but we received enough voluntary gifts to pay the entire cost some weeks. For a number of years after we closed the broadcasts I found individuals at various functions where I was the speaker who told me, “I used to listen to you on the radio every Sunday.” At the end of each quarter my radio talks for the thirteen weeks were printed in book form. Some of the titles of these little volumes are indicative of their content, such as “The Bible versus False Theories,” “Proven Proverbs,” “Storm Clouds Over



America,” “The Sermon on the Mount,” “Happy Homes,” “Actions in Acts,” and others like them.

It was late in 1945 I got into the publishing business in a very minor way. I brought out a rather large cloth-bound volume under the title *New Testament Questions*, by E.M. Zerr. I followed this with a compilation of some of the writings of W.G. Roberts which we called *Lessons From Yesterday*. In 1946 we began to plan publication of *Bible Commentary* by E.M. Zerr. It required a great deal of time, effort and money. Before it was completed it covered six volumes which cost a total of almost \$35,000. At the outset it became apparent that Brother Zerr was not trained to write this type of material, in spite of his comprehensive knowledge of the Bible. Cleona Harvey, who was secretary to the dean of the Indiana State School of Dentistry, agreed to read and edit the entire manuscript. The arrangement did not suit Brother Zerr very well since he did not appreciate another telling him how to say what he wanted to say. But when I pointed out to him a whole lot of typographical and other errors in the first volume on which he had insisted correcting the proofs, and told him that I would not publish any further volumes without editing, he reluctantly consented.

A lot of the material was written in our home. Brother Zerr refused to work more than four hours daily on the writing. He arose before 4:00 a.m. and downed a couple of mugs of strong coffee and started promptly on the hour. When 8:00 a.m. arrived he stopped writing, even if he was in the middle of a sheet of paper. He composed at the typewriter and produced almost flawless copy insofar as margins and the number of lines were concerned. He worked six days per week and stayed with the stupendous task until he became the only man in the restoration movement to produce a commentary on the entire word of God. We brought out 3000 sets of six volumes each, which means that we sold 18,000 volumes. I coined the publicity phrase, “the commentary of the common man,” after hearing Brother Zerr tell repeatedly how his cousin, Noah Smith, at Sullivan, Illinois, had said, “Now Eddie, if you do write a commentary don’t wade in too deep and get over our heads. Just write it for folks like me and act as if we don’t know nothin’.”

Perhaps one of the most significant things I did in Saint Louis was to begin publication of a monthly journal called *Missouri Mission Messenger*. It was originally intended to be a chronicle of activities and news events of our party in the state. By keeping all of the congregations informed as to what was transpiring it was hoped we might be encouraged to greater activity and service to the Master. Gradually subscriptions began to come in from other states and eventually it seemed appropriate to drop the word “Missouri” and simply call it *Mission Messenger*. It was no longer a provincial publication.

At the time of its inception we had no idea that the paper would ever be sent to more than 8,000 readers, upon every continent of the globe, each month. It was only after I became convinced that what we termed “the Church of Christ” was not identical with the one body for which Jesus died, but had been fashioned into a party growing out of a historical attempt to restore the primitive order, the paper really began to be read more widely. The first article on fellowship was printed in 1957 and brought both public and private attacks from preaching brethren with whom I had labored. After the initial hue and cry, which I sought to answer in a spirit of loving concern, the paper reached out beyond our narrow and circumscribed factional limits. It was

almost as if my own spiritual encounter had been timed for supplying a deep need of those who were growing tired of the party spirit with its wrangling and strife, its bitterness and hostility. But more about that later!

As mid-1946 approached, plans for my trip to Great Britain had progressed to the point that a date for going and an itinerary abroad had been worked out. Nell and I would leave Saint Louis on Tuesday, February 18, after I had finished the six-weeks annual Bible Study. It was a busy time of preparation, but then something occurred to make it busier. In late September I was visited by a large delegation of preachers from the other "Churches of Christ" in the area demanding that we debate the Bible College issue "once and for all." They were inviting Dr. G.C. Brewer of Memphis to represent their position and asked if I was afraid to meet him. I was not, and it turned out we had two debates within three weeks of each other, one in Saint Louis, the other at Freed-Hardeman College during their lectureship.

Brother Brewer submitted his affirmation which read: "The organization of schools and colleges as David Lipscomb College (Nashville, Tennessee) for the purpose of teaching the Bible and other subjects in connection, is in harmony with God's Word, and therefore scriptural." I signed it without a quibble. The debate was held in the auditorium of the Saint Louis House, the nights of December 16, 17, 18, 19. More than 600 persons attended each session. W.L. Totty moderated for Brother Brewer, E.M. Zerr for me. Presiding over all sessions was the Honorable William R. Schneider, a nationally known jurist, author of the Workmen's Compensation Law, and formerly a candidate for governor of Missouri.

It was evident our opposing brethren had made a good choice in Brother Brewer. He was distinguished in appearance, an orator of note, and a man of culture. He was a member of the faculty of Harding College and had been given his honorary degree of Doctor of Laws by the school. Many brethren sympathetic with his views flocked into Saint Louis, among them being Eugene S. Smith, publisher of *Gospel Broadcast*; Dr. George S. Benson, president of Harding College; A.B. Barrett, president of Florida Christian College; Frank L. Cox, of *Firm Foundation*; Edward J. Craddock, of Chicago; G.A. Dunn, Sr., of Dallas, Texas; and L.C. Sears, dean of Harding College.

Unfortunately, Brother Brewer jerked the rug out from under some of his supporters by taking the position that the schools were adjuncts to the church and represented the church at work. He said he had personally made pleas for their support from the treasuries of the churches, and had urged that they be put into the regular congregational budgets. A lot of brethren who were on his side of the fence told me that if what he said was correct they were more sympathetic toward my position than toward his.

Brother Brewer was so pleased with the conduct manifested in the debate, he suggested that the two of us hold a series of "Lincoln-Douglas" type debates in all of the college auditoriums. He further suggested that we begin at Freed-Hardeman, and Dean Sears invited us to hold the second at Harding College in Searcy, Arkansas. The Freed-Hardeman debate was held before an overflow crowd on January 7. We discarded the use of moderators since both of us knew we could act as gentlemen. W.L. Totty acted as timekeeper for Brother Brewer, Fred Killebrew served in the same capacity for me.

I took the position that the apostles planted a school for teaching the Bible in every city where they labored, and that Jesus Christ was the president; the apostles and evangelists were the recruiting and field agents to secure students for the institution; the elders and others under them constituted the faculty; every disciple was an enrolled student, with the only textbook being the Word of God. I asked him to find the place where any of the apostles ever created the kind of organization he was defending.

It was a great day and the two sessions were conducted in good order with great response. At the close, N.B. Hardeman arose and said that since I had now taught in Freed-Hardeman I might like a job on the faculty.

### **ON BOARD THE *QUEEN ELIZABETH***

In these days of almost casual tourist travel it is difficult to explain the problems incurred in going to Great Britain in the early part of 1947. We had been in close contact for three years with Albert Winstanley, an outstanding young preacher of the gospel from Lancashire, who was by this time in Newtongrange, near Edinburgh, working with the Scots brethren. He contacted the various districts and we had drawn up an itinerary which would keep me occupied almost every day while we were in Great Britain. Since the first contact with Adam and George Bruce in Windsor, Ontario, in 1929, correspondence had been exchanged with saints abroad, and now sixteen years had elapsed, and we were waiting for a frightful war to cease.

On May 7, 1945, at a ceremony in the headquarters of General Dwight Eisenhower, at Reims, General Alfred Jodl signed an unconditional surrender of Germany's armed forces to the Allies. On September 2, just four months later, General MacArthur and Admiral Nimitz accepted the formal surrender of Japan aboard the battleship *Missouri* in Tokyo Bay. Vast areas of the cities in England lay in ruins. The task of cleaning up the rubble and restoring order from chaos would take many months.

I contacted a steamship company representative who said there were no sailings yet and even if there were I would have to secure a priority from the State Department. The State Department informed me there was a doubt the English Government would approve travel at the time. I went to the British Consul who asked me to make application to His Majesty's Passport Approval Bureau. The bureau notified us they would grant a visa for travel in the United Kingdom. The Cunard Lines told us they had a waiting list "a mile long" when passenger traffic was resumed. We wired New York and found that the *Queen Elizabeth* was scheduled for her first eastward trip, after converting from a troop-carrying vessel, at the very time we wanted to go.

After our reservation was confirmed we set about getting a passport. It was not easy because of the war restrictions still in vogue and it was necessary to file three notarized letters from the Manchester Avenue congregation before we were granted permission to go. When all of the legal requirements had been met other details had to be arranged. The children were in high school but Nell's father and mother agreed to come to Saint Louis to look after them during our absence. It was not easy for them because her father was the mayor of Flat River, as well as an elder in the local congregation.

Because of severe food rationing in the United Kingdom we arranged for congregations to send food parcels to help out. Some items were in shorter supply than during the war, among them fats, sweets, fruits and soap. Regulations permitted the sending of only one parcel per week by any person or firm, and the weight of each parcel was limited to 22 pounds. We assigned various areas in Great Britain to congregations which wanted to help, and each congregation sent one parcel per week for three weeks, making a total of 66 pounds sent to each place. Manchester Avenue congregation sent to the Lancashire District; Hartford, Illinois to Birmingham; Anderson, Indiana to Belfast, North Ireland; while other brethren sent to Kirkcaldy, Glasgow, London, etc.

When it was announced publicly that I planned to make the visit to the United Kingdom at the invitation of the brethren, it apparently created consternation in the ranks of the “mainline” Churches of Christ in the United States. They resolved to thwart it at all costs. The political propaganda machines were turned on full blast. All who had any relationship with congregations in Great Britain, especially American servicemen who had been stationed there, were urged to write and insist that my visit be cancelled. It was decided that the one person best qualified to offset any influence I might exert was John Allan Hudson.

Brother Hudson, who is best known as the originator of the Old Paths Book Club, had served as the minister of Southwest Church in Los Angeles, where he assisted the George Pepperdine Foundation, but was currently with the congregation at 39th and Flora Avenues, in Kansas City. He was well-known to the British brethren because of his work in Birmingham, as well as in Australia and New Zealand. With their characteristic zeal for local autonomy, a group of preachers met together to plan the strategy for stopping my work in Britain before it began. It was decided the best way to do it would be to support a “faithful preacher” in England for a whole year, preferably Brother Hudson. His chief objective would be to keep the British brethren from hearing me. A few weeks before I left home I received this letter from a brother in Britain:

“Brother John Allan Hudson has written to say he is flying over here to be in Britain before you arrive. I thought I ought to tell you this, so that you should be prepared. Yesterday I learned that he had decided to come to Britain (supported by churches in the U.S.) for twelve months. This was to be from April onwards, but apparently, on hearing of your proposed visit, he decided to come earlier. You may draw your own conclusions from this. But I do want you to know it will in no way interfere with your visit, or upset the arrangements in hand. There is much I want to discuss with you regarding Brother Hudson’s visit, and we shall be able to talk it over thoroughly while you are here.”

The “Central Intelligence Agency” of the American Churches of Christ did its work well. Form letters were sent to the elders of many of the congregations where I was to speak. Later on, after Nell and I had been guests for several days in the homes of such brethren they would bring out the letters and we would read them and have a good laugh about them. They uniformly classified me as dangerous, divisive and destructive to the peace and welfare of the body of Christ. All of them made dire predictions of what would happen to the British churches as a result of my coming. One of them concluded with the frightening admonition, “You have been warned!”

Our American brethren who are accustomed to seeing elders “roll over and play dead” or “jump through a theological hoop” when certain preachers issued an ultimatum reckoned without the British brethren. They did not understand the innate sense of fairness which caused them to hear a man out before assessing him as guilty. They did not take into account the quiet stubbornness which resented interference from across the Atlantic. I am afraid some of the Scots had stereotyped Americans, perhaps from the movies, and thought they all wore wide-brimmed hats and cowboy boots, and slapped strangers between the shoulder blades and said too loudly, “How you doin’ podner?”

I went one day to visit a precious aged sister who lived in a tiny stone cottage in a colliery village. She spoke with a brogue as thick as porridge. You could have sliced it with a knife. If her daughter had not been there to interpret neither of us would have known much about what the other was saying. But it was apparent she liked me from the start and I loved her and the cozy little “hoose” in which she lived. When I led a little prayer and was preparing to leave she was pleased I had not shown up wearing a big “bonnet” and “yelling like a coo-boy.”

One day at Ulverston, I was sitting before the grate with Brother Walter Crosthwaite, the sage of the Old Paths movement, and one of the saintliest men I have ever met. He was preparing tea in a soot-covered kettle. Neither of us had said anything for several minutes. Then he spoke, almost as if in reverie and to himself. “All of the real problems which have plagued the churches in Britain in the past have come from America.” After a pause he added, “Most of them from Texas.” That day he paid me the highest compliment I received in his country. “I thank the Father for allowing Nell and you to come, and for making it possible for you to stay in our humble abode.” He did not realize, in his unsurpassable humility, that to be with him was a mountain-top experience I could never forget.

Now we will get back to our trip. On Tuesday morning, February 18, a group of thirty brothers and sisters gathered with us for breakfast at the Fred Harvey Lunch Room in the Saint Louis Union Station. After we had eaten together, Nell and I bade our children and the others a rather tearful farewell, and boarded the famous *Sunshine Special* pulled on its eastern journey over the Pennsylvania Lines track. Twenty-four hours later, at 7:30 a.m., we arrived in New York City with thirteen hours to spend before boarding the huge ship which was scheduled to sail in the early morning hours.

Since neither of us had ever been in New York City we were like “babes in the woods,” gaping and gawking at soaring skyscrapers, and “sunburning our tonsils” gazing upward in open-mouthed amazement. Fortunately, no city slicker buttonholed us to try and sell us the Brooklyn Bridge. We had heard about Automats but had never seen one, so we ate a large breakfast at one and then went on a walking tour of Rockefeller Center. From the 70th floor of the RCA Building we could see the *Queen Elizabeth* lying in dock at pier 90. Further on we could make out the Statue of Liberty which we would pass next morning.

At 8:30 o’clock that evening we joined the throng milling about and boarded the greatest vessel of her day. Since that type of transoceanic travel has now passed away, supplanted by air transportation, I would like to describe one of the queens. The other was the sister ship the *Queen Mary*. The *Queen Elizabeth* was rated at 83,673 gross tons, with 14 decks. The vessel

was more than five city blocks long, 118 feet wide and 234 feet from keel to masthead. The total space available to passengers for deck games and strolling exceeded in area 2 1/2 football fields. There was even a special exercise area for dogs and each day the pampered pets were brought from the ship's kennels to be paraded around.

There were three anchors, each of which weighed 16 tons, and 2,000 portholes containing 2500 square feet of glass. There were 30,000 electric lights and 4000 miles of wiring. In all there were 35 public rooms – lounges, smoking rooms, dance halls, restaurants, children's playrooms, libraries, swimming pools, gymnasias, and three theaters. One of these seated 338 persons. The area of the First Class Restaurant was 13,133 square feet. On the main deck was located the winter garden with a profusion of fresh flowers. Here the ship's orchestra played classical selections at afternoon tea and again at night. Here also one could obtain free a copy of the "Ocean Times," a newspaper published on board each night.

On "A" Deck there was a large shop retailing everything from safety pins to men's shirts. On the same level was a barber shop for men and a beauty shop for women, as well as a smoking lounge with comfortable seats for several hundred. "B" Deck contained the nursery, a tourist gymnasium, a cinema and a large library. I checked out a copy of "This Man Truman," written by an Englishman. I got back out of some of the expressions such as "biscuit-barrel politics," which is as close as the British can get to our "cracker-barrel politics." Winston Churchill was right. We are a single people separated only by a common language.

We traveled "tourist" which was cheapest. Our stateroom had a lower and upper bunk-style bed, wardrobe, dressing table, chair and wash basin with hot and cold water. The space was restricted and while one did not actually need to back out into the corridor to turn around it would have helped. It was our home for six nights, the last at the expense of Cunard Lines. We warped into the dock at Southampton promptly at 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 25. Tourist passengers were to disembark at 4:00 p.m. Then it happened! After part of our luggage was already off, a dock strike was called and none of us could leave the vessel.

Passengers became infuriated. They besieged the Purser's staff. There was cursing, shoving and yelling, but all to no avail. Staterooms had to be made up with clean linens and the chefs had to serve an extra dinner and breakfast. Although we were sorry to disappoint the brethren waiting for us at Waterloo Station in London there was nothing we could do. After dinner the Winter Garden was crowded but there was no orchestra. Without asking permission I mounted the platform, took over the microphone, and called for attention. I pointed out what an extraordinary opportunity this was to become acquainted and to hold an open forum on world conditions. We had people present from many nations, we had just seen the end of a disastrous World War, and I felt we should quit talking about our own temporary inconvenience and discuss openly our divergent views of world problems.

I suggested we stay on each subject exactly one hour and allow any man or woman to speak. We discussed marriage and divorce, then family responsibility and authority, and last of all the changes taking place in moral and ethical values. I adjourned the meeting at midnight over the shouted protests of many who wanted to continue. It was interesting to see how quickly order had developed out of chaos. The meeting was made to order for me. As the self-appointed

chairman I injected the teaching of the Bible into the discussion at the end of every speech. If anyone asked a question of the chair, I answered it with the words, "Of course, the Bible says ...."

The next morning we abandoned ship at 9:00 o'clock, and exactly an hour later the boat train pulled out for London. Immediately evident were the signs of the bombing raids made on this great harbor city. Whole blocks were wiped out. Fire-gutted buildings were everywhere. Our train arrived in London promptly at noon. We stepped into a new world. At home we always "checked our baggage" but in London we "registered our luggage." The station was huge and there were several large restaurants. We chose one and ordered our luncheon. It consisted of pork and peas cooked together, mashed potatoes, and coffee. If that sounds like a lot of potatoes, it is because this was one of the few items not rationed.

After we had eaten we boarded a taxi and went madly dashing down the wrong side of the street toward the friendly home of Brother R.B. Scott.

## **HIGH ADVENTURE IN GREAT BRITAIN**

Almost every believer who knows anything about it is willing to concede that the union of forces of the restoration movement in the United States and the United Kingdom seems an act of providence. The work in the latter had its roots in the Scotch Baptist development. In 1833 there was a small congregation of this persuasion meeting on Windmill Street, Finsbury Square, in London. There were hardly ever any visitors, but one Lord's Day morning a young man walked in and sat down near the speaker's platform. He was Peyton C. Wyeth, an American artist enroute to Paris to perfect his talent. He was born at Claysville, fourteen miles from Bethany (then in Virginia), knew Alexander Campbell personally, and had been immersed into Christ.

While in London he had visited various places of assembly only to be disappointed. On the Saturday before the day to which we refer, he had asked God to lead him to a place where men worshiped according to the ancient order. While walking the streets on the Lord's Day morning he found the chapel on Windmill Street and entered. One of the elders was William Jones, author of the *Biblical Encyclopedia of the Waldenses*, and other books of religious significance. When Wyeth told the elderly man there was a great and growing movement in the new world, whose members worshiped as they had that day, Jones was astounded and almost overwhelmed with emotion.

Jones knew of Campbell only as the brilliant opponent of Robert Owen in a debate held in Cincinnati four years prior. He had no idea that Campbell was pleading for the primitive purity of the church. That afternoon in his home he had Wyeth write to Campbell, virtually dictating the letter. A lengthy correspondence was inaugurated which resulted in Jones creating the *British Millennial Harbinger* which reprinted so much of what Campbell was writing. Out of this grew the visits of Campbell to Scotland and England, with their overtones of gladness and sadness, about which many of us know.

That's the way it began in London and I thrill to it. But I am convinced that no one can write the history of the cause I love, as it pertains to London in this century, and ignore the sacrificial work of R.B. and Mary Scott, and the little group of saints meeting at Hope Chapel, in Prince of Wales Road. I had heard of the Scott family from American servicemen who made that home their gathering place during the war. The family consisted of our genial brother and sister and their four children, Margaret, Dorothy, Isabelle and John. In spite of the fact that Brother Scott was employed as a clerk (the British pronounce it 'clark') and had a limited income they kept "open house" for saints from all over the earth.

Our first introduction to a meeting of the disciples in Great Britain was the day we landed. It was Wednesday, and after tea in the Scott home, where we also met Leonard Channing, a tireless young student and worker for the Lord, we made our way to the little chapel, riding our first double-decker bus. The night was bitter cold. Because of a severe fuel restriction there were no street lights. It was darker than the proverbial "stack of black cats" and we had to hold hands to keep from becoming separated. The little meetinghouse, more than a century old, had been damaged in a bombing raid. No permanent repairs had been made because of priorities on building materials.

We met in a tiny vestry behind the speaker's platform. There were just twelve of us. The gathering was quiet and solemn, with no talking or laughing. Brother Black, down from Dalmellington, Scotland, presided with the same formality as if there had been a thousand present. He began by announcing a hymn to which we turned in a little book called "Hymns for Churches of Christ" which contained 1036 hymns, all without staff or notes. Brother Black suggested the name of the tune we would employ. He then read the first stanza and then we stood and sang the hymn. I do not recall ever seeing an audience in Great Britain remain seated while singing praise to God. After a fervent prayer by Brother Scott, a brother read the first chapter of First Corinthians. Brother Black expounded upon it from notes he had previously made.

Following this I was asked to speak and was then questioned about what the brethren abroad uniformly referred to as "the American scene." Some of the questions were quite pointed. The American doughboys who had attended during the war had come from all sections of America and all segments of the restoration movement and had efficiently conveyed their own confusion to those whom they met. Some from the same town in the United States met at Hope Chapel and had never heard of each other, because of the rigid factional lines drawn at home. It took a world war to get brethren from the same village to shake hands and attend at the same place. It was very difficult for brethren in a land where there was no "color bar" to understand why there was a "white church" and a "colored church" in the same community.

When we arrived back at the Scott home we sat before the grate on this wintry night and talked for hours. It became apparent to me that it would be difficult to explain to brethren in Britain the multi-faceted complex in America known as "The Church of Christ." It also became obvious that it would be just as hard to portray the British scene to Americans. It was our mutual love for Jesus and His magnetic personality which drew us to R.B. and Mary Scott, and when we read a chapter together and knelt to pray before the glowing hearth, before the little night remaining would give us a few hours of repose, I felt that God was with us and moving in our lives.



The next morning at 9:00 o'clock we boarded a London Northeast Railway train at King's Cross Station, bound for Edinburgh. We were told there was no guarantee of making it because of the heavy blizzard of the previous day. English trains are very different from ours. The coaches are small and passengers occupy compartments entered directly from the platform and walled off from the rest of the train. Ours had room for six but we were alone in it when we left London. At noon we unwrapped the lunch prepared for us by Mary Scott – cheese sandwiches, Sultana bread and muffins, and a bottle of black currant juice to drink. Shortly after we finished eating, three soldiers entered our compartment. Two of them were taking back the third one who had been A.W.O.L. for seven weeks.

We gave them the remainder of our luncheon which they wolfed down with profuse apologies. They had eaten nothing since the evening before. All were members of the Durham Infantry, and stationed in an aged castle in which there was no heat at all. I began talking with them about Jesus and what He had done in my life. As I continued to share my faith with them they listened intently, occasionally asking a polite question. Time flew by and when they prepared to leave us at Newcastle-on-Tyne, one lingered behind, saluted and said, "Sir, this has been the happiest afternoon I have ever spent in my life."

Soon it was getting dark and the little engine was toiling through deepening snow. Finally we realized we were in a city. There are no conductors to come through and tell you where you are. You determine that from signs on the station platform. When the train stopped I saw no sign so I raised the window and asked if we were in Waverly Station. We were!

It was Nell who first spotted Albert Winstanley in the crowd. He was holding up a copy of *Scripture Standard*, our previously agreed upon badge of identification. "Uncle Will" Allen was there with one of his taxis and we soon covered the twelve miles to Newtongrange where we were to get our first sight of the work of our Lord in Scotland. God richly blessed us by allowing us to stay with "Uncle John" and "Aunt Mary" Pryde. All older folk are designated as uncle and aunt by the younger ones. I became "Uncle Carl" and Nell was always "Auntie Nell" by the younger folk. The Prydes had spent a number of years in the coal fields of Illinois, not too far from Saint Louis, and they eagerly awaited our coming. We somehow think they are still waiting our coming up there where they have long since gone.

Albert and I spent the first day walking from the home of one member after another, wading through deep snow. I shall not forget the cheerful cottage of "Granny Allen" who had been a member of the local body longer than any other person, far beyond a half century. In the evening I met with the oversight of the congregation to answer their questions. They were pleased to learn there were still brethren in America who contended for mutual ministry, and the right of all brethren to use their gift of edification. They made it clear they had thought that all the American churches had been betrayed by "the spirit of the age" to adopt the "one-man system" as they referred to the hiring of someone from somewhere to come in and pastor the flock professionally. They wanted to know how congregations administered discipline, and how elders were selected and appointed. They were especially interested in whether or not we voted for officers.

On Saturday, March 1, a bus load of us journeyed to Motherwell, near Glasgow, to attend the conference of the Slamannan District churches. A number of congregations had combined their efforts, with a special Evangelistic Committee to receive and disburse funds, and to recommend the places where preachers were most needed. David Dougal, a brother of great preaching ability, was secretary of the conference over which Abe Haldane presided. It was interesting to us that when the Scots wanted to show approval they stamped with their feet rather than clapping their hands. Following tea, I was asked to speak and afterwards was questioned at length by the audience. Some of the saints were a little skeptical about anything bearing the imprint "Made in the United States" and we explored differences in our varied concepts, but in deep love and respect for each other.

There is so much to tell our story will seem unduly long, yet there is hardly any way to shorten it without doing an injustice. It was late in the evening when Nell and I trudged down the snowy streets of Motherwell to the friendly home of Willie Wardrop. We were accompanied by his aged father, James Wardrop, almost 85, and the oldest evangelist in Scotland. He told us the history of the movement, with its hardships and trials, as vividly as if it were in "living color." That Saturday night was like a page out of "The Cotter's Saturday Night" by Scotland's favorite bard. Before we retired to our beds with their eider down comforters, our patriarchal brother summoned the family to gather in the glow of the ingle, as the fireplace was called. He opened "the big ha' Bible" and read from it with firm and unflinching voice. All of us knelt together and he lifted up his words of petition to "Heaven's Eternal King." I fell asleep with the words of the poem circulating through my mind:

Compared with this, how poor Religion's pride,

In all the pomp of method, and of art;

When men display to congregations wide

Devotion's every grace, except the heart!

The next morning the sun turned the snow banks into millions of glistening diamonds for our first Lord's Day in Scotland. It was an invigorating walk between rows of ancient stone dwellings to the little meetinghouse. The procedure was so different from ours I must describe it. The table was set in the center of the speaker's stand. There was one chalice and a small loaf of leavened bread upon it. Three chairs were behind it. Promptly at the time for beginning, the aged James Wardrop, who was to preside, took the center chair. An assistant sat down on either side of him.

The president announced the opening hymn. He read the first verse with impressive voice. All of the audience then arose and sang. Then the president said, "Will some brother take us to the throne in prayer?" A volunteer in the rear of the building prayed. Another hymn was sung. A volunteer came forward to read an assigned portion of the New Testament. He was followed by another who read the Old Testament. Brother Wardrop then made an excellent talk about the meaning of the Supper. Thanks were offered and the assistants bore the loaf and cup to the audience in turn. Each person broke a bit from the loaf as it was handed to him. All drank from

the one container. An offering was taken for the furtherance of the work and then a session of prayer was announced. Perhaps there were six or seven prayers in all, fervent and eloquent in their simplicity. Afterwards the president said, "We have been blessed of the Lord in having our American brother among us and I will invite him to come forward and exhort the brethren." Following my remarks there was a hymn suitable to the closing of the meeting and a benediction. It was all beautiful, impressive and touching.

Nell and I were invited for tea at the home of John Snedden. He was the youngest of the three bishops, being 83. John Anderson was 84, and James Wardrob 85. All three were together with us for tea. It was the first time I had been with three such men, all able speakers and debaters, all with a profound knowledge of the Book. John Snedden asked me if I had ever met a Campbellite. I answered in the negative. He said, "Then you have a new experience today. I am a Campbellite." He meant it. Next to Jesus of Nazareth he admired Alexander Campbell of Bethany. To prove it he pitched in and recited Campbell's "Sermon on the Law" and would have given a goodly portion of "The Christian System" from memory if they had not announced that tea was being served.

What an afternoon that was! In the evening I addressed the "gospel meeting." The saints in Scotland have a clear understanding of the difference between "the breaking of bread service" and a "gospel meeting." The first is for the family of God. Non-members are not invited. If there is to be a Sunday School for the "wee bairns" it is held in the afternoon. It is not a part of the gathering for the edification of the body. In a gospel meeting on the Lord's Day night, the message is addressed to the world. It is intended to reach the unsaved with the glad tidings of what Jesus has done for them.

After it was all over we rode the bus into Glasgow, largest city in Scotland, with Brother John Anderson. His home was to be ours for a few days as we went to other nearby areas to share with brethren. My stay with this godly man provided one of the greatest thrills of my whole life. I am indebted to him for insights which helped to change my life.

## **WHEN THE SNOW FELL IN SCOTLAND**

Glasgow was cold and gray and dirty from soot. The stores were without heat and the girls who clerked in Woolworth's wore heavy coats. One who waited upon us wore woolen gloves. The war years had depleted supplies and a large department store such as Lewis' had little to offer. At the close of our first day in the city I spoke to the little group of saints meeting in a storefront building on Hospital Street, located in the heart of a festering and decadent slum. Their faith in such a depressive area was to me a shining beacon in a bleak world. On every side of them paganism reared its ugly head, but they were not discouraged.

The following day five of us journeyed to Pennyvenie, by way of Ayr and Dalmellington. We visited the thatched-roof cottage of Robert Burns and I had a difficult time tearing myself away from the nearby museum with its many originals of the poems which had made the bard famous. At Dalmellington we sat down to tea in the hospitable home of Edward Jess. He was one of God's noblemen. There were but twelve of us present in the little schoolhouse at Pennyvenie, on a raw, cold night, but the warmth of fellowship will never grow dim in my memory.

On Wednesday afternoon we went to Slamannan and were received into the home of Brother Wilson for tea and scones. We were talking every minute. The house was one in which Adam Bruce, whom we knew in Windsor, Canada, once lived. The village had also been the home of our beloved Harry Topping whom we knew in our own land. As darkness descended the men in our party walked down Station Road to the meetinghouse. It was a cold, crisp, snowy hike. The brother who presided over the meeting asked Albert Winstanley to sing a solo, and then requested Nell and me to sing. We used "Give Me The Bible" as our number. Later I spoke for forty minutes and then answered questions for an equal period of time.

Slamannan had been a center for the work of James Anderson, who was born near Airdrie in 1837. As a humble evangelist he had left a mark upon the whole district, planting congregations, defending the faith, and proclaiming the Word for more than half a century. John Anderson, in whose home we stayed in Glasgow was a worthy son of James Anderson, and served to tie together for us the history of the work in Scotland for a hundred years. It was a saga of labor and suffering, of smiles and tears, of sorrow mingled with hope.

When we prepared to say farewell to the Andersons they presented us with a replica of their tartan, and every time we look at it we recall the glorious fellowship with these members of a genuine clan. We went by bus to Blackburn, near Bathgate, to be received for tea into the home of John and May McCallum. After a satisfying meal of fish and chips we were off to the meetinghouse at Blackridge, where the heating pipes were frozen and we had to hold the meeting wearing heavy coats. When John McCallum arose to preside, his steaming breath ascended in a cloud. Despite the shivering experience the meeting was prolonged by questions and we left the gathering edified and strengthened, to spend the night with Joe and Agnes Kerr, who lived in a new pre-fab in Harthill.

I had written to Joe several times before we left the United States and it was a great blessing to meet him face-to-face. Agnes was a Burns enthusiast and entertained with "Tam-o-Shanter" and several other poems, all delivered in a delightful Scottish brogue. The next morning, Joe, Albert Winstanley, Nell and I took the early bus into Edinburgh so we could see a little of the city before going on to Kirkcaldy, across the Firth of Forth. We walked down Princess Street, one of the most beautiful avenues in the world, and paused to look at the remarkable memorial to Sir Walter Scott, and the statue of Livingstone, the great missionary.

We climbed the steep hill to the great castle which frowns down as a lonely sentinel from the huge rock in the very center of the city. It was like moving into a world of a thousand years ago, for some of the buildings are that old. We tore ourselves away reluctantly to descend to street level and to the railway station. Joe Kerr returned home but Albert went with us as our train crossed the great Forth Bridge, that mile-long cantilever marvel constructed by Sir John Fowler and Sir Benjamin Baker, and finished in 1890.

I was anxious to get to Kirkcaldy which the natives call Lang Toon (Long Town) because it stretches out so far along the Forth. I knew it was the home of the great Nairn Linoleum factory, and that Congoleum had originated there, but one could have guessed that from the odor of linseed oil which hung over the city. At the station we were greeted by our genial host Dave

Mellis, and his son Stanley. Dave was a “Wagon Inspector” for the L.N.E.R. lines, and in his home we found a hospitality which was warm and gracious.

The American restoration movement owes more to Kirkcaldy than most of us realize. In 1763, Robert Carmichael and Archibald McLean were conversing together in Glasgow when the subject of infant baptism arose, and each revealed he had some doubts about it. They agreed to study the scriptures on the matter and by 1765 Mr. Carmichael and five others were convinced they should be immersed. There was not a single baptist in Scotland to assist them, so they wrote to the eminent Dr. Gill in London, whom Alexander Campbell later labeled an able expositor and critic, and asked if he would come and baptize them. He wrote that his age would not permit him to make the trip, but suggested that Mr. Carmichael come to London and be immersed and then baptize the others upon his return to Scotland.

Mr. Carmichael was baptized by Dr. Gill on October 9, 1765, and immersed the other five on the day of his arrival back in Scotland. In November he baptized two more, and when Mr. McLean moved from Glasgow to join them there were nine. They banded together to observe the Lord’s Supper each week and to edify one another. They were called Scotch Baptists, not because of the country, but to distinguish them from the English Baptists. The latter embraced the one-man minister plan, whereas, according to a historian who wrote in 1883, “The church in Scotland was organized on the scriptural plan of mutual ministry, and a plurality of elders.”

The first baptist in Kirkcaldy was a mole-catcher. He communicated his views to a Mr. Cooper who was baptized about 1784. They began to meet together and the work grew until the congregation was set in order November 15, 1798. In 1819 two brethren, Messrs. Tosh and Arthur, whose property joined, each took a piece of his rear garden and deeded it to the congregation for a building lot, and began erection of the Rose Street meetinghouse in which I was privileged to speak. Exactly one hundred years before I spoke from the platform of this building, Alexander Campbell spoke from the same spot. When he finished the congregation resolved to no longer call themselves after an ordinance but to become Christians only. They marched outside and took down their sign and erected one which read “Christian Meetinghouse.” That was the sign which I saw as I entered the building.

We had a busy time in Kirkcaldy. On Saturday, March 8, the brethren held their annual social with 183 present, representing a goodly number of congregations. The next day I spoke at “the breaking of bread service,” the afternoon children’s meeting for “the wee ones,” and at the gospel meeting at night. The congregation had an excellent choir trained and directed by Sister Glass. They always sang at gospel meetings which also had a solo or two, in addition to the congregational singing.

On Monday we visited in the home of John and Agnes Wotherspoon in the country, before returning to town so Nell and I could speak at a meeting of the women of the congregation. The visit with the Wotherspoons impressed me greatly. They were set for the defense of the faith and knew the Word of the Lord. Their house had been built over a coal shaft originally, but had been moved. John had fixed it up himself and it was furnished with lovely antiques. There was a grandfather’s clock which was huge, and there were two heavy mahogany chairs, beautifully carved, which had once been in the captain’s quarters of a ship which sailed the route to India.

On Tuesday we went on a little trip which made our entire journey worthwhile. A bus from Kirkcaldy to Leven connected with the Anstruther bus which made its way through the narrow streets of villages squatting along the Firth of Forth until it came to a veritable story-book town called Pittenweem. We were met in this age-old fishing village by our brother, Neil Patterson, a leader of the little group of saints who met in the "Toon Hall" as the brethren called the Town Hall. We left the bus on a paved square in the upper part of the town. Narrow walkways bearing such picturesque names as Water Wynd, School Wynd, and Cove Wynd led from the brae down to the waterfront.

The harbor was filled with fishing boats, one of which belonged to Brother Patterson. Fishermen were working on their nets. Gulls strolled about bravely on the cobblestones just out of reach. The breakers rolling in crashed against the sea wall. We walked to the home of the Pattersons where delicious homemade shortbread topped off the tea. Neil stood in front of the cheery ingle, and in a voice made strong by long years in a small dory upon the open sea sang hymn after hymn for us. Then in the company of Jimmie Hughes we visited the home of every member and prayed in each home. In the home of Sister Strachan her aged father regaled me with stories of more than fifty years of salt water fishing for a living.

The next day was to be our last in the "Kingdom of Fife" for Kirkcaldy lies in Fifeshire. It was a memorable day since it gave me an opportunity to meet Bro. Alfred H. Odd, an aged stalwart of the faith who began publication of a monthly journal *The Interpreter* the year before I was born. The January 1908 issue listed 45 congregations in Scotland. At 6:00 p.m. we attended "Sunshine Corner" held every Wednesday for boys and girls, under the able direction of Sister Glass. I spoke for 20 minutes to the "wee bairns" and later to the older saints at the regular prayer meeting. It was late when we arrived at the Mellis home for fish and chips, but later yet when Walter Hoggan came in. This tall, handsome policeman was on night duty but was free to share with us. He was deeply concerned about preservation of the concept of mutual ministry and was fearful that with men coming from the states the Scotch brethren might be seduced into adoption of the one-man system. We talked until long after midnight.

The next morning a blizzard was raging. Snow was drifting and some train service was curtailed. But we said a sad farewell to those who came to see us off and boarded the train for Waverly Station in Edinburgh where we arrived at noon. The double-decker bus which took us to Newtongrange that Thursday had to plow through accumulating snow. That night Albert Winstanley and I walked two miles back to town where I addressed a meeting of the sisters. Forty of them had braved the storm. Later I walked the two miles back alone. It seemed strange indeed to be hiking along a road in Scotland by myself at night. Overcome by emotion I stopped in the middle of the road with the swirling snow shutting off vision and fervently prayed aloud for many minutes that men would come to revere the name of Jesus and that malice and hatred be driven out of our hearts so that we might love one another. Uncle John and Aunt Mary Pryde were sitting with Nell in front of a welcome fire when I banged on the knocker, and we continued to talk, unwilling to draw the curtains on this peaceful scene until the large clock struck the hour of one o'clock in the morning.

The Minister of Education in Edinburgh had sent a letter approving my visits to the Council Schools under his jurisdiction and on Friday afternoon I went to the first. The headmaster, Mr.

Lamb, received me graciously, and I spent several hours talking to teachers and pupils. I could write a book about my impression of the contrast with American schools. At night I spoke to the children at “Sunshine Corner” and when we dismissed a number of boys and girls followed us to the bus stop where they formed a circle and held an open air chorus, singing lustily for twenty minutes with the snow sifting down upon us all. Pedestrians walking to their homes stopped and joined in.

On Saturday afternoon I conducted a two hour analytical study in the Philippian letter and spoke at the gospel meeting in the early evening. We lingered over the supper table at the home of Bro. George Robertson until 10:30 p.m. when Nell and I caught the last bus to Newtonloan Toll from which we walked a half-mile to Gorebridge where we were staying.

On Sunday at Newtongrange the children gathered at 10:30 a.m. for Bible Study, but the “breaking of bread service” began promptly at noon and continued until 1:30. From 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. I conducted the analytical study, and at 6:00 o’clock we began the gospel meeting. The audience was the largest in the memory of most of the brethren, and our hearts rejoiced when two precious souls resolved to put on Christ. We walked home in a driving rain which turned the snow into slush. We retired at 11:00 o’clock, the earliest we had gone to bed since leaving the States. But we were tired.

The cold rain proved Nell’s undoing and she became quite ill from a heavy cold. I had to go on alone, first to Bathgate, where a goodly number of saints had assembled in an upper room. I was impressed by the depth of their spirituality, and by the hospitality in the home of Brother Fleming, a great man of God. Next I was scheduled at Wallacestone, so-called from the stone which legend says was the one upon which the Scots hero, Sir William Wallace, sat in 1298 as he watched his men engage the forces of Edward I of England, in the broad valley below. As we climbed the steep hill toward the village my brain was echoing the words of the poem I had learned in elementary school:

“Scots, wha hae wi’ Wallace bled—

Scots, wham Bruce has often led—

Welcome to your gory bed,

Or to victorie!”

Albert Winstanley and I were entertained in the home of another Scotch hero, David Dougal. An American, an Englishman, and a Scotsman sat down to tea, one in spirit through Christ Jesus. David was sincere and studious, and an able proclaimer of the gospel, as was Albert. To be with them was for me “a season of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.” When David arose to open the gospel meeting the house was full. We were all uplifted in heart.

## LOVE FEASTS IN ENGLAND AND IRELAND

The largest audience to which I spoke in Scotland was at Tranent. I first arrived there on Thursday, March 20, two days prior to their annual social which had been postponed a month to enable me to be present. I stayed in the home of Brother and Sister Wilson and it was extremely interesting because they could not understand my American dialect and I could not fathom their Scotch brogue. Had it not been for their daughter Jean, who translated for us, we would have been in a real predicament. But there was one thing I understood and that was the oat cakes made by Sister Wilson. I translated them myself. An excellent audience was present for the gospel meeting the first night, and the following night the greatest number of non-members to be seen in many years attended. It was apparent that the social might set a new record.

Brother Wilson spent the entire day making arrangements for the meat pies and other foods essential to serving those who came. Although everything was strictly rationed the government allowed special concessions to churches upon application. The social was held in the Town Hall auditorium on Saturday evening. Visitors were present from most of the places where I had spoken. There were 242 for tea. Afterwards Willie Steele presided and the Motherwell and Blackridge choruses rendered special numbers. Albert Winstanley spoke for fifteen minutes and I followed for an hour. I bade farewell to many precious brothers and sisters whom I would never see again on earth.

The following morning I spoke at the Lord's Day gathering, and again in the afternoon to about 80 boys and girls. The house was almost full at night for the gospel meeting and my final message in Scotland. The next day Albert accompanied us on the seven-hour train trip to Ulverston, in Lancashire, and our first meeting with Walter Crosthwaite. The congregations which combined to support him rented "Ford Villa," the home where our aged brother and his good wife lived, and where the little band of saints met. What a blessing it was to us to stay with the Crosthwaites.

No other person I have met in my life has impressed me any more than this man. When the tide of compromise, augmented by American influence and money, began to sweep across the congregations in Great Britain many decades ago, he stood like a rock of Gibraltar. As a result his name became revered by some and despised by others. He was as unmoved by the praise of his friends as by the attack of his enemies. Now that he had grown older and was unable to travel as before, it was decided to take advantage of his scriptural knowledge, historical ability and great experience. Young men of promise were sent to live with him for many months during which they sat at his feet for training. Many of those who are active in Great Britain today can look back upon their association with this patriarch with deep appreciation for his help.

We spent hours together exploring our concepts and talking about the problems which had always troubled us as a people. The clergy system, open communion, methods of evangelism – all of these and many other things came under review. Brother Crosthwaite came to love and cherish Nell as one of his own children. One of our treasured letters from Great Britain after we arrived home came from him and mentioned "dear Nell" with special warmth. I spoke every night while in Ulverston in the little tri-cornered room which seated 34 people. It was full every night with 18 non-members present the first night. One brother who came to share with us was



Levi Clark from Barrow-in-Furness. We wrote to each other for years until his death ended our correspondence. I loved and admired him very sincerely.

Our time was not all occupied by meetings. One day we visited the famous English Lake Region. We went to the home of John Ruskin on Coniston Lake. We spent an hour at Bowness and the village church where George Washington's relatives worshiped three generations before his birth. Another day we went to the Quaker meetinghouse built by George Fox in 1688 after he had been imprisoned so many times for open expression of his opposition to war, slavery, and political and religious authority. Upstairs, over the simple meeting room we found the plain bed and chair used by the persecuted crusader. The large Bible which he studied was upon the desk.

Nell and I had a lump in our throats as we said good-bye to Brother Crosthwaite and Sisters Wood and Ormandy at the Ulverston Railway station. I boarded the train for the Wigan District with a distinct feeling that one of the significant periods in my life had suddenly ended. At Wigan we were met by three outstanding men – Leonard Morgan, of Hindley; Carlton Melling, of Scholes; and Leonard Channing, then of London. Leonard Morgan was an owner of several shops and an elder at Hindley. We were scheduled to stay in his lovely home which was also graced by his wife, Doris, and little son John. Carlton Melling was an elder at Scholes, and employed in the public library at Wigan. He succeeded Bro. Crosthwaite as editor of *Scripture Standard*, the paper published by our British brethren. It is currently under the efficient editorship of James Gardiner, of Haddington, East Lothian, Scotland. Len Channing resided in London, but was engaged in a gospel mission at Scholes. He was capable, active and alert, and already several had been added to the Lord through his personal efforts at Scholes.

It had been arranged that I should meet the first night with the elders and deacons at Hindley. They were a fine group of brethren and they questioned me at length about my views of what was transpiring on "the American scene." I did not realize until later that this was one of the places to which John Allen Hudson had written warning the brethren against receiving me. Our visit turned out to be a glorious one. After seeing me, the brethren concluded they could probably handle any wild ideas I might advance, and after meeting Nell they realized that if my judgment about other things was half as good as it was in selecting a wife, England needed me. The Hindley congregation had produced three outstanding evangelists – Albert Winstanley, Frank Worgan and Tom Kemp. It was a blessing to me to be associated with them.

My first meeting in the district was at Scholes, with Leonard Channing presiding. At the close of the service two expressed their decision to obey Christ and Carlton Melling announced the fact with well-chosen words. The meeting on Sunday at Hindley was not hindered by the cold coupled with mist and rain. Leonard Morgan presided capably. The order consisted of a hymn, a prayer and another hymn. One brother then arose and read from the old covenant scriptures, and another followed with a new covenant scripture reading. The "prayers of the church" were called for and three brethren prayed in turn. Following another hymn the brethren contributed of their means. The president made an appropriate talk about the meaning of the Lord's Supper, and thanks were given for the bread and cup, and they were offered to the disciples. I was then invited to exhort the saints which I did briefly. There was no invitation given to aliens. This was a family gathering for the children of God, and not a gospel meeting. British brethren knew the difference.

At luncheon in the Morgan home we met Bro. Harold Baines from Morley, in Yorkshire, who informed us that all was in readiness for our visit to that area and promised that we would be treated to the famous “Yorkshire pudding.” At 2:00 p.m. we were back at the meetinghouse. Bro. Stephen Winstanley called the youngsters together, and after several choruses, dispatched them to their classes. I spoke to a room filled with older children and their teachers. At 6:00 o’clock I addressed an excellent audience present for the gospel meeting, and at 8:00 o’clock the house was filled for the second gospel meeting. Every seat was taken.

On successive evenings I addressed goodly crowds at Albert Street church in Wigan, at Blackburn and again at Scholes. One evening we held an open air meeting in the public marketplace. Wigan is the oldest borough in Lancashire, having been chartered by Henry III in 1246. A hundred years before the American Declaration of Independence was signed the city was known all over the world for its manufacture of bells and pewter.

On Thursday night the brethren in Hindley held a Farewell Rally, attended by representatives from all of the other district congregations. It was evident the Hindley congregation possessed great potential for sparking the work throughout the British Isles. The elders were men of vision, the members of the body seemed consecrated, and the future appeared bright.

If I may digress a wee bit, let me inform you that Wigan was the original home of Miles Standish. He was a resident of Duxberry, Wigan, and named his New England estate after it. It is now well-known as Duxbury, Massachusetts. His wife Rose was the first to become ill on the fateful trip on the Mayflower, and the first to die. She lies sleeping in Burying Hill, at Plymouth Rock. His subsequent infatuation for Priscilla Mullens, who married John Alden, has very little historical basis.

On Friday we flew from Ringway Airport in Manchester, to Belfast, to attend the annual conference of British congregations. Our arrival by the air terminal bus in Donegal Square was greeted by three marvelous people – Mary Hendren, Pearl Hunter and Robby Hendren. Since we were to stay in the lovely home of Sammy and Pearl Hunter, we took the tram up Ballygomartin Road, and walked up Glencairn Crescent to the house. The streets were lined with emergency bomb shelters, now being used as playgrounds by boys and girls. After tea we again walked through a lovely park to Shankill Road and then up Berlin Street to the meetinghouse, a former schoolbuilding purchased and remodeled by the brethren.

William Hendren presided over the welcome rally and, in characteristic Ulster fashion claimed that virtually all great men came from North Ireland, including 19 presidents of the United States, as well as Alexander Campbell and Saint Patrick. Speeches were made by George Hudson from Birmingham, England, and Andrew Gardiner from Glasgow, Scotland. I was also invited to speak as a representative of a former British colony which became upset over tax on tea.

On Saturday the conference business was transacted, and reports given, with Joe Hamilton presiding. In the evening William Hendren and I spoke. I was tremendously impressed with his knowledge and ability. The Lord’s Day meeting began at 11:30 a.m., and made use of the talents of four English brethren – Robert McDonald, Dewsbury; George Hudson, Birmingham; Fred

Hardy, Morley; and Stephen Winstanley, Hindley. George Hendren from Belfast also participated and I gave the exhortation. At the Children's Meeting at 2:30 p.m., Joe Hamilton introduced Stephen Winstanley and myself to speak after encouraging the "lads and lassies" to pay attention.

We adjourned for tea in the home of Granny Hendren, on Brussels Street, just around the corner, and at 6:00 o'clock were all back at the meetinghouse to start the open air meetings. Eighty people marched down the street singing, "Come Ye That Love the Lord!" Stops were made at four intersections with additional songs and an announcement of the meeting to follow. The final open air presentation was directly in front of the meetinghouse. Later, as I arose to speak, the forms (benches) were filled to capacity and people were standing about the walls.

On Monday Nell and I visited the memorial to the Titanic which sank on her maiden voyage in 1912 with a loss of 832 passengers and 680 crewmen. We also went to the monument dedicated personally by General Dwight D. Eisenhower to celebrate the landing of American troops in the war so recently ended. After tea in the home of George and Rachel Hendren, I met with the oversight of the congregation consisting of Joe Hamilton, George Millar, William, Charles and George Hendren. They asked my permission for them to write the brethren in America to send me back to Belfast to help in the evangelizing of Northern Ireland. I little realized then what a change would take place in my life and thought upon my return. We held two open air meetings before the evening service and again the building was full.

The following day a chartered bus took all of the visitors for a tour of Northern Ireland, including the Giant's Causeway. We returned by way of Carrickfergus and the old castle where William of Orange landed and started the drive which made Northern Ireland a Protestant country by the decisive Battle of the Boyne, July 12, 1690. Our tour was on Junior Orangemen's Day which created enough excitement with its massive parade that the gospel meeting was not quite so well attended. It is hard to compete with the Orange Society in North Ireland.

On Wednesday night before the gospel meeting, Bro. Millar presented me with a well-preserved copy of the *Millennial Harbinger*. Thursday evening the meetinghouse was again crowded out. Seven had already obeyed the gospel during our stay and enthusiasm was great. After the regular service a farewell meeting was held, which began with the serving of tea and scones. Joe Hamilton presided. Rachel Hendren was called upon to make a speech of appreciation and ended by presenting Nell with a lovely hand-embroidered Irish linen tablecloth. Bobby Hendren presented each of us a gift and then the chorus stood and sang, "Will Ye No Come Back Again?" We felt a bit flattered for this was the song the Capetown Africans sang to the king and queen as their ship sailed away from the harbor.

All of us were in tears as the meeting ended. Young and old were sobbing as if their hearts would break. We clung to each other, reluctant to accept the fact that we had to part. It was long after midnight when we said goodnight to the Hunter family and went to our bed, but we arose early next morning for breakfast, and when we arrived at the airport bus station in Donegal Square we found a company of saints awaiting us. I could name every one of them, but I must limit myself to a special tribute to Mary Hendren who, for thirty years, has faithfully written to

us and kept us informed by letters, newspapers and books, of the changing fortunes of the saints in these troublous times.

When we arrived back at Ringway Air Terminal in Manchester, we soon transferred to the rail station to board the train for Morley, near the great industrial city of Leeds, in Yorkshire. The train trip through the hills was beautiful. Gray stone fences centuries old climbed up the steeps. Patches of snow lingered in the upper valleys. Rushing streams tumbled under old stone bridges. The train went through a long tunnel and emerged at Morley.

## **MORE OF ENGLAND AND THEN HOME AGAIN**

Our stay in Yorkshire was memorable for many reasons. For one thing we were privileged to stay in the home of Fred and Hilda Hardy and their charming daughter Bessie. Bro. Hardy was a plumber and contractor and had created a lovely house called “Windyridge” out of an antique stone dwelling. I spoke five times at Morley with increasing crowds each night, and once at Ardsley and Dewsbury. The brethren seemed greatly uplifted and my own spirits soared. Bro. Hardy owned an automobile and resolved to show us as much of Yorkshire as possible, including the seven-hilled city of Morley, the home of great woolen mills.

Some areas still remain engraved in my memory. The great city of Leeds with its famous university, renowned modern hospital, the unique city hall, and the huge apartment building spread over several city blocks and erected in a perfect and unbroken circle. The quaint old city of York, looking like a throwback to the days of Charles Dickens. We visited York Minster with its crypts in the floor containing the dust of English nobility, and the days of Roman occupation in the first century. The lovely city of Harrogate, famous spa and health resort, where the crystal clear mineral waters run through the bath houses, and along the valley by the promenade where the wealthy walk.

The age-old city of Knaresborough, clinging precariously to the slopes rising above the River Nidd, and looking like an illustration from a Mother Goose book. This was the traditional home of “Mother Shipton” who was credited with prophesying the advent of automobiles, planes and other modern developments centuries ago. One day, through the kindness of Bro. Fred Sugden, who worked in a woolen mill, we were permitted to go through and observe the processing from the time the wool was received until the cloth came off in huge rolls bound for export to the United States. The week sped by all too quickly and we had to depart for Warwickshire before we were ready to go. We will never forget the Hardy, McDonald, Sugden, Sykes and Baines families, nor shall I forget Geoffrey Lodge, the astute and capable young brother who later married Bessie Hardy.

When we arrived in Birmingham, Friday, April 18, the signs of the fearful devastation wrought by Nazi bombers were everywhere evident. The Summerlane meetinghouse had been blasted into fragments one Saturday night and the brethren with whom I was to labor were using an old mess hall purchased from the government and hauled to their site. We were given hospitality in the home of Bro. Fred Day, one of the elders, and also one of the gentlest and humblest men I have ever met. Scholarly and informed, he was one of the most qualified Bible teachers with whom I have ever been associated.

On Saturday, the brethren had arranged a welcome meeting, preceded by a 4:00 o'clock tea, to which all of the congregations in the area were invited. Instead of one returning thanks when we were all seated, the brethren sang a thanksgiving hymn in unison. Bro. Earl Stuckenbruck and wife, who were enroute to Tuebingen, Germany, were in Birmingham, and came out to meet me. His father was a minister of the Disciples of Christ congregation in Topeka, Kansas, where I finished high school. The Stuckenbrucks were the first Americans we had met on our tour and the "Yankee twang" with its mid-western accent sounded good to our ears.

On Saturday afternoon I was taken to the home of John McCartney, who was to be 93 years old the following Wednesday. He lived contemporary with David King, the leader of the reform movement in England for forty years. He was a boy of twelve when news reached England of the death of Alexander Campbell. I had long read his writings and it seemed like a dream that I should be in the home of this renowned scholar. He was totally blind, but his mind was clear and lucid, and as he sat with the shawl about his shoulders, talking about the Book which had been his rod and staff, it was a little like being in the presence of one of the prophets.

From the home of Bro. McCartney we went to the cemetery where the body of David King lies buried. I had already read the large book titled "Memoir of David King" by his wife Louise, and knew that the Cause had been launched in Birmingham through his efforts coupled with those of J.B. Rotherham. From a congregation of eleven members which they planted, the community of saints grew to number hundreds. In some ways David King excelled Alexander Campbell and it is a tragedy that his work is so little known in the United States. Carved upon the simple stone erected over his resting-place are these words: "rejecting all human creeds, He pleaded that the Teaching of Christ and His Apostles is the only Divinely authorized and all-sufficient Way of Salvation and basis of Christian Union. He was a good man. Mighty in the Scriptures. Ask for the Old Paths and walk therein."

Warwickshire fairly crawls with literary greatness. On our way to Leicester to speak we visited Stratford-on-Avon. The home of William Shakespeare looked just as it had been pictured in my high school English Literature textbook. I read with interest the original manuscripts of some of his plays exhibited upstairs. In an adjoining room, where he was born, many of the world's great have scratched their names in the glass of the old Tudor windowpanes. Easily identified were the autographs of William Makepeace Thackeray, Sir Walter Scott, and John Barrymore. Speaking of Scott reminds me that as we left Stratford we went to Kenilworth to visit the castle tower featured in his novel named after the town.

At Coventry we saw the frightful havoc wreaked by the German Luftwaffe. The city grew from a Benedictine monastery established in 1043 by the famous Lady Godiva and her husband. Hitler resolved to wipe it from the earth. In two months of insane bombing the center of the city was devastated and 70,000 homes were utterly destroyed or severely damaged. The 14th century St. Michael's Cathedral was blasted into oblivion except for the 303-foot steeple which remained like a lone finger pointing toward the heavens.

The little body of brethren in Leicester met in a council schoolroom. They had recently left the large congregation affiliated with the British Cooperation for conscience' sake. We had a good audience present and a grand spirit of fellowship was apparent. The following day we drove

through Sherwood Forest, the one-time haunt of Robin Hood and his merry men on our way to Loughborough where I was to speak. We stayed with Basil and Elizabeth Jaynes who were tenants working on the great Sir Julian Hall estate, embracing several thousand acres. A great many German prisoners were under guard on the estate sorting and cleaning potatoes for the market. Many of them were young and looked like anything but Nazi supermen. They were forced to wear a diamond-shaped patch of another color on the back of their drab jackets and trousers to permit immediate identification and to provide against escape. They were hungry for news of what was transpiring in the world and eagerly snatched up every bit of stray newspaper, which some of them could read.

At East Kirkby, on Wednesday night, I encountered the first serious opposition I had experienced. The British brethren, with very few exceptions, are vigorously against the idea of bearing arms in time of war, under any circumstances. Some of the older ones endured imprisonment and even physical torture for their convictions during World War One. So pronounced was the feeling at East Kirkby during World War Two that it was made a test of fellowship. The brethren refused to pass the Lord's Supper to those who were in uniform. American soldiers who attended were deliberately barred from the privilege of communing in the body and blood of the Lord.

Since I regarded war as an evil, and not necessarily a sin, I had written my book *Fighting Christians* a number of years before. In it I took up one by one the scriptural deductions affirmed by the brethren who were opposed to war and dealt with them. Thinking to prejudice the British brethren against me before my arrival certain ones in the United States had mailed several copies of my book to what they considered strategic areas. The brethren knew I was not a political pacifist. The question period following my message was without incident, but following dismissal several of the brethren gathered around me and walled me in, demanding how I could be in the fellowship of those trained to kill. It reminded me of how things are done in the United States and turned out to be an interesting engagement with some of the most militant pacifists I have ever met. Since I made no test of fellowship out of their opinion it was not nearly so tense for me as for them. I could receive and love them without their changing. But the danger of making tests of fellowship out of personal deductions from the scriptures was borne home to me as I had never seen it before.

After a final meeting in Birmingham we returned to London to spend more than a week with the Scott family before embarking on the Queen Elizabeth for home. It was a time literally crammed with interest, but would require too much time and space to describe. On Sunday, April 27, there were 24 present for the breaking of bread in this great city of ten million souls. In the evening Bro. Scott asked me if I would be willing to engage in a question forum after the gospel meeting. Although I was surprised at the request, I agreed to do so. Later I learned that two or three in the congregation had raised objections to allowing me to speak because of my position as to bearing arms in international conflict. The forum was a good one and the contention quite sharp at times, although good order predominated. Some were more dogmatic than others and the questioners disagreed among themselves, but the session helped clear the air. I came away with a sense of deep appreciation for the brethren, even those who disagreed with me.

We sailed from Southampton on Saturday, May 3, and arrived back in St. Louis on May 10, my thirty-ninth birthday. Our eager hearts were filled to overflowing to see the children well and hearty and doing well in school. In the ensuing weeks scores of letters came from those whom we had met and as we replied to them our hearts drifted back across the ocean and in memory we lived again with those who were so dear unto us. As I write this thirty years have passed into history since we first set foot in Great Britain, but we still hear from several of those whom we met. We would like to hear from all of them.

Almost at once my services were in demand by congregations which wanted to hear of our trip and see the amateur movies we had made of the entire time. I resumed my weekly radio broadcast which had been temporarily placed in the efficient hands of Hershel Ottwell after my 171st consecutive message. Too, we had to begin distribution of the first volume of the Bible Commentary by Brother Zerr which we had published under our imprint. It sold for \$4.00 per copy, bound in cloth and stamped in gold.

Our paper *Mission Messenger*, now almost ten years old, was full of reports of congregations being planted, new meetinghouses being erected, and people being immersed into Christ. Every issue contained letters from abroad and it seemed as if God was smiling upon the efforts of "the brotherhood." It never entered our minds that we were exclusivists forming a divisive party. We were the one body for which Jesus had died. It was a propitious season for resuming the debates with Brother Brewer who had suggested that we hold an open discussion upon every Christian college campus. Inasmuch as he was on the staff of Harding College at Searcy, Arkansas, he suggested it as the best place for our third encounter.

On October 20, 1947, I wrote this genial "brother in error" and asked him to select a date. I was ready when he was. In his reply he said: "I suppose you keep up with the papers and, if you do, you realize that there is a considerable interest now aroused over a question among ourselves. This is the old question of whether or not a church should contribute to a school. You know my position, and this is the position held by the vast majority of my brethren. However, the *Bible Banner* group has been seeking to destroy me for some years and they thought they would get me committed to an issue on which none of the schools or orphan homes or papers would agree with me, and then they would have me branded as a disloyal, unfair man. They have failed in this and it is about to turn the other way. The *Bible Banner* is about to find itself standing alone on this point except for the sympathy they get from the Sommers. They are inconsistent or they would go over to the Sommers or else drop the point they are making an ado about. Right now we have a challenge out to them and it is possible that Roy Cogdill will finally be urged to meet me in debate. If that happens, I'll have him as an opponent instead of you; and when the debate is over, you can probably take his arguments and debate with me or some other man on our side.

"At any rate, this is the status of the case now and I am not prepared to tell you that you and I can have a debate soon. If this other debate fails to develop, then we may get Harding to invite our debate and we can move it to Memphis where we will have a big auditorium. We shall have to wait, however, for a while before we pursue this matter any further. With all good wishes, I am faithfully yours. —G.C. Brewer."

I never debated Bro. Brewer again. The trouble which was fomenting in the ranks of those with whom he was directly affiliated continued to grow until eventually another major cleavage occurred and the restoration movement was disgraced by another unnecessary division. Today in some cities there are representatives of both sides meeting and challenging one another for debate. One side refers to the other as “liberals” while they think of themselves as “conservatives.” The fact is that neither group is the body of Christ in its fullness and both are simply factions which cannot get along with each other.

In January of 1948 we had 85 students from ten states enrolled in the study of the Word in Saint Louis. It was a great learning experience and we explored the Bible with a keen sense of desire for knowing more about the divine revelation. For six weeks we studied every day and held three night sessions of two hours each. We drew so close together that we wept when the time came to bid one another farewell.



## 4. The Beginnings of Change

### LIFE BEGINS AT 40

Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote in his *Journal* in 1847: “We do not live an equal life, but one of contrasts and patchwork, now a little joy, then a sorrow, now a sin, then a generous or brave action.” A calendar consists of twelve pages and every four weeks one of them is torn off and wadded up and tossed in the wastebasket. Each of these discarded pages represents a segment of existence, but what has happened to one during its tenure cannot be carelessly discarded seeing that it has been woven into the warp and woof of the pattern of memory by the slamming batten of experience on the loom of life.

Every year that passes accumulates its own assortment of pleasure and pain, of tears and laughter. The ship of life cannot sail for fifty-two weeks in perpetual sunshine. It was that way with 1948 during which I reached my fortieth birthday. The year began as usual with a packed house in Saint Louis on New Year’s Eve. It was a time of spiritual enrichment, of the manifestation of a fellowship so precious that when the stroke of midnight signaled the beginning of a new year ushered in with prayer many were reluctant to leave. We clung to one another as a huddle of strangers and pilgrims in a foreign land. The songs we sang were hymns about a home none of us had ever seen, but the tolling of the bells at midnight told us that we were nearer to it than we had ever been before.

In March I went to California for a meeting of three weeks’ duration in the new meetinghouse at Compton. I took advantage of the opportunity to speak two nights in Oakland where the saints met in the home of George Robinson, which was surrounded by the campus of the great university. I also spent one night each with the saints in Pomona, Riverside, and West Riverside. I was especially anxious to visit the latter place for several reasons. While there were a few others in the little group of brethren, the majority were members of the Stone and Fiscus families. The latter family had worked its way westward from Indiana, but the Stone family migrated from the Missouri Ozarks. They had purchased a small “ranch” which was well irrigated and all of the married children erected their homes in a small domain over which the aged father and mother exercised a kind of patriarchal sway. It was always a blessing to be associated with them in their kind of isolated splendor. But I was just as eager to meet the little colony of Armenian refugees, a good many of whom I had baptized on a previous visit.

During World War I the Turks, encouraged by the withdrawal of Russian troops from Armenia due to the Bolshevik Revolution, began a reign of terror in Armenia which shocked the world. Whole cities and villages were literally destroyed. The men were murdered, the women raped, and the houses reduced to smoking ruins and heaps of ashes. Before it was all over 800,000 corpses littered the land, most of them shot down or decapitated with the sword, although many perished from hunger and privation. Some of them froze to death in thickets, their bodies becoming food for wild animals.

Those who finally made their way to Riverside, California, had formerly lived in the village of Boethos, near Musa Dagh (the mount of Moses) and when word reached them of the approach of

the Turks they fled to the mountains taking with them only what they could hastily tie into a bundle and carry on their backs. After many days and nights when they held the children close to their bodies to keep them from freezing, their supply of food began to run out and they were forced to become scavengers of the forest, eating bark and roots. When it appeared that all hope was gone and they were composing themselves for death they saw a French ship steaming into the disputed waters and they were rescued. In a frenzy of weeping they threw themselves onto the deck and kissed the planks in gratitude.

For some reason, during my meeting at West Riverside, a number of the Armenians began to attend. Since the older ones could not understand English, those who could asked if I would hold a special meeting with an interpreter for the elderly after the close of the regular meeting each night. Rose Philian, a devout Christian, stood by my side and interpreted. Soon several of the Armenian families expressed a desire to be baptized, but the greatest joy came when Grandfather and Grandmother Egarian reached the decision. It was these two, now grown old, who had kept the little band together and given them heart when they wanted to take their lives rather than fall into the hands of the Turks.

When the aged patriarch stood before the members of the Armenian colony and their friends, I said to Rose, "Ask him if he truly believes that Jesus is the one of whom the prophets spoke, and God's Son." In reply he faced his neighbors and spoke at some length in Armenian. I was anxious to know what he was saying, and I can remember the words of the translator as if I had heard them this morning. "He say, I believe Jesus Son of God, that born of virgin, that he die on cross for his sin, and that he buried and raised again third day. He also say Jesus is coming again, and he will see him, and Jesus will take him and he will be with Jesus." When I led the aged man into the water the interpreter stood close and told him what I said. I think I have never seen before or since such weeping for joy as when all surged forward to embrace the old brother and his companion.

It was a great experience to see the Armenian saints again and to eat shish kebab made of lamb and other ingredients. They went all out with their cuisine and I ate a lot of things I could neither spell nor describe. The one thing that really interested me was to talk with them about their traditions related to Noah's ark which had landed on a mountain not too far from where they had been born and grew up.

Some interesting things happened at Compton where I baptized twenty persons, one of whom was Robert T. Hartmann. Bob was a reporter for the *Los Angeles Times* who later became head of the *Times* bureau in Rome and finally chief of the Washington Bureau. It was here he became acquainted with Senator Gerald Ford from Michigan and when the latter became president of the United States, Bob became his favorite speechwriter. He married Roberta Sankey with whose parents I was staying in North Long Beach and I came to know him well.

When I baptized him he agreed to become a writer for *Mission Messenger*. His articles were both powerful and provocative. The first one titled "The Essence of Faith" appeared in the issue for May 1948. It was followed by such pieces as "Suffer Little Children" and "Words to Live By." Finally, after eight months of such varied productions it was decided he would do a regular column called "Views of the News." It began in January 1949 with a story of how Sohn Ryang

Won, a Korean Christian, adopted into his family the 24-year-old Communist leader who had slain his two sons. The story went on to tell how Sohn converted the young murderer and his whole family to Christ.

For two years Brother Hartmann furnished an article each month until his promotion and transfer increased his responsibilities. His final article bore the title, "Was Peter in Rome?" I got a bang out of his articles. He had not grown up in the background of our party and he wrote what he thought with a kind of fearless disregard for criticism or consequences. He had a kind of journalistic honesty not too characteristic of a lot of the brethren.

Almost a year before I went to Compton, James Lovell, editor of *West Coast Christian* wrote me that, in spite of our differences, he thought I would be glad to see him at one of my meetings. We engaged in a brief period of correspondence and discussed some areas of divergency. Neither of us conceded an inch, but it was all in good humor. There was no way of making him angry. When I arrived in Southern California I called him and invited him to visit my meeting and he countered by asking me to a top-level conference at Pepperdine College. I invited J.B. Ruth, one of the elders, to accompany me. When we arrived at the Administration Building we met with Hugh Tiner, the president; Ralph Wilburn of the Bible Department; Wade Ruby of the English Department; Dean Pullias and Jimmie Lovell.

In spite of the criticism I had leveled at the school and its policies, our meeting was conducted with proper decorum. I think George Pepperdine would have approved of the nature of our confrontation. We were reared in the same partisan background and I knew him when he went to Denver from Parsons, Kansas, where I preached for several years with members of his family always in the audience.

I suggested that, in the interest of better relationships, Brother Lovell print three articles in his paper presenting my point of view, while I would present the same number of articles written by one of the faculty members in *Mission Messenger*. It was agreed this would be a good thing but it never came to pass. Instead, a shake-up occurred, and before too long the president, dean and head of the Bible Department were all gone. Ralph G. Wilburn, who was probably the only real theologian in the group, in the classical sense, went with the Disciples of Christ, where he began teaching at Lexington Theological Seminary. He was selected as a member of the Panel of Scholars which contributed to the restructure program of the Disciples, and gravitated to the Department of Higher Education in Chapman College at Orange, California.

On September 5, 1948, I began a series of meetings in Windsor, Ontario, Canada, which lasted for two weeks. It was an especially pleasurable experience since most of the members were from Scotland and England and I had visited their home congregations abroad. There were two elders – Adam Bruce from the Slamannan District of Scotland, and William Horrocks from Albert Street congregation in Wigan, England. I stayed with the latter and it was an unforgettable experience. My work opened up a period of endeavors which lasted over a period of several years and resulted in some unique experiences as well as in some outstanding friendships.

One day before I went to Canada I was visited in Saint Louis by the three principal instructors of Mid-western School of Evangelism, located in Ottumwa, Iowa. Donald G. Hunt, Burton W. Barber and James McMorrow drove all the way to deliver to me a personal challenge to debate Burton Barber on the subject of instrumental music at the school. I felt no particular inclination to take time out from a busy life for such a discussion but they were insistent. Hershel Ottwell accompanied me to Ottumwa, and we debated at the school on the nights of October 11, 12, 13. On the final night, after the discussion ended, the five of us met in an upper room and prayed that God would overcome our differences and use our mistakes to His glory. The debate had been serious and pointed, but without a single untoward incident or expression of partisan hostility.

Tragedy struck for us shortly afterwards. Nell's father and mother were returning from an evening meeting at Fredericktown, Missouri, when their automobile was hit by a man who was intoxicated. Her mother was thrown from the car by the impact and her body dragged along until the car turned over. She was taken to Bonne Terre where the skill of the physicians and surgeons saved her and started her on the long, slow road to recovery. On the afternoon of December 13 she was in good spirits when a well-meaning nurse massaged her arm because of soreness. A blood clot was loosened and found its way to the heart. In a few minutes she was gone.

I was at Carrollton, Missouri, in a meeting, when Nell called me and relayed to me the sad news. As soon as I finished the meeting that night I started home. On the third day following I conducted the service of memorial before a large audience. My "second mother" was beloved by hundreds. Nell's father was mayor of the city, to which he was elected for several terms, and the family had earned the respect of the whole community. But it came home to me then what a difference there is in a home when the wife and mother is gone. The Christmas season which had always been one of joy and brightness became a kind of weary experience through which we stumbled with our eyes more often filled with tears than with stars.

In the year that was hastening to a close Brother Zerr had completed the second volume of his commentary which we published. Because we had not disposed of enough of the first one to pay for the second, the cumulative effect of the costs became too much and it appeared that we might have to delay work on the third volume until the other two were paid for. Fortunately for the cause, F.R. Bailey of Chillicothe, Missouri agreed to guarantee the cost of production to the printers so we could proceed on schedule. Eventually we brought out three thousand sets containing six books each, a total of 18,000 volumes, at a cost of about \$35,000, not including packaging and postal costs. We sold all of the books.

It was during this year my book *A Clean Church* was published. I had been thinking about it by day and dreaming about it by night until one afternoon I could no longer stifle the urge to write. I sat down at the dining-table and started. I wrote all afternoon, all night, and until almost noon the next day, driven by an inner compulsion which would not allow me to stop. I was afraid that if I slept the fountain might be turned off and not flow again. When I arose from my chair I could hardly walk, but before me lay a stack of pages representing a complete book. I do not recall making any changes when I typed it up. I learned that brain children are like physical children. They must be conceived before they are brought to the delivery room, but once the time has come, they will be born. I suspect that having the first child is most difficult. I never again wrote another major book as I did that one.

In 1948 we also began an outreach program. Brother Leonard Bilyeu opened up his lovely home in the Florissant Valley for a weekly study of the Word. In three months 55 different persons representing all varieties of religious thought had participated. Encouraged by this I secured the conference room of the public library at Kirkwood and launched a study which was surprisingly well attended. I was not alone in this endeavor, for many brethren, old and young, were catching the vision that the post-war world was seeking for a spiritual foundation. As the year drew to a close I wrote, "The quickest way to lose your life is to try and hold it; the best way to gain your life is to lose it for Jesus' sake."

## THE CALL OF THE SOUTH

The year of 1949 was an eventful one historically and personally. On January 20, Harry S. Truman from Missouri was sworn in as President, with Alben W. Barkley as his vice-president. They had been elected November 2 in a stunning upset victory over Thomas E. Dewey and Earl Warren. On April 4 the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was sworn into being, and on April 14 the German war crimes trial was ended with the conviction of 19 of 21 former Nazi officials.

We began by dropping the word "Missouri" from the name of the paper. It had long since ceased to be merely a journal recording news from our state and henceforth would be known as *Mission Messenger*. We coined the slogan "The paper with a mission and a message." We signalled the change by introducing open forums upon such subjects as "The Work of Women in the Church," and "Marriage and Divorce." I published the divergent views in articles and letters exactly as they were written and without editing. It was a new day for fairness and apparently the people liked it. In ninety days we received a thousand new subscriptions. Our writers demonstrated a considerable amount of "unity in diversity," especially since most of them denied there was such a thing.

I rather suspect the year marked a new kind of "high" for our particular segment of the restoration movement. This was reflected in the attendance and enthusiasm shown in the "annual meetings" which had long been a part of our life. Some of these were anniversary gatherings marking the date the congregation had been planted. Others, such as the Labor Day meeting at Hammond, Illinois, were scheduled to take advantage of the freedom from work on holidays. There were 256 at the 39th anniversary meeting at Bonne Terre, Missouri, June 12; 330 at Hartford, Illinois, June 26; 200 at Sullivan, Illinois, July 17; 350 at Richmond, Missouri, July 24; and 452 at Hammond, Illinois, September 5. The latter embraced brethren from 51 congregations in 8 states.

A part of the attendance was due to the presence among us of Albert Winstanley from England. Albert and Jean, with their little son David, a babe in arms, arrived in New York on the liner Queen Mary, on June 20. Nell and her elder sister Nova went to New York to accompany them to Saint Louis, where the stifling heat of the mid-west was almost too much for them. Although still a young man, Albert was an excellent student of God's Word, clear and lucid in his thinking, and articulate in his presentation. He visited scores of congregations with Hershel Ottwell as his guide and travel companion. They covered many states. Wherever Albert went, God used him in a marvelous manner and the six months he spent among us seemed to fly.

In September I returned to Windsor, Ontario, for a Bible Study which I taught every night with an average of more than sixty in attendance. On Sunday I spoke to the edification of the saints gathered for the breaking of the bread, and that night proclaimed the good news in the gospel meeting. It was during the study of the Word that I met William Keenan, an atheist and former Communist organizer. He came to my meeting through the influence of a former alcoholic, now a fellow-member of Alcoholics Anonymous. After three nights of attendance at my class they asked me if I could come and talk with them the following day.

I went at 9:00 a.m., and was ushered into the drab quarters, a “bachelor pad” with sparse furnishings. We sat down in the kitchen with its single naked light bulb hanging from the ceiling. There were just three battered chairs and we pulled them up to the table with its chipped enamel top. As we talked an occasional mouse made a foray across the floor to pick up a crumb, dashing back to safety when someone shuffled his feet. I watched a huge cockroach crawling around on a rickety cabinet.

When I requested the privilege to pray the two former alcoholics and I bowed our heads, while the cold autumn rain coursed its way in rivulets down the outside of the unwashed window-panes. I asked William Keenan to tell me where he was and how he had arrived there. It was like opening the flood-gates to allow a long pent-up river of feelings to surge through. He talked for three hours while drinking cup after cup of strong coffee. I sipped a little of it and it tasted like I think varnish remover might taste. At times during the narrative his nervous hands shook until he had to use both of them to lift the cup to his lips.

As a boy he was turned from the Christian faith by a preacher in the Established Church, whom he idolized, and who had formed a boys’ club which was the height of his joy in the small English town where he lived. He had resolved to grow up and become a clergyman and devote his life to helping underprivileged children when he discovered that the man he revered was a homosexual and the boys’ club was a cover for dealing in seduction. The night after the rector made an indecent proposal to him, he shook and cried all night. The next morning when he tried to tell his quarreling parents who were heading for a divorce they only berated and abused him verbally.

He ran off and ended up in an English city where he was taken into the home of a Communist labor infiltrator. Here he was shown kindness and love. He was treated daily to the idea that religion was a means by which the wealthy exploiters enslaved the sweating masses for their own profit. The term *God* became a dirty word to his mind. God was the designation of an ogre conjured up in primitive minds. When he was sent to Moscow he already hated God and regarded the Christian faith as a retreat from reality by weak persons. He was trained as an infiltrator of youth groups in the English speaking world, but after several years began to “hit the bottle.” He became useless to Moscow and they kicked him out, convinced he would end up in a drunkard’s grave. But he had gone to Alcoholics Anonymous and found understanding and compassion, and his friend had brought him to my meetings where we were friendly and kind to him.

What I said that night made sense if there was a God. If not, it was merely a house of straw. I had listened for three hours without interruption. At one o’clock I began the real struggle for the

soul of a desperate and destitute man. The minutes ticked away while the rain lessened in force. Three more hours passed, and at four o'clock he said, "That's enough. I believe that God is, and that Jesus Christ is His Son." Just as he said it, the sun broke through for the first time that day and cast a shaft of light across the dingy table where we had been sitting for seven hours. That night I baptized him into the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

When I arrived back home in Saint Louis there was a letter written on lined notepaper asking if I would come for a series of meetings in Beech Grove, a little Arkansas village clustered around a cotton gin a few miles from Paragould. I assumed that it resulted from my reply to a letter received in March from Herbert Johnson, a humble farmer near Beech Grove. He wrote to encourage me to continue my opposition to the one-man hireling ministry system which was foisting a special clergy caste upon the congregations. I agreed to go to Beech Grove for a meeting in July 1950, if God willed.

In the December 22 issue of *Gospel Advocate*, John Allen Hudson unleashed a four-column blast against me in an article titled "The Divisive Leadership of W. Carl Ketcherside." In it he used such terms as "Carl's diocese" and "archbishopric." He spoke of my cantankerous spirit and referred to accusations made against me by members of the Sommer family and by Fred Fenton, who once wrote for *Mission Messenger* and was very complimentary of my efforts, until he dropped out to start a short-lived periodical of his own called *Radiant Truth*. Brother Hudson made dire predictions of my rising power and influence, and warned that if the brethren listened there would be great changes come about in the churches.

I was amazed when I read the article, not only by its appearance, but by its harsh and caustic tone. I immediately wrote B.C. Goodpasture, the editor, and asked for space to reply to the personal attack upon my motives and integrity. After a number of days had gone by I received a curt reply consisting of four lines in which Brother Goodpasture said that he did not think an article from me would contribute to the peace or well-being of the brotherhood. To this day I cannot figure why Brother Hudson reacted so bitterly in print in an attempt to destroy me unless it was because the British brethren had ignored his letters generally circulated among them urging them not to hear me. Their willingness to hear for themselves, coupled with the coming of Brother Winstanley, was probably more than our brother could take.

As the year of 1949 drew to a close we had just concluded a six-weeks Bible Study on December 6, which brought together capable students from ten states. Many of these were young, being just out of high school, but a goodly number were older men seeking to improve their knowledge so they might render better service as elders of their congregations. The study was greatly enhanced by the presence of Brother Winstanley who contributed much to our spiritual knowledge as well as to our understanding of the work of the brethren in Great Britain. Our hearts were sad as the time drew near for the departure of this little family. Nell and I were especially touched because they had made their home with us. It had been good to have a baby in the house once more.

On Saturday night, December 24, we had a farewell gathering for them. The next day, Christmas, Albert spoke in the morning for the congregation on Manchester Avenue. That night he addressed the Lillian Avenue congregation for the last time. The next day they left us but not

before Albert had agreed to contribute an article each month under the heading “As Others See You.” His discussion of his impressions of America and of the congregations he visited provided interesting reading for those who had come to love him for his work’s sake. Long after he had gone to labor in Tunbridge Wells and Ikeston, the congregations over here continued to pray for him by name. He had drawn us close to those of like precious faith in Great Britain “whom having not seen we loved.”

Early in 1950, while in Indiana, I went to the office of the *American Christian Review*, to discuss our differences with Allen R. Sommer, and Bessie, his sister. Our visit was amicable and gracious, despite the rifts which had occurred in the past. The same afternoon I went to Butler University for a talk with some of the faculty members. I was received in a spirit of courtesy and kindness.

Meanwhile in Arkansas the exact opposite attitude was being manifested toward the little congregation at Beech Grove. When word of the forthcoming meeting was released the machinery of opposition went into high gear. There were two congregations in Paragould, the county seat. The one at Second and Walnut had J.A. McNutt as minister, the one at Seventh and Mueller had Emmett Smith. George W. DeHoff of Murfreesboro, Tennessee, was in a meeting in Paragould when the announcement of my coming was made. He immediately launched an attack against Beech Grove from the pulpit, demanding that they cancel their arrangement with me forthwith.

When the brethren at Beech Grove declined to do this it was decided to bring in reinforcements, and a call was made to Harbert Hooker at Poplar Bluff, Missouri, who had several times held meetings at Beech Grove and was generally well liked. Brother Hooker did not even consult the brethren as to whether they wanted him to come. One of the leaders at Beech Grove found a note in his rural mailbox that Brother Hooker would speak at Beech Grove the next Sunday afternoon and wanted all the members present. It was announced on Sunday morning and all of the members went. Brother Hooker delivered a talk on supporting preachers, then asked everyone to leave except the Beech Grove members.

He told of his deep regret at learning that the brethren were making the saddest mistake of their career in bringing in the worst extremist in the whole United States. He said I was so opposed to women speaking in the church that when a woman wanted to make a confession of faith we took her out on the front porch of our meetinghouses. The brethren asked him if he would sign a statement to that effect so they could go to Saint Louis and investigate. He refused and told them he was not signing anything, but they would be sorry if they did not listen to him. He then shook the dust off his feet and departed.

Two weeks later a preacher showed up on Sunday morning and announced he had been sent to warn the brethren not to go through with their plans for me to come. He warned them I was so liberal I believed in women preachers. After the meeting they “collared him” and told him that either he or Brother Hooker was guilty of falsehood and perhaps both were. He excused himself and fled the scene, and never returned.



Sterl Watson then entered the fray by writing a booklet filled with diatribe under the silly title “Ketcherside and Killebrew Keeled.” Fred Killebrew was then working with a small congregation in Senath, Missouri, after having renounced the clergy system while living in Tennessee. It was the intention of Brother Watson to wipe Fred and myself off the map with one swipe. Amazingly, Dr. James D. Bales sent out an endorsement of the book urging all to read it. Actually, it was so wild that we immediately recognized that if we could get it into the hands of brethren it would do more good than anything we could write or say.

Fred Killebrew began to advertise the books and offer them free in his meetings. It was so effective that when he went to Sterl to get a couple of hundred additional copies he refused to let him have them or to tell him where he might secure them.

## **ARKANSAS ANTICS**

I feel certain that many of my readers will be inclined to sit in judgment upon me for spending so much time detailing events surrounding one little semi-rural congregation in Arkansas. If I need to justify my own conscience I can do so by recalling that it is in such places the Spirit always works to turn the tide of sectarianism. It cannot be done initially in large metropolitan areas where pride and tradition, those twin evils which oppose all reformation, have entrenched themselves. No one in the restoration movement of which we are heirs, who remembers Washington, Pennsylvania, or Cane Ridge, Kentucky, should ever “despise the day of small things.”

The struggle of men to free themselves from the encroachment of a System seeking to destroy their freedom needs to be chronicled so that future generations basking in the warm sun of liberty will not forget the price that was paid to drive the ominous clouds away. And the names of those who warred upon one side or the other need to be engraved on the pillars of history since movements are but men in action. Before I went to Beech Grove, Arkansas, there had gradually developed a kind of super-church mentality which tended to elevate to dominance large congregations whose preachers and elders were promoters and who could control rural congregations and use them as feeder units to enhance their own image.

One if the congregations in Paragould had actually proposed to all of the rural and village churches in the county that they send their finances in to it, and allow them to arrange for a stable of preachers who could be assigned to various places and paid for from the central fund. The argument was used that since the Paragould congregation had elders and many of the smaller places did not, these elders could oversee the preachers and assure that country congregations would hear “better preaching.” It is to the eternal credit of the rural congregations that they rejected this blatant attempt to take over their rights and violate their autonomy.

But what a proposed centralized presbytery could not accomplish was then attempted through “area preacher meetings.” In such monthly gatherings needs were discussed, plans were devised, and machinery set up to accomplish what a professional clergy wanted to see done. Smaller congregations without preachers on their payroll had no representation. They did not know of the plans until they were already being carried out and they received a letter or visit from

someone asking them to send finances to help “bear the burden.” Such little places had to submit or be ostracized and castigated for refusal to cooperate in “the work of the Lord.”

When W.L. Otty, who lived in Indianapolis, Indiana, heard that I was going to Beech Grove he fired off a letter to the church in Paragould to tell them how to handle the matter. He advised his brethren to assault the ramparts and go in a body to Beech Grove each night. As soon as I finished my message they were to arise and take over and hold another meeting in which they could defeat anything I said. He also recommended that the Paragould brethren publicly withdraw from the two brethren at Beech Grove who had first suggested to the congregation to have me come. By some quirk of the mail service his letter was delivered to the church in Beech Grove instead of to the one in Paragould. One of the brothers whose exclusion was recommended stood up and read it publicly to the saints.

In desperation, the preachers published a notice in *Firm Foundation* at Austin, Texas, under the heading “Ketcherside Invades the South.” It called upon all preachers and members everywhere not to give aid or comfort to the brethren at Beech Grove until they repented of the grievous sin of inviting me to speak to them and renounced me and what I advocated. It was signed by J.A. McNutt and Emmet Smith, among others.

As soon as the notice appeared preachers began to enter the fray. Some called long distance. Others drove to Beech Grove. All frantically urged the brethren to cancel the work before it was too late. Sinclair Slatton, Joe Blue, George Dehoff, G.C. Brewer, W. Curtis Porter, and James D. Bales, were but a few of those who injected themselves into the business of the congregation and vainly tried their hand. The more pressure that was brought to bear from the outside the more determined did the little group become not to be shoved around.

It was about this time I began receiving crank letters from some of the brethren in Paragould. A few of them contained overt threats and implied I might even suffer bodily injury. One said if I did not cancel the meeting and hurry up about it a group of men from all over that section would meet me as “a welcoming committee” and make it so hot for me I would wish I had never come. I sent the letters to the brethren at Beech Grove who called me by telephone to say that it was they who invited me to come and only they had the right to invite me not to come. They told me to come on and pay no attention to letters from the congregations at Paragould or Commissary.

On Saturday, July 15, I went to Beech Grove with Allen Phillips and his good family. They had lived in the vicinity of Lafe, Arkansas, for a number of years and knew most of the saints at Beech Grove. They took their vacation to go with me to help in the meeting and they were a real strength and blessing. I went to the home of Herbert and Ruby Johnson where I was to stay. I have never found the hospitality which they extended to me surpassed. I had not been there an hour until brothers and sisters began to drive in from all around. None of them had ever seen me and they had come to “size me up.” They were sincere, humble and unpretentious. It was easy for me to love them every one.

We began the next day under auspicious circumstances. There was a large crowd in the morning and at night the building was filled. The attention was perfect in spite of the heat. On the final night the audience overflowed the building and many could not get in. Everyone came except

the preachers. They were conspicuous by their very absence. Always before they rallied to a “big meeting” and were on the front seats. Now they had resolved to lie low and allow me to hold the meeting and after it had all “blown over” they would move back in and straighten the congregation out. When I announced that I would return in six months and conduct a study of the Word for two weeks, open to all in the area, it began to dawn upon them that a boycott would no more serve their purpose than open attack.

The day our meeting began the church in Paragould started one with E.R. Harper, of Abilene, Texas. It was calculated to keep their members away. On the first Sunday morning Brother Harper went on the air and made an attack upon Beech Grove and upon me personally. The next day three of us went in to the station, met with the manager, and requested time in which to reply. It was granted us at the regular station rate. We announced it well in advance and publicized it in the Paragould paper. It is possible we may have had the largest listening audience in the history of the station. We were particularly fortunate in that our program was aired just after the noon news broadcast.

During the week letters were mailed to every box holder on the rural routes near Beech Grove. They were signed by the elders and preachers at Paragould and demanded that I debate W.L. Totty or Sterl Watson. I read one of the letters from the pulpit and over the radio station and stated I had already debated both men publicly and did not consider either of them a representative man on the issues at hand. I countered by offering to meet either N.B. Hardeman, G.C. Brewer, or George Benson, as top men in the college ranks. But the meeting closed without a debate being arranged. In spite of the tension I immersed four souls in the nearby drainage ditch. Two more made public acknowledgment of wrongs and asked to be restored to the active service of the Lord.

When the time came for me to leave, all of us realized that we had simply gone through the first skirmish and the real battle lay ahead. Men like James King, Avery Cunningham, and Herbert Johnson had been tested by fire for a year. They were ably assisted by a number of others, among whom special mention should be given to Louis Kappelman, Ellis Hots and Franklin Cunningham. Not a person left the congregation, even under pressure from relatives in Paragould. Every time I thought of the brethren as I made my way back to Saint Louis a phrase from Emerson kept ringing in my mind, “Here once the embattled farmers stood, and fired the shot heard round the world.”

In August I went to Midland, Texas for a Bible Study which was held in a room at the Air Terminal where so many men had received their flight training during the war. The parachute jumping platforms and the dummy bombs were still in evidence. Our meetings were in Building T-284, which was formerly used for storing ammunition. Here where men had been taught to kill we sought to teach others how to live. From Texas I returned to Windsor, Ontario, where our series was blessed of God and several were immersed into Christ. The congregation was growing in grace and knowledge as well as in number, under the guidance of Adam Bruce and William Horrocks as shepherds. But now there were consecrated younger men such as William Brown and Robert Liles who were developing rapidly.

When I returned from Canada there was a letter urgently requesting me to come to Belfast, North Ireland. I postponed a reply for a few days in order to give thought to all the ramifications involved since I was leading a busy life. While I hesitated another letter arrived pleading that I come. I finally consented to go in February after the annual Saint Louis study and the follow-up meeting at Beech Grove. Our daughter, Sharon Sue, who had recently finished high school and was attending the Gradwohl School of Laboratory Technique agreed to edit the paper during our absence. Jerry would look after the mailing and Nell would continue to take care of the subscription and address files.

Arvel Watts, Ellis Crum and Bob Duncan taught special subjects during the Saint Louis study which reached its conclusion on December 15. Students were in attendance from Kansas, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Iowa, Colorado and Pennsylvania. We were particularly blessed in having with us two capable black brethren – Leroy Durley and William Baker.

I arrived back in Beech Grove on January 7, prepared to begin our two weeks of study the next day. The opposition had been busy during the interim. The latest prepared “bomb” was a tract by J.A. McNutt attacking O.C. Dobbs, Sr., of Birmingham, Alabama, and me. I had never met Brother Dobbs but had heard a great deal about him. He was in the first graduating class of the original Alabama Christian College when G.A. Dunn was president. He came away from the school convinced that the gravest threat to the primitive order of things was the growth of the one-man preacher-pastor system.

Brother Dobbs developed a hernia and in order to contain or control it, cut a piece of material from an old automobile tire, out of which he fashioned a truss. The hernia corrected itself with this assistance. This led him to experiment until he invented trusses for various types of hernia after which he created the Dobbs Truss Company to market his product. Since this was prior to the time when surgery was used for the condition, the company soon became international in scope with representatives in the major cities of the world. During the years when the business flourished Brother Dobbs became quite well-to-do. With characteristic enthusiasm he plunged into the fight against the “growing pastor system.”

When he learned of the growing storm at Beech Grove he mailed the brethren a bundle of his booklets which they passed out with considerable eagerness. This injected a new political angle into the fracas. It had been previously hinted that I was leading a “Yankee invasion” into one of the strongholds of the “Old South” and bringing in northern doctrine. It was purposely made to appear that I was a “religious carpetbagger.” But O.C. Dobbs was from Birmingham, only a little way from where Jefferson Davis had been named President of “The Confederate States of America.” He spoke with a southern accent and even wrote with one.

Brother McNutt knew he had to act quickly. He printed a book for general distribution in the area under the heading “Pastoring and Evangelizing.” While a lot of it was devoted to trying to patch up what Brother Harper had said and my reply to him on the radio, quite a lot of space was devoted also to Brother Dobbs. He was accused of being one-sided, biased and prejudicial, and also of being “beside himself.” Coming from the source it did, Brother Dobbs felt highly complimented and fired off a letter inviting Brother McNutt to a written debate which he would print at his expense.

All of this had kept the interest from waning and when I came for the Bible Study excellent audiences gathered every afternoon and night. We did not dwell on the troublesome issues but concentrated on teaching the Word. One afternoon the class was visited by Brother McNutt and the elders from Paragould. Sterl Watson had been imported from Saint Louis to bolster the cause. As soon as I had finished the lesson he arose and demanded that I debate either Rue Porter, W. Curtis Porter, or G.K. Wallace. I agreed to meet either one or all of them. They asked me to write out propositions and submit them. I did so that week. But they could not agree upon them and the attempt fell flat.

One thing that gave me a great deal of hope was the eagerness of the people to know the Word. At each session we had folk from the community who were not members of the Church of Christ. The leaven of peace seemed to be working and I left feeling that good was being done in spite of outside agitation. Arrangements had been made that when I returned from Ireland I would hold another meeting, if the Lord willed. It was a great prospect!

## IRISH STEW

There was more than one reason why the brethren in Belfast felt that I could serve the cause we loved by coming to North Ireland. For one thing there had been some upsetting things happen during a recent mission conducted by C.E. McGaughey. Brother McGaughey had attempted to persuade those who had previously been immersed upon their faith in Jesus, in various groups, to be baptized again at his hands. The office-bearers of the congregation forbade him to “un-Christianize” those who had lived for Christ for years in order to “re-Christianize” them through his offices.

Brother McGaughey was quite adamant and when he influenced a few members of the Irish Baptist movement to cast their lot with the brethren he insisted that he was going to baptize them “for the remission of sins.” The leaders argued that when one is immersed in order to obey God and upon his firm conviction that Jesus was the Messiah and God’s Son it *was* for the remission of sins whether the believers knew it at the time or not. Forgiveness of sins was the design of God for those who were immersed in conformity with His will and not the design of man for being immersed. It was their contention that to immerse those who had previously been immersed, just to make them members of “the Church of Christ” was sectarian in nature and would be what American Baptists had always practiced.

The Irish brethren also resented the padding of reports in American journals of the number of baptisms abroad when, as they said, most of the people had been children of God for years before being taught the way of truth more perfectly and made into statistics by American preachers. The issue came to a head one night when Brother McGaughey had convinced some they should make their calling “safe” by submitting to baptism again. When he announced this at the close of the meeting the elders arose and turned the service over to another brother while they held a conference with the preacher in a rear room. An hour passed by while the congregation sang and praised God, but when another hour was well on its way and the participants in the discussion had not reappeared, the audience was dismissed. The contention behind the scenes continued as the Irish brethren fought to keep from becoming a foreign auxiliary to an American religious movement. Unalterable in their position against re-

immersion, the mission of Brother McGaughey ended, but not until some unrest had been created among the saints.

It was felt that if I came to engage in a positive effort it would be a settling influence and have a quieting effect upon the disciples. Too, it was proposed that I do a good deal of evangelistic work, proclaiming the Good News in street meetings and visiting industrial plants for noon meetings with the workers. The brethren were already in the process of leading an effort in a new housing development which had grown up in the suburbs after the Nazi bombers had wrecked a great deal of the city and literally gutted some sections of it.

We had our final prayer together as a family around the breakfast table on February 8, before Jerry, dressed in his air force uniform, had to leave for work with his fellow airmen. He was twenty-one years old and six feet tall. At nine o'clock, in Union Station, I said goodbye to Nell, Sharon Sue, and a little girl from Honduras who was living with us. As the gate closed behind me and I boarded the train there was a lump in my throat and a prayer in my heart. Two days later I went aboard the S.S. America, the largest and fastest passenger ship ever built in our country. Promptly at noon the gangplank was lifted and we edged away from the pier.

Both of my travel companions in the tourist stateroom to which I was assigned were Catholic men, but poles apart in life. One was an illiterate seaman off the streets of Cork who had sailed the seven seas. He knew every major port on the face of the earth. When I first saw him he was lying in a stupor in one of the top bunks, sleeping off a hard drinking spree which had lasted two days and nights. The other was a member of the faculty of the University of Chicago, a graduate of Illinois University and Notre Dame, and an authority in the history and language of the Celts. A more divergent trio to occupy a single room could not have been selected by a computer with an electrical short in its mechanism. We were together for five days and nights, and if I learned nothing else I found out that Catholics are not all cut from the same pattern. It was a good lesson for one who had grown up stereotyping them as we did about every other group.

I had engaged in many interesting spiritual conversations with scores of folk before we anchored off Cobh early in the morning of February 16. Ireland-bound passengers disembarked here and were taken to shore in a lighter and transported to Cork by ship's train. I had a half day to explore this ancient city which began with a religious settlement in 622 A.D. I already knew from my study of history that it fell to Oliver Cromwell during the English Civil War and I wanted to see as much of it as possible. I walked at a rapid pace all morning from one point to another and it was a relief when, at 1:15 p.m. I boarded the crack train "The Enterprise," and settled down for the almost seven hours of travel to Belfast.

I shall never forget that when I stepped from the train in the huge station I heard voices raised in song. Almost the entire congregation was present and the waves of music reverberated through the corridors, "For Christ and the church let our voices ring." It was long after midnight when I retired to my room at 8 Sunninghill Garden, in the hospitable home of William and Margaret Hendren and their good family.

We lost no time getting into the work. The next evening was a welcome meeting with tea being served at the humble meetinghouse on Berlin Street. A beautiful table was set on the speaker's

platform where I was to sit with the five men in the oversight – Brethren Hamilton, Millar, George, Charles and William Hendren. A well-arranged program continued until time to hurry to the nearest stop to catch the double-decker bus to the Cavehill area where I lodged. During the evening a program of events was outlined to occupy every night of the more than three months I would be in Belfast.

On each Lord's Day morning we would meet at 11:30 for the breaking of bread. The edification talk at these meetings would be delivered by a member of the congregation. At 3:00 p.m. I would teach the children of the community, and at 4:00 p.m. have a class of young men and women. Following that we would hold three or four street meetings at strategic corners and return for the gospel meeting at 7:00 p.m. On Monday nights we would have a meeting for singing and praise led by George Hendren. On Tuesday nights I would teach the neighborhood children (there were more than a hundred at the first session). On Wednesday nights there would be a gospel meeting, on Thursday evening a meeting for prayer and devotion in a home, and on Friday night a study in depth which I would lead.

During my stay we would also arrange for two weeks of gospel proclamation which would be especially publicized in the area. I wish that I might take you on a day-by-day trip with us and let you share every exciting minute, but space will not permit. Each new day brought its own thrill of being and at night we usually gathered in the little home of "Granny Hendren" who lived with her daughters Edith and Mary close to the meeting place. Here we recounted the events of the day and talked and prayed together until time for the last bus to run.

On March 6, I was invited by Mr. Oliver, assistant supervisor of the government press bureau, to attend a sitting of the Parliament, with eleven other observers. After being conducted to my seat in the beautiful Senate room by an usher in full dress, I was treated to a scene of almost medieval dignity and pageantry. The Speaker, who sat upon a throne-like chair on a raised dais, wore an imposing robe and a powdered wig which fell in waves to his shoulders. The Clerk of the Senate, who sat before him, had a shorter wig, with marcelled waves and two tiny tails tied with ribbons and hanging down his back.

It was my good fortune to be present in a session in which cabinet ministers were being seriously questioned as to their action. I was especially interested in the Minister of Agriculture who was charged with supervising rationing. All of us were limited to four ounces of red meat per week. The cooking fat ration amounted to two ounces, and we were allowed two eggs per week. This could be supplemented by horse, whale or beaver meat, which were not limited when available. A black market had developed in pork ribs, knees and bones, which the Secretary affirmed was being carried on from England in spite of the efforts of the secret service of Her Majesty's government.

It was when the Minister of Home Affairs was put on the grill that things really "got cracking." Ireland seemed to have more than her share of gypsies who roamed the countryside in their gaily-colored horse-drawn caravans. Parliament had ordered that some method be devised and steps taken to ensure a suitable education for the children of gypsies and other vagrants. Included in the directive was religious training. The Ministry might as well have ordered to

contrive a means of educating the winds that blew across the landscape, or the waves of the sea. Gypsy children were as elusive as little wild animals.

During this discussion which became heated I heard some of the most penetrating satire and biting sarcasm delivered under cover of urbane politeness. I could catch a glimpse of the deep hostility which has long since burst its bonds in what is now referred to in Ireland as “the troubles.” Some of the members of Parliament represented a Catholic constituency. They raised pointed questions as to the kind of religious teaching to be bestowed by law upon gypsy children. I trust I am not prejudiced but I want to testify that the Protestants who sat on the benches were among the most capable and quick-witted men I have ever heard. Their sharp repartee was something else!

The next day, Mr. McIvor, the efficient headmaster of Mount Collyer School, invited me to spend the entire day, or as much time as I could spare, at the public school which he supervised. I had already spent two hours with him, exploring the difference in educational concepts and goals in our two countries. Mount Collyer was a new adventure in schooling for the more than 800 youngsters in attendance. School began each morning with prayer, scripture readings from the Old and New Testaments, and a brief devotional talk.

The law requires that there be five classes in religion each week for public school students. I was permitted to examine the course of study which had to be non-sectarian in content and presentation. It was very comprehensive of the narrative portions of the Old and New Testaments through the book of Acts. The discipline was both rigid and remarkable. When the headmaster and I visited certain rooms every pupil arose and stood at respectful attention until he told them to be seated. When we left a room the student nearest the door arose and opened it, remaining at attention to close it after we had gone.

I stayed for lunch and would not have missed the experience. Most of the children went home for their noon meal but about 200 stayed. Luncheon was prepared in a central kitchen and conveyed by special vans to each school. The day I was present the supervisor of all lunch rooms in city schools was present and graciously answered all of my questions. The 200 children filed in and quietly took their places at the tables. It was unbelievably quiet. A teacher gave the signal and all bowed their heads and returned thanks in unison, then quietly arose and passed by where the food was being dipped up by student helpers. The menu was Irish stew, mashed potatoes and cake with pudding sauce over it. Milk was provided at each plate. The cost of the meal was six cents in American monetary value. The day I attended more than 30 children were fed free because of poverty-stricken conditions in their homes.

The next day I was invited to speak to a group of men at the shipyards, the largest such yards in the world. I was taken on an inspection tour where I saw three huge aircraft carriers were in the process of construction as well as numerous other vessels. One of these was a mammoth oil tanker for Norway. Another was a whaling ship to be fully equipped to process every ounce of the huge catches. Daily religious meetings were held in the Plumbing Department and here I was greeted by more than 250 men. A loudspeaker system had been set up for our use so that all might hear. Sandy and Nat Cooper, who had accompanied me, sang a hymn at the beginning and



end of the thirty minute period, and after the message had been given we passed out more than 200 tracts to the workmen going back to their appointed stations.

My life was enriched when Albert Winstanley came over from England to work with me for four days. We shared together in the children's meeting, where he was especially adept, and in the gospel meeting where we took turns announcing the blessed facts about the divine breakthrough of the flesh curtain by God's Son. Together we went to a lecture on "The Seven Seals" by a recognized leader of the British-Israel theory and remained to question some of the more rabid followers of the view. But, best of all were the street meetings, four of which we held one afternoon in company with Nat Cooper, a young man of promise. We gathered some 80 boys and girls and led them down the street, singing at the top of their voices. We stopped at street corners where everyone who passed by halted and gave us audience and we took turns preaching the kingdom of God and the way of the cross.

Time was passing rapidly and the days were filled with all kinds of intriguing things. There were visits to linen mills, to manufacturing concerns, to public parks, and other places where opportunities were presented to witness of the grace of God. We were seeing precious souls added to the one body each week. Some of these came in response to public declaration of God's love, others after I had conversed and prayed with them privately. The saints were rejoicing in the confessions of faith made in our meetings and all of us were made aware of the power of the Word and the moving of the Spirit in the hearts of men. The old, old story was still new and vital!

## **THE KNOCK AT THE DOOR**

I come now to the place where I must recount a life-changing experience which was destined to completely re-orient the whole philosophy of my relationship to the kingdom of heaven. I apologize to my readers for the time to be spent in narrative, seeing that nothing is ordinarily quite so boring as listening to another recount what happened to him. I must preface what I shall say with the statement that I am a pragmatist, and not a mystic, by nature, although all of us are combinations of both. I suspect that every wholehearted follower of Jesus is confronted sooner or later with a sense of a great gulf which exists between what he believes and what he really is. For some, the confrontation with the Living Lord is gradual and almost academic. For others it may come as a flash of light in a crisis situation. That the latter should have been my lot is as unexplainable to me as it will be to those of you who now read about it.

It occurred on the afternoon of March 27, 1951. I know where it took place and I know the moment it took place. I am convinced now that if I had never left America it would not have happened at all. Before I went to Ireland I conveyed to the brethren there my hope of visiting the little village of Ahorey, and the meetinghouse in which Thomas Campbell had ministered. William Hendren and Joe Hamilton made contact with Mr. T.S. Hoey, secretary of the little Presbyterian congregation, and he graciously suggested that we conduct a service in the quaint little place. Arrangements were made for Easter Monday, which is a "bank holiday" upon which all business places are closed and workers are free.

Sixty-five of us met at the little Berlin Street meetinghouse early in the morning of a dark and dreary day with the rain pouring down. After a time of prayer we boarded the two chartered buses and set out upon our trip. Fortunately, by the time we reached Ahorey, the rain had ceased. The little village where Alexander Campbell spent his early boyhood was small indeed. Only three Irish farm cottages could be seen. One of them was used as a post office. The meetinghouse sat back in a yard which could have been the setting for Gray's *Elegy*. We made our way along the path which was flanked by the moss-covered grave markers to the door of the lovely little building where we were warmly greeted by the Presbyterian welcoming committee.

In the entrance hall was a bronze plaque of Thomas Campbell inscribed with the words *Prophet of Union*. He was the second pastor of the congregation, assuming his charge in 1798. When we entered the place of meeting its quaintness and old-worldliness struck our attention. It was lighted with paraffin lamps. The pews had to be entered through little gates which had first to be unlocked. When the brethren had filed in and our Presbyterian hosts were seated, I unlocked the door leading to the speaker's platform and took my place behind the stand containing the same large pulpit Bible from which Mr. Campbell had often read.

The audience stood and sang "The Lord's My Shepherd" to the haunting melody of the tune *Crimond*. William Hendren led a prayer for the unity of all believers in the Lord Jesus. I turned to Ephesians 2 and read the chapter. I was moved to speak, as never before, on verse 14. "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us." I must have spoken more to myself than to the others, because all the rest of the day the expression "He is our peace" kept rising to the surface of my consciousness, to be repeated silently.

We were taken on a tour of the manse which had been completely refurbished in anticipation of the coming of the new pastor a fortnight hence. Then a gentle elderly woman who lived in a low whitewashed cottage with a thatched roof, sent word asking if the American visitor would grace her humble abode for tea. Five of us readily accepted her invitation and sat down for a country repast in a dark little room where chunks of peat glowed in the tiny fireplace. Legend had it that when the Campbells resided in the manse, Alexander often stopped at this ancient cottage while returning from Armagh, which was about four miles distant.

We went to Armagh, which dates its existence from 300 B.C., and to the great library established by Primate Robinson in 1771. We walked across the city to the observatory, founded on "The Hill of Honey" in 1790, to be greeted by the present director, Dr. E.M. Lindsay, of Harvard fame, and now recognized in astronomical circles throughout the world. Dr. E.J. Opik, driven from his home in Estonia by the Soviet invasion, explained to us at length his research into the nature of solar eclipses. We ended our visit in the area by exploring Saint Patrick's Cathedral, more than six centuries old, and now the headquarters for the Anglican Church in North Ireland.

As we boarded the buses for the return to Belfast the weather became nasty and bad, and soon the rain turned to snow which took the form of a sweeping blizzard by the time we reached the city streets. Because of the long and tiresome journey of the day, those with whom I lodged went on home, while I lingered with the George Hendren family for tea before the cheerful fireplace. Later, when I stepped out into the night to begin the more than two mile walk, I was

engulfed in swirling snow. I had to make my way from one faint street light to another as I trudged along through five inches of accumulated snow.

I have never experienced a greater sense of loneliness. It was as if I was walking through a universe devoid of all life but my own. The only sound to be heard in a great city was that of my shoes crunching the snow beneath them. The activities of the day came surging back into my mind and mingled with the reveries were the images of the noble souls who dared, in the midst of division, to dream of a united church. I thought again of the text which came to me as I read the Word, and of how it had also stirred the mind of a Presbyterian minister in such a rustic setting. I recalled the message I had recorded in the home of Mr. Hoey to be played at the next meeting of the Synod in Belfast. In that talk I urged that if they had others of the caliber of Mr. Campbell, that they send them to American shores to encourage unity among the frightfully-divided heirs of the movement launched by their gentle minister of yesteryear.

I was smitten with the hypocrisy of a plea for a humble peasantry to provide another apostle for oneness while I was among them as a factional representative. It came home to me with force that I had never really labored for the unity of all who believed in Jesus. I had actually, in mistaken zeal, contributed to the fragmentation of the very movement which Thomas Campbell had launched with such high hopes and great promise. Instead of furthering the noble “project to unite the Christians in all of the sects,” I had absorbed and sometimes even gloried in a sectarian spirit.

As I stumbled along through the deepening snow, alone in a foreign city, I found myself weeping and praying and making promises to God of what I would do if my life was spared through His grace. The word *grace* came like a ray of hope and I rolled it on my tongue like a juicy morsel. What I needed to make life worth living, to overcome my frustration, to rise above the futility of my own efforts was grace. In all of my forty-three years no other thought had ever struck me with such force.

In my darkened room I lay awake all night wrestling with my own thoughts. The hours dragged on in the velvety blackness as I went back over every step of the day before. When dawn came I was empty, drained and helpless. Every dream of my life had vanished. Every ship of hope I had launched lay in broken pieces upon the rocks of my own past. I went downstairs to gaze out upon a world of diamond-flecked whiteness but even its scintillating beauty impressed me but a fleeting second.

I sat down before the little hearth with its one lump of coal (the last one of our ration) and picked up the Bible. My eyes were dim from weeping and from staring into darkness through a sleepless night. Without design I began reading with verse one of Revelation. I became aware that thoughts were leaping from the pages which I had read so often and taking lodgment in my benumbed brain. It was fascinating to have words come alive and to see their souls separate from the characters which the typesetter had given them as bodies, and free themselves from the prison of print to take up abode in my mind.

I read until I came to the letter addressed to the community of the reconciled ones at Laodicea. I could identify with it as representative of our movement. We thought of ourselves as rich and

increased with goods, and needing nothing. I remembered the oft-repeated question, “What is there left to restore?” or, sometimes, “What do we need that we do not have?” But I could also realize that we were poor, and wretched, and blind, and naked, as God saw us. I read on and came to realize what was meant by the gold tried in the fire which could be purchased only at the divine currency exchange by those willing to pay the staggering price. At last I knew what was meant by the white raiment which covers the nakedness of congregations which parade unashamedly, unaware that their garments of fig leaves and their masks are transparent, and they are wearing see-through apparel while the world looks and laughs. For the first time I also knew what was meant by the ointment which restores sight to eyes that are blinded by cataracts of pride, ambition and sectarian prestige.

And then I saw the answer to all of my longings, all of my loneliness, all of my lovelessness to others, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” I had never once invited Jesus to come in. True, I had never asked Him to stay out, but I had never shared with Him the kind of intimacy He had promised, the warm glow of companionship at the supper table, the convivial atmosphere in which friends talk and laugh and joke together, and let themselves go in the firm trust that they perfectly understand one another.

I had come to Jesus thirty years before, and then some, but it is one thing to come to Jesus at His invitation, and a wholly different thing to have Jesus come in to you at *your* invitation. I came to Him out of a state of alienation, like a refugee fished out of the muck and mire who needs to be cleaned up in the bath of regeneration and given an abiding place. But the statement to the Laodiceans was not made to those outside. It was made to those inside. It was Jesus who was outside. Regardless of the state of the things in the congregation with which one was identified, that one could have a royal guest sitting at his supper table and gracing his abode with His presence.

He did not need to leave where he was. He did not need to look for another “church.” In the midst of poverty of spirit, wretchedness, misery, blindness and shameless nudity, he could be filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory. I had never really experienced that kind of joy. In fact, nothing had ever happened to me that I could not describe and glibly enough at that. I had been dubious of anyone who had been too happy. It did not seem right for a Christian who ought to be “walking on eggshells” for fear there was a minute law he might have overlooked and which would bring the wrath of God down upon his unsuspecting skull like the pagan temple which killed blind Samson while the idolaters were laughing at him.

Now I was being tendered an offer of genuine, thrilling, life-changing association which could have been mine all along if I had not wandered in the fog boiling up from the dank and boggy marshes of legalism and tradition. All I had to do was to hear a voice and open the door. That was it. There was no other condition, no regimen of penance, no burden of regret about yesterday. There was no high-pressure selling, no arm-twisting. Loneliness would leave through the same door by which He entered, exactly as light must dispel darkness.

I heard his knock! I heard His voice! I am not talking about audible impressions or things like sound waves or reverberation. It was too deep “for sound or foam” as the poet said. So I arose

and put on my overcoat and the borrowed overshoes which had been loaned to me by a kind brother, and walked the two blocks over to where the double-decker bus stopped to pick up riders bound for the heart of the city. I swung off of the platform at Shankill Road and walked up to the little meetinghouse on Berlin Street. Inside it was dark and filled with cold which caught warm breath and sent it swirling upward like a cloud.

I sat down in a pew selected at random and counted the cost of what I was about to do. I realized that I had been tracked down and brought to bay by “the hound of heaven.” It must have been an hour I sat there with the cold seeking the openings in the fibers of my clothing. At last I kneeled down and spoke, perhaps audibly, “This is it! I have come to the end of the road and I’m opening the door! Come in!” Immediately He did exactly what He promised He would do, and I knew it! There were no hot flashes, no hair standing on end, no goose-pimples, no spinal chills, no “speaking in tongues.” There was none of that!

But there was the indescribable feeling of the rightness of all things, the possession of a peace which transcended human rationality and understanding. I knew a part of me had died and that part would never be resurrected. It had been replaced with a new “me” who was not all of my own creation. I was different and I knew that I was different. I also knew I would never be the same again. Never, regardless of what happened. And then there was that joy! Perhaps the most powerful thought which gripped me was that I had no further enemies among the brethren. They were all children of God! We had a common Father. It struck me like a flash that I could never again hate those whom He loved.

As J.B. Phillips put it, “We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren.” It was months before I learned that the love of God had been poured out in my heart by the Holy Spirit He had given me (Romans 5:5).

## **LIFE IN THE SPIRIT**

In these days I am often asked in public how I explain the traumatic experience which I described in the previous chapter. It is not a satisfactory reply to say that I do not explain it, but simply recount it. Our brethren have been conditioned to think there must be a specific explanation for everything. The explanation must harmonize with and conform to our traditional thought-patterns or be summarily rejected or laughed out of court. I know how they feel for I once felt exactly the same way. Nothing can possibly happen beyond our power of comprehension. If we could not explain it, it obviously did not happen. One who said it did was either deceived or a deceiver.

I am grateful that God’s grace has made it possible for me to outgrow that kind of arrogance. Now I can be like the man who was healed by Jesus after having been blind from birth. He was subjected to the third-degree and given a Star-chamber grilling by the local Pharisees who would rather have him blind than healed by someone as unorthodox as Jesus. He was ignorant about a lot of things as they related to the “how.” But he said, “One thing I do know: I was blind and now I see.” That was not enough for the Pharisees, so they threw him out of the local congregation, which is “par for the course” when there are Pharisees around. Jesus heard about

it and looked him up, realizing that He was closer to the one on the outside than to those on the inside.

At first I said nothing to anyone about the soul-satisfying entrance of Jesus and the inward supper-sharing experience every day. I just continued to feast with Him and He with me, rejoicing in the Spirit. You must remember that I grew up among good brethren who prayed out of a sense of duty. It was a command, a legal requirement, an act of worship. You had to go through the act to be safe. If you neglected it God would clobber you. We did not so much pray as we “said prayers.” I do not think we expected anything to happen, and it generally did not. If it did we regarded it as a fortunate accident.

As time went on and I was driven by the Spirit within to make myself vulnerable by going among those from whom I had been isolated, the fruits of the Spirit were beginning to be detected in my advocacy of love, joy and peace, as opposed to accusation, challenge and debate. At first no one thought it was real. They freely predicted it would not last and that I would eventually return to sanity and be as mean as I was before. But since I had spent some time in “Arabia” before I returned to “Jerusalem,” by the time I began to write on my growing conviction as to the fellowship of the reconciliation, a new wave was beginning to sweep across the religious strand. Eventually it would affect both the Catholic and Protestant establishments and wash over into every segment of the restoration movement.

It ushered in what came to be known as the “charismatic age” although this was a serious misnomer. The more profound student of the new covenant scriptures will at once recognize there can be no charismatic age, for the simple reason that there has never been a non-charismatic age. The work of God has always been made possible by the gifts of God. The Spirit is no less powerful and no more inactive in one century than another. He does not activate in spasms nor motivate in spurts. He has always been the life of the body and will be while the Son sits at the right hand of the Father.

But a lot of branches which had become lifeless and devoid of fruit were led by cultural conditions (I think) to open up their hearts to the will of God for the first time, and as a result of fervent entreaty, were filled with the Spirit. They mistook this filling with the baptism of the Holy Spirit and were ecstatic over the boldness and inner might which became theirs. As a result, when I was asked what had brought about my change of attitude, and I reluctantly described what had transpired, I was repeatedly interrogated as to whether I had received “the baptism of the Holy Spirit.”

The answer is simple. I did not. I consider the baptism of the Holy Spirit a one-time experience to bring the body into union, as I regard baptism in water a one-time experience to bring me into union with the body. Before the one body existed, mankind was divided into two great classes. One of these was nigh, the other was far off. One was called the circumcision, the other the uncircumcision. On Pentecost, the representatives of the Jewish nation received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. At the home of Cornelius, several years later, the representatives of the Gentile nations received the “like gift” as did the Jews at the beginning. Jesus became the peace who made both one. He reconciled both unto God in one body by the cross. Both then had access by one Spirit unto the Father.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is never mentioned again in the word of God. It was unrepeatable because it was unnecessary. The good news was to the Jew first and also to the Greek. After it was established that both must enter into the new relationship and be justified by faith, there was no further need to exhibit the baptism. I reject, as untenable for me, the interpretation of I Corinthians 12:13 which makes this equivalent to what occurred in Jerusalem and Caesarea. Before me, as I write, lies a copy of the *Pentecostal Evangel*. It contains an article by G. Raymond Carlson, Assistant General Superintendent of the Assemblies of God. The title is "The Charismatic Movement Today."

The article contains many good things. It is extremely well written. But it uses the term "Baptized in the Holy Spirit" more times in three pages than it is mentioned in all of the letters to the individuals and saints, as written by the holy apostles. It also makes repeated reference to "the Pentecostal experience." With all due respect to our friends who differ with me, there is no such thing. Pentecost marked the birthday of the earthly phase of the kingdom of God. There can be but one birthday, although there may be many anniversaries to remember or celebrate it. The writer should probably call his "a Corinthian experience," since those who claim the experience distinguish what happened on Pentecost from what happened at Corinth. I do not personally recognize the difference. But I can readily understand why one would not want to be too closely identified with Corinth.

I am quite convinced that the Holy Spirit has dwelt in me since the day I validated my faith in Jesus by being baptized into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. He was God's gift to me according to His promise when I was granted the forgiveness of my sins and was justified by His grace. The Holy Spirit is the present possession of every child of God in this whole wide world. But I was ignorant that He was my Comforter, my Advocate, my Helper. At first I was taught that the Spirit was the Word. We confused Him with the Bible which tells us about Him, because of an unfortunate and tragic misunderstanding of John 6:63. When gradually forced to relinquish that mistaken notion we drove Him into a corner, bounded by the first century and the lifetime of the apostles, and sheared Him of all power in the present.

Driven to the wall by my own weakness and unbrotherly attitude, when I opened the door of my heart to invite Jesus to come in, the Spirit was freed from the bondage and limitations of my own littleness and unworthiness, to pour out the love of God in my heart. I no longer had to try and "finish by my own power" what had begun by the Spirit (Galatians 3:3). Having said this, I want to clarify my position with reference to those brethren who claim "the baptism of the Holy Spirit." I am not upset by their descriptive terminology even though I think they are mistaken.

It seems to me that many of them confuse the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the filling of the Holy Spirit. There is a real and valid difference between the two. I'm not certain that those within the scriptural context prayed for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, although the filling of the Spirit is connected with prayer and manifests itself in a sense of boldness in speaking God's message, as in Acts 4:31. The baptism of the Holy Spirit was to create a new body; the filling of the Holy Spirit is to renew the members of the body. The experience of the Spirit is more important than what one calls it, just as any deed is more important than its designation. One who is not free to make mistakes is not free to make anything else. So I do not propose to

engage in strife about words. Regardless of how one labels what happened to him to produce a closer walk with God I am thrilled that it happened. The result is a blessing and I rejoice in that.

In my case the happening drove me to more than six years of prayerful, and sometimes tearful, re-examination of my whole religious philosophy. I was forced into painful introspection and meditation. It was agonizing to have my idols torn from their pedestals. I came to realize that I had been wrong all of my life in my usage of the scriptures to condone and defend our divisions. When the true meaning and significance of the fellowship began to enter into my consciousness, it was as if a huge burden had been lifted. But that did not come until weary years had passed, and meanwhile I was still abroad. Worse yet, I must return to America and face brethren who had experienced no change. The more charitable of them would come to think I had lost my mind. Many of the others would conclude that I had denied the faith and was worse than an infidel. I would see the day in which I was misrepresented, lied about, and actually hated because of His name's sake!

On the evening of March 30 I left Belfast for a brief interlude in England. Taking the cross-channel steamer for Heysham at night, the next morning I caught the train to Ulverston where I found Brother Walter Crosthwaite waiting. In two months he would celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of his first public message in defense of the gospel. I found him still busy teaching the Word, corresponding with the saints, and editing *Scripture Standard*. The five days and nights spent in the home of this godly patriarch of the faith will linger in my memory as one of the most fruitful periods of my earthly sojourn.

We sat before the little grate fire and talked for hours. Never a moment of it was wasted upon trivia, but the subtle humor and tremendous fund of anecdotes and reminiscences of an old soldier who bore the scars of spiritual conflict made the hours pass all too rapidly. It was hard to tear myself away to mount the stairs to the little triangular bedroom where I slept, and after a few hours' repose I arose eagerly to go downstairs and resume our conversation. I am sure that these few days with a veteran in the service were desperately needed to enable me to withstand in the trying years in which I would face growing opposition while trying to divest myself of the party spirit. The morning I left Brother Crosthwaite walked with me to the station. As we clasped hands, both of us knew we would never talk again on earth. I wiped the tears away as I boarded the train.

Albert Winstanley and Will Hurcombe were waiting on the platform as the train pulled into Wigan, and they conducted me to the hospitable home of Leonard and Doris Morgan where Nell and I had stayed four years before. I spoke at a different place each night – Scholes, Argyle Street at Hindley, Blackburn, Ince, Albert Street in Wigan – and souls were added to the Lord. Each day Albert and I went from house to house, exhorting the saints, pleading with the unsaved, and comforting the afflicted. Through the mists of the years I can still see the faces of the brethren – Stephen Winstanley, Leonard Morgan, Carlton Melling, Harry Wilson, John Pritt, and a host of others. Many have departed to be with the Lord, but as I write this, some are still camped on this side of Jordan waiting to enter the promised land.

My arrival back in Belfast on April 12 was propitious. *The Evening Telegraph* announced a baccalaureate address for the Reformed Presbyterian Seminary to be delivered to the graduates



on April 12, by Dr. James Campbell, M.A., of Larne. The subject of the discourse was to be "Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs." The paid advertisement said the speakers would also discuss the reason for the church's opposition to the use of instrumental music in public praise. I went early and found myself in the company of aged professors from the school, most of them in clerical garb. For almost thirty minutes I was privileged to converse with the instructors in Hebrew, Greek, Homiletics and Church History. Not one was less than seventy years of age and all were richly endowed with scholastic degrees.

The moderator introduced me to the graduates. I was much impressed with one who had prepared himself to go as a missionary to Syria. I met Dr. Campbell before he spoke and he insisted that I address the assembly briefly following his formal speech. Our meeting created a contact which we kept alive for five years through exchange of letters.

The text of his speech was Colossians 3:15-17. He contended against the use of uninspired songs as expression of public worship, equating hymns and spiritual songs as descriptive of certain types of psalms found in the old covenant scriptures. In his outspoken opposition to the use of instrumental music he declared that it was never really introduced until the 13th century, and then by an apostate church. He asserted that the only acceptable instrument for offering praise was the human heart indwelt by the Spirit of God, and said that every reformer worthy of the title had always seen the need of removing the organ and other human instruments as an indication of the serious attempt to return to the ancient order.

In the closing moments of his speech, the learned Presbyterian decried the use of choirs, solos, and quartets in the praise service. He asserted that public praise in the time of the apostles was always congregational. It was always rendered to God and never used to entertain men. In a rather impassioned peroration he besought the graduates going forth into the world to resist the tug of the spirit of this age and seek to imitate the holy apostles rather than the unholy world about them.

He was dressed in somber garb with a long black clerical coat and with knee breeches fastened with silver buckles. His feet were clad in gaiters common to clergymen in the land. As I sat and listened it was not difficult to imagine that Thomas Campbell had returned after all these years, again to address the Belfast Synod, as he was wont to do in days of yore.

## THE LAND OF THE THISTLE

On May 10, 1951, I celebrated my forty-third birthday, far from home and in a foreign land. In honor of the occasion we broke open some of the food parcels from home and served a little dinner for the saints in Belfast. Two days later I began my journey by train to Southern Ireland where I was to meet Nell who was coming over on the *America*. I was especially pleased that my itinerary called for me to spend a night and the greater part of a day in Dublin. I chose as my overnight abode the Four Courts Hotel on the River Liffey.

Four centuries ago it was known as Angel Inn, and became the home of Jonathan Swift, the author of *Gulliver's Travels*. A clever and brilliant satirist, he punched holes in the political and religious pretensions of his day. In 1713 he was appointed dean of Saint Patrick's Cathedral, but

with the fall of the Tory Administration a year later his political career ended, and he retired to Angel Inn where he died in 1745. When the inn was remodeled, the decorator made lavish use of mirrors and statuary, so that one feels he is staying in a museum.

The original floor of wide boards fastened with wooden dowels has been left throughout, so that one can literally walk where the author of *Tale of a Tub* trod. There is, among the public rooms, a spacious lounge and writing room with a huge open-grate fireplace. Since I always seem to get more from my reading when I am in the proper atmosphere, I settled down in a leather chair in this room, resolved to read some of the poetry by Swift which I had never taken time to read. It was an evening well-spent. I shall always remember scanning the poem "A Description of a City Shower" while the face of its author stared out at me from its frame.

I cannot forbear saying a little about Dublin, the capital of the Irish Free State. It is a city famous for its educational and cultural background. When I became acquainted with the works of Richard Chenevix Trench, and especially his volume *On the Study of Words*, I learned that he had been Archbishop of Dublin. This motivated me to learn all I could about the city and especially the Protestant influence within it. I remember having been impressed with the fact that the Alexandrian geographer, Ptolemy, who lived about 150 A.D., had mentioned the original settlement which grew into Dublin.

As I walked the streets I felt like Paul did at Athens when he saw the city wholly given over to idolatry. Images for worship were everywhere. Candle factories were prominent, manufacturing tapers to be lighted before saintly statuary. Clerical garb was everywhere manifest as priests and nuns walked the streets. Advertisements of pilgrimages to Rome and Lourdes appeared on bulletin boards and in shop windows. I read through the long list of obituaries to see if one Protestant was listed. Apparently the Protestants are extremely healthy. I found not one name. That thousands of Irish had gone to America was evidenced by the number of death notices containing the words: "American papers please copy."

On May 13, I went to Cork, a train ride of 165 miles to the southwest of Dublin. In the knowledge that I might never be there again I walked as rapidly as possible to cover important areas in this city of more than 80,000. Cork is the home of two cathedrals, one Roman Catholic, the other Anglican. Both are called St. Finbar, after the name of the founder of the city in 622 A.D. It was late when I got to Cobh, and the Hotel Commodore where I was to spend the night.

I arose early the next morning to go to the dock. The *America* had anchored about four miles offshore before daybreak, and passengers who were to be taken off on the tender were given an early breakfast. I saw Nell as she stepped off the lighter and soon she saw me and waved. But we could not be together until she had cleared customs. What a blessing it was to hold her in my arms again after an absence of months. We had much to talk about on the long train journey to Belfast. When we arrived at the station we heard the beautiful strains of "The Lord's My Shepherd" being sung to the tune *Crimond*. The whole congregation was there and their singing stopped even the train crews who paused to listen to every word.

We had one more week in Belfast and our hearts were torn that the time of our departure was so close. The final days created a kaleidoscope of memories. Each day the members vied with

each other to show us something of interest. Each night I spoke to a gathering of the saints. A visit to a large linen factory, a trip to the magnificent City Hall, crowned by a view of the private office of the Lord Mayor, through the courtesy of his secretary, a final tour of inland Ireland, a day at Bangor by the seaside, and then the final night and the farewell tea at the meetinghouse.

The chorus sang beautifully. Different brethren made brief talks. We wept unashamedly. We clung to one another, reluctant to take leave. The congregation gave us a lovely picture of the Mountains of Mourne, personally autographed by the painter. Nell received numerous gifts of linen and some of the sisters presented her with treasured heirlooms and keepsakes, out of hearts filled with generosity.

The next evening we had our final tea at the hospitable home of William and Margaret Hendren, and then drove to the docks where we were to board *The Royal Ulsterman* for the cross-channel trip. Almost the whole congregation was at the dock, and as the ship drifted slowly away from the wharf and out into the darkness, we could hear the strains of "God Be With You Till We Meet Again." A feeling gripped our hearts that we would never again see these precious ones upon this earth.

I have never forgotten Belfast. I can still envision the children swinging on ropes attached to the street lamps. I can still see the women on their knees scrubbing the sidewalks in front of their homes with reddened hands. I remember the groups harmonizing in song on the street corners at night, the women draped with thick shawls or blankets to shelter them from the cold as they walked to unheated shops, the many pushcarts on the street, the window washers carrying their ladders and buckets. I shared the agony and the ecstasy of a people who had just come through a devastating war and had triumphed and I left a little bit of myself in Ireland.

We were met at the dock in Glasgow by John and Mary McCallum and spent the day resting in their home while catching up on letter writing. It is a good thing we found this little time for relaxation because I was getting ready to go into a hectic schedule without realizing it. The next afternoon we left for Tranent, where I had spent my time exhorting the saints of the Slamannan District, in my final meeting in Scotland four years before. We stopped enroute at the home of Joe and Agnes Kerr where we were to stay all night. They had moved from Harthill to Prestonpans since our visit.

The place was rife with history. The house where the Kerrs lived was on the banks of Red Burn which flowed red with blood on September 21, 1745 when the Jacobite forces led by Charles Edward Stuart known as the "Young Pretender" or "Bonnie Prince Charlie" defeated the British under Sir John Cope. The monument to the victory of the wild tartan-clad clansmen still stands on the field in Prestonpans. It marks the high tide of the rally of the Stuarts before their forces were completely routed at Culloden Moor in April, 1746, and Charles Edward became a hunted fugitive.

Just as interesting to me was what had happened here in 1590 when witchcraft became an organized institution. A number of persons who claimed to have seen and conversed with the devil, and who had entered into a compact with him, began to exercise a great deal of influence. Superstition ran riot. Special meetings were held at night in the church building at Old Berwick,

and graves were opened by these progenitors of modern spiritualism who collected human skulls and bones to use in their incantations. Some there were who predicted that Satan was preparing to capture the world and this would be his headquarters and the place of his throne.

King James, who became a specialist in witch-hunting, and who defied the curses pronounced upon him, effectively put an end to the ambition of the witches. He had his soldiers gather up a group of them and ordered that they be publicly strangled and their bodies burned. Some of their more ardent followers declared secretly that no fire would be able to burn them. Not only did their bodies burn, but their leader, Dr. Fian, was executed at Castle Hill in Edinburgh on December 26, 1591. This halted the immediate outbreak of superstition, but that it did not completely crush it is evidenced by the fact that the last person to be executed as a witch in England was in 1716, while the last one in Scotland died in 1722.

Fifty Bible teachers from the Slamannan District gathered at Lochside Chapel, which I remembered so well, on this Saturday afternoon, for a discussion of means and methods of improving their efforts. The meeting was ably presided over by John Steel, an art instructor at Airdrie Academy. We sang a hymn, had a prayer, and then sat down together for tea. I recalled that it had been said that Gabriel would have to be careful about when he sounded his trumpet, for if it was at teatime, no Scotsman would show up. After tea, I spoke briefly and then opened the meeting for questions.

Before we realized it three hours had slipped away. Afterwards a number of folk gathered at the Kerr home and entertained us with Scottish ballads and songs of the Jacobites, as the defenders of the house of Stuart were called. I have never again heard “By Yon Bonnie Banks and By Yon Bonnie Braes” done as effectively as that night. And when I hear “Will Ye No Come Back Again?” my mind reverts to that Saturday night in May. It was an unforgettable time of love and fellowship and genial good-feeling.

The next morning Joe and I walked the three miles to Tranent where I was to teach for more than an hour in a gathering of the saints who came early. It was a refreshing walk along a road in Scotland, past the monument to the battle, and with the town always in sight. The “breaking of bread service” as our brethren designated it, began at 11:30 a.m. and continued until 1:00 p.m. I spoke again to the edification of those present, and then Nell and I went to the nearby home of Sister Wilson, and her daughter Jean, for a quick luncheon. In the interval between my trips to Scotland Brother Wilson had departed to be with Jesus. I missed him greatly. Sister Wilson remembered my taste for Scotch oatcakes and had laid in a goodly supply.

I spoke to different groups at 2:00 p.m., 3:00 p.m., and 4:00 p.m., and at the gospel meeting at 6:00 p.m. This was not enough and after I had finished the brethren convened again to hear me for another hour. All of us were tired after we felt our way back through 32 miles of pea soup fog to the McCallum home. It was 1:00 a.m. when we finally retired. Before I could go to sleep I thought back over the entire day. I had a good feeling about the cause at Tranent. A number of younger brethren were identified with the work. The possibilities for growth seemed great. The brethren were firmly grounded in the concept of “mutual ministry” and the utilization of all the gifts.

We had one more week remaining in the “land of the thistle.” If I were to tell you all that happened this literary effort would be expanded far beyond its worth. There were scenic tours to Loch Lomond along roads lined with colorful rhododendron, while snow-capped Ben Lomond towered high in the distance; to Gareloch, the salt water lake off the Clyde, which was filled with the ships of the famed British Navy; to the mighty Forth Bridge, an engineering wonder; and to the renowned Castle Hill in Edinburgh where kilted sentries paced back and forth.

But even more interesting was the return to congregations we had previously visited and to the homes of saints we had seen four years ago. There was the meeting in Glasgow, the one in Motherwell, where David Dougal had labored with diligence and effectiveness for two months. Then on to Slamannan which gave its name to the district. We went into the homes of folk I had met in Canada. One was the home of a sister whom I had immersed during one of the meetings when she had come over to visit in Windsor, Ontario. It was a rich experience to see her now in her native land.

One day I discovered a huge bookstore on Charles IV Bridge in Edinburgh. It was a half-block long and stocked only used religious volumes, thousands upon thousands of them. I went up one aisle and down another, reading titles and viewing works I had heard about for years and had never seen. I was like a country lad turned loose in a city candy store. I stayed all day until there was just time to go to historic Wallacestone for the evening meeting, after tea in the gracious home of David Dougal.

Our last week in Scotland was spent at Kirkcaldy. I have previously mentioned this as the place where Alexander Campbell had spoken a century before my first visit. Kirkcaldy was the birthplace of Adam Smith, who wrote *The Wealth of Nations*. He was greatly influenced by his close association with David Hume, and I have often wondered what Alexander Campbell had to say about Smith and Hume while he was in Kirkcaldy. He was familiar with both and expressed opposition to Hume’s theory about the rights of man.

Nell and I stayed again in the hospitable home of the Mellises. On Saturday evening a welcome tea had been arranged at the meetingplace on Rose Street, and brethren came from Dunfermline, Leven, Pittenweem, and other towns in “the kingdom of Fife,” as well as from the region across the Firth of Forth. The program was excellent. The hymns of praise lifted our spirits. So did the meat pies and biscuits (cookies) which we ate while talking as rapidly as we could about our marvelous relationship in our precious Lord. It was a season of refreshing from His very presence.

Our final day in “auld Scotia” was the Lord’s Day. It is etched into my memory. I spoke at “the breaking of the bread” and remained to talk to the lads and lasses in the Sunday School in the afternoon. When we came out the rain was pounding the pavement. At the end of the street the sea was breaking against the wall with resounding slaps as the spume and spray leaped high. It was still raining hard at the time for the evening meeting but the house was filled. Some of the older men wore kilts of lovely plaid.

At the close of my talk three precious souls announced their desire to put on Christ in baptism. It was a time of rejoicing with tears of gladness. We said good-bye to one another, and walked out

into the rainy night. All of us were aware that we would meet again some day where the light of the sun was not needed and the storm clouds would never rise.

## **BACK HOME FROM ENGLAND**

On May 28 we arrived in Yorkshire, the largest county in Great Britain. It was once the foremost manufacturing center of the world. We went to Leeds, which is famous for being in the midst of the textile industry. Fred and Hilda Hardy met us, and took us to the home of their son-in-law, Geoffrey Lodge. Almost every home in England has a name and Geoffrey and Bessie called theirs Maranatha. It was a constant reminder of the fact that the Lord is coming.

The next day two carloads of us drove through the beautiful Wharfe River Valley to the lonely Ilkley Moors. We left our cars and tramped through the wild gorse and bracken covered country. It is a land of grouse shooting. We heard the call of the curlews and saw the shaggy sheep which pasture on this awe-inspiring stretch of deserted country. As I looked back upon it from the car window my mind was full of "Wuthering Heights," by Emily Bronte, written about these same moors.

That night I spoke at Morley to a crowd which filled the little place of meeting. Geoffrey Lodge presided. We engaged in discussion with the Nazarene and Pentecostal folk who attended until we were late for dinner at the Thomasson home. After the dishes had been cleared away, we got our Bibles and talked about the Word until midnight. It came to me that this could be the strength of the Cause all over the earth, for little groups to meet in homes and discuss frankly and without formality the truth from heaven.

The following day we drove to Knaresborough where a ruined castle looks down from the height where it has stood a thousand years. It was market day and this quaint town which looked like an illustration from a book of Mother Goose rhymes was crowded with stands and temporary little shops set up. We wandered through narrow winding streets and alleys, flanked by age-old buildings with slate roofs. Far below flowed the picturesque river. That evening found us at East Ardsley where I spoke at a gospel meeting presided over by Brother E. Worth. It was Memorial Day at home but no one knew that in England.

The next morning we departed for Tunbridge Wells, in Kent, the garden spot of southeastern England, bordering on the English Channel. The white cliffs of Dover have made it justly famous. The congregation was small and had an inadequate and poorly-situated meeting place. It had been plagued by internal troubles, but under the guidance of Albert Winstanley and Ralph Limb had overcome them. I was in a ten-day series of meetings, during which Nell and I made our abode in the hospitable home of a beloved sister, Gertrude Hill. One man was restored, and one immersed. He was the thirtieth person I had baptized into Christ since crossing the ocean.

On the morning of June 13 we bade farewell to the saints in England. We boarded an early train for London, where we spent the day at the World's Fair which was then in progress. That evening we caught the boat train to Harwich, where we embarked on a steamer which landed us at Hook of Holland the next morning. We began a tour of historical sights in Holland, Belgium and France. It was an impressive time but I shall mercifully spare you the details.

We went aboard the great ship which was to bear us back home at Le Havre, and arrived in New York on the last day of June. On our train trip back home I stopped at New Castle, Indiana, where a four-day mass meeting was starting which brought hundreds together from California to Pennsylvania. On the first night Adam Bruce and William Horrocks from Canada spoke. On Tuesday night I addressed a packed auditorium on "The Name of the Church." I took the position that the body of Christ was given no title, and did not need a distinctive name since it had no rivals. To name it was to denominate it, and thus to separate the family of God. This was my first attempt to state convictions which were beginning to form. Fortunately no one seemed to know what I was saying and those who mentioned it thought it was great. It was only later, after I became convinced from reading Alexander Campbell that I came to the conclusion that even the term "church" was a misnomer.

Three days after I arrived home in Saint Louis, Brother J.H. Mabery of Bonne Terre, Missouri left this world to be with Jesus. Fred Killebrew and I spoke words of comfort to the huge audience which had gathered in his honor. He had proclaimed the Word all during his long employment as the chief electrician for Saint Joseph Lead Company. Many men who had been assigned to work under him had been led to Christ. He had started several congregations of believers and we had worked together in weak places with full understanding and appreciation of one another. It was a grievous loss to me.

When the time came to return to Beech Grove, Arkansas, Darrell Bolin went with me. He spoke at Beech Grove and Evening Star. The attempted boycott was completely broken. Brethren came from nearly all congregations. Emotions were running high. One morning we received word to appear at the meetinghouse. When we arrived there were ten men there, including several elders and deacons from Paragould. Present also were Franklin Puckett and G.K. Wallace. When we entered the building and were seated, Brother Wallace took the floor and announced it was time to call my hand and he was there to do it.

He presented propositions he had drawn up on the preacher-pastor system and colleges. With a flourish he threw them down on the table and demanded that we put up or shut up. I waited for a minute while the awed silence seemed like an eternity. I slowly arose and walked to the pulpit. Looking the brethren in the face I said I would accept the offer to debate and the propositions as drawn. I proposed that we include a discussion of the scripturality of an evangelist looking after and exercising oversight of a congregation he had planted until elders could be developed and ordained. I felt this needed some clarification. Brother Wallace in a meeting at Paragould which was held to stop my inroads into the southland had misrepresented my position on the question. It was agreed to include it.

We decided to not have moderators but to allow each man to be responsible for his own conduct. Each of us was to choose a timekeeper. I agreed to meet Brother Wallace anytime, and his supporters selected the week containing the Fourth of July the following year. We announced the debate that night. The interest in it was intense, and many regretted that it was so far in the future. As one old brother put it, "We are ready to see the fur fly now and it looks like the best thing to do would be to put the two of you up on the stand and let you go at one another!"

I was really too busy to think much of the debate or to make preparation for it. On August 7 I began a one-week study at Farmington, Missouri, during which one was immersed. On September 9 Ellis Crum and I entered into a series of meetings at Independence, Missouri, and it was at Eureka congregation, a fine rural group near Meadville, Missouri, close to the home of General John J. Pershing at Laclede. On October 7 I began at Nixa, Missouri, in the Ozarks, the scene of so many meetings in my earlier days. James Baysinger led the singing and did a marvelous job. We immersed 22 in the three meetings.

The fall and winter months were filled with activity. Three things stand out in my mind as I review events. First, the amount of training of men in various congregations. The Saint Louis Bible Study began November 5 with students from many states. E.M. Zerr came for three lectures on Prophecy. But there were special studies and training classes all over the United States. Brethren were being developed to edify, to do personal work, and to share the Good News.

Second, the continuing contact by mail with the saints in Great Britain. There were letters and articles from England, Scotland and Ireland. Many of these were from humble saints who had come to love Nell and me. They wrote about their families and what was happening in their congregations. We answered them all immediately. They sent calendars and shortbread and other things at Christmas. It was several years before the correspondence dropped away and finally slowed down to a trickle. Death was taking its toll of those who had met us. It meant much to hear from these precious ones.

Third, the intensification of feeling in the southland because of the coming debate. Brethren in many congregations who had entertained grave doubts about the rise of the clergy system began to surface. As they did so, local preachers felt forced to speak in defense of their position publicly. This only served to increase suspicion that something was wrong. But it gave the Baptist Church a respite from attack. Since I was regarded as the greatest enemy to the church in this generation, my name began to be heard with increasing frequency in sermons. It appeared in bulletins, in tracts, on the radio, and even in public advertisements in newspapers as brethren sought to stifle and kill my influence before people had even heard me.

H.F. Sharp of Blytheville, Arkansas, took up the cudgel with an article in the October issue of *Gospel Guardian*. He titled it, "Reckless Reporting by the Saint Louis Pope." In it he called me, among other things, a heretic, a troublemaker, and a pope. He accused me of malicious falsehood, divisive teaching, damnable heresy, and preaching filth. All of this was because of my conviction relative to the ministry of all the saints and the priesthood of all believers. Our brother only served to inflame the issue and to encourage others who had never met me to inveigh against me.

For weeks I became the subject of radio programs in Arkansas, Kentucky and South Missouri. Those who spoke against me had never met me. They had never read a word I had written. They operated purely on hearsay. Some of them were contradictory. But they sought to prejudice the minds of men against me. The preachers all expected to attend the debate but they did not want the "common people" to come. It was alleged that I could make black appear to be white, that I was a master brainwasher, and that what I said should go in one ear and out the



other. It did not work as intended because many of those who heard resolved to come and listen to me out of curiosity.

At the time I had not yet formulated my present conviction that public debating of issues among brethren achieves but little lasting good. It would be several years before I would become bold and brave enough to hang up my verbal gloves and announce that my participation in such partisan encounters belonged to my days of spiritual immaturity. At the time I liked to debate. I liked the exchange of wit and repartee. I gloried in being chosen as a champion. I rejoiced in and responded to the audience reaction.

I made my preparation with full conviction that I was battling for the truth. I still believe that. I am not sure I was as prayerful as I ought to have been. I may have relied too much upon my own ability and knowledge. But I realized it was a battle to the death. One of the combatants was wrong, and one of us would lay his life on the line spiritually.

## **THE COW PASTURE DEBATE**

My first discussion with Brother G.K. Wallace has been referred to as “The Cow Pasture Debate.” There was no place in the area large enough to accommodate the expected crowds, so brethren secured a huge tent and pitched it in a large field five miles north of Paragould. Hundreds of people came from many states. Hotels and motels for miles around were filled to capacity. The debate began on June 30 and closed July 4. J.A. McNutt was selected as timekeeper for Brother Wallace. My uncle, L.E. Ketcherside, operated in the same capacity for me.

The first two nights Brother Wallace affirmed, “The employment of a preacher to preach for the congregation as now practiced by the church of Christ, at 2nd and Walnut Streets, in Paragould, Ark., is scriptural.” The third night I affirmed, “The New Testament authorizes an evangelist to exercise authority in a congregation which he has planted until men are qualified and appointed as bishops.” On the fourth night, Brother Wallace affirmed, “The organization, by Christians, of schools such as Freed-Hardeman College is in harmony with the New Testament scriptures.” On the last night I affirmed that it was contrary to the New Testament scriptures.

It is not my intention to review the substance of the debate. It was put into print and can be read in its entirety. Brother Wallace was a worthy opponent. A typical “Church of Christ” debater, he was constantly watching for a chance at the jugular. He knew all of the debater’s tactics, was witty and sharp and one did not dare to let down his guard. I think his weakest moments came in his dealing with the difference between preaching and teaching and gospel and doctrine. He read the wrong definitions from both Thayer’s Lexicon and Webster’s Dictionary.

There were scores of preachers present, many representing both positions. A few did not have clear-cut ideas about either. Each afternoon public meetings were held at Beech Grove. In these any brother could say anything upon his heart by way of strength and edification. It was decided that no discussion of or reference to the debate would be made in these meetings. It was probably the greatest array of public talent ever assembled at Beech Grove. Every meeting was stimulating and uplifting.

The debates drew people from the area who came as Puritans would attend a bear-baiting, or those south of the border would go to a cock-fight. Not too many of them understood the issues but they liked the excitement. This was evidenced when men gathered in country stores like the one at Hooker's Switch. The question of the debate came up as they sat talking on the front porch, and one old resident said, "Well, for my money, that Baptist from Saint Louis is giving that Campbellite about all he needs."

One of the greatest blessings which came to me during the debate was to meet Leroy Garrett. Students from David Lipscomb College called him in Dallas after the first night of debate, urging him to come. He deeply impressed me when I first shook hands with him. We held much in common but we also differed in our concepts regarding many items. We had been reared in different areas. I did not know the brethren with whom he had worked. He did not know the ones with whom I had labored. But both of us knew Jesus, and because of Him we wanted to know each other better.

It was only a short time later when he called me from Winfield, Alabama, where he was in a tent meeting. I went down to spend several days with him in the small hotel. There, in the presence of three David Lipscomb College students, we explored the points upon which we differed for three whole days. We began talking early in the morning and continued until late at night, merely taking time out to go to the tent for meeting. The people in the community did not know what was taking place as we sought to understand one another and the Word of God. Later we set up meetings in homes in Dallas, and then decided to widen the scope and invite all to participate. These were some of the most profitable and soul-searching experiences of my life.

Two weeks after the debate I returned to Beech Grove for two weeks. Each afternoon we held a two-hour session of Bible study. It was open, free and positive. It was generally agreed the debate had helped our cause. People from many other congregations came to hear and be blessed. An instructor from Harding College came to lead the singing. Brethren from various parties came and went away without rancor. The little congregation now had a reputation all over the United States. It had refused to roll over and play dead!

Before I leave the debate I must tell you of what happened to our antagonists later on. G.K. Wallace who was a Bible teacher at Florida College left the school and turned against it. Franklin Puckett who came with him to issue the challenge split with Brother Wallace and died on the other side of a rift which knew no reconciliation. The two congregations in Paragould whose preachers signed the article in *Firm Foundation* sounding the alarm that I had invaded the south, fell out with one another. My uncle and I attended a debate between them at 2nd and Walnut. The alienation exists to this day. Many of the preachers who attended the debate have since become involved in another schism and are attacking each other.

I am not glad these things happened. They are a built-in part of the System. There will be trouble in every congregation eventually. There will be new divisions in every generation. All of the programs, all of the excitement, all of the hullabaloo, will not prevent it. Legalism leads to division. It can lead nowhere else for men in the flesh. So long as men substitute love of law for the law of love trouble is waiting in the wings. It will come in on cue. Church of Christism is like any other "ism."

Four days after the debate finished, Brother D. Austen Sommer died of a heart attack as he sat in his home in Indianapolis, Indiana. He was born in Kelton, Pennsylvania, on March 28, 1878, and was 74 years of age. His departure brought home to me the fact that the generation of those who had influenced my younger years in the faith was retreating into the shadows. The Sommer family, which once exercised such an influence in the northern states was disappearing. Composed of men who knew the Book but who were jealous of each other, they had fragmented both their family and congregations throughout the land. Yet it was sad for me to see them die disillusioned and forlorn.

In October, 1952, Brother Garrett launched a monthly journal called *Bible Talk*. In his initial editorial he wrote: "We feel that institutionalism and professionalism are teammates in that inauspicious game of apostasy into which they have enticed the church." He proposed to expose them for what they were, while at the same time dealing with worldliness, health habits, use of leisure time, the Christian home and worship. It was quite a sizable order for a paper.

The first issue bore a picture of the youthful-looking editor and Ansel Chandler of Tyler, Texas, wrote that he was a graduate of Freed-Hardeman College, Abilene Christian College, Southern Methodist University, Princeton University and Harvard University. *Bible Talk* was the forerunner for *Restoration Review* and did much to define issues confronting a great segment of the restoration movement sparked by the Campbells and their contemporaries.

The 1953 *Mission Messenger* featured a series of articles by Albert E. Winstanley, on various topics. At the same time I started one on "The Elders of the Church." There were twelve articles about the bishops dealing with an in-depth study of their qualifications, selection and appointment. The January issue carried a picture and an account of the golden wedding anniversary of Brother and Sister W.E. Ballenger. He had begun preaching two years after I was born and had planted new congregations all over the central states. Meticulous in dress and with shoes shined like a mirror, he had endeared himself to rural and village people because of his genial attitude. Some of them said he could walk through mud and none of it would dare rub off on him.

In February I went to Valdosta, Georgia at the invitation of brethren who had attended the debate. My mission was to visit and talk with preachers and others in the area. It was the first time I had been that far south, but I knew that Valdosta was the home of Jessie F. Love who had visited us in Missouri shortly after my father was immersed into Christ. He was a curiosity in our village with his broad southern dialect. I located his wife who was still living in Valdosta.

I talked with Joe Goodspeed, minister at Remerton, and Evans McMullen who was laboring at Hahira. Both were graduates of Florida Christian College. Other brethren came from Florida, Alabama and other parts of Georgia to converse with me. We met in a home and talked until midnight every day.

On January 24, J.A. Freed died at Topeka, Kansas, at the age of 77 years. The day of his death was also that of his 49th wedding anniversary. He had been a friend of our family for many years and was a relative of the brother Freed who founded the college at Henderson, Tennessee. J.A. Freed had proclaimed the gospel for a half century, and was well known.

On February 20 I began a series of Bible studies in the American Legion hall in Paragould, Arkansas, despite a good deal of opposition. I was on the radio daily discussing trends in the religious world. The result was that our crowds were good, reaching a total of 150 in many sessions. In the April issue of our paper I announced that I was scheduled for studies in Texas, Tennessee, and Georgia during that year. The increasing number of calls made it impossible to continue the Saint Louis studies. We cancelled them after fifteen years of continuous teaching.

During the Arkansas debate, Sterl Watson, who was preaching for the West End Church of Christ in Saint Louis, arose and issued a challenge for me to debate Brother Wallace on the same issues in Saint Louis. Being satisfied with the Arkansas encounter, I saw little use of a repetition of the debate. But before Brother Watson left Arkansas for Saint Louis he announced that he was coming to the city to run me out of it, so when he repeated the challenge to the congregation at Manchester Avenue there was little we could do except to agree to another debate.

Each congregation appointed a committee to work out the details and it was agreed that I would debate Brother Wallace in Carpenter's Hall October 26-30. It was decided that the debate would again be printed and thus four of my discussions would be in book form.

## 5. The Change Continues

### THE STORMY FIFTIES

Anyone who reads the history for 1953, of the particular restoration attempt to which we are heirs, will surely recognize that this year represented a peak in the battle between those who advocated a mutual ministry of all the saints and those who defended a professional ministerial caste. Although the central issue was the rise of a clergy system, there was always in the background the question concerning the right of disciples of the Master to create and endow human organizations to develop a special class of men who hire themselves out to congregations on a contractual basis to feed them.

It was a year of high tension manifested in public debates. We were attacked in articles in papers from whose columns we were barred and in which we could make no defense. Walter Henderson, at 2nd and Walnut, in Paragould, Arkansas, kept up a running fire against me in his little weekly paper called *Pause, Ponder and Profit*. Guy N. Woods devoted an article to me in *Gospel Advocate*. G.C. Brewer, who was as dignified in error as when he held the truth, stooped a little from his high plane and let loose a barrage in the same paper. He was perturbed because I held a meeting in Rutherford County, Tennessee, without consulting with George W. DeHoff of Murfreesboro and clearing it with him. I wrote a reply but Brother B.C. Goodpasture returned it with a note that my writings could not be published in his journal.

Glenn L. Wallace made a vitriolic attack on Leroy Garrett in the April 30 issue of *Gospel Guardian*. Rex A. Turner wrote an "Open Letter to Leroy Garrett" which was published on the editorial page of *Gospel Advocate*, for February 12. His opening sentence read: "Now that some of the details of certain maneuvers are in, the evidence points to the fact that you are definitely opening up a front for W. Carl Ketcherside and Sommerism here in the South." Leroy filed a reply. After a month went by he wrote to Brother Goodpasture and asked him why it had not appeared. In a letter which Leroy published, Brother Goodpasture ignored the question of the personal attack published in his own paper. But the *Gospel Advocate* had an editorial in the March 19 issue which said: "We do not feel that we are obliged to furnish a medium for radicals and hobbyists to ventilate their hobbies, nor are we obligated to become an agency for the dissemination of error. It is not our remotest intention to give brotherhood publicity to every hobbyrider and his fancies."

Brother J.W. Roberts, of Abilene Christian College, entered the arena through the pages of *Firm Foundation*. He was disturbed by Leroy's "peculiar ideas," and said, "Brother Leroy's ability and training deserve better things than the use to which he is putting them." Leroy pointed out that the Greek scholars, both Christian and otherwise, agreed with his position.

All of these men who took up the cudgel were eminent in "Church of Christ" circles. The fact that they felt pressured into writing against us, and even had to misrepresent our position, gave us the courage to press on. This was an indication that what was said was being read, that people were being made to question some of the entrenched practices. Although these men had been very active in debating with Baptists, Methodists and others, now they were being forced to

defend what they had. For the first time in their history it was being demanded that they “preach what they practiced.”

April 14-17 found Leroy Garrett and Floyd I. Stanley in a debate in Cowden Junior High School auditorium in Midland, Texas. The proposition was: “The Scriptures teach that a congregation of the Church of Christ with elders may employ a gospel preacher to serve as the minister of the congregation at a regular salary.” Brother Stanley was the minister of the Southside Church of Christ in Midland. Reports from those in attendance universally mention his sarcasm and abusiveness, and Brother Garrett’s calm and dignified demeanor.

On June 30-July 2, L.E. Ketcherside of Peoria, Illinois, debated Obert Henderson, of Walnut Ridge, Arkansas, at Peoria. The propositions dealt with the organization of Christian colleges and the work of evangelists. Those favoring the views of Brother Henderson absented themselves from the debate. He could not get one of the brethren to even come and keep time for him. I moderated and kept time for both men. The debate was very gentlemanly. Brother Henderson proved himself to be a person of real Christian character and demeanor. Later I became better acquainted with him and we enjoyed a real sense of fellowship in the Spirit.

My second debate with Brother G.K. Wallace was held in Saint Louis, November 26-30. It attracted hundreds from fifteen states and Canada. In addition to the debate two sessions were held daily at the Manchester Avenue meetinghouse. Those who presided over these sessions by invitation of the elders were L.E. Ketcherside, Peoria, Ill.; Vernon W. Hurst, Bristol, W. Va.; Hershel Ottwell, Hartford, Ill.; and Fred Killebrew, Senath, Mo. Brethren from everywhere were free to speak. They considered such questions as: What sectarian tendencies among us need to be eliminated? What scriptures are commonly misapplied? What are the bases for fellowship and disfellowship? What factors are essential to a complete restoration of the primitive order? These sessions were highly practical and free from controversy.

The debate itself was one of the most interesting in which I have been involved. Brother Wallace had argued himself into a dilemma. In Arkansas he contended vociferously there was no difference between preaching and teaching and between gospel and doctrine. He was on record as being opposed to any human organization to preach the gospel such as the missionary society. It was easy to prove from Florida Christian College bulletins that it was a human institution and that it existed to teach doctrine set forth in the new covenant scriptures. Brother Wallace was thus caught participating in and defending the scripturality of a human institution to preach the gospel.

He either had to take the position there was a difference between preaching and teaching and between gospel and doctrine, or else withdraw his opposition to the missionary society, as a human institution to preach the gospel. Later I learned from brethren who were present in the daily conclaves in which they sought to patch up the matter for Brother Wallace that the preachers knew they were hard hit. Their consolation lay in the fact that if Brother Wallace spoke forcefully and loud and hit his chart with the pointer the brethren might overlook the corner into which he had driven himself. He did both but it did not work!

As soon as that debate ended I had to start preparing for another. It was with Flavil L. Colley and was held in Beckley Theater at Dallas, Texas, December 1-4. It was limited to the scripturality of hiring a minister of a congregation having elders "as generally practiced among the churches of Christ in Dallas." Attendance was excellent and behavior above reproach. The debate was put into print and can be read in those libraries which have preserved such accounts of what transpired.

Before we close the account of debates we need to mention two more, which were held in 1954. One was conducted in Ivanhoe Temple, Kansas City, Missouri. It featured Leroy Garrett and Bill J. Humble. Pat Hardeman was the moderator for Brother Humble. Carroll Wrinkle served in the same capacity for Brother Garrett. To me, one of the outstanding things about this debate, which drew large audiences of eager listeners, was the question about the content of the gospel, whether the gospel was designed to be preached to the saved. Can the saved be evangelized? Despite the careless writings on this theme, it is ignorance with regard to it which underlies so many grave problems in the whole world of believers in Jesus as God's Son. It is the foundation of many of our own tragic and disappointing deviations from the divine purpose. The rise and development of a special clergy, the multiplication of divisive parties, the whole question of fellowship are all linked to it.

Brother Garrett debated George W. DeHoff at Nashville, Tennessee, June 1-4. The debate was conducted in a large tent pitched on Caldwell Lane, not far from David Lipscomb College. Pat Hardeman moderated for Brother DeHoff. Henry Clay Grayson moderated for Brother Garrett. From his very first speech Brother DeHoff seemed intent upon turning the debate into a burlesque. He dealt in personalities and it was obvious he was out to destroy anyone who opposed his practice. After the debate Pat Hardeman sought me out to tell me that the two of us would have to meet in a debate on the issues to end all debates. The time never came.

We were engaged in other things besides debating. In January of 1954, Leroy and I attended the David Lipscomb College Lectureship at Nashville. It was my pleasure to spend several hours with the venerable James A. Allen, editor of *The Apostolic Times*. He was seventy years old but his memory had not dimmed. He gave me a great many insights into the causes of modern defections within the church. I could see that a great many problems stemmed from the ambitions for leadership of men who allowed pride to rule their lives.

Leroy and I went to visit Brother B.C. Goodpasture in his office, and later in his home. Everything was cordial. We presented to him a proposal for a panel discussion by representative men dealing with principles and not personalities. He could not see the wisdom of it and preferred going on as we had with him printing but one side of an issue. The lectureship turned out to be a mediocre presentation.

The following month Nell and I attended the lectureship at Florida Christian College at Temple Terrace, near Tampa. The theme was "Persistent Problems in Preaching." Featured were men such as Basil Overton, J.A. McNutt, G.K. Wallace and Pat Hardeman. One night after the session a man stopped Nell and me just outside the tent. Within a few minutes about a hundred men were gathered around us. They began bombarding me with questions from every side with

all of them talking at once. Franklin Puckett mounted a chair and began to quiz me while many others were talking at the top of their voices.

I told them I would talk to anyone whom they chose but would not become a part of such a hullabaloo as they were engaging in. Since Brother Puckett already had “the chair,” they nominated him. We talked about two hours and no one left. Occasionally someone would yell out a question and had to be reminded of the agreement. I left about midnight feeling good. Some of those who had started out so bravely were silenced.

We were in Birmingham, where we spent three days in the home of O.C. Dobbs, Sr. I visited a number of people including John T. Lewis. We had a long discussion about the clergy system and our brother attended one night when I spoke. Brother Dobbs took the floor after I had finished and proposed an open forum on the issues in Birmingham. Brother Lewis opposed it strongly. He felt that he could speak for the congregations in Birmingham.

The year of 1954 drew to a close with a great deal of excitement prevailing. The status quo had been disturbed and men hardly knew what to do!

## YEARS OF CHANGE

The time has come to try and describe the four most formative years of my life. They were years of change, of study, deep meditation and fervent prayer. They were years of fear mingled with faith. In them I came closer to God than I had ever drawn before. Actually, this period had begun on that Easter Monday in 1951 when I spoke at the little village of Ahorey, in North Ireland, at invitation of the Presbyterian leaders. I stood on the platform where Thomas Campbell had ministered before coming to America.

However, I returned to the United States to engage in debates with brethren. The heady excitement of combat in the forensic arena made it impossible for me to study deeply or to think clearly about the will of God for my future life. But between the years of 1953 and 1957 a great transformation took place.

Out of it came my article “That They All May Be One” in the January issue of *Mission Messenger* for 1957, and the even more trenchant “Thoughts on Fellowship” in January 1958. These were the initial public presentations of the thoughts which had begun to lodge in my heart. They represented my crossing of the Rubicon, the burning of my bridges behind me. They were the first guns fired in my commitment to an unrelenting war against sectarianism, and especially against my own.

During those years I learned the stern discipline of research and study. I read every word of the five-volume Lard’s Quarterly, the seven volume Christian Baptist, and as many bound volumes of the Millennial Harbinger as were available to me. It became apparent to me that we had departed so far from the original spirit and intent of the restoration ideal that it was a travesty upon justice to claim that we were the same movement. It soon became obvious to me that no splinter of the movement was the one holy, catholic and apostolic church of God upon earth, and



that all of our fragmented groups taken together did not constitute the body of Christ in its fullness.

I was able to distinguish between the body as a divine organism conceived in the mind of God, and movements within it launched by the thinking of men like Luther, Calvin, Wesley, Campbell or Stone. It became apparent that the first great error of the heirs of the reformers was the equating of the movement with the Lord's church, thereby adding another religious party or sect to the already overburdened landscape. I became convinced that we had not achieved the original purpose of uniting the Christians in all the sects. The magnificent myth which had driven us on relentlessly to war against all sectarianism but our own was the fantasy that we were exclusively the body of Christ upon earth. It was a solemn thought to me that I had brothers and sisters meeting behind other signboards, and that we were saved by a Savior and not by a signboard. My growing conviction led to the article "The Sheep on the Hills." I could see that God's flock was scattered and not yet gathered.

I was led to investigate within their context every scripture I had ever employed to justify division among the saints of God. It was a frightening experience. As I read Amos 3:3; 6:5; Romans 16:17; I Corinthians 1:10; II Thessalonians 3:6, and other such passages and saw how we had wrested them, I began to wonder if I had ever been right upon anything. One after another my usage of such passages was taken from me. I began to mistrust my judgment. I was driven to my knees and sought the understanding of God's will with tears. I wept much to realize that at the very time when I thought I was serving Him I was actually dividing His children by my interpretations. It was several years before I wrote the first edition of my book "The Twisted Scriptures" but all of the time the Spirit of God was illuminating me as I surrendered more and more to His claims. I was driven to Him by loneliness for in those days there was no one else to whom I could talk.

It was a difficult thing to overcome pride and ambition. I had been for so long a recognized leader of a faction in the religious complex that I sought for some way to hold on to my past and maintain integrity with the present. One day, after months of introspection I sat down at my desk and wrote, "I have been in the wrong about fellowship all my life. Today I renounce that wrong. I will no longer try to make my increasing knowledge consistent with my past teaching. That teaching was in error." I recall as if it were yesterday how I felt when I read what I had written. It was as if fetters had been struck from my mind. New insights began to flood my soul so fast I could hardly write them down. It was as if a dam had broken inside me. I have never felt quite so clean and pure as I did that day.

People began to write and tell me I had changed. To them that was the unpardonable sin. They equated our past position with the will of God and to leave our feeble human thought and go on to greater heights was forsaking the truth. They would quote for me things I had written in the past and ask me if I still believed them. To all of them I wrote, "You are right, I have changed, and as I learn new truths I will change again. I have signed my declaration of independence from all of the errors of the past, and I shall pray that God will open up your heart to renounce yours as I have mine."

I resolved that I would never again debate publicly with any brother. I would never again represent any party, sect or schism. I would never again allow myself to be selected and thrust forward by the partisans of any school of thought to defend their opinions and deductions. I would stand or fall to my own master and I would allow all others to do the same. It came as a great relief to realize that never again would I have to spend weeks trying to figure out what an opponent might say and how I would parry his thrust. Since the moment I made my promise to the Father that I would never again debate, I have become increasingly convinced of the folly of attempting to arrive at truth or alleviate division by such a ridiculous procedure. If a community is not divided before a debate it will always be after one is held. The very psychology of our modern debating is divisive.

As I studied the past it became evident that men like myself who had learned new truths always made two errors. The result was an intensification of the sectarian spirit. In the first place, they left where they were and went with those who had taught them the new truth. This took the new truth out of the place where it was most sadly needed and put it in a place where it was already present. I resolved not to go anywhere but to stay where I was, regardless of what happened. If I could not serve God among those whom I knew best I would not be liable to do so among others.

Secondly, those who learned new truths usually tried to bind them upon others. In their joy at learning something meaningful to them they wanted to press it on everyone whom they met. Their new brainchild meant so much to them they wanted everyone else to become pregnant immediately. This always caused cleavages in the body. I resolved to share my ideas but never to allow them to become dogmas. I was resolute in my determination never to form a clique or club. As I wrote in my paper, I refused to be bought off or scared off and expected to remain where I was for the duration.

I urged all others to stay where they were until driven out. It appeared to me that the way to unite was to unite. The way to halt division was to stop dividing. It seemed sensible that if everyone remained where he was this would preclude the formation of new parties, and while this would not lessen the number it would freeze them at the present level. It was my conviction that time would heal many of the breaches and bridge many of the chasms. In any event, the formation of new parties or sects, or the changing from one party to another would not achieve the purpose of God. To shift from one party to another does not eliminate problems. It only subjects one to new and unfamiliar problems with which he is not by experience qualified to deal.

I did not feel it was proper for me to continue without informing the brethren with whom I was laboring of my radical change of thought. The elders agreed to set up six two-hour periods on successive Saturday evenings and invite all who wished to come. I was to speak an hour and then answer questions from the audience for an hour. The meetings were well-attended and orderly, although somewhat tense. I loved and respected all of the brethren. I knew how they felt. I had taught them what they believed and had led them in its implementation. Now I was occupying the same speaker's platform to tell them I had been wrong.

I discussed with them the name of the church and told them it had no official title. The primitive *ekklesia* represented the called-out ones and they were known, not by a title, but by their love for

one another. They were identified by where they met, and we should name the place so we could find them geographically, but not name the church to distinguish it from other believers, for that meant to denominate it.

I dealt with the “five steps of salvation” and showed that we were not saved by climbing a little ladder into the kingdom. Rather we were drawn up by an “escalator.” We simply took the step of faith and the grace of God, as an unseen power drew us up into repentance and immersion into the precious Lord. It was His power and not ours which accomplished His purpose and we never left the faith we had in the beginning to go on to the next step.

I discussed the nature of worship and showed the folly of “five acts of worship” when everything that one did on earth under the sovereignty of Jesus was an expression of worship. Under Jesus there are no holy places, holy days or holy things, but only a holy people. I discussed the nature and composition of the one body and showed that it was composed of every person on earth who had answered the call of God. We should not ask people, “Which church are you a member of?” because there is only one. There never has been another and never will be. Our purpose should be to receive all whom God receives and as He received them.

I showed the differences between the gospel and the doctrine. The gospel consists of seven historical facts. The testimony to these must be believed. The doctrine consists of a course of instruction. It refers to that which is taught. It requires understanding and rationalization. We are saved by faith, not by how much we learn and know, but by whom we know. It was also pointed out that God probably did not respect any of our lines of demarcation and division because He did not create them. We like them because they gave us a sense of security, but it was a false security based upon human opinion.

We did not lose a person. I am working today with the same congregations with which I have always worked. And I am welcome in hundreds more. Through the grace of God, with few exceptions, the places where I had worked outgrew their narrow and inclusive views in the Saint Louis area, and are as comforting to me as I try to be to them as we grow older in years and in the faith.

## **WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU CHANGE**

I have often been asked about the effect of my changing convictions upon the party of which I had been one of the leaders. That, of course, is always the crux of any change. In the Saint Louis area where brethren could question me personally and where they could observe the life of Nell and myself, all of us continued to grow together in love. It was not quite so tranquil in other parts of the country. As I began to expose my changing views there was first astonishment and then resentment.

I had been a leader in opposition to the “Rough Draft” as presented by Chester and Allen Sommer in Indianapolis, Indiana. I had worked with their brother, D. Austen Sommer, in salvaging a “faithful church.” Later when problems arose with the latter I had again been a leader in what we called “preserving the faith.” Now I was saying the faith revealed in the Book was greater than, and not even related to our petty problems. Indeed, I was beginning to intimate

that it was not only supremely above the Sommer movement, but the whole Campbell movement. The body of Christ as viewed by God was infinitely superior to all of our hassles and wrangles about means, methods and machinery. I suggested that He might not have been with us in any of our debates and controversies.

At first the opposition was an undercurrent. I would hear rumors of speeches delivered in various places opposing my concept of fellowship. Occasionally someone would write me that his congregation had received a warning against me. I was no longer sound in the faith. It was suggested that I might be losing my mind and that much learning had made me mad. I was not invited to speak at a few gatherings where I had once been welcomed. As the spirit of opposition gradually began to crystallize and to surface in order to protect itself, it became centered in three men among the older brethren – E.M. Zerr, Roy Loney and C.R. Turner.

Brother Loney was a good writer but was completely deaf. His speaking was greatly affected by his condition, and he was very difficult to understand. He had been alienated from his family and isolated from the brethren for some years because of his involvement in local church troubles. I went to Colorado and offered him the opportunity to write for *Mission Messenger*. He readily accepted. However, he had grown up in an age of preacher rivalry and church trouble, and was happiest when engaged in a running feud by mail. My changing views presented him another opportunity. He wrote letters to brethren whom he deemed weak in Saint Louis and sought to woo them into allowing him to come and start a “faithful church” and gather the dissidents together. They brought the letters to me and we ignored them.

Brother Turner’s influence was limited and hurt by his own judgment. Possessed of an inflexible spirit, and being radical by nature, he felt called upon to try and drive brethren to see things as he did. Wherever he went he assailed “the new doctrine on fellowship.” He was especially embittered by my emphasis on love as the solution of all of our problems and ridiculed it publicly whenever he could.

Brother Zerr was possessed of the greatest knowledge of the Book of any man among us. Every year, after his wife died, Nell and I had him come and stay with us for at least two weeks at Christmas time. He liked our children and enjoyed the spirit of gaiety which they created when they came home. I had edited and published his large book *New Testament Questions* and had also brought out the six volume commentary which he wrote. We were close to each other and I arranged for him to speak in congregations in the Saint Louis area.

He was a columnist for our little journal, writing a monthly article, “Word Studies in the Bible.” He was adept at this kind of thing and had his articles in on time every month. As I began to air my developing views he became uncomfortable at appearing in the same paper with me. More and more it was apparent in his column that he was attempting to shore up our traditional partisan position. This was evident in his column for March 1958 when he wrote on the words “Heresy and Faction.” The same issue carried two articles of mine. One was titled “The Party Spirit.” Some have said it was the most keenly analytical article I have ever written. The other article was another installment of “Thoughts on Fellowship.”

It was this series which Brother Zerr could not allow to go unchallenged. He wrote me that he could not continue to write for the paper unless he was permitted to write about my fallacies. I replied that I would welcome anything he said which would point out my error, and nothing he wrote would keep me from loving him. Accordingly, he announced his intention of dealing with my views in the August issue of 1958 in an article entitled "Preface." The intensity of his feeling was shown by his concluding words, "I am not vain enough to think I can 'stem the flood' of this disastrous movement. But I know that I can clear my conscience by raising my voice and hand against another incipient gash in the body of Christ."

In an editorial note I said, "We cherish the right for Brother Zerr to differ with our views, and we will provide him the same opportunity to be heard as we ask for ourselves. He may set forth any view he holds in this paper .... The fact that our brother, or any other brother, disagrees with us will make no difference in our treatment of him. We will demonstrate one time in history that there is room in the fellowship of God for brethren to differ in love."

It was obvious that I now faced the first real test of my view that love was the ultimate dynamic which could maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. For the first time I was committed to a wholly new approach to dealing with those who differed with me. I examined my own heart and found out that I was not shamming it. I loved these brethren in spite of their human weaknesses and mine. I resolved not to hurt their influence nor put a stumbling block in their way. I would simply be true to Jesus. I would correct any mistakes which they sustained by evidence and apologize for any wrong.

I published all that Brother Zerr wrote. I replied as gently as possible. The result was that brethren had both sides of the controversial thinking before them in the same issue of the paper. I felt deeply that the things I was writing would some day be generally accepted. I was content to plant and water. I would "learn to labor and to wait," and allow time, the great arbiter, to validate what I was saying. As for the present I must be true to increasing knowledge regardless of consequences.

We escaped without a formal split, for which I have ever been thankful. It is true that some brethren with whom I had labored branded me a Benedict Arnold. Of course they knew little about what I was doing and nothing about Benedict Arnold. In private letters I have seen since, I was referred to as a traitor. None of these things moved me nor did I count my life dear unto myself. I knew the brethren did not realize the scope of what I was saying and they were angry, thinking I had left them. Actually I did not leave anyone. My only sin was the receiving of all God's children as my brothers. I did not consider that loving others more meant that I loved those with whom I had been associated any less. I moved out of the stagnant pool of backwater into the mainstream of God's mercy and love.

In these days I am constantly running into good brothers and sisters whom I knew in olden days. They would have nothing to do with me then. But many of them have now become less sure that they have a perfect understanding of all truth. They have seen their children and grandchildren drift away from the cold, calculating legalism which we then equated with the will of God. It has shaken them. They have mellowed and become more open. Some of them are now members of

groups about which they condemned me when I suggested there might be Christians among them.

I have learned one thing which has proven valuable for me. When problems arise, if one can avoid saying too much about them in their initial stages he will not have so much to retract later on. Human pride often interferes with our acknowledgment of wrong and congregations which choose sides actually create the “sides” by their choosing. All matters are better when handled with cool heads and warm hearts than with hotheads and cold hearts.

On Labor Day weekend in 1958 occurred a meeting of great significance. It was held in the little city of Nowata, Oklahoma, and was arranged by my brother Paul who presided over it. Hundreds of brethren gathered from several states. It was a rich time in sharing. Featured was a discussion of instrumental music in relation to fellowship. Participants were Seth Wilson, Don DeWelt, Leroy Garrett and myself. The format proved to be excellent. There were three sessions of two hours each.

## **LAVA FROM ABOVE**

It was John Milton who called death “the golden key that opens the palace of eternity.” As I think of 1959-60 I am impressed with how often that key opened the palace door for older persons whom I loved. Then I recall that I was fifty-two years of age and those of the preceding generation were ripe for the reaper’s scythe. It is not in a morbid spirit but simply to keep the record straight that I mention a few of those whom “the great leveler” called home to be with Christ in this brief period.

There was John Egarian, who died at Riverside, California, at the age of 94. He was born in Betios, Syria, 14 miles from Antioch, on February 22, 1865. He learned to speak Armenian, Turkish and Arabian, but English was too much for him. He became skilled in silkworm culture, and was a consultant on silk production and manufacture while mayor of his city for many years. I baptized him and his good wife, with several others in the Armenian colony in 1939. He was 74 at the time and we had to speak through an interpreter.

On March 14, A.E. McClafin, an elder at Bicknell, Indiana, died of a heart attack. I had stayed in his home many times, and the hours were spent in discussion of the word. His wife, Bessie, was a talented writer. For years she did a column for the Apostolic Review called “Leaves from a Rose Retreat,” as their lovely home was called. Upon two occasions we had stayed up all night long talking about the Bible.

On June 16, J.W. Watts, Nell’s father died. I was very close to him. Born in the Ozark hills he had grown up with little formal schooling. He came to the mining area when it was rough and tough. He was baptized by Daniel Sommer and was thoroughly committed to Christ. Twice he had been elected mayor of the city of Flat River. He was universally respected through the area for his commonsense, fairness and justice. I conducted his funeral service before one of the largest audiences ever to attend such an event. That day we learned what it meant to sorrow not as others which have no hope.

Brother E.M. Zerr was seriously injured near Martinsville, Indiana, October 29. He had celebrated his 82nd birthday two weeks before. He drove his car on to the highway directly in the path of one that was coming. He lingered four months in a coma, never regaining consciousness. He died on February 22, 1960. During his lifetime he conducted 75 protracted studies of the Bible in depth. For years he was the query editor for the *Apostolic Review*. He was the only man in the restoration movement who had produced a commentary on the entire Bible. A great deal of it was written in our home. I had gone to see him a few months before his accident. He was very cold and formal toward me. He thought I had “left the faith” because I insisted that God’s people were still scattered throughout the sectarian world.

On the same day Brother Zerr died, a mutual friend of ours, James Vermillion, departed this life in Riverside, California. I first met him in Springfield, Missouri, when I arrived there at the age of fourteen to hold a tent meeting on north National Boulevard. I stayed in his home and played with the boys. In later years he got a thrill out of telling how he would have to come out and tell me it was time to come in and get washed up for the meeting.

On January 4, A.W. Harvey, died in Bloomington, Indiana, as the result of a stroke. He had been a friend of the Sommer family for years, although he was not that close to D. Austen Sommer, whom he regarded as extreme. He was widely known because of his authorship of a booklet called “Bible Colleges.”

On February 6, Robert Brumback died of a cardiac condition, in Phoenix, Arizona, where he had gone upon the recommendation of his physician. He was author of two books which I published. One was “History of the Church Through the Ages.” I proofread the 430 pages three times before publication. The other book was “Where Jesus Walked.” It was the story of Brother Brumback’s trip to the holy land.

On March 17, Dewey Copeland died of a heart attack at Valdosta, Georgia. I met him first at the debate with G.K. Wallace, near Paragould, eight years before. During the interval I had been in his home many times. He and his wife and daughter had made a trip with Nell and me to Banff and Lake Louise in Canada, returning by way of Yellowstone Park and the Black Hills. It seemed incredible that he was gone. Jim Mabery and I went by train to Georgia to conduct the funeral service. It was a vast crowd we addressed.

On July 5, W. Curtis Porter died in a Memphis hospital. He had known that he possessed a rare and incurable blood disease since 1942. When he first learned of the proposal of the brethren at Beech Grove to have me come to Arkansas, he bitterly opposed it. He spoke against me publicly and wrote letters trying to get the brethren to cancel my coming. He was the first one I met in my debate with Brother Wallace. Later, the two congregations in Paragould which opposed me so bitterly fell out among themselves. Brother Porter debated Guy N. Woods on institutionalism. It was while sitting in the audience listening to these two “pros” seeking to cut each other down that it dawned upon me how childish were the issues we were debating. I went to see Brother Porter at his home a few months before his final hospitalization. He was courteous and kind. He told me that after seeing some of the actions of the brethren he was inclined to be more favorable to me than to them.

The saddest loss of all was that of my mother. She suffered a massive cerebral hemorrhage at Topeka, Kansas, on Lord's Day morning, August 21. She was 77 years old. All the way from Saint Louis to Topeka I caught myself thinking of bygone days. I recalled how, when we were little, Mom used to sing us Danish lullabies as she rocked us. I remembered teaching her to read English. And I lived again the days of poverty. Her children had been her whole life.

She had known hardship, toil and pain, but now it was all over. Gone were the lonely nights when my father was away preaching and she was home worrying about sick children. My brother Paul and I conducted the memorial service. When I said the final benediction and turned away from the grave where her body would return to dust beside that of my father to whom she had always been true, I suddenly realized that our children had no grandparents left.

Not everything was death, of course. There was renewed life on many fronts. Brother Garrett and I continued our Saturday sessions in Hartford, Illinois. We met one Saturday per month for six consecutive months in the fall and winter. The subjects were weighty but timely. Each of us spoke an hour in the morning. At noon the sisters served an excellent meal and we all ate together. In the afternoon we took questions from the audience for two hours. We did not always agree but we loved one another and all of us learned. Out of these meetings grew the Hartford Forum, now the Saint Louis Forum. It has been one of the greatest influences in creating respect across party lines.

It was early in 1959 that we set up luncheon meetings at a restaurant in Springfield, Illinois, once per month. We met to discuss the implementation of God's will. The first one found 35 brethren from Churches of Christ and Christian Churches together. Brother Garrett presided. The theme was "How Can We Work Together For the Cause of Christ?" We met as friends and not as enemies. The next month more than 40 were present. It was a kind of daring experiment in those days. Now it is routine in our area.

In the March issue of the *American Christian Review* appeared an article over my signature entitled "A Statement of Fact." It was an apology for my actions in elevating "the Rough Draft," written in 1932, to a test of fellowship. I had reached the conclusion there was but one creed, the Lord Jesus Christ. To elevate an editorial statement of opinion into a test of union or communion was as absurd as it was wrong. I was particularly disturbed by the fact that we had summoned brethren from various sections of the country to a meeting in Kansas City, to take a stand on the issue. Such mass pressure seemed to me in retrospect to be sectarian. It smacked too much of church councils in history, all of which ended up producing a new creed.

I began the series of articles on "Covenants of God." I had become convinced that God had revealed Himself as a covenant-making God, He made covenants with Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Later He made a covenant with Israel at Mount Sinai. They broke His covenant and He promised to make a new one. In it the motives and rules of action would be engraved upon the hearts of men. It became obvious that we were no longer under a written code. The new testament was not composed of twenty-seven books. The new covenant was a person. The apostolic epistles were not a code of jurisprudence. They were a collection of love letters written to believers in Jesus who were having difficulty imitating the Master.



My whole life was altered. Always before I had been laying down the law instead of living up to love. I had become a good lawyer and a poor lover. Now passages seemed to leap from the pages into my heart. “The law was a custodian to bring us to Christ, but after faith is come, we are no longer under a custodian.” Later this became the basis of my book “The Death of the Custodian.” Now I had to wrestle with the fact that faith had come. We were no longer under a written code. Everything took on a new perspective. I began to understand the grace of God. I began to see that love was the fulfillment of law. And I began to walk in the Spirit.

I doubt that any other concept I have ever had since I accepted the invitation of Jesus and opened the door to my heart to let Him come in and sup with me, has had the profound effect upon me that the thought of a personal covenant with God has had. The church, redemption, reconciliation, worship, and all other facets of the life of faith took on new depths. Above all else it placed scripture in a completely new and proper context. It became a loving guideline along the road of life.

I began to read the Bible with new eyes. I began to meditate upon it with a new heart. What a blessing it was to realize that the verbal revelation of God was suspended from love for God and one’s fellows. “On these two hang the law and the prophets.” I could see that what we called the church was simply the called and gathered. It was a universal community of the reconciled. It was the kingdom of heaven doing the will of God on earth as it is in heaven.

It was still several years before I fully realized that the kingdom was alive and energetic. It was flowing relentlessly like lava from above. There had been no previous trough constructed. Its form was determined by the contour of the terrain. It was mind-boggling for a former legalist to realize the pattern was not determined by a book containing a written code but by the world itself. The kingdom must be flexible enough to move upon that world. The means, machinery and modes of service were dictated by raw human needs.

## **THE CUTTING EDGE**

The advent of 1961 brought with it what might be the highest level yet attained in the discussion of fellowship. Of course, as we later honed our thinking, we were able to present the cutting-edge of it more fully. But I was writing on the theme with a great deal of power and brethren were anxious to hear of it. It was evident that it was an idea whose time had come. It was now ten years since I had my spiritual encounter in Ireland, and I had returned home to investigate the revelation of God’s divine purpose in my life with fresh insights.

I was booked for meetings from coast to coast. In everyone of these I invited questions from the audience. So new was what was being said that the queries were many. This proved to be the most interesting and exciting part of the studies. As an illustration I will refer to a meeting in Sullivan, Indiana. The restoration movement there was fractured into four separate groups. I was invited by the smallest. The little building had standing-room only on Saturday night and on Sunday afternoon we moved to the Four-H Club building where there were 42 congregations and 14 preachers in attendance. And this was in the dead of winter, on January 14 and 15.

During the next two years I crossed and recrossed the country. The Missouri Christian Lectureship, a powerful forum in earlier days, was revived by Grayson Ensign, president of Moberly Christian College. I spoke on "The Ground of Christian Fellowship." The speech has since appeared in a book and has been reproduced in a couple of booklets. It represented my most complete treatise on the subject up to that time.

Of special significance was an invitation to come to Louisville. It was issued by two congregations but was held at the Kentucky Avenue Church building. It was my first appearance among brethren of the pre-millennial persuasion. Brother E.L. Jorgenson was still alive and it was my pleasure to meet him and come to know him. The pre-millennial brethren had always been known for their freedom and openness toward others. I was well received and mutual love bridged any difference that existed. Later that year I went to Southeastern Christian College at Winchester, Kentucky, and spoke to the student body and friends of the college who came. We had a beautiful relationship and I returned to the college upon other occasions in the future.

As a result of these encounters I was invited to come to Shawnee Church in Louisville, where I held a meeting later in the year. Willis Allen was the minister and he proved to be a fine man and a great brother in the Lord. Through these contacts I came into contact with the brethren at Portland School and with those who carried on *The Word and the Work*. I became quite convinced that they had been misrepresented and unmercifully ill-treated by preachers of the dissenting view.

Not everything was rosy, however. It was during this year that Brother Roy Loney launched a new little journal called *The Gospel Message*. It was intended to provide a medium for those who thought I had departed from the faith. It did not create a new party but served to perpetuate an old one. Brother Loney had been invited to speak in Saint Louis in years gone by and he did his best to divide the brethren in Saint Louis and to gain a foothold. He wrote to a number of the brethren making false accusations and insinuations, but the letters were generally handed to me and his efforts came to naught. The brethren who wrote to him were sympathetic because of his deafness and he took their sympathy for this to be sympathy with his divisive attitude. It was not.

One thing of especial interest that occurred during this time was arranged by Jim Mabery. He was a great brother and ardent for the work of Christ. Brethren arranged to celebrate my fortieth anniversary of preaching the Word with a "This Is Your Life" presentation at Green Parrot Inn, in Saint Louis County. Old friends attended I had not seen for years. A special recording for the session was sent by Brother Winstanley and some of the saints in Great Britain. Our children and their companions sang special numbers. There were several hundred present for the event and it was a thrilling experience master-minded by a professional. Anything Jim arranged was sure to be a success, and he had working with him his good wife, Ina Lee.

During the year word was received of the death of Walter Crosthwaite in Great Britain, on May 23. He passed across the Jordan at Ulverston, in Lancashire, and with his going I lost a precious friend and sensed the closing of an era. His noble stand for the purity of the gospel had earned for him the burning hatred of some, but the warm friendship of others. I cherish the memory of

the time spent in his cheerful little home more than anything else which happened on my journey to England.

He was unshakable in his convictions and those who grew up at his feet were fortunate indeed. He spanned the time when the church was beginning to go off the deep end over the compromise with “liberal theology” and saw it become affiliated with the World Council. He was the leader of the Old Paths Brethren who resisted the drift of the tide. God needed such a man for such a time and raised him up. He and Levi Clark had a profound impression upon my life. I will never forget my association with them.

During the year I also went to Lakewood, California, for a meeting with the congregation there, which was ably shepherded by Bro. Bill Jessup. Lakewood was established by Ernest Beam, a pioneer in the attempt to unite the forces of the restoration movement. In my ignorance and the party spirit I had opposed his effort. He was hounded and harassed by men infinitely smaller than himself during his life and probably died of a broken heart, feeling that his efforts were a failure. They were not, of course, for the planting of the seeds of freedom is never a loss.

I studied his work intensely when I began to realize the merit of it and came to the conclusion he had made two mistakes in his method of going about it. I resolved to avoid those mistakes. Our meeting lasted five nights from October 16-20. More than 400 attended every meeting, crowding the little building to standing-room only. Every evening we had prayers for unity in a little room just off the patio. Some evenings the room was virtually full. The Vernon Brothers sang for the meeting. It was my first occasion to meet them. Harold Clark led the congregational singing. A busload of fifty came from Pepperdine College every night. The question periods each day were very lively. Some questions were earnest attempts to find a solution. Some preachers asked things only to disrupt. But God was with me and I found a ready answer for all.

It was about this time that Reuel Lemmons unleashed an attack upon me in the *Firm Foundation*. An excellent editorial writer and a man of tremendous ability, generally when he assailed a person in print, which he did very rarely, that person curled up and played dead. It is an outstanding phenomenon of the restoration movement how much power is centered in editors. A withering blast from one of them and you have had it. Brother Lemmons entitled his editorial in which he named me several times, “Blind in One Eye.”

This time it did not work. It seemed rather to publicize my effort to bring sanity to a body intent upon consuming itself. Thousands heard of me who did not know me before. I received scores of letters, many of them from Texas. It was apparent that many people were fed up with the sterile “status quo” and the establishment for which Brother Lemmons was one of the chief spokesmen. There was a grassroots yearning to become free from the domination of a self-imposed clergy group. An articulate coterie of brilliant young people was beginning to form which would make itself heard and felt.

The work was given impetus by a “Concourse Toward Unity” held at Denver, Colorado, July 1-7, which was attended by 500 people from 21 states, Mexico and the Philippines, to discuss the problems we faced in order to be united. M.F. Cottrell was one of the speakers. He fired the

audience with new hope. Man after man spoke on the subject in a dynamic way. When it became apparent that there was a unity of purpose one of the congregations sent for C.E. McGaughey to come. He made a stereotyped speech demanding unity upon matters of opinion and stating there could be no unity without conformity. When he finished he knew that he had made a miserable failure.

Brother Cottrell and I invited him to have lunch with us. He reluctantly accepted. Brother Cottrell told him that he needed to come into the twentieth century and get off his hobby horse. Brother McGaughey said he intended to ride the horse right up to the gates of heaven. Brother Cottrell told him that if he did a voice from inside would tell him to tie his horse outside and come on in. There would be no hobbies in heaven. Conditions were changing when brethren from every segment of the movement could share together in love as they were doing there.

It was this year I was first invited to come to camp at Macrorie, Saskatchewan. Paul Tromburg was laboring at Outlook and I had visited the work there. At the time the men met in the daytime, but the evening meetings were open to the sisters. The camp has since changed and is now a Family Camp with more than 200 registered. Back in those days it was heavily weighted with people from the non-instrument Churches of Christ, but it now involves about half of those who use the instrument and the other half of those who do not. It is sponsored by a congregation which has no instrument but does not make a test of fellowship out of it. The question is never mentioned by any speaker and causes no problem. It is a tremendous annual affair which brings together in a primitive setting brethren from almost every province in Canada, as well as from several states. I have returned almost every two years since that time and have seen great strides in our reception of one another in Christ. The interesting thing now is to see people from various other backgrounds coming and being treated with love.

On September 17-21 I was invited to Rosemead, California, for a fellowship forum by Robert E. Hanson. The house was packed every night. One evening two carloads of brethren drove in. They sat together around Glenn Wallace. When I had finished my speech, Brother Wallace arose and said I had insulted the Lord's church of which he was a member and he demanded an opportunity to reply. It shocked the audience. They could not think of anything I had said which could be so interpreted. I arose slowly, walked to the speaker's stand and looked at Brother Wallace for a long time with a smile upon my face. You could have heard a pin drop. I told him that if he felt offended he should be given an opportunity to reply, and that next afternoon he could do so for fifteen minutes.

The building was crowded to capacity the next day. I introduced Glenn and told the audience he had a few things to say. He put on quite a show, pounding the organ with his fist and declaring it was the real problem. When he finished his harangue, I simply ignored him, and arose and quietly said, "It is now time for questions from the audience. Who will be first, please?" Brother Wallace bounced out of his seat and asked if I was going to answer him. I said, "No, I do not find anything which requires an answer, so we will proceed according to our regular format."

He and the seven others who came with him stalked out, murmuring something under their breath as they went. We proceeded with the meeting.

## A LETTER FROM ABILENE

It must have been about 1963 that Mission Messenger began to be influential internationally. Included in reports to be found in the paper for that year are some from Australia, Canada, Okinawa, England, The Netherlands, Chile, Scotland, Thailand, Denmark and Finland. It was great to receive letters and subscriptions from such far-away places, but this eventually proved our undoing. Nell was taking care of all the wrapping and bundling of the papers, as well as looking after the subscription list. Some people moved so frequently that it actually amounted to us sending the paper to them and paying them for reading it.

Eventually the paper was going to more than 8200 homes on every continent. We had to stop. Nell was actually working for twelve hours some days. After giving notice of intent for three years we reached the end of our row on December 1, 1975. Although we ceased publication then we still receive a great many subscriptions. Persons who have never heard of us before, will read an old paper and send in a dollar asking to be put on the list. We claim to be the only publishers who ever discontinued because they were too successful.

It was on January 31, 1963, that J.D. Thomas of Abilene Christian College published in *Gospel Advocate*, an article entitled "Brother Ketcherside's New Fallacy." It was full of such manifest error that I wrote B.C. Goodpasture asking for space in which to reply. He would not grant it. So I wrote to Brother Thomas and made an offer for fair examination of my ideas at Abilene. I wrote as follows:

"Since I am sure that you believe in the right of sincere brethren to present their appeal in love, to be heard, can it be arranged that I come to Abilene for three sessions of two hours each, for public examination of my thesis? If so, I suggest that in the first two sessions I present objectively my position as to unity of the believers for one hour, and then submit to an hour of public questioning by a panel composed of three brethren, yourself being one and the other two being men of your selection. I further suggest that in the third session, after presentation of my views, I submit to questions (either oral or written) from the entire audience, yourself acting as chairman of that meeting.

"It would be understood that neither yourself nor Abilene Christian College concurred in or endorsed my views, but simply that as free men we met in interest of truth. I pledge upon my honor, that I will conduct myself with gentlemanly courtesy to all of the brethren, and if I cannot lessen areas of conflict I will not widen them."

At the time I had confidence that I might be invited to Abilene on the above fair and equitable terms, so that the perceptive students could hear and then reach their own conclusions. My hopes were dashed when, on February 9, I received the following curt note from Brother Thomas:

"Dear Brother Ketcherside: In reply to your recent letter inquiring about a public discussion of your present views, I wish to state that, for good and sufficient reasons, I would not be interested in trying to have such a discussion. Sincerely yours, *J.D. Thomas.*"

I kept on trying, thinking that conditions might have changed. Every year I published my offer to come to any college among us and subject my views to the scrutiny of faculty members. I then saw a letter written to the president of Abilene Christian, by Norma Parks, and after reading the reply to it I gave up on ever receiving a fair hearing before the student body. It was obvious that the administration and the doctors were fearful of what might happen. They could attack my views at will and refuse me the opportunity of being heard in an equitable exchange.

This was the year in which I was first asked to speak at the North American Christian Convention. It was held at the Long Beach Convention Center. I was appalled to see the sectarian attitude so rampant in one meeting. Fortunately, the brethren have “cleaned up their act” since that time, but the demonstration they put on in that meeting was one of the most childish and blatant exhibitions of party spirit I had ever seen exhibited. My speech was delivered on the evening of June 27, and it had an electrifying effect. It was the first time a non-instrument brother had spoken and it received the first standing ovation ever accorded up to that time.

Since that time, Leonard Wymore has tried to feature one or more men from the non-instrument segment. Bill Banowsky, Norvel Young, Marvin Phillips, Ira North, Leroy Garrett, and others have spoken and been well received. I substituted once for Joe Barnett from Lubbock, whose secretary telephoned the night before his appearance and said he was sick. The meeting is the largest and best attended of any within the restoration movement. I have addressed the saints three times and thoroughly enjoyed it. It is strictly a preaching convention. No business is transacted. No resolutions are drawn up. The brethren believe in the autonomy of the local church. It is a great big get-together of people from all over who meet and enjoy one another’s company. Leonard Wymore is one of God’s noblemen.

During the year I spoke at numerous colleges, among which were Manhattan Christian, Manhattan, Kansas; Nebraska Christian, Norfolk, Nebraska; Puget Sound College of the Bible, Seattle, Washington; Johnson Bible College, Kimberlin Heights, Tennessee; and Minnesota Bible College, then in Minneapolis, but since moved to Rochester. In every one of those I found students who were eager to hear the message of peace on earth to men of good will.

There were two opportunities afforded to really cross over lines. In Nebraska I was invited to Dana College, on March 22. It is a liberal arts school under supervision of the Augustana Lutheran Conference, and a great many of the students were Scandinavian by birth. It was interesting to me to see the ritual in chapel. It was much like that to which I was accustomed in my earlier days in the Missouri Synod. After speaking to the students publicly I went down to the lounge and conversed with them privately and in small groups for another hour. I found them turned off by the liturgy.

The other occasion was on October 27 when I went to Kendallville, Indiana, to deliver a Reformation Day address. It came three days before the anniversary of Martin Luther’s nailing of the 95 theses against the church door in Wittenberg. We had a joint meeting of all the Protestant Churches and I spoke on “Heretics and Heroes.” I made the point that a heretic is a hero ahead of his time. All a heretic has to do is to be dead a hundred years and he will become

a hero. One generation hurls stones at a heretic, which the next generation picks up and makes a monument from them.

Everything that has been gained in religion has been gained by those accused of being heretics. Luther, Huss, Zwingli, Calvin and Wesley, were all branded as such by their contemporaries. It is often easier to label one a heretic than it is to deal with what he is saying. Luther faced an Establishment which was well entrenched. The Elector of Saxony said, "I am not at all surprised that it has made so much noise; for he has committed two unpardonable crimes; he has attacked the pope's tiara, and the monks' bellies."

I pointed to the need of another reformation with Luther's words: "I will say what I mean, boldly and briefly; the Church needs reformation. And this cannot be the work either of a single man, as the pope, or of many men, as the cardinals and councils; but it must be that of the whole world, or rather it is a work that belongs to God alone. As for the time in which such a reformation should begin he alone knows who has created all time. The dike is broken, and it is no longer in our power to restrain the impetuous and overwhelming billows."

It was during this time that Martin M. Mitchum, who was an elder in the Christian Church at Rolla, Missouri, and a man with great insight, decided to take definite steps to do something tangible about the unity of believers. He invited Don DeWelt, Howard Short, and me to engage in public dialogue on fellowship. Don was from Ozark Bible College. Howard was editor of *The Christian*, now called *The Disciple*. This was before restructure had taken place among the Disciples of Christ, and we had a meaningful discussion. Each of us spoke fifteen minutes and then sat down together to field questions from the audience. All three of us came away with a greater feeling of respect for each other.

I have often wondered since what would have happened if such discussions could have continued among top-level men. Would it have made a difference? Was the sectarian spirit so engrained and crystallized that we would have to go on to the bitter end? Or do things have to work out their own accord and in the good time of God, as Luther indicated? We talked about these and many other things as we drove back to Saint Louis that night.

But one of the outstanding gatherings was at Wynnewood Chapel in Dallas, Texas. It was held June 30-July 7. Speakers and teachers were Darrell Bolin, Leroy Garrett, and myself. This launched a series of meetings which were held annually. Sometimes there were two meetings per year. They were notable for their openness and for their freedom of spirit. As time went on, brethren from every background were given an opportunity to speak. Brother Degroot and Ralph Graham from the Disciples of Christ, Jack Holt from the anti-cooperation wing, Ervin Waters from the one-cup brethren. We invited brethren from every segment and they came. One day Pat Hardeman came and asked a lot of insistent questions. He was with Florida College at the time. We were surprised a little later to learn that he had gone with the Universalist Church. Sometimes things warmed up quite a bit as brethren brought with them some of their clan. They came to listen to their man and as soon as he had finished they walked out.

J.D. Phillips joined with us in teaching and it was great to share with him. He was editor of "The Truth." His knowledge of restoration history was amazing and we were greatly blessed by the

anecdotes which he told. Bill Thurman taught one year and gave fresh insights into the Word. There was nothing static about the meetings. They changed from year to year as the personnel of the congregation changed. There was much to learn in the exchange of ideas. Looking back on things I can see that these meetings were within the will of God. They were a part of our struggle for the meaningful life. The influence of Leroy, calm and unruffled, was a real part of the gatherings.

In December I finished a reprint of articles by Reuel Lemmons and my reply to the same. I said: "Better days are ahead for all of us. There are signs everywhere that attitudes are changing. Brethren are becoming more bold in their declarations against orthodoxy and legalism. Of course we anticipate further areas of personal attack and boycott, but this is a small price to pay for freedom in Christ Jesus. Be sure that we shall not allow ourselves to become embittered or cease to love. Our hope of sharing with Jesus over there depends upon our exhibiting love to all of the brethren over here."

That year, the Hartford Forum featured talks by Russell Boatman on "The Basis of Authority"; Harold Key on "Fellowship and Endorsement"; Roy Key on "Legalism and Faith"; Grayson Ensign on "Is Unity Possible in Diversity?" and by Leroy Garrett on "The Vocabulary of the Holy Spirit." I spoke on "The Relationship of Immersion to Fellowship." A great time was had by all.

## **OUR ENDURING HERITAGE**

Henry David Thoreau wrote, "Only that traveling is good which reveals to me the value of things at home, and enables me to enjoy them better." It was in 1964 we built our new house, and moved into it shortly before Thanksgiving Day. It was five minutes from the air terminal and Nell could drop me off there, and come and get me on my return without ever going to the public parking lot. The house was designed to enable us to handle the paper and my books, and proved to be ideal for our need.

And we needed something to make travel more convenient. During the year, among many other places I spoke at Milligan College; at the Bond County Fellowship Meeting at Mulberry Grove, Illinois; at the alumni meeting at Lincoln Christian College; at the Southern Illinois Christian Convention; at Roanoke Bible College in Elizabeth City, North Carolina; at the Tri-State Fellowship in Weirton, W. Va.; at the Statewide Fellowship Meeting in Boise, Idaho; at the Statewide Rally at Little Rock, Arkansas; at Ozark Bible College, Joplin, Missouri; at the Arizona Christian Convention, at Phoenix; and at Oregon State Christian Convention, at Turner, Oregon. This was but a little of my travels during the year.

In the meeting at Milligan College, I first came in contact with Dr. Robert Burns, and liked him from the start. I had corresponded with him many times but it was a great privilege to know him personally. At the time he was minister for the great Peachtree Christian Church in Atlanta and a genial gentleman.

Present with us also was Dr. James DeForest Murch, of Silver Springs, Maryland. He knew the history of the restoration movement like few others I have ever met. He had just edited a history



of it called *Christians Only*. He had always been intensely interested in unity as evident in the Witty-Murch discussions. He was a co-founder of the National Association of Evangelicals, and editor of their journal *United Evangelical Action*. He was founder and president of the National Sunday School Association, the National Association of Religious Broadcasters, and the Evangelical Press Association. He was also managing editor of *Christianity Today*. He was author and composer of the song "I'll Put Jesus First In My Life." We began a great fellowship which lasted until his death, and the times he spent in our home meant much to me.

On March 4, 1964, Harvey Bream and I met in a 3½ hour public conference with Dr. Clyde Funkhouser, District Superintendent of the Methodist Church, at Fairfield, Illinois. The subject was "Current Views on Christian Unity." Harvey was editor of *The Restoration Herald* but has since become president of Cincinnati Bible College. The encounter was great and confirmed me in the belief that we needed to cross over lines for dialogue.

It was about this time I formulated a policy with reference to other journals. I was under attack from some of them in every issue. I was being called a heretic, a Judas Iscariot, a Benedict Arnold, a compromiser, and a liberal. It was not popular in those days to affirm that every child of God in the world was your brother. So I simply resolved to mention the various papers and urge my readers to send for a copy and read what was being said about me for themselves. It proved to be a good method of dealing with the situation and I pursued it as long as I continued to publish. It was about this time someone sent me a little motto which read: "Love Your Enemies, It Drives Them Nuts."

During this year Leroy Garrett made a monthly out of his paper which had previously been edited as a quarterly. This gave him the opportunity to write articles which were geared more closely to the times. The result was a great increase in the number of subscriptions. The paper has been a monthly ever since and has accomplished profound good. Leroy has never been free from attack, much of it unprincipled, but his patience and tolerance have turned this to great growth. By this means much has been accomplished to the glory of our Lord.

The following year, 1965, brought three things to pass which were of note in my life. First, I was invited to speak at the World Convention of Churches of Christ, in San Juan, Puerto Rico. The World Convention was begun by Jesse M. Bader to provide a chance for the various restoration groups to meet together and listen to one another. The first one was held in Washington, D.C., in October, 1930. There were more than 9,000 present.

I was the first participant from the non-instrument group who had ever been present. When I arrived in San Juan, there were 6000 people present from 32 countries. The evening meetings were held at Herman Bithorn Stadium on the outskirts of town. Buses were used to transport people to the place and back to the hotels. The address of welcome was made by Florentino Santana, who was president. I was on the speaker's stand with Ray Blampied, president of the college at Dunedin in New Zealand, who was to be the first speaker. Brother Blampied's speech was characteristic of those who take a liberal theological approach to the sacred scriptures. It was apparent that many of the common folk did not like it very much.

Mine was entitled “Our Enduring Heritage” and my closing paragraph said, “Our enduring heritage! My entertainment in infancy, my instruction in youth, my inspiration in manhood, my invigoration in approaching age, my illumination on the coming journey through the valley of shadows! Oh, may I never forget it, but love it, revere it, and through it be faithful unto Him whose word it is. And amidst the clamor of disputed claims, the shouts of sharply separated scientific scholars, and the propositions of antagonistic professors and pundits, may I never forget that it is better to know the Rock of Ages than to know the age of the rocks.”

I was hardly prepared for what transpired. People from the Congo, from South America, and from Australia, pressed around me to shake my hand. They were thrilled to hear someone defend the Word as inspired of God and revealed from heaven. After my speech I was sought out by various ones who wanted to discuss the bearing of my remarks upon their national life and conduct. I began correspondence with some of them, and we continued to write to each other for years. It was as if God had arranged everything to His glory.

The next speaker after I finished was George R. Davis of National City Christian Church in Washington, D.C. He spent his entire time defending the president, Lyndon Johnson, who was a member of his congregation. The contrast in speeches was so great that a lot of brethren from other parts of the world were turned off. One of them said to me, “We came thousands of miles to hear about the Savior, and it is a new wrinkle to learn that his last name is Johnson.”

The second thing which meant a lot to me was the study in depth conducted at Highland Church in Louisville, August 2-6. It was strangely successful, bringing together brethren from 12 states, 4 continents, and 6 segments of the restoration movement. Brethren affiliated with congregations which held the premillennial view were always intensely interested in souls. They had gone to the remotest parts of the earth with the message of life and had labored under great difficulties to tell the story of the cross. It was a blessing to have some of them in our audience.

The third thing which affected me was the cessation of the *American Christian Review*, after 110 years. This truly marked the end of an era. It did not make the impact it would have made if it had stopped a few years before. For a long time it had been simply picking up and reprinting older articles and it was no longer geared to the times. It had outlived its usefulness and was ready to die. But it brought a touch of nostalgia to me. It was the first religious paper I had ever seen. When I was a mere lad it came to our home. I used to lie flat of my stomach on the floor and read every word of it.

Brother Daniel Sommer was born of German immigrant parents in 1850. After a boyhood of poverty and hardship, he enrolled in Bethany College when he was nineteen years of age. On January 28, 1873 he married Katherine Way, daughter of Francis Way, an elderly Quaker. In 1886 he purchased the *American Christian Review* which had been started and printed by Benjamin Franklin, until his death near Anderson, Indiana, in the autumn of 1878. Brother Sommer changed its name to *Octographic Review*, in honor of the eight writers of the new covenant scriptures. A great many of his humbler readers did not understand the meaning of the word “Octographic” so by the time I arrived on the scene it was changed again to *Apostolic Review*. Eventually, it was returned to its original title.

It was W.T. Moore who said, “The restoration movement does not have bishops – it has editors.” For years our fate as a people was wrapped up with the *Apostolic Review*. Indianapolis was regarded as our headquarters, although anyone of us would have been quick to affirm that we had no earthly headquarters, but heaven was our home. Brother Sommer was a commanding figure. What he said was accepted as “law and gospel.” When he read the Sand Creek Address and Declaration, and issued the ultimatum that those who persisted in the unscriptural clergy system, and in worldly ways of raising money for the support of the gospel, would no longer be regarded as brethren – that did it!

The fate of the Sommer family was our fate. When Sister Sommer became editor she debarred Daniel from writing and would not publish his material. Upon her death the editorship went to Chester and Bessie. D. Austen, who thought he should have been chosen, broke with them and started his own paper. It now became fashionable to speak with disrespect of the *Review* and with pride of the *Macedonian Call*. But editors have “feet of clay” and it was not long until D. Austen proved to be untrustworthy, as we saw it.

I am glad to be delivered from the unholy mess we created by our strife. But I want to see others also made free – free to love, to receive and to welcome all who are in Christ Jesus. Better times could come immediately if all of the papers among us would begin to urge upon us community instead of conformity. We will never see everything alike. If we did it would be but a short time until we differed about something else. What gain will come from calling for division where God has commanded peace?

Certainly, it would acquire an about-face. But what have we gained by pursuing the direction we have been going? Have we united the Christians in all of the sects? Have we brought peace to a body troubled with fighting? Is the heartache and bitterness, the hostility and hatred, to be our heritage to the bitter end? Will we continue to strike down every man who pleads with us to turn away the sword from shedding the blood of a brother?

Do not most of our divisions represent our faith in opinions rather than in Jesus? Do they not exemplify our trust in our own infallibility? Do not the words of Oliver Cromwell apply to us today, “I beseech you, brethren, in the name of God, to consider that you may be mistaken.” Are not there thousands upon earth who love Him as sincerely as we do, who revere His word and seek to follow in His path? What do we gain by giving them a shove instead of a helping hand? Shall we continue to shake our fist, rather than to wave our hand at a passing pilgrim?

Editors have gained too much power among us. They dominate our thinking. They determine our stand upon issues. They domineer in the realm of faith. And they make us pay for it. Let us choose wisely whom we shall follow.

## **REVIEWING OUR HERITAGE**

The year of 1966 was destined to be one of violence at home and abroad. We were still entangled in war in Vietnam which was taking such a toll in lives and finance. And right in the middle of the year police in Chicago discovered the bodies of eight student nurses brutally murdered in the townhouse they shared. Fear gripped the hearts of those within the “Windy

City” until police apprehended Richard Speck, an ex-convict, and charged him with the killings. Two weeks later, Charles J. Whitman, an architectural student at the University of Texas, climbed into a tower and killed 15 persons and wounded 31 others before he was himself killed.

On March 16, astronauts Neil A. Armstrong and David R. Scott made the first of five successful two-man Gemini spacecraft dockings, linking up with an Agena Target vehicle. On June 7, James Meredith, whose enrollment at the University of Mississippi in 1962 touched off massive riots, was shot from ambush on the second day of a projected hike of 260 miles from Memphis, Tennessee, to Jackson, Mississippi, to encourage Negroes to vote. Once again we demonstrated how great our technological skills were for handling acute problems of space, and how far behind we were in handling the agonizing problems of human behavior on earth.

The year was noteworthy in the restoration movement circles of which we were a part also. March 4 marked exactly a hundred years from the death of Alexander Campbell. I went back and read once again the touching story of his dying as written by Dr. Robert Richardson, who preached the funeral discourse in God’s Acre, at Bethany, before hundreds from all walks of life who came to honor the memory of this great man.

On September 1, the 150th anniversary of his “Sermon on the Law” was celebrated. It was this noble defense of the Good News from heaven given before the Redstone Baptist Association in 1816, which aroused so much hostility and created such animosity toward Campbell. He was ahead of his time. Today his message would hardly create a ripple on the surface of the muddled theological waters, but when delivered it cut right to the heart of things. It seems peculiar that the creeds of men are no longer the great issue among believers in Christ.

We had a gathering at Bethany during the year. It featured men and women from all of the major divisions of the movement. All of us stayed in the dormitory which gave us an opportunity to talk together between sessions. We also ate in the cafeteria and shared insights as we ate. Our discussions were held in Richardson Memorial Lecture Hall, and were generally very gracious. Brother Cawyer, an elder from Abilene, Texas, and a man I had known since childhood, tried to start an argument over music and kindred matters but served only to let off some of his own steam. No one was there to debate. During the sessions I heard Dr. Perry Epler Gresham deliver one of the finest speeches about Campbell that I have ever heard. He was an orator of the old school, and a real patron of a lost art.

On Sunday we held our meeting in the old brick meetinghouse which has been preserved, although only used upon occasions like this. We sat in the straight-backed seats and sang only hymns that dated back more than a century. We had no instrument. A sister had prepared a loaf as it used to be done, and we used the two silver chalices from which to drink the fruit of the vine. They had been used by the congregation in its earlier days, and were brought from the Campbell museum for the occasion. It was easy to envision the saints of old gathering in their simplicity and humility, with the freed slaves sitting on the back rows.

It was the same house in which the venerable Thomas Campbell had given his farewell address on June 1, 1851, at the age of 88 years. With his hearing greatly impaired and totally blind, he had to be transported to the place on a horse-drawn sled, prepared for the occasion. His text was

Matthew 22:37-40. I was chosen together with Seth Wilson of Ozark Bible College to do the preaching. I was pleased to address such a select group upon the Lord's table as a symbol of our unity. We parted at the door after having demonstrated the power of the Good News to unite the hearts of those who truly love Him.

During the year it was my privilege to address the Seventh Consultation on Internal Unity of the Christian Churches held at Enid, Oklahoma. Men from the Independent Christian Churches and Disciples of Christ periodically met to discuss their division and determine what grounds there might be for resumption of a working relationship. I was invited as a kind of "neutral" to serve as a Biblical lecturer at each session. It was there I first presented the thinking which later found its way into print as "The Death of the Custodian – the case of the missing tutor."

I postulated that our relationship with heaven was covenantal, and that it was by grace and not by law. We must choose between love of law or the law of love, and the choice must be individual. It was in this series I first coined a number of phrases which I have since employed, such as "legalism has made us good lawyers, but God designed us to be great lovers." The series was well-received but it became apparent that the brethren were far apart theologically. But it served to convince me of one great thing which has proven to be invaluable to me. Unity will never become a kind of organizational get-together. In the final analysis it is personal.

On June 15, I brought out the first edition of the book "Voices of Concern," edited by Robert Meyers, at the time a minister for the Riverside Church of Christ, and a professor of English at Friends University, in Wichita. Bob was eminently qualified for the work of bringing out such a volume. He had been chewed up by the brotherhood "meat grinder" and thrown to the lions at Harding, much to the discomfiture of the lions. He graduated *summa cum laude* from Abilene Christian College, received an M.A. from the University of Oklahoma, and a Ph.D. from Washington University. He took special courses at Oxford University and at Salisbury, in England.

The book featured one chapter each from seventeen outstanding men and women who were or had been affiliated with the Church of Christ. It was written in compassion and with a tinge of sorrow that it had to be produced by these people at all. In a well-phrased preface the editor wrote, "Their hope was that this book would so alter conditions that no other volume of this kind would ever need to be written." Almost from its inception it came under attack and was subjected to bitter criticism. It could not be ignored. The writers were not ignorant, but were among the most brilliant thinkers produced within the Churches of Christ in this generation.

Not everything written about it was bad. It was reviewed in numerous periodicals, many of them outside the Church of Christ. Their favorable reports caused it to be widely read. It represented a complete reversal of policy and a new approach to journalism among Churches of Christ. We were attacked because we had disclosed sad and sordid things which had always been swept under the "brotherhood rug." For years the references to it in "Church of Christ journals" were all of vinegar mixed with gall. But "the cat was out of the sack" and there was no way now to capture the feline quietly. It is interesting that, after the book went out of print, we still received many calls for it. Even now, after fourteen years, people write us wanting to know where they can obtain a copy, and offering premium prices for it.

Meanwhile I was busy traveling. I conducted a Forum on Fellowship at Lancaster, California; and a Conference on Evangelism at San Jose Bible College. I spoke at the State Christian Convention at Clovis, New Mexico; at the Mid-State Christian Men's Preaching Rally, at Mt. Zion, Ill.; at the Christian Student Fellowship, at Lexington, Kentucky; at the Christian Evangelistic Society Convention, at Pittsburgh, Penn.; at the Commencement and Preachers' Institute at Alberta Christian College, in Canada; at Kingdom Builders' Fellowship at Sumner, Illinois; at the School of Ministry, Milligan College, Tennessee; at the Blue Ridge Clinic, Hillsvale, Virginia; at Mountain States Christian Men's Retreat, Bluefield, West Virginia; and at the College-Career conference in Southern California.

These were but a few of the places to which I went during the year. I was also editing the paper, bringing out books, and doing a full service effort in Saint Louis. Everywhere I went I took the message that all of us could be one in Christ, and none of us give up any truth he had ever held. I defined fellowship as the sharing of a common life – eternal life. Many were not ready for it. Brethren were afraid of it. They had lived so long behind the walls of their self-imposed exiles that they felt protected and shaded. The elders of the Chestnut Drive Church of Christ in Doraville, Georgia issued a “white paper” in opposition to the things “Mr. Ketcherside” said in the fellowship in Atlanta. I was not recognized as a brother by these unfortunate persons. I mentioned it without rancor in *Mission Messenger* and urged everyone to write for a copy and read carefully the negative opinions it expressed. It was obvious that in Church of Christ circles fellowship was conditioned upon what you were against, rather than who you were for.

I was not deterred by the attacks upon me, either made clandestinely or openly. When I first sat down several years before and worked out the strategy for my attack upon the sectarian spirit, I recognized that it would be unsuccessful if I allowed myself to become ruffled or lost my ability to show love for those who counted themselves to be my enemies. I resolved to remain calm and cool under fire. Regardless of the misrepresentations of my position I must never stoop to the employment of such methods. It has paid off to be fair, just and equitable.

The Hartford (Illinois) Forum, held in December of 1966, was on the theme “The Holy Spirit in Our Lives Today.” It brought together men from the Disciples of Christ, Christian Churches, and three different segments of the Church of Christ brotherhood. Some were charismatic while others were opposed to it. There was not one untoward moment. We came together as brethren and left with the feeling heightened above what it was when we came.

When Roy Key, of Ames, Iowa delivered his gracious message on “The Holy Spirit and Our Prayer Life” he touched a responsive chord in every heart. Bro. Key grew up in the Churches of Christ. All of his family were still members of it. But he was so abused and mistreated by brethren that he was literally driven out. During his address he told the touching story of Roland Hayes, the talented black singer who sang before the crowned heads of Europe, but who later returned to the old plantation where his mother had been a slave. There was hardly a dry eye in the house as Roy painted the picture of his confrontation with the old master and mistress and the forgiveness he felt in his heart. It was a great meeting, a good one, and it made all of us regret when it was over and we had to return home to the division that existed.

## 6. God's Peace in Turbulent Times

### FROM LUBBOCK TO KIMBERLIN HEIGHTS

It would serve no good purpose to pass by the year 1966, without detailing one special event which had great significance. It was the fiftieth anniversary of the First Christian Church in Lubbock, Texas, and I was invited by the genial Dr. Dudley Strain, to speak at the banquet honoring the event. Upon my arrival in Lubbock I found that Broadway Church of Christ was but a short distance down the street and that Batsell Barrett Baxter was in a meeting there, with special noonday services. I resolved to attend.

We went early and I met Bill Banowsky, who was minister, and also Jim Bevis, who was on the staff. I was amazed to see about 450 present at midday. After Bro. Baxter had finished, Bro. Banowsky arose and said he could not introduce all of the many visitors who were present, but there was one who was giving such a fresh and wholesome outlook to the churches, that he wanted all to come and meet him, for the day was coming when men would say, "We had a prophet among us and knew it not." He then asked me to stand and be identified. He also announced that he had called Dr. Strain and had reserved a table for Church of Christ folk, and he intended to hear me at the Christian Church that evening.

During the afternoon I met with more than a dozen preachers of the Christian Church – Disciples of Christ, discussing what course would be pursued by those who loved the Lord in our day. I was appalled to see how the so-called social gospel had eroded their minds and how little of the sacred scripture they really knew. After the banquet I learned that Dr. Kline Nall, head of the English Department at Texas State University, had arranged for a wide open meeting on the subject of fellowship. It was attended by a number of Disciples of Christ ministers, together with representatives of seven different Churches of Christ. There were about ninety present. I spoke about ten minutes and then opened it for questions. To give everyone a fair opportunity for questioning, I limited the number of questions to three from one person each round.

Brother Banowsky was present and listened carefully but asked no questions. Brother Baxter quietly asked a few during the course of the evening. But Brother Thomas B. Warren set out to trap me and throw the thing into confusion. On his last question he asked a number of them, each one with a design in mind. It was easy to detect his purpose and I "headed him off at the pass." It was that evening, during the three hours "among the doctors" that I became convinced that the position I held on fellowship was unassailable and invincible, and that all the objectors could do was to quibble and cavil. I also left feeling that some of those present were in actual sympathy with my position but could not say so openly. It was a refreshing experience and made me more glad than ever that I was free in Christ.

On February 23, 24 I went to Columbia, Missouri, seat of our state university, to speak three times at a fellowship forum at Westside Christian Church, and to address those who attended the banquet for the college-university class, which was under the sponsorship of Dr. James Ferneau. It was while I was there that I became convinced that the battle for the minds of men would be fought out on the university level. It became obvious that our real enemy was humanism and

secularism. I returned home to begin a study of these, and to gird myself for the future combat. It was suddenly borne home to me that we are not in the arena with ignorant anti-intellectuals any more, but with sophisticated rebels in an “age of doubt” and some of these are razor sharp.

On March 6, I began with Riverside congregation in Wichita. It was only by God’s providence that I should be there. It had been the congregation where G.K. Wallace, had held forth for so long. Sister Wallace, the wife from whom he divorced, was still there. When I debated with Brother Wallace, in Arkansas, a number of years before, no one would have dared to predict that I would preach there. The people were great Christians, above the average intellectually. They were nervous and upset by the continuous attacks made upon them by other Churches of Christ in the area. They were under a constant barrage.

Bro. Robert Meyers was preaching for them, and I was with him and his great family a lot. Bob was not a traditional Church of Christ preacher, nor a preacher of Church of Christ traditions. This disturbed a few in the congregation, who not only wanted to hear the same things said, but in the same words they were accustomed to hear. I received Bob because of his deep faith in Christ, and admired his superb scholarship, although I was probably a trial to him by my lack of it. I returned for another meeting later and I suspect some good was done. Eventually Bob changed to teaching at Wichita State from Friends University, and became preaching minister at the Congregational Church in the city. I have often longed to see him again.

I would not want to be critical, nor “hurl the cynic’s ban,” but it seems to me that we are unable to make room under the umbrella of God’s love for those who challenge us to think beyond ourselves. We are uncomfortable with men who want to scale the peaks, and dwell among the clouds. Our God is a “God of the valleys” and we prefer to dwell there “in peace and quiet” like the inhabitants of Laish who “had no dealings with other people.” The demand for parrots has produced a lot of “chickens” among us. It is only when we learn to make allowance for one another in love that we will have arrived.

If you recall, 1967 was in the thick of the counter rebellion which originated primarily at Berkeley, but could have burst out anywhere. The Haight-Ashbury district in San Francisco was composed of the flotsam and jetsam of our culture which was blown up by the westerly winds. The “flower children” were doing their thing. Nudity was being flaunted. The sex-revolution was at its height. Drug abuse was fast becoming a way of life. Young people were blowing their minds as frequently as they once blew their noses. It was at this very time that Gene Rogers and Loran Biggs, ministers, brought me to Gardena, California, to spend the entire Easter break working with the young people of the area.

The arrangements were ideal. Buses brought 152 high school kids in every morning. They were alone with me for two hours. Then the church furnished them luncheon. Closed circuit television allowed the parents to see me and hear my answers to the questions, but not see the children. Their questions were terrific. They covered the whole range from the nature of religion to sexuality. I was training them to be not only aggressively pure but to wage war against the whole mixed-up social order. I wanted them to become “commandos for Christ.” Those who were in high school were not there merely to study algebra and science. They were dropped behind the lines to wage a warfare. They were secret agents for the greatest kingdom



ever founded. Their task was not to run from evil but to infiltrate the ranks of those who were engaged in it and take them captives for Christ. It seemed to work. In the afternoon I met with 60 college people, and at night spoke to an average of 330 adults. It seemed to me that we were privileged to give Satan a real blow and drive back the forces of darkness.

March 30 found me at the Southern Christian Convention in Kingsport, Tennessee. Present also to speak was George Gurganus, at the time with the Harding Graduate School in Memphis. He was there because of his great knowledge of missions. It gave me a chance to observe how men from the non-instrument ranks reacted around other brethren. They were not free and comfortable. I found that they simply spoke and retired from the scene. They did what they came to do and that was it. Most of them, at the outset of their speeches, disavowed the idea that their speeches implied fellowship. It was evident they were “covering their tracks” if they were questioned by some of the more radical brethren back home. There was no warm fraternization, except in the case of Bill Banowsky and Norvel Young, who seemed to appreciate being invited by the North American Christian Convention and generally appeared to have a good time. Bill Banowsky especially treated the folk like brethren.

April 10-14 I conducted a five night study on the Holy Spirit at Fort Wayne, Indiana. My good friend, Bill Lower, was minister. He has since removed to Denver, Colorado where he has done a remarkable job. The Charismatic movement was just beginning to gain momentum. Demos Shakarian and Dennis Bennett were still unfamiliar names to a lot of folk in the restoration movement. I chose to make my teaching positive, rather than negative, and to tell what the Holy Spirit does for us, rather than what He does not do for anyone.

The lessons were well received, and I kept polishing them up for a presentation elsewhere. Eventually they became the basis for two of my books *One Great Chapter* and *Heaven Help Us*. The first constituted a verse-by-verse study of Romans, chapter 8, in which Paul seems to rise to new heights in telling of God’s great provision in Christ. I used a great number of the questions I received in my talks on the subject as groundwork for the material in the books, which could well have been designated a kind of “brotherhood project.” I was a little astounded to find out how little most of the brethren knew about “Our Little Helper.”

It was during this year I spoke at the homecoming at Johnson Bible College, where anything can happen, and something usually does. It was a rare privilege for me to be on Kimberlin Heights, where Ashley S. Johnson, through sheer drive made his dream take reality. It was here he began The School of Evangelists in 1893. Always known as “the father of the poor young preacher” he threw the doors of his school open to any young man of purpose in the mountains who was willing “to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.” Everyone was expected to work in those days, on the farm, in the dairy, or in the kitchen. Students arose at 4:30 a.m., and found the president already up and praying.

Of course things have changed in our day, but there still hangs over the lovely campus which has displaced the rude one of an earlier day, enough of the spirit of its founder to sanctify many of the students and to give them some of the courage of him who, like Napoleon, refused to recognize that there was such a word as “impossible.” It was a really great thing to be there where so many of his books had been written. I had read all of them.

## “ONE FAITH, 10,000 OPINIONS”

There were two events which I attended in 1966 which were outstanding because of their nostalgic value. The first one sought to recapture for our day the spirit of Cane Ridge where it all began. It was the Second Annual Brush Arbor Meeting, near Fairfield, North Carolina, held on June 24. When I arrived the day before I found a number of men presiding over the roasting pits on which lay four hogs and a whole beef. The men were under the direction of a chef who told them when to replenish the fire under the spits and grills. They worked all night long preparing for the next day.

People came early to allow time for visiting. They parked in a huge field, directed by several men into the long rows of vehicles. Everything was very systematic and orderly. By the time for the morning meeting there were about three thousand present. The license plates bore the names of a number of states. The pulpit was erected out in the open and had a canopy of brush over it. It was a haunting reminder of the old days. I recalled the times I had spoken in a brush arbor in the Missouri Ozarks in my younger days. After I had spoken in the morning meeting, the people lined up in six rows to be served with meat and slaw. The food was great and the fellowship was wonderful. Nothing was lacking.

The other event was The Cumberland Christian Camp Meeting, held out in a state park near Corbin, Kentucky. The town itself was renowned as the home of Colonel Sanders, of Kentucky Fried Chicken fame. One could see the restaurant where he had gone bankrupt, with nothing left but a recipe and a vision. These he had parlayed into a fortune. The colonel was immersed while still a boy and had been a member of several Christian Churches.

The camp meeting was held under a huge tent. A number of brethren pitched tents around it and stayed for the entire thing, including the chicken barbecue prepared by men of the Corbin area the last evening. It was my privilege to stay with Fred Waggoner, whom I had known in Logan, Ohio, and several other places. Like me, he was pretty much of a “homespun” preacher who operated a grocery store at Grayson where we first became acquainted. He would tackle anything, whether qualified or not, and generally was successful. We had a great time together and the meetings were tremendous.

From the pulpit one could look out to where the blue haze dropped down on distant hills. The cool crisp mountain air in the morning was invigorating. It was easy to imagine the wagon trains of yesteryear snaking through the Cumberland Gap. Kentucky was destined to play a prominent part in the restoration ideal. It was at Cane Ridge that it began, and at Lexington that the forces of Stone and Campbell met together and became one. It was at the outset of the meeting which consummated this union that John Smith said, “While there is but one faith, there may be ten thousand opinions; and hence, if Christians are ever to agree, they must be one in faith, and not in opinion.”

I went to Macrorie, Saskatchewan, for the camp meeting in which I taught. There were 150 enrolled. This gathering was sponsored by the congregation at Outlook, a little group of hardy souls, numbering about 25 in those days. The camp was located in a shady valley which cut like a gash through the wheat fields of the almost boundless prairie. The people who attended

pitched their tents, or pulled their campers into little cleared spots in the underbrush. I slept in the back of a converted school bus. It was a tremendous time of fellowship and Bible teaching. The camp has contributed much to the alleviation of suspicion and distrust. Although the congregation does not use instrumental music it has consistently refused to make a test of it and has used preachers who favor it. The result is that sharing has been encouraged and needs have been met in a very real way. Much of this is directly attributable to the Banting and Tweedie families who have worked together amicably for years, and whose good judgment and commonsense have become noteworthy.

On September 1, 2, I was the speaker at Pearson's Mill Christian Assembly near Converse, Indiana. The camp director is Rod Cameron, a man of many talents, and a great friend of mine. A descendant of the Scottish clan Cameron, Rod was fortunate enough to marry Beverly who has stood by him through thick and thin. That has taken some doing because it was often thicker than it was thin. Early on he became a ventriloquist, and he and his dummy are well known. He went to Africa in 1958, shortly after the erection of the gigantic Kariba Dam on the Zambezi River in Rhodesia. They cut a track of almost eleven miles through the heavy brush, and for several months slept under the bed of their Chevrolet Power Wagon. Their first kitchen was a tarpaulin stretched over a rope, their first storage room was a shelter made with reeds. Their water supply was eight miles away.

Rod nearly drove the "witch doctors" up a tree with his ventriloquism. They did not know what to make of Gabby. Few people really do. There were few things the witch doctors could do that Rod could not do better. But I had to leave to begin preparation for the delivery of the speeches in the Roy B. Shaw Memorial Lectureship, held annually at San Jose Bible College. The school has a great history of promoting unity. It was while Bill Jessup, that wonderful man of God, was president of the college, that Ernest Beam began to make overtures of oneness. Brother Jessup brought him into the Bay Area for a joint meeting of brethren. It was shot down by anti-instrumental brethren who attended for that purpose. It ended in a shouting match which was disorderly. Challenges were waved about for debates. But times have changed, and there were brethren present from all segments of the church to hear me. Al Tiffin, the president, had contributed well to the ongoing dreams of his predecessors.

It was about this time that the magazine *Mission* began. The first edition carried articles by Abraham J. Malherbe, Roy Bowen Ward, Thomas H. Olbricht, Donald McGaughey, Wesley C. Reagan, and Juan A. Monroy. The journal began as a kind of sophisticated medium to relate to the modern world in which we live. It proposed to give good thinkers a chance to be heard in a way they could not in the ordinary publications. From the first it had to be subsidized by its trustees. It faced opposition, both overt and covert, because it did not hesitate to milk sacred cows, which previously had been used only for worship. It is a matter of deep shame that Abilene Christian College exercised censorship over those on its staff who wrote for it, and brought pressure upon them to quit.

It was during 1966 that Norman Waters, a Tutor at Fitzwilliam College, at the University of Cambridge, in England, passed away. He was the first president of the Alexander Campbell Society. This was a coalition of persons in various colleges and universities in Great Britain who had banded themselves together to preserve the heritage and influence of the reformer. He was

succeeded by Peter D. Archer, of Glasgow, and Philip Brooks became the secretary of the society.

The last named and I began a correspondence which lasted over a period of several years. From him I obtained a list of the members and their addresses. It was interesting to note that they came from every college and university in the entire United Kingdom. I became an associate member and enjoyed the exchanges with some of the most brilliant young minds I have ever known.

Some fine things happened to people whom I knew and loved during 1967, things which caused me to rejoice in their behalf. Bert Ellis wrote from Pusan, Korea, about discovery of a grassroots movement of concerned Christians who could see the folly of denominationalism. Mont Smith reported from KIRAMU, Ethiopia, that 87 native people attended meetings in his living room in one week. Dr. Robert Walker and his wife Phyllis were being used of God at Hippo Valley Christian Hospital, in Rhodesia. William Hendren, Belfast, North Ireland, with whom I had made my home, was elected a Fellow of the Royal Microscopic Society. John L. Morrison received his Ph.D. from Stanford. The subject of his thesis was "Alexander Campbell and Moral Education."

Henry Boren, of the History Department at the University of South Carolina received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, which would enable him to live in Rome for a year and work on a numismatic project. Thomas Langford accepted a fellowship for a year of work at the United States Office of Education, in Washington, D.C. Boyd L. Lammiman was selected as the new president of Alberta Christian College in Calgary. He is still there. A.V. Mansur brought out a new book under the title "Let My People Go." Gordon Souder, who was living at Burnaby, British Columbia, finished a second semester of Russian language study at Simon Fraser University and was laboring with Russian-speaking Christians in the area.

Bob Duncan was granted a sabbatical leave from his position at Illinois State University to do research in California. Barry Willbanks was awarded an Honor Scholarship at Harvard Theological Seminary for topflight scholastic work. The Dallas Times Herald featured a three-column spread on the work of Leroy Garrett in the field of Christian unity. Brother Garrett expressed himself as being extremely optimistic for the future. Mike Wood was given a scholarship for research at Emory University. All of this seems so very long ago. I cite these instances to show how active God is in human affairs. He is continually bestowing gifts, blessing all of us, calling all of us to greater heights of service. It is no wonder that I bow in humblest adoration and daily give thanks for His marvelous grace.

Of course, during the year He called a lot of brethren to be with Him. He allowed them to graduate ahead of the regular class, and receive their diplomas before the rest of us were called. Among these were James Pierce, a wonderful brother in Des Moines, Iowa; Bonds Stocks, former administrative assistant to Rep. John Rankin, of Mississippi; Cleo Mabery, Flat River, Missouri, whom I immersed when both of us were fifteen years of age; Vearla Foltz, Chillicothe, Missouri, a retired rural mail carrier, whose home had often been mine; James A. Allen, Nashville, Tennessee, long time editor of the *Apostolic Times*. Bro. Allen was set against the rise of the clergy system, which he could see invading the churches. He was handicapped in his

opposition by location and circumstances. Paul Mackey, Burbank, California, an excellent journalist, finally succumbed to cancer after a long battle. He was only 33 years of age.

As I look in retrospect upon the death of these and others whom I knew I wonder what changes would have occurred if they had lived. What kind of an impact would they have made upon the world? Then I am encouraged to press on without delay, knowing that I shall join them on the other side. It is a wonderful thought that those whom we knew over here we shall see over there where all conflicts have ceased and all strife is past.

## RECOVERY OF SOMETHING OLD

It is amazing how the history of the “kingdom of God” is interwoven with and affected by the things which transpire in the kingdoms of men. Although we have no continuing city here, we have to live in a lot of them which are not going to continue, and in which rot and decay have already set in. We may be strangers and pilgrims, but we are also sojourners in a land that is not ours. Whatever happens politically, economically, or socially affects us all. Candidates for glory die in times of epidemics and plagues as do the rankest unbelievers. All of us alike live in an atmosphere that has been colored by guilt and sin.

In March of 1968 President Johnson shook the nation by announcing that he could not enter the race for another term. That “waved the flag” which made it possible for everyone to get into the race. It was won by Richard Nixon who received 43.4 percent of the popular vote to 42.7 by Hubert Humphrey. A surprising 13.5 percent went to George Wallace. The stage was thus set for the traumatic and as yet unexplained condition which later transpired and took the name of Watergate.

On April 4, Martin Luther King was shot to death on the balcony of a motel in Memphis, where he had gone to assist in a strike by black sanitation workers. On June 7 James Earl Ray was arrested in London and charged with the wanton murder. Frustration, disappointment, and depression gripped the black community and expressed itself in looting and violence. Then, as if a frightful and malign influence was manipulating the nation, Robert Kennedy was shot on June 6 in Los Angeles. It cast a pall over a peaceful populace who had rejected forceful overthrow of the existing order as a rational alternative to the ballot box.

During the year, death claimed one of the greatest examples of triumph over handicaps in our nation. At the age of 87, in Westport, Connecticut, Helen Keller gave up the struggle to maintain a life which had been marked by privation and suffering. At the age of nineteen months she became blind, deaf and mute. Under the careful and gentle tutelage of Anne Sullivan Macy she quickly learned to read and in 1900 she was able to enter Radcliffe College. She graduated with honors in 1904. Later she lectured throughout the world, visiting wounded veterans and giving them hope and infusing them with courage.

In spite of the frightful murders, the looting, and the rapine which ripped our nation apart, the year ended on a note of real faith. Nell and I were in the home of Jerry, our son, and with his family on Christmas Eve when it happened. Three astronauts aboard Apollo 8 had orbited the moon several times. They were the first human beings to view the far side of the moon.

Suddenly one of them began to read from the sacred scriptures. Man's voice came from the greatest distance it had ever come with the age-old truth. It seemed that everything was all right again.

It was about this time that I had matured to the place where I had learned to trust in God fully and completely. I began to realize that He knew the end from the beginning, and could call the things that be not as though they were. He holds the whole world in His hand. This made two changes in my life. First of all, I prayed before arriving at a place that God would take the whole thing under His providence and bring together those who needed me most and let me relate to them for the mutual upbuilding of both of us. Since that time I have never been uptight about crowds. I have spoken to those who were present with equal fervor, whether there were six or six thousand, and have praised His name for what He did.

Second, I began to pray that He would open up for me great doors and effectual, although the adversaries were many. I realize that He never had a less qualified person through whom to work. The only thing I had going for me was an intense desire to see His will accomplished, and a fervent love for people. My educational attainments were as nothing and I cast what little I did have to the dogs. I had no degrees and had never been to college. But I resolved to go wherever the opportunity was afforded and to do my best. That prayer opened up for me chances which were tremendous and for which I am humbly grateful and profoundly thankful.

On February 13 I went to Milligan College to deliver an address at the Welshimer Memorial Lectureship. Brother P.H. Welshimer was in Canton, Ohio when a great revival was held by Billy Sunday. He followed up on those who made a profession, baptizing hundreds into Christ. He began the largest adult Bible Class in the nation at the time. A Welshimer Room is contained in the beautiful library which bears his name at Milligan, and every year a lectureship is held in his honor. My theme was "The Cross and the Growth of the Church."

That night I was scheduled to speak at Erwin, Tennessee, as one of five speakers brought in by a joint rally of Protestant Churches, each year, to demonstrate that, in spite of their differences, Jesus Christ is Lord. It afforded an opportunity for those with varied doctrinal biases to meet others in the community. That afternoon I was interviewed over radio. I then spoke to more than 700 persons gathered in the building of the First Baptist Church, following which I held a dialogue session with the Protestant clergy of the area. I came away convinced that these men were greatly responsible for the perpetuation of feuds and divisions.

The next morning I spoke to more than a thousand students in the local high school. At noon I broadcast a sermon from the pulpit of the First Christian Church. As I prepared to fly out of the area that afternoon, I looked back upon my stay of one and a half days, and thought of the bases I had touched. It was apparent that God was opening doors, for by no stretch of the imagination could I conceive of myself arranging all of these things. But it was merely beginning.

A little more than two weeks later, on March 3-7 found me at Langley Air Force Base for a Religious Emphasis Week. It was arranged by George C. Fisher, Wing Chaplain of the 450th Air Base Command. Brother Fisher was up for retirement soon and wanted to leave a heritage to the men. I was met at the air terminal by a Filipino soldier in a limousine. He was to be my

orderly while on base and took me to a luxury apartment which was to be my home. It was stocked with all kinds of liquor when I arrived and with the same amount when I left.

The next morning, which was Sunday, I was to speak in three Protestant Chapels, one immediately after the other. My car was awaiting when I finished at one to hustle me over to the next one. I was saddened by the fact that I could not talk directly to the men, shake hands with them, and share with them. That evening I spoke to the Protestant men of the base at the fourth chapel, following a barbecue. I answered questions from the audience. They were a different kind of questions than one hears in civilian life.

There followed in succession in coming days a meeting with the Junior Youth Group, a bunch of young people, some of whose fathers were flying the skies over Vietnam, and a dinner with a High School Group, during which I fielded their questions and learned a lot about their hang ups. I ate at the Officers' Club, and often had early breakfast with men dressed in their flying suits who could be in the air in the next hour with the Far East as their destination. We explored the question of war and its moral force.

One of the most interesting meetings was an address to the 316th Field Maintenance Squadron. Colonel Barner, a bluff Roman Catholic, issued a commander's call, which meant that the men in the squadron had to attend or be in the hospital. It was a captive audience. Many were resentful, a few of them openly hostile. In the group were hard-bitten men from the streets of Brooklyn and New York City, farm boys from the wheat fields of Kansas, and sun-tanned lads from ranches in Texas and Arizona. That day I received a lesson in how to weld an army of trained men together out of raw recruits from every walk of life. I began on time and ended on time. There was no dragging of feet in the military.

The last day there were two addresses. One was to the Protestant Women of the base. They were joined by busloads of women from two nearby bases. It was for the women I felt the greatest compassion. They were separated from their men for weeks on end and never knew how they would return, if they did. Life for these women was a cycle of worry and fear. There was the daily dread of the knock on the door to reveal the loss of a loved one on some foreign soil. In the evening we closed with a grand finale, a meeting for everyone. During the time I was on the base I prayed more than I had for a long time. It was easy to sense the loneliness of those I met, people who could establish no routine, who had no certain home.

I went almost immediately to Santa Clara, California, to speak at the Sunday school convention. It consisted of more than 600 superintendents and teachers, representing every evangelical church in the great valley, except the Church of Christ. It was held in Calvary Baptist Church, and I stayed in the "prophet's chamber" of the church. This was a lovely two-room apartment upstairs. It was well-stocked with food of every kind, so that one could fix his own meals and even entertain visitors if he liked.

The congregation had started seven years before with twenty-one members meeting in a home. The Sunday following the convention, the goal was 1400. They had registered 1380 the Sunday before. I did not get to talk to the two ministers. They were not there. They were out making calls the entire time. Another spent his time in the hospitals. But I talked to other members of

the staff about the phenomenal growth. They attributed it to two things – the people found their needs supplied and the fellowship. The motto of the church was “Where you are a stranger only once, and then only for a few minutes.” In addition to speaking each night I also taught two workshops.

But the thing that gave me the greatest satisfaction was an invitation to address the evangelical preachers of the area at a noon luncheon. There were almost 300 present. The president of the group was a Baptist. The man who introduced me was a member of the Salvation Army. It was just the kind of group I had been looking for to try out a new approach to restoration. I spoke on “Renewal through Recovery of the apostolic proclamation, purpose and power.” As I spoke I noticed the men taking envelopes from their pockets and hastily jotting down notes. Little did they realize that they were being treated to Thomas Campbell’s Declaration and Address, presented in the light of contemporary needs.

I pointed out that renewal was not the creation of something new, but the recovery of something old. We had surrendered a lot of provinces which had to be recaptured. To do this demanded a strategy for world conquest. As I offered them such a strategy, they seemed deeply grateful.

## **DRAMA AT HARVARD**

In 1958, Erskine Caldwell wrote in the July issue of Atlantic Monthly these words: “I think you must remember that a writer is a simple-minded person to begin with and go on that basis. He’s not a great mind. He’s not a great thinker. He’s not a great philosopher. He’s a story-teller.” I take a lot of comfort from that observation and rather suspect I am a living example of it, although not too well. If one had to be a great philosopher, this story would wither on the vine.

I began the year of 1969 with a trip to Miami, Florida, where my good brother, Robert Shaw, was ministering to the First Christian Church. It was a Disciples of Christ congregation located squarely in the downtown area. The building was a huge and imposing structure. In former days it had been filled to capacity in the fall and winter. The preacher in those days had specialized and speculated on prophetic interpretation and “snow-birds” from the north filled the place. There were almost as many on Sunday night as on Sunday morning. Many of the wealthy and sophisticated northerners came to know each other and looked forward to seeing each other at the church when the first flakes began to fly in Michigan and Ohio.

But the scene had changed. Cubans had flocked into Florida and settled in the city center. The old stores moved out and Spanish-speaking people surrounded the church location. Many of the new arrivals were Catholic. Many others had no religious affiliation at all. The audience got down to about 250. They made a little huddle in the midst of the great structure designed to seat fifteen hundred. They talked with nostalgia about the great days of yesteryear and dreamed rosy dreams of the past. Some of them were still possessed of courage. They wanted to relate to their changing world.

I held sessions every night during which I sought to speak with encouragement and “strengthen the things which remained.” The church was suffering with internal pressures. The question of restructure troubled them. Brother Shaw was a conservative in the truest sense. Each morning I



held a meeting during which I sought to answer the questions of those who were present. Men came from the Independent Christian Churches and from non-instrument Churches of Christ. Some of the questions were particularly touchy.

I recommended that all those who wanted to maintain the faith as it was once delivered exchange addresses and start a little paper to be circulated among all, keeping each other informed as to their plans. I suggested at a Minister's Breakfast that there were surely some areas in which all who loved Jesus could work together. I further suggested that the preachers of all groups meet and eat together each month and discuss the mutual problems in such a great national "playground." I was speaker at a luncheon at the Exchange Club one day. I spoke of the need of the recapture of a moral dynamic for America. It was pleasing to see the response.

The following month I was back in Central Florida for the Annual Spring Spiritual Clinic which was held on successive nights in Orlando, Cocoa and Daytona. As my policy was, following my speech in each of these places, I invited questions from the audience. As was generally the case this proved to be the most interesting feature of all. Some of those in the audience had evidently been saving up their questions and finally found a chance to use them.

I next went to the School of Christian Living in Louisville, Kentucky. Each night the chief of police and I addressed the audience upon the spiritual and ethical phases of the Christian walk. During the five days I was there I spoke 17 times. I addressed Circle-K at Kentucky Southern College, spoke to 1100 students at Seneca High School; to the entire student body at Old Kentucky Home High School, in Bardstown; and to the Junior High School at Boston. It was a real pleasure to share with these young people, some of whom were very brilliant and perceptive, and give them hope. It must be remembered that the Vietnam War was still going on, the draft was a way of life for young men, and there was a genuine struggle in their emerging consciousness as to what was right and what was wrong.

I addressed a noon luncheon of the Kiwanis Club at the Executive Inn, and spoke to the faculty and students at the College of the Scriptures. This was a black school primarily operated to train preachers of the good news. I met and shared with them. During the time I was in Louisville I was on a one hour open line program over WFIA. The listeners zero in on anyone who tries to answer their questions. I enjoyed the give-and-take of it.

I rode one night with the police. I reported at headquarters and was assigned to a squad car until midnight. Then we returned to headquarters and I rode with two other men until 3:00 a.m. It was astonishing the different kinds of calls that were received. I was allowed to go in with the police. We refereed family fights, picked up sodden drunks, investigated a robbery, and broke up a gang fight at an all-night eatery. I came to have a tremendous respect for the "men in blue." All with whom I rode were young and a part of "the new breed" who deserve a lot of credit.

March 26-28 found me at Scottsbluff, Nebraska, at Platte Valley Christian College, where I spoke five times. The audience came from long distances and people were present from Colorado, Wyoming and Nebraska. While I was there I granted an interview over the radio at Station KOLY, and another over television KSTF-TV. In addition to this I held a dialogue session at Nebraska Western College. Many of the students were from farms and ranches in the

area. I found them alive to what was happening in the world but generally more conservative than their counterparts back east.

On the last day of my stay there, news was flashed over the wires, of the death of Dwight David Eisenhower, at the age of 78. He returned from the European theater of war as a hero to become the 34th president of the United States. The nation mourned his passing and Nell and I went to see the train bearing his body back to Abilene as it came through our city. It was swathed in black bunting. Ike was buried close to his simple old-fashioned childhood home. His mother had been a Bible-reading woman who was opposed to all armed conflict. Her son had planned D-Day with its frightful toll of life.

It was about this time I received a call from Dr. Krister Stendahl, inviting me to Harvard University to deliver an address before the Divinity School on the theme "Toward A Conservative Ecumenism." I accepted and on April 7 appeared in Braun Room at the school where the lecture was to be given. I was to speak for thirty minutes, to be followed by three reactors to my speech. Then I would have fifteen minutes to reply, following which the audience would question me for thirty minutes. The only catch was that the audience did not want to stop when the hour was up.

The three reactors were all men of stature and prominence in the theological world. Dr. Stendahl, who was first, was Dean of the Divinity School and a recognized leader in the World Council of Churches. He had, but a short time before, delivered a position paper at the convention in Uppsala, Sweden. Dr. William Robert Hutchison was Professor of the History of Religion in America. He was born near Washington, Pennsylvania, where Thomas Campbell lived and wrote "The Declaration and Address." Dr. Hutchison knew the restoration movement topside and bottom. Starting out life as a Presbyterian, he had since become a Quaker, a position which he found more comfortable because of the historic emphasis for peace. The third reactor was James Valentine Fisher, a Ph.D. candidate, and a brilliant student. He was the son of Chaplain Fisher who had arranged for me to be at Langley Air Force Base.

I began with a definition of ecumenism which lifted it out of the political wrangle in which it had become engaged, and separated it from the various theological interpretations placed upon it. I then showed the extent, nature, place and purpose of the unity we seek. I affirmed that under the prayer of Jesus, whom I recognized as Lord, we were obligated to seek the unity of all those who believe in him through the apostolic testimony. Therefore, any attempt at a confederation of so-called world religions was not only foreign to the design of heaven but would do despite to the divine purpose and plan "which was to unite all things in one, in Christ Jesus."

Dr. Stendahl commended my distinction between *kerygma* and *didache*, and pointed out the initial message to the world was referred to as the gospel, or good news, as distinguished from the doctrine, in which all of us are obligated to grow as a natural effect of our acceptance of the message concerning Jesus. His prime objection was a fear that, in our attempt to get rid of traditional forms and fixtures, we would be ensnared into the common trap of devising other structures which would enslave men more than those from which we had escaped. Dr. Hutchison traced the course of the restoration movement and its multitudinous divisions, ticking them off on his fingers, and expressed the maxim that "by their fruits ye shall know them." He

felt that the only thing he could expect was more division, and not more unity. He thought it was like inviting a fox into a chicken house to unite the chickens. He might accomplish his purpose but Dr. Hutchison did not relish the idea of how and where it would be done.

Dr. Fisher objected that too little had been said about the *pneuma*, or Spirit, as the uniting power. My reply to all of this was that the men had preconceived what they thought I would say and had already formed their reactions before hearing it. Consequently, they had to give their speeches whether they were appropriate or not. I had not appeared as a defender of the restoration movement, and had not even mentioned it. I was there as an apologist for a conservative ecumenism and wherever it took me I was willing to go regardless of my past, just as Dr. Hutchison was no longer a Presbyterian.

Present for the confrontation was the Secretary of the Archdiocese of Boston. I met her before the encounter and she told me that the archdiocesan council was greatly concerned with modern trends and had sent her to glean what I had to say about a more conservative ecumenism. She took copious notes while I was speaking and again when I answered questions. It would have been interesting to know what transpired when she reported back to the council.

The Boston Globe had a reporter present also and the write-up in the paper next morning was quite lengthy and gave a lot of coverage. It was made to appear as a debate between Dr. Stendahl and myself, an idea I had earnestly sought to avoid. The report pretty well ignored what the other speakers had said, primarily because, as I suspect, the reporter did not know what they were talking about.

The student body was composed of some fine dedicated students who regarded the Bible as the norm. I could strengthen them. But it was the day of revolt and some who were present challenged everything held sacred in the past. They worshipped at the shrine of the god of the *Now* and paid homage to every freakish idea that was deemed to be new. I felt a real sense of compassion for churches which would be saddled with these restless young swaggering bullies.

## **STILL MORE DRAMA AT HARVARD**

Our last episode found me at Harvard, and a more unlikely or less qualified individual had probably never graced the premises there in the long history of the Divinity School which was set up in 1816. Nevertheless, Dr. Joseph Fletcher who had written the controversial book “Situation Ethics” heard that I was there and sent me an invitation to join him in his class on “Verbal Tools in Situation Ethics,” at the Episcopal Theological School in Cambridge.

I confess that I went with a warped preconceived idea of the kind of person who would produce such a liberal theological volume as he had turned out, and which was sparking all kinds of attack from the religious community. I fully expected to find a gay young “swinger” of about thirty-five years of age, with long hair and a beard, dressed in hippie garb, smoking a pipe, and wisecracking his way through class at every turn. You can imagine my surprise when I found a grandfatherly type, clean-shaven with a short haircut, and wearing a conventional suit of rather somber gray. The truth is that he was attired much more conventionally than I was.

The class consisted mostly of students for the Episcopal clergy, and it was obvious from looking at them, what a wide degree of variance that hoary fellowship tolerated. I had “cut my eye teeth” on the works of men from the Episcopalian clergy system – Alan Cole, John R.W. Stott, Michael Green, and J.I. Packer, all of whom were part of the “Evangelical Fellowship of the Anglican Communion.” Their knowledge of and emphasis upon the word of God was a far cry from some of the wild ideas of these young men. I was thrilled to be among them and to affirm my faith not only in the need for a revelation but in the revelation given to meet that need.

Dr. Fletcher proved to be both modest and gracious. He introduced me to the class of about forty and invited me to participate during the two-hour session. He asked me for my definition of *agape*, which he laughingly suggested might need to be defined for modern secular man. He defined it simply as “active concern” for others. We discussed the implications of it, and talked about the seeming difference between Paul’s theology and that of our Lord. He was quite convinced that, in going to the Greek world, Paul placed certain elements in the message that Jesus never intended. I was quite convinced of the opposite. It made for an interesting exchange. I remained behind with the students to talk and answer questions after he had left the room. It was a morning well-spent.

That evening a group of students under the banner of the Students for a Democratic Society, all slanted toward Marxism, occupied the University Hall and ejected the deans and administrators, and locked them out of their offices. They rifled drawers and files, and obtained some secret and classified materials and documents which began to appear in *Old Mole*, the appropriately named underground newspaper. The Harvard authorities tried to negotiate with them all next day to get them to abandon the building. The students were adamant and flushed with a sense of victory, and they had no success. They filed a list of grievances which they sent to Dr. Nathan Pusey, president of the institution.

Between three and four o’clock the next morning several hundred police moved in and stormed the place. They used only such force as was necessary, but they dragged the students bouncing down the stairs, cursing and screaming obscenities, and herded them into buses commandeered as “paddy wagons” and hauled them off to various and sundry jails. Just as they hoped it would, their forcible arrest created a real furor at the school and almost the entire student body rebelled. It was apparent that they had been looking for an incident which would spark an uproar.

I sat in on a meeting of the faculty and students of the divinity school, called to determine the policy they should pursue and the direction they should take. Richard Niebuhr presided as a representative of the administration. Harvey Cox was present as a kind of strolling ambassador and mediator. The student president was a radical revolutionary. He was dressed in a bizarre costume which made him look as if he had just drifted in from a reservation. He had a necklace of bear claws around his neck and a ring in one ear. One student suggested it should have been in his nose. He was thoroughly committed to overthrow the existing order. When the shouting subsided he made the proposal that they seize the Divinity School, Andover Hall and the World Religion Center, and hold them “till hell freezes over” or student rights were recognized. Another took the floor and said he was glad to learn that he believed in hell, because he had been denying its existence up until now. Finally enough quiet was obtained to take a vote. The more

conservative element won by such an overwhelming majority that the leader and a smaller group of cohorts stamped out of the hall.

Harvard Yard was filled with milling students. There were a lot of young agitators present who were not students and had no connection with the school. Communist slogans and literature were everywhere. Most of it seemed to favor Castro and Chairman Mao. It must have been already printed and rushed in on heels of the revolt. "The Albatross," a hard rock band, set up on the steps of Memorial Church and banged and howled, adding to the general din and confusion. Shortly after noon Dr. Pusey appeared. He walked through the milling crowd like the children of Israel did through the Red Sea. He paid no attention to the jeers and catcalls, and to the occasional obscenities. He was as cool as a cucumber. And that coolness won the battle. In a few days the condition had subsided and gradually things returned to normal.

I conducted small group meetings in various homes and estates while in the area. On Monday night I was at the Wellington home in Mattapan; on Tuesday night in the Edmonds home in Billerica; on Wednesday night in the Van Voorhis home in Bedford, and on Thursday in the Hill home in Medfield. In everyone of these people prominent in various circles met for discussion of the word of God and their lives. On Friday morning I met with a gathering of ladies at the Kaplan home in Bedford. At this I spoke about our great hope through the resurrection of Jesus. On Friday night some 200 people gathered for a farewell meeting in the auditorium of Bedford High School. It was a great time of rejoicing in the Lord.

On July 19 the papers heralded the death of Mary Jo Kopechne. She was in an automobile which went off a bridge on Chappaquiddick Island, Massachusetts. The circumstances of her death were very suspicious and it seemed that a blanket was thrown over the investigation. It has dogged the steps of Senator Edward Kennedy ever since, and will undoubtedly play a part in the future of any bid he may make for the presidency. There are too many unexplained aspects of it to sweep under the rug.

On July 20, 21 Neil Armstrong stepped from the lunar module Eagle to become the first man to walk on the surface of the moon. We hurried home to watch it on television. As I sat in our living room and beheld those first "bunny-hops" I was seized with a feeling that things would never be the same. We were entering another stage of man's existence. It would be like the Stone Age, the Iron Age, the Machine Age. The Space Age marked another milestone in human progress. It would require a "new man for our time" as Elton Trueblood came to put it.

On July 3-5, 1969, Nell and I went to West Islip, New York, for the Fourth Annual Unity Forum. West Islip was a dream that did not really become an actuality. It began as an Exodus movement. A number of Texas people were transferred at the same time to the northeast where they expected to become the nucleus of a thriving congregation and the seedbed from which to start others all over the New England States. It ended in disillusionment. The people were no different in the new location than they had been in Texas, and in some cases, that was not good. But the unity meeting was great.

It brought together Dwain Evans, Leroy Garrett, Robert Fife, Robert Shaw, J. Harold Thomas, Floyd Rose, Arthur W. Boone and me. Floyd Rose, an outstanding black brother from Toledo,

Ohio finally stole the show. He told about his work as a mere boy with Marshall Keeble, and how they were not allowed to stay in the homes of white brethren in the meetings. He talked about a rope through the middle aisle to separate the two races and told how a black preacher took the confession of the blacks who came down, and a white preacher did the same for the whites. Half of the audience was weeping unashamedly when he finished. It was clear to see that Churches of Christ had a miserable record to answer for on their treatment of the race question. Nell and I went to New York City with Don Haymes and his dear wife and saw the frightful conditions under which they labored for the Lord.

It was about this time a new little magazine was launched which was to have an effect far beyond its size. It was called *Integrity*. The editor was Hoy Ledbetter, a tremendous and capable brother. He was also fearless as one needs to be who undertakes such a work of faith in spite of the opposition of the entrenched forces of the establishment. The first issue contained articles by Dean Thoroman, John Smith, David Elkins, and Frank Rester. The paper drew fire from its very beginning because it dealt with subjects which had always been concealed by the church, but it has survived to this day.

I had gone for “Inspiration Week” to Northwest Christian College at Eugene, Oregon. As soon as my plane landed I was whisked away to a student lounging place called Carriage Trade Coffee House where I was due to be on a call-in program on the radio any time. I went to the college and had lunch with the football team and found that four of them had been meeting every night for prayer. They agreed to set up a meeting for me with the student body of the University of Oregon next evening when I finished speaking for the Christian College. About 325 persons assembled and sat on the floor when I walked into the great Sigma Chi lounge. I began by divesting myself of any sectarian label and appeared before them as simply one of the fellowship of the unashamed. As I talked and answered questions an emotional wave swept over these young people, some of whom had been guilty of gross sins. It continued far into the night on the outside of the building, with weeping and prayers.

It was August 19-21 when I went to the Rocky Mountain Men’s Roundup which was held at Como, Colorado, far up in the mountains. It was at Rocking-R ranch and 300 men were present. Most of them stayed over and slept in the bunks at the camp. Present with me were James DeForest Murch who deplored camping out and did not stay to the close, and Don DeWelt who did like it. The latter had been on a mission to Australia, and was on his way home. The slides he brought with him added much to the meeting. I spoke on fellowship each morning and night and the men ate it up. In spite of incessant rain which made it unseasonably chilly we had a great time and a beautiful meeting.

It seems as if the Spirit of the Lord is more apparent in some gatherings than in others. I can testify to His presence in the meeting with these men, many of whom came from ranches and farms. They truly loved the Lord.

### **“HOW DID JESUS GET IN HERE?”**

The year of 1970 dawned with the war in Vietnam still draped like an albatross around the neck of the nation. The potential for violent protest hovered like a malign storm cloud over the land.

No one knew where it would touch the land next with its bombing and murder. The decennial census revealed some strange things. We had passed the two hundred million mark for the first time. The figure was 203,235,298. One-tenth of our citizenry was now over 65. Three-fourths of them were urban dwellers. One eighth were nonwhite. California had overtaken New York as the most populous state. The tide of immigration had shifted from eastern to western flow.

On February 25, a branch of the Bank of America went up in flames as a result of an antiwar protest at the University of California in Santa Barbara. It seemed that the licking tongues of flame were reaching out to consume our way of life. President Nixon announced his intention of withdrawing an additional 150,000 troops from the stinking cesspool of Vietnam the next year. Then on April 29 the war was escalated when the U.S. and Vietnamese forces began a major invasion of Cambodia.

This triggered massive protests across the land. At Kent State University in Ohio, national guardsmen opened fire upon students protesting the war. Four were killed. Many more were injured. It never was successfully proved that any of those killed were in active protest. The incident triggered rebellion throughout the land. Frustrated young people reacted, often in blind rage. By my birthday, on May 10, a student strike center at Brandeis University, announced that 450 institutions of higher learning had been closed down or were experiencing student antiwar strikes.

One of the places where unrest was surfacing was Illinois State University at Bloomington. At the very height of the ferment, the Christian forces on campus decided to inject the philosophy of the Prince of Peace into an ugly situation. Inter Varsity, Christian Collegians, Campus Crusade, the Navigators, and Baptist Student Union, temporarily transcended their various methods of procedure, and invited me to come for a happening which was simply called "The Way." It was a happy designation. It was publicized by posters on the campus and in the daily newspaper.

The leaders were sharp enough to realize that unless there was a direct confrontation between the forces of belief and unbelief, between the followers of Jesus and those of the pagans, the meeting would avail nothing. There had to be the actual clash of verbal swords in face-to-face combat. They arranged for that, although, as it turned out, there were unexpected elements which could not be foreseen or provided in advance. These only served to heighten the tension and suspense.

I arrived on the scene the afternoon previous, just in time to see four hundred students wearing black armbands, in honor of their fallen comrades at Kent State, marching to the cemetery in a "Death Walk." Not a word was spoken as they walked along. Blacks, whites, Orientals, they trudged along the sidewalk, with only the shuffle of their feet marking their progress. In the cemetery they sat in silence with bowed heads, among the stones and granite markers, and then marched back. That night they slept on the ground in the quadrangle in what was advertised as a "sleep out for peace."

At 9:00 a.m., the following morning, I spoke to the combined forces of Christian students in Adlai Stevenson Memorial Hall on "How Did Jesus Get in Here?" I pointed out that he entered the earth, cradled in the womb of a woman, and He entered Jerusalem on the back of a donkey, to be acclaimed king. But he entered Illinois State in our hearts. He would be as effective as we

allowed Him to be. He would be as bold, as brave, and as courageous as we were. And I pointed out that although the apostles were unskilled and unlearned, their opponents “took note of them that they had been with Jesus.” After answering questions for two hours from a hall that was filled to capacity, I went to the cafeteria in the Girls Dorm, where we continued to talk about the things of the Spirit with some thirty Christian young women.

At 1:00 p.m. I was scheduled to meet in open dialogue three professors who were agnostics. It was to be a clear cut encounter with raw doubt and blatant unbelief. The lounge was filled with every kind of student. Included were several black activists. There was a Buddhist present. These hardly knew what to do or how to react toward me when I extended my hand and welcomed them. They were afraid of losing ground if they exhibited any kind of fraternity with “whitey.” I had nothing to lose and everything to gain. My theme was “The Transforming Dynamic.” I affirmed the intrusion of God into our universe on a revelational and personal plane. I knew where that revelation was found and I knew the person. I pointed out that Jesus was the only revolutionary who changed the world without burning it down.

Dr. Joel Vernon was the first reactor. He had been the son of a Baptist minister but had sold out on his faith. In a speech larded with profanity and four letter words, and obscenities, he branded the new covenant scriptures as a compilation of “myths and damned fairy tales” written to frighten the gullible out of their wits. He was in the Department of Political Science.

He was followed by Dr. Joseph Grabill, of the Department of History. He charged Christianity with creating a cover-up to evade reality by the use of traditional words. The last was the eminent Dr. Martin McGuire of the Department of Anthropology. He asserted there was only one brotherhood of the flesh created over millions of years of developmental progress in kinship with animal life.

There was a deep silence as I rose for my ten minute summation and reply. To lessen the feeling I called the men by their first names. I was older by far than they. But all seemed to sense that it was now or never, the battle lines had been drawn. The time for a showdown had arrived. I pointed out that profanity was not proof and expletive was not explanation. It is generally employed by those who face something with which they cannot cope on rational grounds. I said Joel had started rebelling as a child according to his own testimony, and he was still at it in the same way. I urged him to grow up and face the issue, and not try to smother his inability to do so under the cover of swearing. Surely in his studies of political science he should have developed an adequate vocabulary. I pointed out that while he had made a blanket statement that the word of God consisted of “damned fairy tales” he had not given us a single one of them.

Joseph Grabill needed to realize that words which had been tested and tried were not merely traditional terms but were as modern as the morning newspaper. I mentioned that in his speech he assumed to speak only in traditional words for there were no others by which he could convey his meaning. Tradition means “handed over, or handed down,” and anything from the past had to be described in such terms. There was no better word to describe our problem than sin, and no better one to portray our condition than lost. It was the “lostness of man” which resulted in his loneliness, alienation and depression. Man had cut himself loose from his roots. He was forming a cut flower civilization. It looked good but it was not alive.



I expressed my appreciation for the scholarship of Martin McGuire who had gone to almost incredible lengths to achieve his doctorate in anthropology. But I pointed out that the “brotherhood of the flesh” of which he spoke originated in the jungle and was fast taking us “back home.” It was based upon the “law of fang and claw.” It worshipped the idea of “the survival of the fittest.” It glorified the concept that “to the victor belongs the spoils.” The only real brotherhood worth having was that which originated from a relationship to the same Father, the Creator of us all. In it we could constitute a family of peace and tranquility.

While I was answering the professors, a young black Muslim arose and stepped forward, taking his position directly in front of me. He demanded to be heard in the name of Allah. It was evident to see that he craved attention. He grasped at the chance of using our meeting to secure it. I smiling said, “Although I do not see your name on the program, you go ahead and I’ll listen, since it is obvious that if I go ahead, you will not, and I want you to hear what I am saying.” He let loose a tirade against Jesus as a white man’s God, used by the western culture to enslave his ancestors. He accused white slavers of being rapists and filled with brutality.

When he ceased speaking, I replied softly. I kept my eye fixed firmly upon him during the entire incident, never allowing it to waver from him for a minute. He became uncomfortable at my gaze and his own eyes shifted from side to side. I told him that he was speaking of a different Jesus than the one I was defending. My Jesus was color blind. I pointed out that he was always interested in the poor and depressed. He would not exploit anyone. He branded people like the traders in human lives as hypocrites. No one ever raped another by following Jesus but by departing from his teaching. Jesus was an advocate of the philosophy of “the second mile” lifestyle. Indeed, it was Jesus dwelling in me that made it possible for me to love him. Muttering that he did not want my love, he turned and left the room.

After this interruption I finished my answer to the reactors and closed with prayer for them. It appeared that I had been in control of the situation throughout, although there was a time or two when it approached the explosive point. But love had won the day. Later that evening I addressed a student rally which was held in Wesley Foundation headquarters. I spoke on the theme “How to Really Get in the Way.” I answered questions for another hour, and we explored the Christian attitude toward sex, war, social reform, and other pertinent themes. It was my suggestion that the Christians take over the quadrangle for a full day, and make it an arena in which they took on all comers. They could challenge the neo-paganism openly and it was better to fall in battle than to be nibbled to death by mice.

When I finished at ten o’clock it represented a full day of direct encounter and dialogue. For thirteen hours I had been on the firing line testing the sword of the Spirit against the best the enemy had to offer. I was tired but keyed up for anything. I flew back to Saint Louis that night, and virtually the whole distance I prayed for those I had met. It had been a fruitful day.

I would not have you think that all of 1970 was like the encounter I have just described. There were moments of tranquil meditation and joy. There were times when I could draw a little apart from the multitude and refresh myself by study and meditation. I availed myself of every such moment. But generally there was activity of some kind and I traveled from one end of the country to another preaching the gospel of peace without compromise and emphasizing the hope

which makes that gospel “good news.” In fact, one of the great things that happened during the year occurred in February. It was notable because of things which transpired which were not on the program. But I will have to tell you about it in the next installment.

## **THE DAWN OF THE 1970’S**

One of the great regions of our land is that which has been designated Appalachia. It is ill-defined and no one can tell where it begins or ends, or where its boundaries are. It was fortunate in being settled by a people who were often poor but proud, and who were adept in adjusting themselves to wringing a living from the impoverished hill land in which their little farms were snuggled. These settlers were independent, resenting intrusion from the outside and keeping alive their traditions regardless of cost.

One of these was the Appalachian Preaching Mission. All of the evangelical congregations in and around Johnson City, Tennessee, join together for a week of proclamation once per year. That is, all but the Church of Christ. Services are held at noon in a downtown theater, and at night in the field house of East Tennessee State College. Businesses and industries close down at noon to give their employees an opportunity to attend the meetings. A different person presides each day, including the mayor, the president of the Chamber of Commerce, the president of the college, the head coach of football, etc. Ushers are drawn from various civic groups. One day the Lions Club, the next the police and firemen, the next the Rotary Club. It is a unique situation providing an opportunity for a united effort in proclaiming a common belief in Jesus Christ in spite of differences in dogma and doctrine.

In 1970 I was selected to be the noonday speaker. I delivered five addresses. There were 450 present for each of these. At night, Dr. Walter Judd, Kenneth Chafin, John Anderson, C.M. Ward, and Wayne Smith spoke in turn. It was the kind of thing which could happen only in this area of rugged individualism. I was invited by the president of the college to sit in a meeting of the entire faculty group and make suggestions as to how to deal with the problem of student rebellion. I was amazed to see the deep spiritual commitment of many of the faculty. The meeting began with prayer which I was asked to direct.

One day I was being interviewed over the local television station when the show was caught by the football coach. He called the studio and arranged to pick me up when I went off the air. I went to the school where the football players were in session. He introduced me and I spoke to them for fifteen minutes, witnessing to them what Jesus had done in my life. I then took their questions. I went to dinner with two students who wanted to talk with me. One was a lad who was a half-Jewish kid. He wanted to know how he could obtain what I seemed to have, an unflappable ability to face whatever garbage life flung in my direction with a smile. He confessed to me that he had tried sex, done the sex bit, and was now trying to find his identity and the answers to life by being into the contemplative, meditative, esoteric Far-East religions. I told him that he could stare at his navel until the sun went down and never find anything revealed except a thread or a raveling, but if he saw Jesus as I did, he would have to get up off his haunches, put his clothes on and start marching. He would have to be a part of the personal answer to the world’s woes and problems.

One week later I was at a convocation of college and career young people at French Lick, Indiana. It was held in the great resort hotel which was built in the days when this was one of the outstanding spas in the United States. The wealthy came in their private railroad cars to take the baths. Although the luxury had somewhat faded since it had become a convention hotel, it was still fancier than anything most of us had ever seen. We ate together, talked together, and prayed together. Our lives were refreshed by men of stature who had prepared well. I was resource man in the scriptures. On Sunday morning we partook of the Lord's Supper at our respective tables. Each little group of twelve participated as they wished. There were 644 enrolled for the affair. It was the largest group which had ever attended this annual event, sponsored by Christians Unlimited. One of the highlights for me was to see Jim Bevis, who came to stay with me during the sessions. The one time I had seen him before he was a minister of education at Broadview Church in Lubbock. Bill Banowsky was the minister.

I went next to Santa Ana, California, and the First Christian Church, a beautiful structure, presided over by Gerald S. Bash and James Stock. My theme was "A New Look at the Book of Acts." But it was the "extra meetings" in which I found the greatest enjoyment. Most of these were set up by "Skip" Stock, a restless bundle of energy who was always looking for new worlds to conquer. We went directly from my plane to a beautiful restaurant for a private meeting with a brilliant attorney who was a skeptic at the time. It was while discussing with him that I first affirmed that the source of all authority could not be limited by the authority which proceeded from him, and that we cannot bind God by the commands which he gave to bind us, realizing that He is sovereign. I made use of the fact that Jesus said that all authority was given to him in heaven and on earth, but Paul declared that God excepted Himself from that authority.

Each night after meeting those who wished to do so retired to the beautiful lounge which was on the grounds, and I answered questions until 10:30 o'clock. The time was never long enough. A tragic thing had recently occurred. Pat and Shirley Boone and their lovely daughters had lately been excluded from the fellowship of their congregation because of their growing conviction that the Holy Spirit worked in our generation as he did in the primitive church. The elders of the Church of Christ in Santa Ana had commissioned their preacher to go and try to restore Pat and Shirley "to the fold." During the process he also "received the baptism of the Holy Spirit," according to his testimony, so he was also excluded. He attended several of my meetings. All of this was fresh on the minds of the people and most of the questions dealt with that subject.

One morning just as we were preparing to open with a prayer a two-hour session for questioning, nine preachers from the Churches of Christ filed in and lined up on the back seat. They were as solemn as a convention of undertakers. It was evident that they had come for a shootout at the old corral. It began immediately. The first one led off with a question intended to trip me up. But I saw through the ruse and answered it. The second followed to take advantage of the first. I fielded every ball that was thrown. For some reason I never felt more at ease. I have never been more comfortable. It was obvious the preachers were losing ground and they became more sarcastic and bitter as the tide of battle flowed against them. Finally, one of them gave the others a signal a few minutes before closing time and they all arose and filed out. I invited them to remain for refreshments but they ignored me. When they had gone someone in the audience let out a loud "Whew!"

Three days later I was on the beautiful coast of Oregon at Newport. Robert Church was the minister. The little city was noted for its ocean fishing and surfing. The congregation had experienced serious trials and a great deal of internal strife in the past but all was peaceable at the time. We had a varied audience for both morning and evening meetings. The local Lutheran minister, the Assembly of God preacher, two Catholic priests, a nun, and several others came regularly. It was at Newport I first met Stanley McDaniel. He was a college professor in northern California. Later he did his doctoral thesis on my life and preaching at Indiana University. It was also a real blessing to meet the family of my aged brother George Hendrix. A number of them came and took over a small motel and stayed for the entire study. Brother Hendrix was an old-time pioneer schoolteacher. He knew Daniel Sommer, A.M. Morris, and S.O. Pool, names from my own distant past.

One visit I made probably deserves mention. It was to the Abilene Christian College Lectureship. Brother Garrett and I were together. I was invited to speak one night at Southwest Park Christian Church, by Alvin Houser, who was serving as minister. The place was filled almost thirty minutes before the time appointed. A goodly number of professors from the school, together with several visiting speakers, joined with a large delegation of students who were present. I spoke on "Solving Problems of Long Division" and threw it open to the audience for questions. There was not a single untoward minute. On my return I stopped off in Arlington for an address at the Holiday Inn. There were representatives from 17 congregations in attendance, and most were friendly.

It was a notable event for me when I was invited to address the Prairie Young Peoples Association meeting held at Missoula, Montana. This outstanding group celebrated its golden anniversary several years ago. It is made up of Christian youth from the prairie provinces of Canada and from the top tier of states in the United States. There are always friends from other states and provinces in attendance. The meeting at Missoula began in the Snow Bowl Ski Lodge far above the city. It was snowing hard, and after the initial session and snack lunch, taken while sitting on the floor in front of a huge fireplace, it required a snowplow preceding us to get down to the Florence Hotel where everything else took place.

Workshops were carried on all day Saturday, and I made a speech at the lovely banquet that evening. Sunday morning everyone was up early and the Lord's Day meeting was held so that before noon the attendees could be started on the long trek back to their homes. Each one was provided with a sack lunch. I found myself greatly encouraged to know so many fine young people. The world seemed a little safer for having them.

During the last month of 1970 I went to Houston, Texas for a forum on fellowship. As there was no church building where all could attend we opted for a neutral place, and secured the auditorium of Lanier Junior High School for the night sessions. Noonday meetings were held in the Downtown Y.M.C.A. and provided an opportunity for everyone to ask the questions which they considered worthy. The meetings were attended by representatives of all the churches, but no announcement of them was made publicly by the ministers.

This was the first of two such attempts, and we reached various kinds of Churches of Christ, Christian Churches, and Disciples of Christ, with the message of peace. Some met for the first

time and learned they lived on the same street. The second time I invited Ervin Waters to handle the questions with me. I have never worked with a better brother. He was sharp as a tack, having honed his mind through years of debating. It was a real privilege to be associated with him, and we have cemented our friendship as the years have come and gone.

I presented my thoughts for the year in a bound volume of the paper called "Our Living Pattern." At the conclusion of one of the articles I wrote: "If we can ever sense that Christianity is not a law but a life, that it is not a sacrificial code imposed from on high but the sharing in our lot of a God who came down from above, our fears will give way to faith, and our heartaches to hope. We will cease to ride herd on God's sheep and be willing to follow in the steps of the Shepherd. We will substitute the law of love for our love of law, and see the God of goodness demonstrated in all of the goodness of God as manifested unto us."

## **SUMMONED TO COME UP HIGHER**

The year 1971 will be remembered by different people for various reasons. Southern Californians will recall the severe earthquake which resulted in buckled freeways, and 62 deaths, with more than a million dollars of damage. Space enthusiasts will recall it as the year when the astronauts of Apollo 14, led by Alan Shepard, spent 10 hours exploring the lunar surface. Revolutionaries will remember it as the year of the bomb in the basement of the United States Capitol, which resulted in \$300,000 damage.

Indians will remember it as the time when Federal marshals occupied Alcatraz Island which had been seized by representatives of various tribes who hoped to make it a cultural center. Theatrical buffs will remember it because of the opening of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington. Felons will call to mind the occupation of the state prison in Attica, New York, when 34 of their number died with 9 of their hostages in the brief battle with state police and sheriff's deputies. Blacks will recall the death of Ralph J. Bunche, under-secretary general of the United Nations, who received the Nobel peace prize in 1950. He was the first Negro Nobel Laureate, and a man of distinction.

Only yesterday headlines screamed these events. The hearts of men palpitated with pride or failed them for fear as they read them. How much a part of the dim past they now seem. How far away they appear. How remote they are from our present busy lives. There is no Nobel prize for those who labor for spiritual peace. But there is a noble reward at the end of the way. So our own striving for peace among believers went on. It seems almost incredible that I was engaged in 24 meetings in 16 states. These were in a context that reached from ocean to ocean and from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico.

I have recently read again of the travels of the pioneer proclaimers. By steamboat down the Ohio, by stagecoach through forests and across the prairies beyond, and then by horseback along faint trails they made their way. Wherever they went the light shone. Now I can board a jet in Saint Louis and I am within three hours of any place in the United States. What a responsibility this lays upon me. I seem to have accepted the challenge in 1971, for I was away from home more than I was at home. I must tell you about a few of these encounters as they are part of the warp and woof out of which the pattern of life has been woven. But first I must inject a note of

sadness for the year was one in which some of my dearest friends were summoned to come up higher.

Bob Haddow was a real inspiration to me. He was completely paralyzed. Yet he became a great reader. He laboriously formed letters and words and wrote to me. He came whenever I was in California in a special van in which his bed could be hauled. His mother always accompanied him, driving the vehicle. Generally his grandmother was also along. He believed in what I was doing. He dreamed the same dreams as myself. I first met Harry Robert Fox, Jr., recently home from long service in Japan, and became convinced that I was in the presence of one of the humblest, most erudite and well-read minds I had ever had contact with. Subsequent contacts did not change my thinking. I wept when I learned that Bob Haddow's spirit had wrenched itself free from its twisted clay tabernacle.

The deaths of Dewey Elliott, of Richmond, Mo.; Noel Sutterfield, of Detroit, Michigan; and Forest Tabor, of Fairplay, Kentucky, made me realize the far-flung regions in which men lived who had affected my life. Then, in rapid succession three more were called home who had been of profound impact in my life. The first was Everett Noel, of Topeka, Kansas. He was one of the first men we met when my parents moved to Topeka. When the church divided, over what now appears to me to be trivia, he stood with us. He was always helpful to my parents during their lives. I am not sure how he looked at what I advocated as God opened my ideas to the wider vistas of His kingdom. I was gradually barred from the church of my childhood and was not invited back to where I had stood as a high school youth and parroted the party line. But I loved them then and I love them now, and I realized that the death of my brother marked the passing of an era.

Louis J. Kappelman was a true man of God. Born of immigrant Lutheran parentage as was I, he accepted the plea to become a Christian only, the first time he heard it at a little Arkansas congregation back in "the sticks." He was honest, hard-working and humble. Amidst all of the pressures and tensions of the party spirit, he "kept the even tenor of his way." I stayed in his home during some of the most dramatic periods I encountered as a preacher of the gospel, when every day brought fresh accusations woven of a tissue of falsehood, and it was refreshing to talk with someone who was unperturbed and tranquil. I learned much from him and his departure wrenched my soul.

Bertha Robinson died at the age of 87, one of the noblest Christian women to ever grace God's footstool. Her life was of no significance among the kingdoms of men, but can never be overlooked in the kingdom of heaven. The cause for which we plead in the Saint Louis area owes its inception to her. Never married to any man on earth she was free to be a member of the bride of Christ. Her entire life was dedicated to caring for others. She possessed a patience which became proverbial and "admitted openly that she was a foreigner and a refugee on earth." She did not leave home when she died, she went home. Nell and I still talk feelingly of her pilgrimage among us.

Stewart Whyte, of Alton, Illinois, was a real inspiration to me during his life. He was the victim of an incurable condition and succumbed prematurely. Homer Harvey, who was a master of the stonemason's art, and an inimitable carver, died at Middletown, Indiana. Dr. N. Rhoads, a

member of an old-time family in our restoration movement died in Eugene, Oregon. I knew I would miss his encouraging letters. My life was impoverished by the deaths of these, all from different states, and different stations in life. Despite the divergency of their interests all had been very meaningful to me.

It was during this year I decided to concentrate my writing on a chapter which had deeply impressed me during my striving toward maturity. As I pointed out in my initial article, "The Ascent of Faith," Romans was the Alps of the new covenant scriptures, and chapter 8 was the Matterhorn, looming high above and towering into the clouds. I analyzed every word in this impressive part of the Book of books, and at the end of the year embodied all of the material in a volume titled "One Great Chapter." It must have touched a tender chord, since we still receive orders for it long after it has gone out of print.

I began the year at the First Christian Church in Escondido, California. The series was called "College of the Bible." It brought together people from the Church of Christ to share with those in the Christian Churches. It was a time of great fellowship. We averaged 300 per night and 150 in the morning sessions. I spoke at various civic and school gatherings with good effect. I was accompanied by Al Karges, genial and hard working.

February 1-3 I was scheduled to deliver the T.H. Johnson Memorial Lectures at All Faiths Chapel, on the grounds of Kansas State University, under sponsorship of Manhattan Bible College. Each morning we conducted an informal question and answer session at the college. In the afternoons I had an unparalleled opportunity to meet the students at Kansas State. It was during this time I came to admire so greatly Brother William Lown, president of the Bible College. His non-sectarian attitude was refreshing to contemplate.

I went next to University Street Church of Christ at Eugene, Oregon. At the time the charismatic viewpoint was a matter of great concern and many of the questions in the daily forum dealt with the subject. I tried to be as diplomatic as possible. I took the position that I would make no test of fellowship out of one's personal experience to which he testified, nor allow anyone to measure my standing with God by His own experience. This was calculated to maintain fellowship with all and forbid judging of another by anyone on the basis of his own esoteric experience. I still think that these are the two gravest dangers, and of far more harmful tendency than any opinion relative to the work of the Spirit.

The Abilene Christian College Lectureship began on February 22, and I was scheduled to speak that night at the YWCA auditorium. I did not particularly like the arrangement. I did not want to appear in rivalry against the school, despite their opposition to me. There was little chance of my speech being assessed impartially but I made no reference to the school and dealt solely with the agonizing problem of disunity. Later I was invited to meet in an off-campus room with several students. Most of them and their parents were charismatic. The room was packed and we discussed until well after midnight.

March 3-5 found me speaking at the World Vision Crusade at Intermountain Bible College, Grand Junction, Colorado. Brother Erskine Scates was president of the school. He has since died and we have lost a friend and a good man. I was especially pleased to learn of the work

among the Navahos by former students. These had gone on the reservation and lived in hogans, and shared the lives of the Indians as well as the transforming message. They found it easier to relate to these gentle tribesmen than to the world of violence outside. They had learned the language and the traditions and were accepted by even the older men of the clan.

March 15-19 I was back in Oregon, at Newport. I stayed in a home, where I could see the restless waves of the Pacific Ocean foaming out against the shore. It was decided that I should speak about the Holy Spirit because of the unrest concerning His work in our day. I decided to pitch my talks on a positive note. It seemed to me there had been enough negativism. The church had been troubled by various things with no relationship to the current issue, and I did not want to leave them divided over matters relating to the Spirit.

My talks were entitled *The Person of the Spirit; The Purpose of the Spirit; The Performance of the Spirit; The Power of the Spirit; and The Peace of the Spirit*. In our morning study, for which the room was filled, we attracted a mixed bag of eager students. Several clergymen of various backgrounds came. We had a large attendance from Churches of Christ. It was interesting to answer their questions and not forget my objective which was a plea for peace.

I made it clear the difference between revelation and interpretation. The first is what God said. The second is what we think He meant by what He said. The first is the disclosure of the divine mind. It is perfect. The second is the application of the human mind to what was said. It may or may not be perfect. We are bound by God's Word. But no man is bound by my understanding of it. Each person upon earth must be free to engage in a private search of the divine revelation, and to deduce what it means for himself. If his deduction differs from mine, one or both of us may be wrong, but we dare not make a test of one's relationship to God out of his relationship to my understanding of the will of God.

Robert Church, who served the saints at Newport, was in agreement with my method of teaching, and we sailed through nights with a filled auditorium, in which there were Catholic priests and nuns, as well as Lutheran ministers and others. It was interesting to see how eagerly they all learned and how they grew in a love of God in five nights and four days of intense teaching.

## **WAGING PEACE**

One of the greatest blessings which has come to me has been the privilege of working with the Canadian brethren. Their great hospitality, developed in part from a frontier existence not too many decades ago, is proverbial. I have been with them from the maritime provinces on the east to beautiful Victoria in the far west. It was because of this I looked forward with keen interest to speaking at the Prairie Young Peoples Association Conference, held in Yellowgrass, Saskatchewan, April 15-17, 1971.

The congregation at Yellowgrass is unique. Never very large, it has sent out more preachers than any place else I have known. Most of these were educated in the States, and most of them remained in "the lower forty-eight" as these United States are called. I had met many of them and knew a great many other brethren from Yellowgrass before I arrived. Without exception they were all sincere and sacrificing for the Cause of Christ. The conference was excellent. It



made possible for the bonds of fellowship to be tightened from Winnipeg to Dawson Creek. It lapped over into the northern tier of states and drew people from all of them.

On Sunday night, after the conference had concluded in the afternoon, brethren had made arrangements for me to speak in Regina, the beautiful capital of the province. The meeting was held in the Christian Church building. The brethren were in turmoil. There was a division of sentiment as to which direction they should go on “restructure” which was the talk of the Americans in those days. We were favored by having with us four members of the Anglican clergy. They heard me declare the good news as our only hope. I pointed out that, in the final analysis, all fellowship with God was on a personal basis. It was man-to-God. Regardless of what happened to institutions it could not sever the relationship unless we consented to having it do so.

On April 26-30 I was scheduled for a fellowship rally at Phoenix, Arizona. It continued for five nights in the North High School Auditorium. By selecting a “neutral place” it was believed that more people could attend without offending their tender consciences. I was interviewed on radio twice and appeared on television in talk shows twice. In one of these people could call in and ask questions directly. It was interesting to note that while we were engaged in the great and vital issues affecting the whole world of believers, and unbelievers, that questions from members of the Church of Christ all had to do with instrumental music. The fact that we were divided and rent asunder in direct contravention to the prayer of Jesus seemed of no particular consequence. The sordid problem of division had to be aired. The question was no longer “What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he?” It was now “What think ye of a piano?”

I went next to Columbus, Ohio for the Central Ohio Ministers’ Fellowship, May 12-24. My theme for the series of talks was “Growing Up in Our Understanding of Christian Unity.” I gathered that almost all of the men agreed with me theoretically, but lacked a knowledge of how to implement what I was saying practically. Without realizing it was happening, we have been betrayed by circumstances into becoming a non-sectarian sect. We were in partisan competition with other sects about us. We thought we were right and could not be wrong. They thought the same thing of themselves. We looked upon one who was converted to us being a convert to Christ. It was obvious that we were in some cases developing a “personality cult” built around the charisma of a preacher. It would take a long time until we grew up in our concept of the unity for which Jesus had petitioned.

Our problem was augmented by fear. We had become afraid to venture beyond our traditions. We were frightened at the thought of experimentation, so no new discoveries of how to work were being made. Like a cow tethered to a stake we grazed in our own restricted circles. The length of the rope determined the area we would cover. Yet, all around us was a world dying for what we could share. Meanwhile we were meeting only with those who agreed with us, and rearranging our prejudices. The only bright spot in an otherwise discouraging picture was that created by a few hearty souls who ignored the brands of men and sought to relate meaningfully to the cross of our Lord.

I stayed with Jeff and Linda Smith. They were some of my favorite people. They had been in Great Britain and we had mutual acquaintances there. It was wonderful to be in their home. Jeff

was a student at the university and I got to visit it. It was a great buzzing beehive of activity. On May 24, I went to James River Chapel, south of Springfield, Missouri, where I was among friends I had known since my boyhood days. I held my first meeting in the area when I was fifteen and had returned often. For five nights I spoke on the theme, "Will the Real Jesus Please Stand Up?" I showed how we had constructed our own images of Jesus which were not real at all. We had caricatured him only to satisfy our own longings and ideas, but behind the masks we had created stood the real Jesus, still longing to help us.

June 7-11 I began at Highland Church in Louisville. Ernest Lyon ministered to it. It had known some of the great men of the past. Among them was E.L. Jorgenson, who had come from a Scandinavian settlement in Nebraska to become one of the great song compilers of his era. With his goal, the upgrading of the vocal music of the congregations, he was led to bring out *Great Songs of the Church*. It caught on. He had hit upon the idea of alphabetizing the hymns in several categories. It was a privilege to be in his home and to share experiences with him. He had ministered in Toronto, and had been instrumental in introducing Claude Witty and James DeForest Murch.

These two men began a series of "unity meetings" in 1936. They had agreed that "tradition, creedalism, provincialism, institutionalism, Pharisaism, extremism, indifference, self-sufficiency, ignorance, proselyting, distrust, and all the imps of Satan were running riot. The leadership of the churches were not calling for unity. There was no great uprising of the rank and file demanding it. Yet we, as a people, had preached it; we ought to practice it."

Men from both sides risked their futures and engaged in irenic discussion. I opposed it with characteristic ignorance. We were the loyal church and that was it. Finally, the radical element from both sides shot down the meetings. Foy E. Wallace had bitterly opposed them in the south. They came to nought because the brethren were thinking war instead of peace. It was war against brethren and it was much more appealing than war against Satan.

In early July I attended and spoke at the conference on unity at Atlanta Christian College, in Atlanta, Georgia. It was well attended but I came away feeling that more groundwork was needed. The questions showed a strange lack of relevance to the unity of all believers. That passion for oneness had not yet been fanned into flame. Each party was interested in unity which came its way. There was too much of the spirit of the snake and frog which promotes togetherness by the first swallowing the latter. Several years of teaching would have to be done before each was willing to move toward a common center and let Jesus become the real focal point.

August 2-6 I was back in Oregon at Camp Wi-Ne-Ma for a family camp. It is located in a beautiful spot where hills and mountains drop down to meet the ocean. From my window I could watch huge whales sporting offshore. More than a thousand people were registered. Campers covered the entire area. I was Bible lecturer for the week. In addition, I met with the young people each afternoon. The winds and waves had hollowed out a natural bowl of sand on the shore and we used it for our discussions. All other adults were barred and I could listen freely to the problems and hang ups of more than two dozen teen-agers. I was, as usual, deeply impressed with their enthusiasm and potential.

Next I went to the Blue Ridge Men's Clinic, which was held not too far from Grandfather Mountain. This spot is known for its gathering of the clans every year. Dressed in tartans and colorful plaids, thousands of people of Scottish ancestry assemble for a reunion. The sound of the pipes reverberates through wild mountain glens. Scottish dances and games are carried on apace to the exultant cries and cheers from thousands of voices. I know some who have not missed attendance there in years, going back repeatedly to eat haggis and to down Scotch oatcakes.

The clinic featured Beaufort Bryant, Clarence Greenleaf and me, together with 754 other men. It was no place to go to catch up on your sleep. Some men talked virtually through the entire night, huddled around little campfires, and fortified inwardly by coffee which would dissolve shingle nails. They had often stayed up like this while fox-hunting and it was no problem for them.

I went next to Houston, Texas, one of the fastest growing urban areas in our country. What a contrast it was to the peaceful quiet of the mountain regions of the east, where one could hear the far-off crow of a rooster as he awakened in the morning. Once again, at Sidney Lanier Junior High School I conducted a Fellowship Forum for three nights. It was necessary to define fellowship again for those who had been betrayed into thinking it was something men had the power to extend or withdraw, when in reality, it was a state in which we were simply called to share. To accept one another freely was the greatest blessing to which we had been called.

I have often read a piece of reportorial writing with deep appreciation. I know that a reporter must be selective. He must be judgmental. This means that what is not said may be even more important to another than what is covered. I feel the same tensions in writing this. There was my meeting at Astoria, Illinois, and Canton, Ohio, and the Louisiana State Convention at Shreveport. Everyone of these was important. At Canton I spoke 12 times in five days and addressed three breakfast meetings. Yet space will not permit full coverage of them.

On October 20 I was back at San Jose, California, to deliver the Roy B. Shaw Memorial Lectures. These were, by terms of the will, to be about the restoration movement. My themes were: The Death of A Dream; The Recovery of Reason; and A Faith For the Future. I demonstrated that our restoration movement arose at a certain period in history. It was spontaneous and not planned. It was adapted to the cultural needs of man as he then existed on the frontier. We no longer live in those times. We must launch a new movement dedicated to renewal through recovery of the apostolic proclamation, purpose and power. We must make the ageless gospel meet the needs of the Space Age.

Later I went to the Genessee Church of Christ, near Flint, Michigan, where it was my privilege to stay with Frank Rester and his good family. Then I found myself at Eldon, Missouri where Seth Wilson, Gareth Reece, Russell Boatman and I engaged in a two-day forum on "The Holy Spirit." I closed my travels for the year at Windsor, Illinois. It was close to Sand Creek, where the division all began. It was there that for the first time the opinions of men were made tests of fellowship, and those who did not conform were told that they no longer would be regarded as brethren. It seemed like a good place to go back to and proclaim the gospel of peace and seek to undo some of the tragic ills which had resulted from an ill-conceived policy.

## NOTHING IS AS IMPORTANT AS JESUS

The year of 1972 will never be forgotten by Richard Nixon. It must both thrill and haunt his every waking moment. It was the time of his greatest triumph. On November 7 he was re-elected to serve a second term with a vote well in excess of forty-seven million. In February, accompanied by Henry Kissinger, he had gone to Communist China. The television screens in every American home registered the progress he made in his negotiations. It was a time of exhilaration for him. His goals were being realized. His dreams were coming true.

On the night of June 17 occurred the Watergate break-in. Those who were apprehended had electronic equipment in their possession. The incident was not at first seen in its full potential. The poison in its fangs was well concealed. On June 22, and again on August 29, President Nixon assured the nation that no one in his administration had anything to do with it. But after his re-election, the serpent began to uncoil itself, striking first at this one and then at another. Before it was over the pride of the haughty would be humbled. The dream temple would lie in shattered ruin. A hero would become a villain. And disillusionment would spread like a pall over the nation.

On May 2, J. Edgar Hoover would die of a heart attack in Washington. He was 77 years of age. He had been Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation since 1924. Hated by Communists and fellow-travelers alike, he had seemed like a towering rock against those who would undermine our national ideals. He had been at the forefront of the battle when roving gangs sought to pillage us. As he grew older, the first accusing fingers were pointed in his direction and he had to reckon with a new kind of opposition. His opponents carried briefcases filled with statistics rather than machine-guns filled with bullets. It was like an old stag brought to bay by the pack yapping at his heels, making his last stand with his back against the mountain. On May 15, Governor George C. Wallace was shot by a 21 year old drifter, Arthur Bremer, in Laurel, Maryland. The day after Christmas Harry S. Truman died in Kansas City, Missouri, at the age of 88.

I began the year in sunny California in Escondido. The "College of the Bible" attracted brethren from all over the region. I spoke each night at the congregation and held an open forum each morning. Men and women seemed intrigued by the fact that they could ask anything they desired. We did not always agree but we had a glorious time in the Lord. No one asked whether you were this or that. It seemed enough that all were in Christ, all wanted to learn, and all were teachable. Between sessions I addressed civic clubs in the area and spoke to other special groups. In all of these encounters I kept in mind the motto of Alexander Campbell: "He that would plead this heavenly cause must stand before the people with peace in his heart, union upon his lip, and truth in his eye."

The last of January I returned to Florida College for the lectureship. An attack upon the principles which I espoused was to be made and I wanted to be present for it. When I was there before, G.K. Wallace, Pat Hardeman and Bill Humble were the prominent figures. All of them had occupied really prime spots on the program. Now all of them were out. Their names were not even mentioned. I met with a number of students, at their request, in a room in the men's dormitory for several hours in the afternoon. They were full of questions. I answered them

without reservation. It was suggested that I appear before everyone and take their queries. The school, which was presided over by James Cope, would not allow such an arrangement as if it were part of the lectureship proceedings. It was arranged that it be held at 10:00 o'clock after all regular activities were over. It was to be in the building of the University Church of Christ.

Standing room only was the word which went forth fifteen minutes before the scheduled time. Every conceivable niche was filled for the meeting which lasted three hours and finally ended at 1:00 o'clock a.m. It provided the greatest excitement of the lectureship. I spoke for thirty minutes on my concept of fellowship. I was followed by Robert Turner, who admitted that he had only read a copy or two of *Mission Messenger*. I then sat down on the platform with Brother Turner, and we were joined by Ferrell Jenkins and Harry Pickup, Jr. It was interesting to watch the men who did the questioning. Some of the older preachers imagined themselves to be prosecuting attorneys with me as defendant. Since I refused to accept the role or play their game they did not know what to do next. They were accustomed to someone who rolled over and played dead when they queried him. An occasional student seized the limelight to establish himself as one of "the faithful." But the majority of the audience listened seriously and soberly.

I am convinced that great good was done, especially with the more observant and erudite students. I have seen reports in the more partisan journals that at least fifty of the most brilliant students in the sect have been affected by my plea. It would seem that this fact alone would cause the party leaders to take thought. If only lazy and slovenly students were affected it might be brushed aside as of little consequence, but when top-notch students see the value of the priorities emphasized it is another matter. Since that fateful night in the history of our modern thrust for renewal I have done a lot of thinking about the brethren who oppose support of what we call institutionalism.

I reject the brand of "antis" as applied to these brethren. It is silly and childish. All of us are "anti" on a lot of things. In some respects their contentions are but an extension of some of my own former efforts. But the charge quite frequently made by their opponents that they "out-Sommer" Daniel Sommer is not to be credited. Their position is not the same as his. I knew Daniel Sommer personally. He was often in my home. He ate at my table and shared with me his thinking. The brethren at Florida College are not espousing a warmed-over version of the Sommer ideology.

I think the rise of the party is a phenomenon which occurs at periodic intervals in every group which is based upon a legalistic stance for its survival. The only safeguard against it is the investiture of one man with infallibility, and the universal recognition of him as the authority. As long as that authority is respected and revered the organization will remain intact. It is because of the erosion of authority that the great monolithic structure of the Roman Catholic Church is faced with such problems in our day. The seeds of division are inherent in every legalistic group. Given the correct conditions they will germinate and a fracture will occur.

The regarding of the New Testament scriptures as a written code of laws coupled with the idea that God provided an exact pattern to be meticulously followed in all ages has operated in such a way as to defy the lordship of Jesus and substitute the rule of dominant men. These have generally been editors among the various segments of the Churches of Christ. Sometimes they

have been elders who were inflexible. Every time the culture altered, division has occurred. Division is part and parcel of the attitude toward the plan of God. It is not at all a question of respect for the authority of the Word, but of respect for a particular way of looking at it. Many men have deep regard for the revelation of heaven who do not have the same regard for the interpretation of an editor.

As I view it, these brethren are guilty of profound errors in their reasoning. They do not distinguish between the gospel of Christ and the doctrine of the apostles. They do not understand the nature of worship. They do not understand the nature of fellowship. They have arisen as a protest movement against what they considered certain abuses, and allowed it to gravitate into a separate and exclusive party. This was the great mistake. Brethren may think as they wish about the Herald of Truth, and they will do so. They may support it or not support it. They may watch it or not watch it. But when either group creates a party around its deduction it becomes factional. And factionalism is a sin. This makes their opinion as important as the death of Jesus. One must believe it to be regarded as in the faith. It becomes an unwritten creed. But nothing is as important as Jesus – just nothing!

Of course each party attracts those persons who thrust themselves into prominence by intemperate and injudicious statements. They generally prove to be an embarrassment to those who sigh for Jerusalem and are sincerely saddened by division and strife among the saints. Partisan papers agitate the situation by publishing almost vituperative reports against those who disagree with them. H.E. Phillips wrote in *Searching the Scriptures*, a monthly periodical, about “the despicable doctrine of fellowship.” Others were almost as uncouth in their attacks. But none of these things move me. The road of a reformer has always been a rocky route to travel. But there are great rewards.

Changing the subject, two deaths occurred during the year that were of some significance. Alexander Campbell Johnson, Jr., died at the age of 74. Maria Louise Campbell Barclay died at the age of 105. Both of them were the great-grandchildren of Alexander Campbell. Alexander himself had died on March 4, 1866. It was the Lord’s Day and just as it drew to a close he was called to his eternal rest. Now his great-grandchildren were going home at an advanced age.

March 6-10 found me at La Crosse, Wisconsin. Because of a building program our meetings were held in the YMCA building. I arrived just in time to see a member of a rock music group baptized. The leader had been in the hospital as a result of a real bad drug trip, when a candy-striper met him, told him about Jesus, and changed his entire life. His conversion had a great effect upon the other members and one by one they discovered the tug of the Galilean upon their hearts and made the great transformation. They were a jovial group who had tried everything the world had to offer. They conceived the idea of writing Jesus’ words to some of their tunes and belting them out to the far-out generation who made the scene.

They suggested that we make a joint appearance on the university campus where they had been “big time” before. I agreed and they secured Presidents Hall. By this time they were calling themselves HOPE, and they put up posters all over the place with our pictures and the inscription “Hope With Carl.” I was astounded at the drawing power they exhibited. The great hall filled

completely and students and faculty jostled for standing room around the walls. They spilled out into the hall.

For almost an hour HOPE played and sang. I did not understand a word they were saying. They testified of their faith and then introduced me as “The Answer Man.” I went for fifty minutes. The questions were terrific. Some tried to trip me up as the Pharisees had done with Jesus. I sailed through the troubled waters without a break. Many of the questions were significant and penetrating. The entire thing was televised. It made the meeting. The night sessions were filled with people. The day sessions produced an interested group who were eager to know. I am pleased to report that all the members of the rock music group went back to school. One became a schoolteacher. The other four became preachers of the gospel. God works in wonderful ways and through all kinds of agencies. How wonderful of His grace to turn drug users into disciples of the Nazarene and into useful servants of His kingdom.

## 7. The Last Years of Mission Messenger

### 1972: A YEAR FOR RENEWAL

On March 13-17, I was with the Northglenn Christian Church at Denver. It was served by my good friend, William Lower. I first met him and his lovely family at Fort Wayne, Indiana. He was an excellent administrator, an apt student and a competent proclaimer of the Word. I stayed in a little camper belonging to one of the brethren. It was pitched at the rear of the church building and it was in a real spot. At night I could see the star-studded canopy of the skies flung above me, unobscured by the smog of our own creation. It was a real place for meditating and I did a great deal of it. Out of my deliberations came an article which was one of my deepest. It was entitled "Spiritual Argonauts" and deals with the nature and essence of truth. It was published in the August issue of Mission Messenger, in 1972, and appears in the volume called "The Divine Purpose." I have never written another to equal it. And I could not have written it if I had not been alone at night on the plains outside "The Mile High City."

March 20-22 found me with the Northside Church of Christ at Grand Rapids, Michigan. I stayed with Patrick Miles and his good wife. They were a wonderful black brother and sister. They had two beautiful children. It must have been rather strange for them having a white man in their home. I caught them staring at me around the door facing as I wrote. Pat was an elder and a good one indeed. He had a grasp of what was transpiring and was a firm believer in the need for implementing the prayer of Jesus for unity.

While there I spoke at chapel at Great Lakes Bible College and also met with the Campus workers at Michigan State. The school was in the vanguard of the student revolution. They were taking to the streets and marching for any cause, or simply creating an artificial cause and marching anyhow. It was interesting to see them gather momentum and wave their fists and start shouting. It was a great time to be there with the message of "The Indestructible Jesus" when a lot of other things were being reduced to rubble or going up in licking flames. In times like these you need an anchor!

I went next to Newport, Oregon for the third time. I was becoming a regular fixture in this fishing town, so picturesquely sprawled above the wide Pacific. The brethren had established a coffee house mission on the waterfront. To it came sailors from every country possessing a fishing fleet. Here they could find a free copy of the scriptures, sometimes in their native tongue. There was always someone with whom to talk about the lordship of Jesus. A few steps down the wharf was Mo's chowder house, a famed place which looked like anything except a restaurant, but made clam chowder which was out of this world. If you ate too much of it you would be too!

We had decided that the lessons at night should be on the book of Romans. I worked out a series which I designated: Nonsense and Incense; Faith and Futility; The Father of the Faithful; Dead and Delivered; the "As" and "So" of Service. The auditorium was filled every night. The open forum attendance each morning was very gratifying. It was while in this town I found an old friend whom I had known from boyhood in Topeka, Kansas. He had become a judge on the circuit court judiciary.



It was my good fortune to go next to Hoxie, Kansas, where Darrel Foltz is doing such effective work. While there several members of the Dunkard Brethren attended every night. I learned that they had quite a colony at Quinlan, Kansas, where there were two congregations as the result of an unfortunate split. Realizing that they had descended from the work of Philip Jacob Spencer and Herman Francke, in protest against certain deficiencies in Reformation life and practice, I was anxious to meet with some of them. We went out to the beautiful and fertile farm of one of the leaders. I soon found that they were descendants of the Pietists, and were part of a restoration movement which preceded ours by a century.

The house was plainly furnished. Everything served a utilitarian purpose. It was spotless. There was no television set. A great many of what we consider “modern conveniences” were conspicuous by their absence. The people attired themselves in simple garments which denoted their faith and separated them from the world about them. They practice foot-washing in conjunction with their communion. They hold a love feast annually as a symbol of their affection for one another. I was blessed by being able to talk with them. It was only in recent years they had begun to attend our meetings. They could come and not offend their conscience since we did not have instrumental music. I was much impressed with the unaffectedness of their lives. It was no problem to me to recognize them as brothers and sisters.

It was about this time I learned of the death of two aged saints whose lives had impressed me greatly. One was Isaiah H.H. Moore, 91, of Louisville, Kentucky. He was killed when thrown from an automobile in a three car collision in New Lebanon, Indiana. This humble black man, a direct descendant of slaves, had long worked with College of the Scriptures at Louisville. The other was Charles Bussard, also 91, who was living near Springfield, Missouri, when summoned to his eternal home. He was of hardy pioneer stock, and had spent his entire life within a few miles of his birthplace. Generous, open and free-hearted he had roots going back to the pioneer days when the English and Scotch people crossed the Appalachians and drifted westward. He had a lot of Elizabethan words in his simple vocabulary.

I traveled next to Elgin, Oregon, for a series of studies on “The Life of the Spirit.” I was met at Pendleton by a brother in a light plane. We lifted out of the valley and crossed over a high mountain which stood between us and our destination. We were so close to the ground that I could look down and see bands of wild elk grazing. It was a hunter’s paradise. My stay was marred by word of a highway accident which claimed the life of Bernell Weems, of Bonne Terre, Missouri. A preacher of the Word, he died early one morning when his car struck the abutment of a bridge. I was asked to come for the funeral service but could not, as I was scheduled to be the speaker at the commencement at which our oldest granddaughter, Dawn, graduated from the high school at Aspen, Colorado. She was valedictorian of her class and made a fine speech based upon I Corinthians 13.

Following an excellent meeting at James River Chapel, south of Springfield, I was booked next for the camp near Macrorie, Saskatchewan. Word came of the death of J.C. Bunn, at the age of 90, in Washington. In my early boyhood when I was twelve years old, he had announced my first preaching appointment at the little rural church at Old Pearl, in Illinois. My work had “caught on fire” from that fateful night and my destiny was determined. At Macrorie I was associated with Ed Benoit, a member of the provincial parliament for Alberta, sitting at

Edmonton. A great student of the Word, and a master of communication he did a tremendous job. We had a great time and saw much good accomplished.

I accepted an invitation to address the College-Career session at the North American Christian Convention. My theme was "The Holy Spirit in the Church Now." After finishing my assignment I was preparing to leave for home a day early. I was asked to deliver the final morning address as a substitute for Joe Barnett, of Lubbock, Texas, who called to say he was sick and could not make it. There were over 5,000 present and I had to speak primarily "off the cuff." A great many persons whose hearing was apparently defective told me it was the best I had ever done. I still run into people who were present and remind me of the speech. It is enough to discourage one from preparation.

August 11 and 12 I was accompanied by Otto Schlieper and Leroy Long, of Saint Louis, to a men's clinic at Rock Garden Camp in the beautiful Missouri Ozarks. I was associated there with Knofel Staton, currently {at the time these memoirs were first published} a professor at Ozark Bible College. Since that time I have been with him in various other meetings here and in Canada. Each time I hear him I become more convinced he is one of the most articulate men among us. His research is so thorough that it leaves nothing to be desired. He is the author of a number of books, all of them good ones. His studies on marriage leave little else to be said. Fortunate indeed are those places which secure him as a speaker.

During September I was at a Family Camp at Little Galilee, near Clinton, Illinois, where Enos Dowling also spoke. The former librarian at Butler School of Religion, he had become associated with Lincoln Christian Seminary. His knowledge of the restoration movement history is unsurpassed. His hobby is collecting old song books prepared by composers in the movement. Among those he has gathered are scores of books starting with Alexander Campbell, and reaching down from the inimitable J.D. Fillmore, to brethren who are still alive and writing. The great transformation that has taken place the past several years betokens the coming of a new reformation. Every such reformation in the past has been launched upon the wings of song.

On September 8, 9 I was at Butler Springs Men's Retreat in Ohio. It was a blessing for me to be associated with James Smith and Paul Bajko. Paul is from Poland. As I write this he has just celebrated his 25th year in preaching the good news to the Polish people. In 1971 the church in Poland celebrated its 50th anniversary. Paul helped to plant a congregation in Bielsk-Podlaski in 1969. They remodeled an old building to seat about 70 persons. They have since outgrown their quarters and have applied to the government for permission to build a larger one. Since 1969, new congregations have been planted in Poland at the rate of one per year.

I went next to Hilltop Christian Service Camp and spoke at a Men's Retreat. The camp is near Columbus, Indiana, and from it I went directly to Sunbury, Ohio. Then on to Hobbs, New Mexico, where I was surprised to see Brother and Sister W.P. Hutson. They had come to take a motel room next to mine just so we could talk in spare moments. Brother Hutson grew up in a different segment of our brotherhood than had I, but he read *Mission Messenger* and became entranced by what I was doing. We had great times talking over our past and thinking about the future. The three of us became convinced that we were living in one of the thrilling periods of the church.

From Hobbs, I journeyed to Corvallis and Beaverton, Oregon. It was my third trip to Oregon during the year. At Corvallis I had the privilege of association with a great number of college faculty and students who were dedicated to Christ Jesus. Our association was unmarred by any kind of difference or friction. Although they came from various backgrounds, under the gentle influence of the Spirit they were drawn together. At Beaverton I was compelled to deal at length with the rise of the charismatic movement. It was beginning to make an impact upon the community. It was a great time to be alive and actively dealing with the problems of the church.

I closed the year at the little Illinois town of Astoria. We had a great series of meetings and I met some fine people. I returned home to prepare my speech on "Fellowship" for the preachers' workshop at Abilene Christian College. It was to be held January 8-10. As I looked back upon the year just spent I could rejoice in accomplishments for the Cause. I had traveled in every part of our nation, and had gone to Canada as well. Everywhere I found brethren awakening to our needs as a people. It was evident that we were moving into a brighter and better day.

### **GETTING ACQUAINTED IN TEXAS**

Hershel Ottwell died on Thanksgiving Day, 1972. It was a sad loss to many of the saints, and especially to me. We had grown up together as boys in the country. We used to play together on Sunday afternoons. I was older than Hershel, but we admired and loved one another. He was an excellent teacher. He had devised the fine art of making charts and used them a great deal. He loved to work with small and needy groups and to see them grow. Teddie Renollet and I conducted memorial services. As I saw him lying there with his lips sealed by death I realized that one of God's noblemen had been mustered out of the church militant. We had said farewell to one of the great proclaimers of the Good News.

The year of 1973 had hardly begun when it brought news of the death of an ex-president, Lyndon Johnson. He died of a heart attack while enroute from his ranch to a hospital in San Antonio. Always a controversial figure, the world still argues over some of his decisions. He was buried in a humble shaded family plot upon the banks of the Pedernales River. Meanwhile, his successor, Richard Nixon was becoming more involved in the Watergate scandal with each passing day. And he was forfeiting the confidence of the American people with each move he made. The "Saturday night massacre" in which he fired Archibald Cox, Attorney-General Richardson, and his deputy, Ruckelshaus, was almost the last straw.

The "long national nightmare" as Gerald Ford described it, was augmented by the conduct of the Vice President, Spiro T. Agnew. He resigned his office to avoid further prosecution. On December 6, Ford was sworn in to take his place, the first man to enter office under the terms of the 25th Amendment. The trial of the Watergate accused was televised. Each episode was like driving the knife a little deeper into the body politic.

Early in January I went with Leroy Garrett to the Preachers' Workshop at Abilene Christian College. The weather was frightful. A blizzard swept across the land leaving the roads ice-covered and hazardous. Cars were in the ditches the entire route. Plane service was completely cancelled. Despite this 700 men gathered for the event. I spoke on fellowship. Harold Hazelip, of Memphis, Tennessee, and Richard Rogers, of Lubbock, Texas responded. Then I answered

questions for the rest of the morning. Due to the importance of the theme and the interest in it, J.D. Thomas had not arranged anything else and we had the full session. It was an interesting time. Some agreed with me. Others were bitterly opposed. It would be interesting to see the reaction if the speech were being made now. Great changes have occurred. The position I advocated is much more widely accepted in these days.

January 31, I went to Kentucky to Murray State College, for meetings with the Murray Christian Fellowship. As I met with the students and answered their questions I was made to appreciate the fact that the fellowship was not limited to those who were of our persuasion. It was open to all who were seeking the answer to the great question of life itself. I met many who had grown up in various religious backgrounds. They were being ministered to according to their needs. The student rebellion was grinding to a halt but there was no adequate substitute for it. Fortunately, those who attended the Bible studies of the fellowship were being pointed to Jesus, and to march for him was the real way to go.

Before I returned home I was scheduled to speak at the Christian Church in Brookport, Illinois. The town was a microcosm of the divisions of the restoration movement. Although it was but a very small Ohio River town, at one time it had three congregations, all meeting within a few blocks of one another. The hostilities and bitterness were bequeathed from one generation to another and the feud perpetuated. The situation is somewhat alleviated now, although there are often internal troubles which beset the groups. I have often wondered what would happen in such a place if there were just one person who ignored all of the divisions and simply recognized everyone who loved Jesus as his brother. This is the way Paul did at Corinth.

The month of February proved to be very busy for me. I spoke for the North Central Regional Camp Conference at Lincoln, Illinois, and went from there to Jacksonville, Florida. I was in the home of Tillman and Ellen Cavert. It was Ellen's father who gave the original money to build Florida Christian College. They feel very strongly that it was diverted from its original course, and they were "sold down the river." If the truth ever becomes apparent it will look bad for the administration. While I was in Jacksonville, some sixty brothers and sisters gathered in the Cavert home where I spoke to them on fellowship.

I went next to Patoka, Illinois, where I addressed a full house on the subject of the Holy Spirit. I addressed the Area Men's Fellowship at Gillespie, Illinois, in one of the great coal mining areas of the state, and concluded the month at Columbus, Illinois, where I spoke on "The Four Dimensional Life." For four nights I emphasized that if Christ dwells in your heart by faith, and you are rooted and grounded in love, "you may have power to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth, and length and height and depth, and to experience the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge." If you have never known this it may be indicative that you are not one of the saints.

Early in March I went to the Family Life Conference at French Lick, Indiana. Other speakers were Dr. Robert Burns and Dr. Charles Shedd. Dr. Burns was at his inimitable best and the more than 400 persons who had enrolled thoroughly enjoyed him. Dr. Shedd had recently authored the book "The Fat is in Your Head." He had formerly weighed 330 pounds, but now was down to 165, which was just half of his previous avoirdupois. He said he had "shed one Charlie."

In his introduction he told us how he was motivated to write the book. In his younger days he always had to clean up his plate. It was an unpardonable sin to leave any food on it. You always had to eat what you took out even if it made you gag. His mother hovered over him with the threat, "Clean up your plate or you will get no supper." When he got married and his children came along he could not treat them so cruelly. Still he had the neurotic aversion to food left on the plate. So he would take what the children had left, rake it out on his own plate, and eat it. This continued until one day his youngest son looked at his mother and said, "Mama, if we did not have papa we would have to keep a pig, wouldn't we?" On such casual observations hang the writing of many books. It does not take much to trigger a real writer into starting.

The Sixth Annual Missionary Reunion of Mexico was to be held south of Cuernavaca, in Morelos, Mexico. I was invited to address it each evening for three days. It was a fascinating experience for a "gringo" like myself. We stayed in an old, old inn, and the meetings were held in a large room. In the daytime we met in a group under the beautiful trees on the grounds which were fenced in. The furniture was heavy and ponderous, all of it hand-carved by artisans of the past. The water was turned on four hours per day. If you wanted a bath you had to be there. Drinking water was obtainable from huge jugs in the hall.

The waiters spoke only Spanish and I never was quite sure what I would get when I ordered. This resulted in some frantic gestures and waving of the hands. One thing I could admire was their ability to make bread. Each morning there were six to eight different kinds of delicious fresh rolls on the table for breakfast. I could have made a meal of them alone. One day some of the missionaries took me into the native section of Cuernavaca to an ice cream parlor run by a man and his wife. The ice cream was made in flavors I had never seen before – fresh corn, prunes, avocado, mango, and a host of other things too numerous to mention. I got a double dip cone, one dip being guava, and the other banana. It was *delicioso!*

It was interesting to hear some of the problems encountered by missionaries, especially by those who had gone to remote jungle villages, or penetrated into mountainous regions off the beaten track. It was nothing to have chickens scratching around and clucking in the buildings used for meetings, or to find a dog taking a siesta under the Lord's Table. The improvising of various things for enhancement of teaching taxed even the most fertile and inventive minds. I learned a lot about problems on the mission field. I came to appreciate the various moral standards which had developed through the ages. But I still came away with the idea that the chief problems were one's fellow missionaries. If one could learn to put up with them he generally had no trouble with the natives. It was interesting to see the "gung ho" American spirit come up against the "Mañana" attitude of the people. The latter eventually won!

I went directly from the exotic influence of our sister country to the south to my own native town, Flat River, Missouri. It had made great changes but had not yet developed into an asphalt jungle. It was near here I was born. Here I was christened in the Lutheran Church. It was a mere formality because I never remember going back. Here I grew up in childish simplicity. Here I married Nell when I was twenty. It was good to be back home again, although the rough, rude mining settlement had grown up into a more cultural city.

The boom began just eighteen years before I was born with the sinking of a shaft that uncovered incredibly rich veins of lead ore. The place was tough, the rough and tumble life of the miners centered about the Blue Goose, the Black Bear, the Klondike and Moonlight saloons. When I was a youngster someone was always being killed in a drunken brawl. It was a real pleasure to return and I felt humbled by it all. I was thankful to see the sophistication that had replaced the early days. I spoke at the Lions Club, the Kiwanis Club, to the Rotary and Optimist Clubs. In every instance I held out the hope that is ours in Christ Jesus. When there was time I answered questions. Many of them were pertinent and penetrating.

Soon thereafter I began a tour of western Texas and eastern New Mexico. My real purpose was to expose myself to some of my friends who had never met me, and to meet as many of those who opposed me as possible. I wanted to be vulnerable. I believed in what I was saying. I had confidence in what I was trying to do. Of course, I could not generally speak in church buildings as the sectarian spirit forbade that. In the divided condition of God's family I purposely opted for neutral locations since this would make it possible for all to attend regardless of conscience. I found out that generally the ones who fought my coming most desperately were the preachers. I am convinced that our brethren would have settled their differences years ago had it not been for the fact that they were kept apart by professionals.

At Borger, Texas, I was a guest of David Warren. A group of us met for dinner in an uptown restaurant and talked as fast as possible since time was short. We then adjourned to the lovely home of the Warrens to which people came from all over. The spacious living-room was crowded. We continued our talk until almost midnight. That night I went home with the Hutsons, to Friona, Texas. I spent the next day in the hospitable home of the senior Hutsons but we were blessed by the coming of their son Leland, and his family, to have luncheon and to spend the day with us. That evening we met in the Hospitality Room at the local bank. It was filled to capacity. I spoke about my growing concept of the fellowship for the whole family of God. It was generally well received. The big thing was to get someone to implement it.

## **SPECTERS FROM THE PAST AT LEXINGTON**

In my last installment I was in Friona, Texas. It is one of the great cattle feeding places in the United States. We visited one of the feeding pens. There were thousands of cattle. Everything was mechanized. The feed was mixed with supplements in a towering silo and fed by augers into the troughs. All the cattle did was to come and eat. It was almost like the church in a lot of places. The herd had nothing to do with selection. They had to take what was supplied. It was put into the trough and they could not question it. They must either eat it or sleep through it.

I went next to Portales, New Mexico, where I was a guest in the home of Frank Poyner, a brother with whom I had corresponded, and whom I had come to love. Our meeting was held in the Conference Room at the City Library. It was my privilege to have a number of young people from the New Mexico State College with us. A goodly number of them had recently left the large Church of Christ in the city and had started to meet to themselves. They had done so because they thought it was essential to protect their freedom from prejudice.

It all started over a Bible study held on campus. The young people were baptizing a number of other students. They obtained permission to use the baptistry at the church building. There was some objection to the dress of some of them. They wore jeans. They allowed their hair to grow a little longer than the people were accustomed to. They ignored the pews and sat down on the steps to the pulpit and on the floor surrounding the baptistry. They sang choruses. When one was baptized they lifted up their hands to God and praised Him. They hugged the person while he was still dripping wet. The deacon who was taking care of the building and unlocking the door became infuriated. He declared, "Not only did they not sit on the comfortable pews we had provided, but they sat there and sang songs that were not even in our books." So they left and began meeting where they were cemented together and not concretized.

At Lubbock our meeting was held in the Student Center at Texas Tech. It was preceded by a small gathering in the home of Dr. Thomas Langford, dean of the university, and a real man of God. A number of friends dropped in to talk about the progress of reformation. They were overjoyed with what was happening. The meeting at the center brought together a goodly number of readers of *Mission Messenger* in the area, some of them secretly "for fear of the Pharisees." There were also students present from Lubbock Christian College as well as from the local school of preaching. It was quite obvious I was saying some things they did not hear daily. I was "bringing certain strange things to their ears."

The question period was particularly penetrating. One young man asked if I were not afraid that I might be advocating heresy. I replied that I was even more afraid that he would confuse orthodoxy with heresy, and pointed out that it was Erasmus who said, "By identifying the new learning with heresy, you make orthodoxy synonymous with ignorance." I then mentioned that every reformer in history had been branded a heretic by the establishment. Luther, Huss, Calvin, Wesley and even Alexander Campbell. If I were a heretic I was in good company. All of these were hounded and harassed, driven out and persecuted during their lifetimes, and it was only after they had been dead a hundred years that they became heroes. Anyone who differs with us, who does not parrot the traditional ideas, is regarded as a heretic. We mistake walking in the old paths with wallowing in the old ruts. It is not wrong to dissent. It may be wrong not to do so. The status quo is not sacred. We have to be willing to be reckoned as oddballs rather than to play ball sometimes.

It came to me that the reason these diverse people could come and hear me was because I represented no party or sect. I belonged solely to Jesus. I was continually astounded by the fact that people could grow up in the same community and know nothing about their "other brethren." There were six different groups present at Lubbock. Each of them knew only a certain group of preachers. They read only their own papers. I introduced some who had met in business transactions but did not know each other as Christians. They could hear me with a clear conscience because I no longer represented any of them. I was simply a member of the fellowship of the unashamed. My only creed was Christ, my only law was love. I did not shrink from questions of anyone.

At Ruidoso, New Mexico, the following night, we met in the Luncheon Room at the Chaparral Motel. There were not many of us but it was a thrill to sit down and discuss "kingdom matters" with those who had vowed allegiance to the king. After it was all over we went to the lovely

home of Brother Teague and continued talking until it was quite late. I have often wondered about those whom I met. I have heard of none of them during the years that have elapsed. Are they still faithful to the principles about which we talked, or has the lure of the world deflected them from their goal?

After a series at Ferry Road Church of Christ in Waynesville, Ohio, I went to the banquet held in the Student Center ballroom, at the University of Kentucky, in Lexington. I never visit the city without feeling a sense of something bordering upon awe. The cause was established there by Barton Warren Stone in 1816, with 24 members. It was here, just sixteen years later that the Disciples and Christians united in a meeting which began on New Year's Day and continued four days. On the following Lord's Day they communed together and pledged to each other their cooperation.

It was in Lexington that the debate between Alexander Campbell and N.L. Rice was held. It began at 10 o'clock, Wednesday, November 15, 1843. It lasted fifteen days. Each disputant made 64 speeches. The published account filled a book of 912 pages of closely set type. Mr. Rice proved to be the most difficult opponent Mr. Campbell had met during his whole career.

In 1847 the church in Lexington was the largest in the state. It contained 382 members. It had been beset by trouble over various things from the beginning. From 1864 to 1870 instrumental music became the most bitterly discussed issue in the *Millennial Harbinger* and in *Lard's Quarterly*. Some of its greatest antagonists were in Kentucky. Among these were J.W. McGarvey, Moses E. Lard, and I.B. Grubbs. Brother McGarvey withdrew his membership from the Broadway Church when the instrument was installed. But he never made it a test of fellowship. He still returned to Broadway to preach when invited to do so. He professed a sincere love for all of the brethren there. He was big enough to distinguish between fellowship of God's children and participation in a practice which he could not condone.

When I visit Lexington it seems that I am in a microcosm of the entire movement. Specters from the past appear to materialize out of the gloom. Heroes of yesterday who "waxed valiant in fight and turned to flight the armies of the aliens" seem to hover about. But gone is the deep-seated spiritual dedication combined with intellectualism of the highest sort. What a privilege it would be to sit at the feet of Campbell, Stone and McGarvey. I spoke at the banquet on the topic "The Battle of the Pea Patch," drawn from II Samuel 23:11, 12.

I went next to Belmont Avenue congregation in Nashville. This was a unique and free congregation. Some had been excommunicated by Churches of Christ in the area because their opinions did not jibe with the establishment. Others had just grown tired and left of their own accord. They were searching for green pastures. They were tired of munching on dried hay. There were jeans-wearing, long-haired kids in the number, but there were also doctors, lawyers, professors and businessmen. All got along well. The only test of fellowship was your relation to Jesus. The service was alive unto and enlivened by the Spirit.

The congregation had a magnificent social consciousness. They supplied food, clothing and furniture to the needy on a daily basis. They had chosen to remain in the old building and it was crowded for every service. There were two meetings held on Wednesday night while I was



there. Both of them filled the place to capacity. A lot of students from David Lipscomb College came to hear me. They sat on the floor, on the steps of the pulpit and in the baptistry. Some of them stood patiently in the rear.

People drove long distances to be present. I met young people who were in Nashville, hoping to make good in country or bluegrass music. The service was so unstructured that anyone could come up on the platform, or stand where he was, and tell what Jesus meant to him. Don Finto was generally responsible for the meetings. He had been a teacher at David Lipscomb College but was let out in one of their purges. He was joined by several other professors who were guillotined and who helped to start Belmont. It was a church whose time had come.

Actually the church had been there for many years. The father of Norvel Young was one of the elders. But the church was fading into the background as the community changed. It was dying rapidly. Only a handful of people were attending. Most of them were afraid to return at night. Drugs and prostitution were all around them in the streets. Stealing and vandalism took their toll. And then renewal set in. Drug users came back from a living death through Jesus. Young prostitutes found a haven of rest in Jesus. In an amazing fellowship which knew no second-class citizens of the kingdom people were baptized unto a living hope. Obviously there were risks. There are always risks where freedom is found and everything is not cut, dried and stacked beforehand. But it was a great thing to be a part of a congregation which had been resurrected from the dead.

It was while I was there that I met the father and mother of Pat Boone. They were gracious, kind and unassuming. We went out to eat together one night so they could tell me their story. They were greatly disturbed when they heard that Pat and Shirley had become wrapped up in the Holy Spirit. They prayed for them every night, asking God to bring them back. They had all been members of the Churches of Christ for years. One night the elder Brother Boone could not sleep, so in the middle of the night he slipped out to read his Bible and pray. While he was praying he became convinced of the presence of the Holy Spirit. He awakened his wife and told her that Pat was right. She arose and prayed and said she experienced the nearness of the Spirit. They were so overjoyed at the discovery that they made the mistake of telling about it next Sunday. Sister Boone was divested of her class which she taught and they were both excommunicated. They were still attending there, however, as they loved those who had treated them so unfairly.

Right after I left Nashville I went for a Talkathon to Missouri University. It lasted about nine hours in all. I began at 1:30 p.m. and closed at 10:30 p.m. Students could come and go as classes or work demanded. The room was always full and some were standing in the hall ready to take the place of those who had to vacate. There was a fifteen minute rest period every two hours. In each segment I spoke for 30 minutes and then answered questions for the remainder of the time. Some of the questions were very interesting. They were the kind you would expect from students who were part of a great university under the domination of humanistic thinking.

We discussed the relativity of truth and I suggested that in its final analysis truth was a person and not a proposition. Jesus declared that he was the way, the truth and the life. Before a proposition can be stated it has to exist first as a concept in a logical mind. I postulated that all truth had to exist in a divine mind. It was a great session.

## TALKING PLAINLY WITH EACH OTHER

The eighth annual unity forum was held July 5-7, 1973, at Tulsa, Oklahoma. Local disciples had worked diligently in promoting it. Brethren were in attendance from 15 states and Canada. The interest was superb. Perry Epler Gresham, former president of Bethany College, and an authority on Alexander Campbell, spoke the same night as I did. His style was inimitable. Although he was on the board of huge corporations, his speech was given in a kind of down-home, "cracker barrel style" which made him appear as a country philosopher.

I told a simple story about an early incident in my life, in which I reacted adversely against my brother because I became unsettled as to whose child I really was. It was a homely little piece which hardly deserved a hearing in such august circumstances. Yet it seemed to impress the audience in a manner which some of my more profound reasoning failed to do. I have wondered a lot of times since that night, if it might not be the case that we are divided purely because of our lack of ability to talk plainly and simply. Only recently I had a letter from a college professor who said he was searching one night for something he could use to illustrate what fellowship was all about. He came across the article in *Mission*, and read it to his class. I have never been able to write another article of that kind, yet I wrote that one in one sitting. Apparently it dipped the well of communications dry.

I was impressed with the fact that few of the local members of the churches of Christ attended. I was told that they were warned not to come. Most of those who were present were "freedom fighters" who had struggled with the dogmatism and sterile orthodoxy of the institution and had wrenched themselves free. It was not yet time for people in general to get their eyes opened to the fact that they were being held as hostages to a System. That would come later. A goodly number of those who did come were self-styled "charismatics." I deplored the brand as a separatist title. It always appeared to me as being divisive in its very nature. Everyone who has a gift from God is charismatic, and that includes all. Among those who came was Ben Franklin, who was later to hold a debate with Guy N. Woods. The debate did but little good. It settled nothing. But the unity group at Tulsa was significant in that it brought together a group of saints who might not otherwise have met. They learned to listen to one another despite wide divergencies in their views.

Later, I went to the Lake Springfield Christian Assembly at Springfield, Illinois, to address a group of men. The camp was beautifully situated commanding a view of part of the lake. The brethren used it as a youth camp during the summer, and when September came, they availed themselves of the opportunity of getting together to talk over their problems and recount their victories. Generally they sought for speakers of reputation who could share with them new insights into the Word. I think that such gatherings are reminiscent of the pioneer culture of which we partook in our early years. People on the frontier felt an urge to come together to reinforce the faith, and to listen to a rehearsal of "those things most surely believed among us." It is a great loss that it becomes ever more difficult to get people to come to such meetings.

From there I went down to Cabool, Missouri in the Ozarks. It was an interesting place. It was a center of small farms from which came some of the 60,000 pounds of poultry per month, and the hundreds of cases of eggs shipped out every week. The Ozarks farmer does not try to conquer

the wilderness. Instead, he makes friends with it. He is generally concerned with small plots of it that he can use for pasture and orchard. But chickens and eggs bring in the regular income. As the farmers say, "You can't rightly tell about fruit. Frost or blight is apt to get it. But not a hen. A hen works right on, rain or shine." Besides, the women can generally look after the chickens.

The congregation, like so many others in small areas, had been through some traumatic experiences. I sought to help them as much as I could. I was fortunate to have with me a dear brother and sister from Astoria, Illinois, Mr. and Mrs. Evan Price. Those who wished to do so gathered at a little restaurant daily and we talked and ate together, speaking quietly and meditatively together of our relationship to God through His marvelous grace.

I went next to Columbus, Indiana, where there are six thousand people who claim allegiance to Christ in the restoration movement. They are divided into several large congregations. I went to New Hope, which is just a short distance outside the city. The congregation dates way back in history. Immediately behind the meeting-house is an old cemetery, the markers of which indicate burials of many decades past. Daily I strolled through this hallowed spot where "the rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep." The congregation is ably served by my good brother, Mat Malott. It was once primarily a gathering-place of rural people. Now it is growing in membership and is composed of many from the city as well as from nearby towns.

At Fairborn, Ohio a pleasant surprise awaited. The crowds were so large as to necessitate extra chairs in the aisles at night. The day sessions, which were open forums, brought in more than sixty persons. The questions were of special interest. The answers were eagerly received. It was in these daytime sessions that the greatest good was accomplished. One thing which impressed me was the similarity of the questions. Whether it was in a Christian Church or Church of Christ, whether in the city or in a rural setting, the same things troubled the people.

November 5, I went to Terre Haute, Indiana, at the invitation of the campus ministry, to deliver three addresses in a hall on the campus of the State University. It was a delightful occasion. I met with the Christian students early in the morning for prayer and Bible Study before the sun was up. An excellent audience was present each night, with brethren coming from far and near to be a part of the encounter. It was during this time I learned a great deal about Elton Trueblood and the "Yokefellow Movement" which he began. I was not too far from Richmond, Indiana. Trueblood credits C.S. Lewis with his conversion from a liberal theologian to a Christ-centered believer. In his autobiography he writes, "C.S. Lewis reached me primarily because he turned the intellectual tables."

It was about this time that a new journalistic enterprise began. It was devoted primarily to reaching Disciples of Christ, Independent Christian Churches, and Churches of Christ. It had three consulting editors, one drawn from each segment. It was aptly and significantly titled "Fellowship." Several issues were printed and they contained some meaty articles. But it never really got off the ground. I have often wondered why. I have come to the conclusion that it was because it represented the dream of a top echelon of men. No movement has ever marched which did not begin at the grass-roots level. A great many lesser, and much inferior, papers are being published in our day. And "Fellowship" seems to have been needed so much.

At Indiana University, Stanley McDaniel, who was a professor at College of the Redwoods in California, when we first met, made application to do his doctoral theme on "The Life and Preaching of W. Carl Ketcherside." Permission was granted and Stanley, who now teaches at Johnson Bible College, began collecting my materials. He did not neglect any source. The result is that he accumulated the largest body of my writings of anyone on earth. He listened to numerous tapes, besides reading every book and paper to which I had contributed. Finally, after several years he completed his thesis. I appreciate what he said, but I still wonder why the university agreed to allow it to be written about such an obscure personage.

I went next to address the annual banquet of the Eastern Lakeland Christian Campus Ministry at Charleston, Illinois. I felt while I was there that it was one of the most effective and best conducted of any such work I had seen. The students seemed to be gung-ho for Jesus. They were not Christians and students, but Christians who were students. There is a difference. The first think of their student life as separate from their Christian commitment; the second see it as merely a part of it. In my talk I sought to recapture for all their mission. They were "secret agents" for another kingdom. They were on enemy territory and in an alien land. They had been dropped behind the lines as commandos for Christ. They were on a search and rescue mission. They were members of the heavenly Central Intelligence Agency. Their allegiance was not to the school first but to their absent King. Someday He would return and rescue them from the asphalt jungle.

A short time before, the Humanist Society issued Humanist Manifesto Number Two. It was anything but complicated. It was a plain declaration of war against everything which I hold dear. It called for a freeing of the American mind from what it called the fear and dread of the supernatural. and predicted that by the year 2000, all forms of superstition and religion would pass from the scene. It was a calculated flinging down of the gauntlet in the face of those who believed that Jesus was the Son of God.

It was signed by a host of men and women who were regarded as the most erudite in our land. They were the instructors of thousands of our youth. Among them were a couple of professors at Indiana University. Recognizing the grave danger of raw humanism being dumped like raw sewage into the clear streams of thought, and realizing that it had already infiltrated our whole life structure, I welcomed the opportunity to appear on the campus of Indiana University at Bloomington, to discuss openly the implications of the manifesto.

I carefully studied the whole question until I was thoroughly conversant with its appeal to the modern scientific and technological mind. I became convinced that the inclination to place all things in the realm of relativity had laid the foundation of the theory in its modern form. So I sat down and worked out my presentation on a three-prong basis. (1) Where I agreed with humanism; (2) Where I disagreed with humanism; (3) My personal apology, in which I set forth the reasons for believing that the faith for which I make my plea is far superior to humanism. I gave a five point breakdown in developing the last. It was a privilege to be on a modern campus and to be brought into contact with some of the brilliant minds to be found there. Yet it was tragic to see how far the school had drifted since the days when David Starr Jordan was president of the institution.

I closed the year with the brethren at Washington, Illinois. They had invited me to come and speak on the theme, "Meeting Problems of Today's Youth." It was one of my favorite subjects and I was quick to accept the invitation. Reconstructing the year in my memory, it appeared to be one in which God had been rich in His abundant mercies. I had traveled all over the United States without undue incident. I had engaged in all kinds of encounters and had come out relatively unscathed. It was a great feeling to be used of God in so many different ways and for so many things. I faced the coming year with confidence in the divine mercy and compassion.

As 1834 drew to a close, Alexander Campbell wrote in *Millennial Harbinger*, "We expect and hope to travel more than usual during the ensuing year, the Lord willing. On deciding the rival claims of numerous sections, we incline not to be arbitrary, and have nearly adopted this resolution – to be governed by the number of readers we have in various places, our experience hitherto proving that we can be most useful in those regions, because there is something to work upon in the minds of such communities." That said it for me also.

## **JUNGLE FELLOWSHIP**

With the beginning of 1974 I knew that we had but two more years to edit the paper. We had resolved to discontinue *Mission Messenger* with the December issue of 1975. It had been a part of our lives for thirty-seven years. And it would be difficult to bid it farewell. There was never a time in all of those years that we were not conscious of it. We ate with the paper during the day and slept with it at night. We calculated time from one issue until the coming of the next.

For a long time I had been wanting to do a series of articles on pure speech. I was motivated in the desire by a statement of Alexander Campbell in his "Synopsis of Reformation." I could see that this was of prime importance. Accordingly, I commenced to write on the general theme. I started with a quotation from Joseph Addison in the British journal called *The Spectator*, which was born on March 1, 1711. I closed with the statement, "I want to be with all who are saved, and I expect to be. I care not one thing for any partisan flag over an exclusivistic rampart. My hope is in Christ Jesus. I began in the Spirit and I have no intention of trying to be made perfect in the flesh." The writings for 1974 were all gathered into a book called "Pure Speech."

It was our custom to bind about 2250 of the books each year. They have long since been sold, and seem to be even more popular now that they are out of print. It is my hope that they may continue to bear the message when I leave for worlds unknown.

My first trip in 1974 was one of great interest to me. For a number of years, missionaries from Independent Christian Churches had labored in Brazil. They had planted congregations in Brasilia, and at various other points throughout that great land. In more recent times Churches of Christ began to send in workers who tended to congregate in Sao Paulo, and to work out from there. Each of these with a common restoration heritage met for a combined conference. One year one group brought in a speaker, the following year the other group had the privilege of doing so. For several years the Christian Church brethren had been asking for the privilege of having me come. Each time they were told not to do so. I was dangerous; it was not time to have me yet. My thinking was too advanced to risk having me.

Finally, the brethren decided they were going to have me whether it was approved or not. The others said that if I came they were going to ask someone to come also. They selected Reuel Lemmons, editor of the *Firm Foundation*. We had never really been together, although both of us knew we should meet if possible. We had tried to do so once or twice without success. Brother Lemmons had been provoked into making an attack upon my position in his paper. I replied and three articles from each of us had appeared in both journals. He had written one entitled "Blind in One Eye," and I had also answered it. I had tried several times to get articles published in the *Firm Foundation*. Each time they were returned with a curt note saying that I was not welcome to write.

Realizing the influence of this fellow-editor I was anxious to meet him and to be with him. The circumstances were ideal. The camp, which had been rented from the Presbyterians, was carved out of the jungle. There was a kitchen and dining room at one end, and a circle of cabins, with a large assembly-hall at the other end. Brother Lemmons and I stayed in a very small unit together. In our bedroom we could reach out and touch each other from the bunks.

I learned a great deal about my companion while we were together. I am not sure he was as comfortable with the brethren from the Christian Churches as I was. But he was formally polite to all and gave no offense. He was brought there to do a job, and he did it, and that was it. I found him to be a mellifluous orator of the old school. Some of his presentations rivaled the best of William Jennings Bryan, "the golden voice of the Platte." This was especially true of the early morning devotionals in which we took turns speaking on one of the psalms. Since our visit I have had a longing to talk at length with Brother Lemmons about the community of saints in which we both share. There is no justifiable reason for us being apart. Certainly there is none for us appearing as enemies.

It would require too much space for me to describe all that took place in the jungle vastness, and I shall desist. It became apparent to me that the men who work there must find a solution to their problems or perpetuate among humble people a division which grew up on the frontiers of America. It is incredible that those who believe in the same Jesus, who worship the same God, who read the same Bible and sing the same songs, should project an image of alien churches upon the native minds. I worked with the young people, boys and girls who were children of the missionaries. Some of them came from remote Indian villages in the jungles of the Amazon. They were schooled by their mothers. We had a great time together.

I flew back to Saint Louis from Rio de Janeiro, in a frightful blizzard. We were bandied back and forth between airports where we were not permitted to land. We were flown to Dulles and not permitted to leave the plane. Finally we were cleared for landing at Kennedy in New York. I finally arrived in Saint Louis, having been for almost twenty-four hours without food. The next morning Nell suffered a blackout and fell with a thud in the bathroom. When I reached her I thought she was dying, from the look in her eyes. I called an ambulance and she was in the emergency room all day. They never determined the cause of the blackout, but she was in frightful pain for the ten days she stayed in the hospital, and had to be cared for when she returned home. I was glad that the providence of God brought me home when I was most needed.

It was about a month later I was scheduled to speak three times and conduct a workshop at the Christian Writers' Clinic, held at Holiday Inn North, in Cincinnati. It was a rich experience for me. The clinic was conducted by Standard Publishing. The editors of their various publications were all present, giving advice and sharing experiences with budding journalists. I have since met people all over the United States who have told me they met me there. They have expressed themselves as being appreciative of the encouragement they received. Some of them have since blossomed into authors and have brought me copies of their books. I never had the opportunity to attend such a school as I was growing up. I simply started writing down the thoughts which came to me in my moments of meditation. I never thought I would be an editor this long.

On March 7-9 I was in Kingsport, Tennessee. I stayed in the congenial home of Max E. Smith. We had a full schedule of meetings. I spoke three nights, conducted forums each morning, spoke at two luncheons, delivered three radio addresses and made two thirty minute television appearances. It was a blessing to me to be able to enjoy the hospitality of such a gracious home and the fellowship of such a fine band of disciples as I found there. I have often thought about how the sectarian spirit cheated me in not allowing me to know so many whom God loved and whom I also found it easy to love.

I was scheduled to be in Xenia, Ohio, April 3-5, and as I was flying into an airport some twenty miles away, I noticed the pilot was having a difficult time landing the plane. We were being buffeted by heavy winds. The sky outside was almost as black as night. When we got to the home of Bro. and Sister Jones where I was to stay, we learned that Xenia had experienced a frightful tornado and many homes, schools and churches had been wiped out. We hurried to the meetinghouse to find it had been turned into a rescue station. People came straggling in, dripping from the torrential rain which had followed the storm.

Some of the members had lost their homes. Included among them was Brother Isaac Flora, the minister. Many of those who came to the church building still had loved ones missing, in some cases buried in the debris. The women warmed up the chili which had been prepared for our lunch the next day. Coffee was made and thankfully received. Everyone had a tale to tell about how the storm swept in leaving devastation in its path. There were those who could not talk. The uncertainty numbed them. The tornado was one of scores which had harassed the country on that frightful day. Our meeting was cancelled and the city began the monumental task of cleaning away the rubble in preparation for rebuilding. It was a tragic thing.

I went next to Los Angeles to make a special film with the Vernon Brothers. It was made at Warner Studios. They had been making "Homestead, U.S.A." which featured their birthplace and home in the Ozarks. It was a successful presentation. The four brothers formed a real quartet. All of them had married wives who were singers and who had a quartet of their own. Then the children followed in the footsteps of the parents, and they could form almost any kind of combination of voices. They did an excellent job of sending forth the message on wings of song. Best of all, they did not strive to make it by their distinctiveness. They just got up and sang their heads off, and that was distinctive enough in our day. Besides that, all four of the boys were preachers and they could exhort and encourage their listeners to be faithful.

You will recall that it was the Vernon Brothers who led singing for me and did special numbers years before, when I was at Lakewood, California where Ernest Beam was serving when he died. I was there at the invitation of his successor, the inimitable William Jessup, who will never receive enough honor in this world to repay his noble efforts in behalf of the unity of the believers. It was great to be reunited with the brothers again. We used the old Roy Rogers set and present on the program with us was Dale Evans (Rogers), his wife. I was able to talk with her frequently during the long day of filming and I came to admire her a great deal. She told me of their desire to have children and how they had adopted so many of all races.

The night before I had spoken at Westchester to a full house. It was served by one of my favorite people on earth, Harold Thomas. He succeeded Bill Banowsky, who had resigned to become president of Pepperdine University. Harold had been a real pioneer, a trailblazer in the northeast, especially in Maine. He and his good wife were great souls, addicted to the kingdom, willing to make themselves vulnerable for the sake of Jesus. In the same congregation was Harry Robert Fox, Sr., who, with his family had spent so many years in Japan, beloved by the native peoples. I already knew Harry Robert, Jr., and Logan, both of whom were possessed of a fabulous knowledge of the Word. It was a rare privilege to see their revered father.

On May 9, I delivered the baccalaureate address for the graduating class at Cincinnati Bible Seminary, and the next week was in a meeting at Amarillo, Texas. It was my first time to actually conduct a series for brethren who had always opposed the Sunday School. Some of the brethren were a little skeptical of my coming. The preacher was David Sullins, a unique and precious brother. I stayed in his home. Dave had been in Germany during the war, charged with the repair of the motor vehicles for a contingent of motorized cavalry stationed near Berchtesgaden, the mountain retreat of Adolf Hitler, about ten miles from Salzburg. He had fallen in love with an attractive German girl and they married. It was fun attempting to “sprechen sie Deutsch” with her, especially since I only remembered from my childhood, the little warning taught all children:

“Messer, glauber, schare, und licht,  
Ist for kleine kinder nicht.”

But we had a great meeting and talked about what God expected of all of us in this age. I went back once again for another meeting and found the brethren able to work across the lines with those who did not agree with them.

## **PEOPLE AND PLACES**

One of the outstanding gatherings of men in the United States is the Cavalier Men’s Retreat in Virginia. I have now spoken there three times. When I went in 1974 it was held at Oak Hill Christian Assembly grounds, just outside of Richmond. Now it meets some seventy miles away, near the little village of Yale. There were 460 men present the first time I was there. Now it consistently attracts more than 500. Campers are parked all over the hillside and tents pitched throughout the pines. It is a strictly “come as you are event” and no one dresses up for it. The music is under the direction of “The Gospel Lads,” who direct audience participation as well as



render specials. Those who attend go back home refreshed in spirit, and ready to try and remove mountains for the Master. It is truly an inspirational something.

I flew next to Saskatoon, where brethren met me and took me way south to Macrorie. Here it is that a kind of wilderness camp has been carved out by the brethren. Room has been made in a deep valley for the pitching of tents and the parking of camping vehicles. A tractor stands by to snake the cars out in case of rain. Brethren come from all over Canada and part of the United States. All eat breakfast together. At noon camp stoves and campfires are going all over the place as every family prepares for itself. There are meetings in the morning and evening, the latter generally around a fire which is needed occasionally when the sun goes down. The pace of life is slow and relaxing with the afternoon given over to games in which anyone may feel free to participate.

During the light refreshment period at night, choruses are sung over the dying embers. The young people are exceptionally good singers, and the wooded hills resound to the sound of their voices. Cecil Bailey, from Winnipeg, Manitoba, and Harold Fox, from Malta, Montana, were the other two speakers. I was endeared to them by their seriousness of purpose and their love for the Word of God. I spoke analytically on the Ephesian Letter. It was hard to bid each other goodbye when the time of separation arrived.

I had to hurry back to the states in order to get to the School of the Ministry, an annual feature conducted at Milligan College in Tennessee. Milligan is a famous school because of its origin and its setting. It is one of the loveliest places in the world. I joined Knofel Staton, Mildred Phillips and Olin Hays on the program. The entire Vernon family was present and regularly provided us with superb music. I came to believe that Knofel Staton was one of the most capable men in the restoration movement in our day. Young and vigorous, he was also filled with knowledge. He talked about marriage and I thought I had never heard another series to equal it. Sister Phillips was excellent in her presentation of personalities she had known in the restoration movement. She is the daughter of the late P.H. Welshimer of Canton, Ohio, whose name has already become legendary. Brother Hays was also in his usual excellent form. It provided a good time for all.

It was about this time I learned that in England, Carlton Melling, who had been gradually losing his sight, resigned as editor of the *Scripture Standard*. He was succeeded by the efficient James Gardiner of Edinburgh. The paper was once under the editorship of Walter Crosthwaite, so during my lifetime had been blessed by three dedicated men, capable and scholarly. It was good to realize that it had been entrusted to good hands.

The war had made a greater impact upon the British brethren than they had at first realized. Those who lived in Scotland, England and Wales, were all pacifists. During my two trips among them I found only two men who believed it was right for a Christian to bear arms in defense of his country. During World War I they had suffered indescribable physical torture because of their conscience on the matter. They had been thrown into prison and starved on bread and water. Some of them always bore the marks of their suffering.

But World War II brought among them a different breed, men from the United States, some of them in uniform, some of them conscientious objectors, but who tried never to allow anything to interfere with their devotion to the Lord. These men, and some of their contemporaries, went back to Europe after the hostilities had ceased, taking with them American ideas and methods of evangelism. In Italy, Finland, Germany, France, the Netherlands, and even behind the Iron Curtain, as well as in England, they planted congregations of believers. Neither group was as tolerant of the other as they might have been. Challenges were issued to debate, and to all intents and purposes, a divided group of believers was the result. At present it appears that both sides continue in a kind of suspended animation, watching each other, talking about each other, but seldom talking to one another. A new paper has been started, and there has been a sad polarization.

September 13, 14 I went to the Men's Retreat at Round Lake Christian Assembly, in Ohio. There were 601 men registered for the occasion. Don DeWelt was the other speaker, and he did a masterful job. Many years ago, when we first began to try and bring some degree of understanding and tolerance into an area where hostility had always raged, Leroy Garrett and I met with Don and Seth Wilson at Nowata, Oklahoma, in an epoch-making forum which was conducted openly and fairly. My brother Paul presided over it. At the time I came to have a deep appreciation for the men whose position we opposed. We have grown closer together through the years.

Don has taught at Ozark Bible College for years. He has always been an advocate of intense evangelism coupled with nurture in the Word. He has published a whole series of books devoted to helping men understand and teach the Word of God. One of his most noted accomplishments was that of bringing back the entire set of Campbell's Harbinger. His latest feat has been the returning to print of the periodicals by Walter Scott, with "The Voice of the Golden Oracle" as the final volume. I consider it one of the greatest volumes I have ever read. Don's method of public presentation is unique. One of the blessings of it comes from his ability to carry on a conversation with himself. It was a great blessing to me to be associated with him. The men all loved him!

Four days later I went to Hanover, New Mexico. To get there, it was necessary to fly to Albuquerque, and take a small commuter plane which flew by way of Truth or Consequences. We landed at Silver City, which was founded in 1870 to mine the gold and silver ores in the foothills of the Mogollon Mountains. Although the supply of these precious metals is about exhausted, copper mining has displaced the work of digging them out. It is thriving. The little town of Hanover lies in sight of a copper mine. The handful of saints meeting there were precious in their faith. The sisters brought lunch and we ate together at noon and again at night after the meetings. The Mexican-flavored food was super. We lingered on in the company of each other, unwilling to break the magic spell of fellowship which engulfed us all in its embrace.

Al Botts, who had been successful in forging a career in the Far West, had returned to Silver City, where he was engaged in his trade, while preaching for the little band of saints. He was not caught in the sectarian noose at all, and extended the love of Christ to all who deserved it. I was refreshed greatly by the simplicity of life in this remote village which was literally "the end of the trail." Ghost towns and abandoned mining villages dot the mountains. Owls fly in and out of

deserted houses. Coyotes make their dens under the ruins of old taverns which once echoed to raucous laughter. But there is nothing ghostly about the fellowship of the saints. It is genuine.

The following month I went to Solsberry, Indiana, where James Root ministered. He had been a successful newspaper editor, but an inner gnawing had driven him to become a preacher of the Word. So he left the desk and went out “not knowing wither he went.” He was never able to divorce himself completely from his former vocation. One who has smelled printer’s ink never is. So he continued to report the news and do book reviews for the paper, but his work for Christ became very challenging and satisfying. Fortunately, he was not caught up in a lot of the political strivings which seem to be part of the religious establishment. So he and the little band of saints were making progress. This was evidenced in the capacity crowds which attended the meetings. The house was filled every night.

It was while I was there that I came to realize the urbanization of our culture and the words of Jacques Ellul struck me with full force. He said, “We are in the city even when we are in the country for today the country (and soon this will be true of the immense Asian steppe) is only an annex of the city.” Solsberry had once been a quiet Hoosier village. The old country store was still there. It stocked everything from horse collars to kerosene lamps. You could still buy an ice cream cone for a nickel. There was a bench behind the stove where “the spit and argue club used to meet.” But times had changed. The village was now the bedroom of the city. Every morning people arose from their sleep and headed for the city to work. Some of them were on split shifts. Times had changed and were still changing before our very eyes.

My next work was in Saint Louis, Michigan, where a congregation was thriving under the direction of Henry MacAdams. We had been together years before near South Bend, Indiana. It was good to see him again. He was loved by the people and respected in the community. I was pleased to see brethren from several wings of the non-instrument group come. Some of them were ill at ease at first, walking gingerly as if treading upon forbidden ground. But they were soon listening quite calmly and were resigned to the fact of where they were.

I went next to Beaverton, Oregon. Donald S. Cox was the minister, and I had the great privilege of staying in his wonderful home. Don is man intent upon following God’s leading as he understands it. He has a tremendous grasp of the sacred scriptures and a sense of the relevance of the good news to our present age. He is an excellent administrator, but seeks to lead the flock gently home. It was a tremendous blessing to be associated with him.

On August 9, Richard M. Nixon became the first president of these United States to resign from office. The day before he had made his farewell address to the nation admitting only to poor judgment. I had defended him until a few days before. When I became convinced that he was no longer speaking the truth I could not speak up for him. I was greatly disappointed. It seems incredible that a man who had held religious services in the White House could deceive the people of our land. But I was glad when the Watergate ordeal was over and Gerald Ford took office. I think he made a grave error in political judgment when, on September 8, he announced that he had unconditionally pardoned his predecessor for all crimes against the United States he “has committed or may have committed.” I do not think the public was ready for this and I do not think his reasons for doing it were all that logical.

It was December 19 before both Houses of Congress gave a majority vote of approval to Nelson Rockefeller as vice president. This came only after a lengthy and full investigation of the sources and use of his colossal wealth. For the first time the country had an unelected President and Vice President. Meanwhile two famous show personalities died after years on radio and television. Ed Sullivan passed away in New York on October 13, and Jack Benny died in Beverly Hills, California on December 26. The first was 73, the second was 80 years of age.

Change and decay were upon every hand. The small and the great were all subject to it. But it was a blessing to be in one whom it could not affect. It was with faith in Him I began what was to be the final year of publication of the *Mission Messenger*.

## DIVERSE MINISTRIES

Before I get too far from it, I must tell you about the Thanksgiving Workshop of Evangelicals for Social Action, in which I was invited to participate as a delegate. It was held in the Downtown Y.M.C.A. in Chicago and lasted for three days. There were two men from the independent Christian Churches and one other from the Churches of Christ, Vic Hunter, who had been editor of *Mission* but had just resigned. It was interesting to listen to those who had been invited to speak in behalf of various groups, blacks, Orientals, and Hispanic. Some of the most fervent oratory was poured forth in behalf of a majority group in our society – women!

Among those who impressed me most were Paul Rees, Tong Gaw, and Carl F.H. Henry. The latter delivered one of the finest speeches I had ever heard. Leaving all theory aside he went straight to the Bible, and made it come alive. He seemed to be a master of the art of exposition. He developed the parable of the injured man on the road to Jericho in a truly new and exciting way. I liked the calm fashion in which he reacted to the questions and feedback which grew out of his speech. He was firm without being stubborn, practical without being pushy.

In looking back now upon the year I am describing, I find another thing which brought great satisfaction to Nell and me. I had made it a practice, when I sold enough books to pay for the printing, to start giving the remainder away to college students absolutely free. We even paid the cost of wrapping and postage. In seven years we gave away over 4200 volumes. The postage alone was a little more than fifteen hundred dollars. No one who wrote was turned down provided he personally requested the book. We refused to send them to young people at the request of preachers or parents. We did not want those who received them to feel obligated to read them. We did not propose to thrust anything down unwilling gullets. The books went to every continent. We mailed them to Cambridge, Oxford, the University of Leeds, and various other schools in England. We sent them to universities in Lebanon, Egypt, Taiwan, Amsterdam, Germany and South Africa. It was a real joy to get letters with odd-looking stamps and quaint handwriting asking for one of the books. It helped to show the circulation range of our little paper.

We were not even launched into the New Year when I received word of the death of longtime friends. M.S. Whiteman, one of the original students at the old Alabama Christian College, when G.A. Dunn was president, and the college was located at Berry, many years ago. We had become real friends. Harry Robert Fox, Sr., the gentle missionary who planted the cause so

firmly in Japan, and who finally retired to Inglewood, California. He wrote me such encouraging and stimulating letters, never complaining about his own increasing age and infirmities. Elizabeth Vermilion, of Riverside, California. I used to stay at their house in Springfield, Missouri, when I was known as “the boy preacher.” I played with her sons until they had to summon me into the house to get ready for evening meetings. John Hasty, the dyed-in-the-wool Republican of Nixa, Missouri. He lived to the age of 94, always kind and considerate of others. These all died in the faith, having seen the promises and embraced them afar off.

I returned to Westchester, California, the second week of the New Year. The meeting was kind of outstanding. Each night a different group sang. One night the whole Pepperdine University Chorus was there. Another night, the black choir from Figueroa Boulevard Church of Christ was present. A children’s group from a day school was present one night, and still another group from Westchester. These all harmonized a half hour before the preaching began. Every night there were people present from 36 to 53 congregations. It was like old home week. Harold Thomas presided over the meetings. Those of you who have heard him know what an outstanding job he does. I spoke one day for the Southern California Christian ministers, and another for the faculty meeting at Pepperdine.

I went from there to Macomb, Illinois, to visit the campus work which was being carried on under the versatile and capable direction of John Derry at Western Illinois University. This was the thing I liked to do best. It was a real thrill to engage in a dialogue session with young people of college age. Their questions were not stereotyped. They were new, fresh and vibrant. And they demanded answers to the problems of life. A good many students seemed jaded, tired and fed up with the daily routine. I noticed that those who had come to know Jesus did not seem to fit into the groove chopped out for the “average student.” Generally, they were a cut above, having added a spiritual dimension to life. And John was doing a good job in helping them to take full advantage of their new perspective.

I found a relatively small non-instrumental congregation in Macomb. Several of the members were connected with the college in the role of instructors. I sought to get them to begin clearing the ground for accomplishing some things together with brethren in the Christian Church. Their common historical roots could nourish them both. One thing I recommended was that they take turns holding their midweek Bible studies together. To me, it seemed a shame to have a mere handful of people studying in each place when they could combine for one night a week with no compromise of convictions.

The first of February found me at the World Convention of Missions at Grand Junction, Colorado. It was sponsored by Intermountain Christian College. Both the college and the convention were the fruition of the dream of Erskine Scates, the president of the school. Always an ardent advocate of sharing the Good News with the poverty-stricken people of the universe, he arranged the annual convention to inform and alert the inhabitants of the fertile Colorado Valley of the needs of the regions beyond. He has now departed to be with Jesus but he has left his sons to put wings to his words and feet to his prayers.

I had been in correspondence with Al B. Nelson, a long-time instructor at Texas A M University, at College Station, about coming to Bryan, Texas. We had agreed upon February 19-21 as the

date. The little Christian Church there had been beset by difficulties of one kind and another, and it was a pleasure to go and proclaim the good news of peace. I was agreeably surprised to see a goodly number of brethren from the Churches of Christ present, and although they tended not to agree upon some of my answers to certain questions, that was to be expected. I tried never to trim my response to please the querist, but to answer in such a manner that I would be willing to give an account if it was the last thing I ever said. I was also perfectly content to do as Martin Luther said, "Give men time." We did not arrive at our present state in one day, nor would we get out of our predicament by sunset.

I made my home with Brother and Sister Nelson, and it was a lovely and quiet place. As we breakfasted together I could look out on the rear courtyard where Sister Nelson kept the birds well supplied with an "avian smorgasbord." Some of them were so tame and had been regular customers for so long they would go up on the windowsill and watch us as we ate. Brother Nelson and I wasted no time. It was a literary blessing for me to be with one who knew Texas so well, and we talked about two realms – heaven and the Lone Star State – without stopping.

I went next to Lake Wales, Florida, for the Lake Aurora Christian Assembly meeting. Brethren reported later that it was the largest in attendance of any Men's Retreat they had ever held. I spoke three times and held open forums for questions twice. The questions were especially good. The men had gravitated to Florida from every part of the north. They brought with them the sectional bias of each area, and they wanted to know the truth about their views. I pointed out that every movement begun by men to unite the believers inevitably passes through the same sequence – charity, innovation, debate, division, sectarianism, and charity again. This starts the whole process over. We are just now emerging from our period of hibernation in the deep freeze of sectarianism. It is difficult for us to be charitable. We are afraid of going too far, of denying what our parents fought to achieve. But our parents were not perfect and a lot of things which they willed us are questionable. We need not fear being lost at sea as long as we cling to the Rock. Jesus Christ is Lord. If we steer by Him instead of by history we will be safe.

At Lexington, Ohio, I was scheduled to speak on three themes which were particularly relevant to our times: "Do Demons Inhabit the Bodies of Men Today?"; "Can the Planets Decide Our Fate?"; and "Resurrection and the Life Beyond." These were on everyone's mind because of "The Exorcist." The house was filled for every service and more than a hundred gathered for the question periods each day. It was a real blessing to be associated with such generous, warmhearted saints, and I thrilled to their companionship in the Lord Jesus.

I had been issued an invitation to speak at the International Convention of Christian Endeavor which was to be held at Portland. More than a thousand persons were in attendance. After I addressed the entire group they split into two equal sections and I met with about 500 of them to answer questions about the faith in Christ Jesus. There were a good many delegates from foreign countries. As a result of speaking for the gathering I have three times been invited to address the Easter Sunrise Service which they sponsor in one of the most beautiful parks in Saint Louis. It attracts some 2500 persons.

I went next to Bloomington, Minnesota where I spoke to the congregation of which Robert Cash is the able minister. Fortunately, it was far enough to the north that the party spirit did not

prevail with the same bitterness and intensity in which it is found farther to the south. As a result we had in attendance a great number of Church of Christ brethren. This always makes the question forums of particular interest. Both sides tend to ask about things of which the others have not the faintest inkling of knowledge. Because of their long years of isolation and insulation, both have accepted their own distinctives.

April 23-25 found me at the Colony Heights congregation in Fort Wayne, Indiana, with George L. Shull. It had been a long time since I had been in Fort Wayne. I had made three trips there previously. I found a town which had known the impact of change. The men who had been laboring there when I had originally visited were all gone. But Jesus was there alive and well. It was interesting to see how He could adapt to various circumstances and conditions, and influence them.

Less than two weeks later I was in Lansing, Michigan, for the State Christian Convention. This made it possible for me to meet a great many good friends I had made through the years. Michigan was always very interesting to me. It was in Detroit that Brother Malcolmson, an elder who had come over from Scotland to become wealthy in the coal importing business, had staked Henry Ford to his first \$50,000 when Ford was beginning to experiment with his motor vehicle. Ford used to attend services with him. Legend has it that he immersed Ford. They had no preacher for they were staunch believers in mutual ministry. Malcolmson spoke on the theme once at the Abilene Christian College lectureship. It was a masterful address.

In 1856, Isaac Errett left Warren, Ohio, with a group interested in the lumber business. He had to travel by stage from Detroit far back into the timber country. The business failed and Errett started planting churches instead of cutting down trees. He brought about 1000 new members into the body before leaving for Cleveland to edit the *Christian Standard*. Before he left he was under fire for a sign on his door which read "Rev." Isaac Errett. He was the first man in the Restoration Movement to adopt a title. I went to Michigan with a lot of history behind me. I tried to make a little while I was there.

## **THE WONDERS OF KOINONIA**

As the time drew near for the announced demise of *Mission Messenger*, we were besieged by offers to take it over and continue it. A good many of these offered to continue it in the manner to which it had been accustomed. I steadfastly refused all of these. It was my contention that no one else could edit the paper as I had done. Thirty-seven years of trial and error had stamped it with the impress of my personality and thought. It was a baby which Nell and I had conceived and to which we had given birth. It was a part of us. The transfer of it to another was as unthinkable as it would have been to give one of our grandchildren to someone else to raise.

When that did not work we kept getting offers to buy our mailing list. It was just under ten thousand and consisted of many who had already been introduced to buying books by mail. I stubbornly refused to sell it. It seemed to me it would be a complete betrayal of trust. Those who sent a subscription want the paper. They did not want to receive a fistful of mail every day advertising everything from neckties to cheese. When I announced that the mailing list was not

for sale, I was told that everyone else was doing it. Some even became a little huffy and sarcastic. But none of these things moved me and we quit with our list – and our honor – intact.

Of course, a great many who lamented our planned discontinuance wrote begging us to continue. This was especially true of those who had recently started to read the little journal and wanted to absorb more of my thinking. It was also the case with those who had been subscribers from the beginning. It had been like one of the family to them. I wrote them all, thanking them for their confidence, but telling them that I wanted the paper to die in my arms and lay it gently to rest. I did not want to see it go out with its back against the wall and the baying hounds moving in for the kill. A great many editors have continued too long and have done as much damage in their final few years as they did good in all of the previous decades of their writing.

Besides that, I had a lot of reading I wanted to do, and a lot of personal work that I wanted to perform. There were miles to go before I could sleep. There had always been certain inhibitions created by having to get out the paper. I felt that when I mailed out the last issue and laid down the pen it would give me a sense of freedom I had not known for years. But meanwhile I was in the final year and I made some serious and far-reaching suggestions to the brethren which would get us off the sectarian hook on which we had impaled ourselves. These were all bound together in the book “One in Christ.” It has long ago sold out.

In August of 1975, I went to the congregation at New Liberty, near Windsor, Illinois for their centennial. It was a beautiful old meetinghouse out in the country. I had held meetings there when I was just coming into manhood. I had baptized scores of people in the nearby Kakaskia River. It was only about three miles from Sand Creek, where Daniel Sommer had read his fateful Address and Declaration which started us down the long road of fighting and division. Only eternity will reveal the cost of the strife which began with that lethal dose. When I first went to the area I was not only a victim, but an actual practitioner of the sectarian spirit. Now I rejoiced to see the descendants of those who had sued each other in the courts sitting together in heavenly places.

Less than a week later I was back at a family camp in Mechanicsville, near Richmond, Virginia. I delivered four addresses which were entitled: “Can the Home Survive the Shock?”; “How to Keep From Coming Unglued”; “Who Is Raising Whom These Days?”; and “Darling, *You* Are Growing Old.” I ran the entire gamut of life experiences from the purpose of the home through marriage, parenthood and old age. It was easy to talk to those who were eager to listen and we rejoiced to be with each other in the Lord.

I went next to the Area Men’s Meeting in Chicago. It was great to be back with the men who worked in the city which Carl Sandburg called “Hog Butcher of the World, Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat.” I went over to visit the inner city work. It was doing good but I came away with a feeling that culturally we are ill-adapted as a people to penetrate the hard shell of the city. There are no doubt enough people in Chicago from a restoration movement background to make a congregation many times the size of any we have there. But they are hiding. They are running from themselves. Our rural, Southern-oriented, social culture and life-style has not equipped us to face the problems of a black, Oriental and Southern European conglomeration. It was great to



talk and visit and eat with men who had accepted Satan's dare. But it was obvious that we needed a radical reformation, one that cut to the bone.

My very next work was a totally different kind. I was with the Northland Christian Church in Danville, Illinois. The congregation had a lovely structure in which to meet, and was composed of good middle-class Americans. It was a distinct change from the drug-pushing, prostitute-ridden, gang-harassed Chicago streets. It made me feel the force of "East is east and West is west, and never the twain shall meet." I will confess that this has been a source of a lot of anxiety to me. I have always held that the blood of Jesus will cleanse anyone regardless of how filthy, dirty and scabby his sins may have made him. I have an almost unconquerable urge to button-hole people on the streets and tell them about the grace of God. I'm drawn by a deep inner compulsion, a sense of destiny, a real deep-down feeling that makes me want to go down highways and alleys and compel them to come in.

Next I went to Orrville, Ohio. If you do not know, this is the home of Smucker's – the jam people. Years ago the German family of Smucker began making apple butter on a small scale for sale to the neighbors. As time went on their fame spread and their business grew in Ohio like that of Walter Knott had in California. Now they produce thousands of tons of fruit, as well as making sorghum, honey and peanut butter. They have become "jam merchants to the world." Several of the members worked for them. The Smuckers had Anabaptist roots and this is evidenced in the town. It is a lovely and clean place, like German-oriented towns often are. Kenneth Baldwin ministered to a congregation of gracious and diversified folk.

The following week I was in Flora, Illinois to address the Southern Illinois Christian Convention. The town was named after the Roman goddess of flowers, whose festival, the Floralia, was inaugurated in Rome 250 years before Jesus was born. The meetings were held at First Christian Church which has in excess of 1250 members. I taught an afternoon workshop and spoke at night. The auditorium was filled to capacity.

I went next to Piqua, Ohio, which has a history reaching back before we gained our freedom from English domination. In 1749 a fort and trading post were established here. The town was incorporated as Washington in 1807, the same year Thomas Campbell left Ireland for America on the good ship Brutus. The name of the town was changed to Piqua in 1823. Dave Huddleston was working with the congregation while I was there with the brethren.

It was while I was there I met Dr. Marcus Miller. He had just written a book "Roots By the River." He sent me a copy. I devoured it. I read it with such avidity I could hardly put it down until I had read every word of it. The preface begins with these words: "This is a commentary and a history of the Tunkers or the Old German Baptist Brethren who settled in the upper Great Miami and Stillwater Valleys of Ohio. It attempts to reveal a little of the personalities and human nature of those who lived in these valleys, a little of the physical and a little of the spiritual sufferings which they encountered, and a little of the thinking that went into some of the courses which they chose to take."

The book details the divisions which beset the "old Brethren." Like ourselves they were caught up in the frightful tensions which tore at a movement that was far removed from the social

climate of ancient Judea, and like ourselves they had their “progressives” and “Faithful Brethren.” They had problems with protracted or revival meetings, with Sunday Schools and with Social Meetings. They resisted bitterly a “salaried or paid ministry which was believed to be against the apostolic order.” They had problems with the bicycle which was designated “a modern invention, popular in the world and creeping into the church.” In 1925 they wrestled with the radio, and later with television as “an influence for evil.” One of the biggest hassles was over the starting of Christian schools. Another was over the introduction of the automobile. Hours were spent in denouncing Ford and Chevrolet for leading us down a road with no ending. As I read this interesting volume, I could see our own movement on almost every page of this much older and more venerable attempt to “restore the primitive order.” I was deeply indebted to Dr. Miller who still wears the “plain clothes” including the coat with the standing collar.

Incidentally, the Dunkard Brethren, in 1911, reached a dress decision which has been binding ever since. It includes the following statement: “That the brethren wear their hair and beard in a plain and sanitary manner. That the mustache alone is forbidden. Parting the hair in the middle or combing it straight back is recommended for both brethren and sisters.” The Dunkard Brethren should not be confused with the Old Order German Baptist Brethren. They have a common origin, but there have arisen differences which have driven them apart. Does that sound familiar to you?

My next trip was to Meadville, Pennsylvania. I found the congregation meeting a couple of blocks from the campus of Allegheny College. The college was started in 1815 and chartered in 1817. It was loosely affiliated with the Methodist Church and was noted for its library of 140,000 volumes. Ida M. Tarbell, who was a native of Erie County, had written “A Life of Abraham Lincoln” in 1900. In preparing for it she amassed a tremendous collection of Lincolniana which she left to the school. I went to the campus and was walking across it when I heard my name called. I was surprised to see a man whom I knew. He had grown up in the Churches of Christ but had long since gone to the Disciples of Christ. He was head of a department at the school. We felt that it was providential that I just happened to be walking across the campus so we could meet.

There were several brethren from the non-instrumental congregations who attended the meetings. Some came from as far away as Youngstown, Ohio. The auditorium was filled each night and we had a glorious time. Nothing marred our kinship with one another and the fellowship was unabated. I stayed with Brother and Sister Hessler and it was truly “a home away from home.” After the meetings at night a group of brethren would go with us to the hospitable home, and we would talk until almost midnight.

I have thought a lot about the wonders of *koinonia*. As William Barclay says, it is such a rich word that no single English term can describe it. It literally means “to share a common life.” The New English Version so renders it every time it occurs. But the common life we share is that of the Spirit. It is not just putting up with one another, or enduring each other. It is at once so beautiful and thrilling that nothing else can ever take its place in the association of Christians. I think it was one of the grandest things that God ever did for us, the providing of a relationship that is so intimate and full it transcends our differences.

## MORMONS AND JEWS

Nell and I received a blow when we learned of the almost sudden death of Brother Melvin Burton at Escondido, California. We had known Melvin and Gladys most of their lives. They moved to Saint Louis shortly after we did and our families grew up together. Their son Curtis married our daughter Sue. Bro. Burton had served until retirement in the criminal investigation division of the Internal Revenue Service. He had helped to close the case against Tom Pendergast, the racketeering boss of Missouri, and had worked on the Al Capone case in Chicago. When he retired he was honored by the President of the United States as well as by many others in the political spectrum. There was never a breath of scandal against him.

In Oct., 1975, the Saint Louis Realtors' Association decided to have a prayer breakfast. It was to become an annual event if it was successful. They asked me to speak at it. A great deal depended upon the reaction. It was at 6:30 in the morning at a prominent hotel. Many of those who came had been "out on the town" the night before. A great many were smoking cigarettes as if their life depended on it, rather than the opposite. The president was a consecrated Christian gentleman. After breakfast he made a few remarks, led a prayer for God's guidance, and introduced me. I have never before felt the same nearness of the Spirit. I spoke about 18 minutes. After the first five the attention was riveted. At the close there was a standing ovation. I am glad to report that the prayer breakfast is a regular thing now.

I was invited to come next to the Kentucky State Teen Convention at Lexington. It was great to see the hundreds of youthful Christians gathering for the occasion. The singing was rousing, the spirit encouraging and the atmosphere was excellent. It gave me a great thrill to touch so many lives while they were still in the dewy freshness of young manhood and womanhood. The courage, faith and hope of such people is a tremendous source of strength to me.

I went from there to Canada to the Ontario Christian Seminary. The president was Alan Larue. I had first met him years ago at a little rural congregation in Ohio. He was always a man of vision and foresight. He had gone to Toronto and built the school up to its present rating. It was a brilliant move. Toronto, an Indian name meaning "a place of meeting," was already the second city in Canada, in point of population. It had just begun to expand. A great medical, museum and musical center, it was also the home of Toronto University, one of the great educational centers of our day. The city was small in number, but had an impact beyond its size. It was great to be able to talk with the students between sessions and to share in their plans and ambitions.

December 3-5 found me at Wickliffe, Ohio. Here I was permitted to be with Jack Ashworth, who previously labored with the Church of Christ, but who had been delivered from a lot of the sectarian hang-ups. Because of the freedom and openness of the congregation it was under suspicion by many others in the general Cleveland area. The very first morning six of the preachers came together to question me. Just as soon as I announced we were ready for queries from the audience they "hogged the show" and sought to dominate the proceedings. It was rather interesting. They followed the pattern I have seen so often. One would ask a leading question, and the other would have his hand in the air before I answered it. They laid down a barrage of questions but fortunately I had heard all of them before, many times.

One of the most interesting features about this kind of tactic which I have experienced so often is the reaction upon those who attend my meetings and who did not grow up in an exclusivistic Church of Christ atmosphere. They can hardly believe their ears. In most cases the questioners keep an eye on their watches and about five minutes before quitting time “they fold their tents like the Arabs, and as silently steal away.” When they leave, someone is almost certain to burst out with, “Who in the world are those men, and what do they represent?” Of course, these men cannot eat luncheon in the meetinghouse, so they never meet people informally and personally. They can only hit and run, so they appear cowardly to those who cannot understand either their purpose or their method of trying to attain it. The sectarian spirit makes cowards of men who ought to be brave.

Since Kirtland was quite close, I was eager to go over and see this place which Joseph Smith made quite famous. It was very near the home of Sidney Rigdon, who was a Baptist preacher at Mentor originally. He was an eloquent man who was led into what was called “the current reformation” by Alexander Campbell, after an all night talk on the front porch at Bethany. He became very close to Campbell, even traveling with him by horseback to Washington, Kentucky, to take notes on the debate with McCalla.

Rigdon was led into Mormonism by Parley P. Pratt, who with his brother Orson, was another defector from the Campbell movement. Rigdon had a profound effect upon the developing Mormon faith and is credited with a lot of the theology which became part of it. He expected to become its head, succeeding Smith, who was shot to death in the jail at Nauvoo, Illinois, by enraged citizens who resented his ambitious attitude and his taking of other wives. But he was shouldered aside by Brigham Young, and at the age of sixty returned a broken man to his boyhood home in Friendship, New York. Here he worked as a shingle-packer, disillusioned and upset, referring to himself as an “exile.”

The “saints” as they refer to themselves, built a “temple” in Kirtland. It is still maintained by the “Reorganized Church” of Independence, Missouri, one of the five branches into which the movement separated. The caretakers and guides try to make it appear that the blueprint was inspired and the Lord acted as foreman in its erection. It is evident that this is only part of the myth of which the whole false system has been constructed. It has been built into one of the most cleverly-contrived fabrications ever devised to fool and deceive an unsuspecting world.

On two consecutive Tuesdays in December I was scheduled to be the speaker at the Messianic Forum luncheon in Saint Louis. These are held every Tuesday at noon at the Downtown Holiday Inn. They began on May 14, 1948, the day that Israel became a nation, following a resolution by the United Nations General Assembly, on Nov. 29, 1947. This called for an end to the British Mandate for Palestine which had been established by the League of Nations in 1922. I have now spoken about 36 times to the group, which is attended by Jews with a great deal of love for Jerusalem. Some of these are believers in Jesus, but a great many are opposed to him. They are held together by a mutual love for Israel, although their reasons for that love differ widely. I have been privileged to meet teachers and writers exiled from Russia, as well as presidents of large manufacturing concerns, and persons from every walk of life. The most versatile and articulate presentation I have ever heard in answer to my presentation about the Lordship of Jesus, was made by a manufacturer of men’s pants.

Once I was invited to speak by the United Jewish Men of Saint Louis. I appeared with a popular and respected rabbi, who presented counter-arguments to my contention that Jesus was the Messiah. There were 800 men present for the dinner and program which followed. The thing which impressed me was the number of Jews who were humanists. The rabbi was in almost as much trouble as I was. The question period lasted an hour and he was attacked for his belief in the existence of God about as severely as I was for urging that Jesus was His Son.

The last event of the year was the Saint Louis Forum. This had always been an honest effort to discuss anything, regardless of how “sticky” it was, without qualm. Any person could feel free to state anything or to ask any question. In 1975 we stretched the program to the point that we engaged in open discussion of moral questions and obligations such as we had not discussed before. We had twice invited women to appear as speakers in a survey of women’s rights and privileges in the church. But this time we invited two men who were doctors to frankly discuss the abortion issue; and two persons who were involved in the political spectrum to talk about the Christian’s role in modern politics. We asked them to address frankly the problem of whether a Christian had the right to march in peace demonstrations, or to use the power of organized revolt to overthrow laws that were unjust.

Two students of prophecy talked about modern Israel in the plan of God. One of them felt that Jerusalem was destined to play a dramatic role in the future dealings of God with the world; the other felt that Jerusalem meant no more to God than Saint Louis or New York. This made for a good question period. There were two more who spoke on the subject of marriage and divorce especially as divorce and remarriage applied to one who was chosen to serve as an elder. I made an announcement of the forum in the paper but there was no coverage given it because by the time it was held the *Mission Messenger* was no more.

On December 1, Nell had addressed and wrapped the final paper and I had placed it in the proper bag according to the zip code. I loaded the nine mail sacks in the car as I had been doing each month for thirty-seven years and drove to the loading dock at the main post office in Saint Louis. I am sure it must have come as a great relief to Nell, and to Brother and Sister Ratliff, who had faithfully helped us wrap them for months. Sister Ratliff continued to do so after she had partially recovered from a paralytic stroke. I am not sure how we would have made it without the ministrations of this faithful pair. I said goodbye to the mail handlers on the dock and went into the weighing office and bade farewell to the men who had helped me so much. Only one was left who had been there when I started. I climbed in the car and started for home with mixed emotions. More than a third of a century lay behind me.

I could not help but think of the changes I had made in those years. In my next, and last article in this series, I hope to detail some of the changes in my perception of the will of God which have occurred to me. I have been attacked and abused for stating them. It appears that we are often more comfortable with one who continues to wear the rags and tatters of a disproven theology than with one who dons a new suit provided by the Spirit of God. If one tells the truth about changes to which he has been driven he becomes the victim of a verbal assault; if he lies or cavils or conceals his true feelings he becomes a recognized, if uneasy, party hero.

In the remainder of this space I want to thank all those who have helped us in any manner. Many of you are still doing so. Your encouragement and sharing are wonderful. I have often thought what I would say if I were requested to name the five persons who have most affected my life. I have reached the conclusion it would be impossible to answer. Surely God has brought all of you into my life for an eternal purpose. You have touched my life for good and I am forever grateful. I have survived three wars, and even two world depressions. I have lived to see numerous changes in “the higher powers” that govern. Men have come, and men have gone, but I have continued with unabated faith in Him “who puts down kings and raises them up.”

From one who was an intolerant debater and defender of the party line I have been delivered and made to see the earnest attempt to please God of many who have never heard of the Campbells. I have been led to see the inherent good in the youth of our land and have been able to properly appreciate the strength of middle age, and the wisdom and experience of old age. I am thrilled that I was invited to share this “Pilgrimage of Joy” with you, and since the journey is not completed I trust that you will pray for me that it may be finished as it began.

### LAST TIME AROUND

In this my final article in the present series, I want to suggest some of the things which I think I learned, and which have made such a noteworthy change in my attitude toward others. I constantly hear the charge that I am not the same man I used to be. I always answer that if I learn more tomorrow I will not be the same as I am now. I realize that I could skip these things. By doing so, my stock would rise greatly in some circles, but I would neither be faithful to my own convictions, nor loyal to Jesus, who is my only Lord.

Perhaps the most profound change came with the realization that the Church of Christ was simply another denomination and a sect. There is a difference. To denominate means to give a name or title to. To do this in order to separate and segregate those who wear it from other believers in Jesus is sectarian. To select a title that is found in the scriptures gives added weight to the divisive arguments which always result. And, while the expression “the church of Christ” does not occur in the sacred book, this does not deter some of the trivial arguments used to justify it as *the name* of the family of God.

It became obvious to me quite early that we had built up a System around the name we had selected, and we were seeking to save a man by getting him into that system. We were going the same route as the Church of God, the Nazarene Church, or the Church of God in Christ. We had been betrayed into thinking that by conforming to a few items one becomes pleasing to God. But each sect has a different set of items. Each party in the church of Christ has a different set. All of these are determined by honest, but stubborn men, who value their own distinctives above the unity of God’s people. But one is not saved by being orthodox. He is not saved by a System, but by a Savior.

I was made to realize that the sheep of God were not all in any sectarian fold, but were scattered over the partisan hills. Various things have been done to bring them together. Reformations have occurred at various times. These inevitably produced movements which were doomed to multiply the divisions. One reason for this was the designation “churches” for the various sects.

They are not churches by any stretch of the imagination. There is only one church. There never has been but one. There will never be another. Every saved person on earth is a member of the one body. By the will of God we are all one, by the actions of men we are all divided.

People in the sects are not necessarily our enemies. They are flesh and blood. They hurt, feel pain, and have nosebleed. And we wrestle not against flesh and blood. It is easier to fight persons than to fight principalities and powers. It is easier to war against persons than to go up against the unseen power that controls this dark world. We are carnal and we like to see our shots reach home. We can see people wince, dodge and grow angry, and it makes us exult. We must completely change our battle strategy. We have been fighting other believers.

People in the sects worship the same God, believe in the Sonship of Jesus, read the same Bible, sing the same songs, meet on the same day and hour, strive for the same heaven and fear the same hell as do we. Surely it was the malevolence of Satan which caused us to direct our weapons against them instead of “against spiritual agents from the very headquarters of evil.” There is not one indication in God’s Word that Paul, if he had been confronted with the same situation as ourselves would have turned his hand against every man and rejoiced that every man had turned his hand against him.

These people are hostages to Systems. From birth they have grown up and been reared in such Systems. Or in manhood, in the midst of the tragedy of the human predicament, they have fled to these Systems, as to cities of refuge. Our task is not to beat or belabor hostages. It is not to get the better of them. It is not to kill them. Any nation which kills hostages is inhumane, a violator of all basic human rights. We are to free hostages. But we cannot do so by contriving another System. Our walls are no better than those of other prisons. We must bring them to Christ and not introduce them to another custodian. This is the most difficult thing to do in our generation. It requires a vision of the unseen, a faith which looks beyond.

Another thing which I learned had to do with worship. I had grown up believing there were five acts of “public worship.” These had to be performed on the first day of the week when the brethren met together, almost as a ritual. One of the insights I received from my study of the Word was that with the coming of Christ *all things* were made new. At the same time “old things had passed away.” I guess it was just too much to believe that all things were made new. They may have passed away, but I needed them for a security blanket. I held on to some of them like a baby retains the habit of “thumb-sucking.” I continued to do so until I came to trust in Jesus like Abraham did.

I shall never forget the afternoon that I was reading and meditating upon Jesus’ visit with the Samaritan woman at the well curb at Sychar. It suddenly became clear to me that he lifted the subject of worship completely out of the realm of “the proper place.” It was no longer a question of this mountain or Jerusalem. It was no longer what our fathers worshipped. It was not a question of being in the right place. There was no right place for the simple reason that there was no wrong place. It was a matter of Spirit and truth for the true worshipper.

I could see that in Christ there were no holy places, holy things, or holy days. The idea of dedicating or consecrating a pile of brick or stone to God eventually became obnoxious to me. I

came to truly believe that “the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with men’s hands.” No carpenters, no brick masons, no hod-carriers could negate that statement. I separated myself completely from the Jewish concept of speaking about a certain part of the building as a sanctuary. The idea of dedicating an organ, or a fountain, or something else to the God of the universe became silly, and what is worse, a sin. It became obvious that wherever I was it was a holy place because I was there. God dwelt in me. It was not a matter of going to a temple. *I was the temple!*

Whatever I did in my body became worship, when done in deference to the majesty and glory of God. The passage, “Whatever you do in word or deed,” took on a new and deeper meaning. God was as interested in how I talked to my grandchildren on Monday as he was in what I said to a group sitting solemnly and gravely before me on Sunday mornings. He was as concerned in how I mowed my lawn, fixed a flat tire, or shopped at the grocery, as he was in what I did in Bible Class. It was a mind-boggling experience, a kind of explosive high to realize that everything – and I do mean everything – was worship of the Almighty.

I could see clearly how the “five acts” had been blown up into something that could be used as a hoe handle or baseball bat to beat people into submission. One of the best examples is “the act of giving.” Out of the reasoning on this point came an accumulation of money, or hoarding. This created a treasury which necessitated a treasurer. This demanded business meetings and the reading of the treasurer’s report, and so on, ad infinitum. I do not think that any of these are wrong. They are not sinful. But the idea that they are a part of God’s revelation, or that they are found in I Corinthians 16, is about as far-fetched as the idea that the synthesis of Thomas Aquinas is God’s plan for his people. All of this talk about who can be helped out of “the treasury” and who must be helped before it gets to “the treasury” is just so much poppycock. It has all been distilled from feverish, factional hearts. It is divisive by its very nature.

One thing which helped to free me from the insufferable slavery of the sect was the realization that fellowship with God is on the basis of a personal covenant with the divine. We are not in fellowship with Christ because we are in fellowship with others, but we are in fellowship with others because we are in fellowship with Christ. The vertical relationship precedes and makes possible the horizontal and not the reverse. The vertical is primary, the horizontal is secondary. Fellowship is the sharing of a common life, and the life in which we share is eternal life. Men have no control over eternal life. They cannot admit one to it. They cannot discharge one from it. It is foolish for mere weak mortals to talk about receiving one into the fellowship. It is absurd to talk about withdrawing fellowship from him. That is institutional or organizational twaddle. It is a demonstration of “peanut-sized” thinking.

God did not entrust so wonderful a thing as the salvation of a single soul to the whim or discretion of sinful and changeable man, although He made men as His human agents to carry the Good News. But He enters into a personal and direct covenant with each one of us. He does so on the basis of divine grace. No human intermediary is required. No parent can make a covenant for his child. No one in authority can make a covenant for those who are subjects. Human favor has nothing to do with it. It is tragic that we have done with the word “testament” what we have done with many other majestic terms utilized by the Holy Spirit. We have whittled them down in our attempt to make them relevant to our human predicament. It does not



take a lot of study to see the old covenant does not consist of 39 books, nor the new covenant of 27.

We are distinctly told that the new covenant was not written with ink. All of the records, epistles, and even the apocalypse were written with ink. On this we have the testimony of the writers. There is a difference between the new covenant and the new covenant scriptures which grew out of it. The new covenant is written on fleshly tablets of the heart. It consists of the Agreement into which I entered with God and to which I subscribed. I surrendered to Him absolutely, unequivocally, until death silences my tongue or forces me to drop the pen from my nerveless fingers. The new covenant is not a written code. It is not a compilation of laws, statutes and judgments. We are not under law but under grace.

Along with this I learned the difference between the gospel and the doctrine of the apostles. The gospel is the *euaggelion*, the good news of what God did for us when we were helpless to do anything for ourselves. It is to be proclaimed. It is God's message for the unsaved. One cannot evangelize saved persons. The doctrine is for those in the body. It is not for the world any more than the gospel is for the church. I learned this from Alexander Campbell. Then I found out that he had learned it from Dr. George Campbell of Aberdeen, and from Dr. James McKnight of Edinburgh. So I obtained their valuable works and studied them, all the while becoming more convinced of the distinction.

Indeed I am thoroughly agreed with Alexander Campbell that there can never be a thorough reformation, so long as we ignore this vital principle. It is foundational to our goal. It is basic to its achievement. It is vastly more than a mere argument over semantics, or an empty discussion of words. The profundity of it, once seen, will commend itself to the genuine scholar as possessing the greatest potential for unity. It is saddening to see shallow minds which never had an original thought, denying it as a kind of joke.

Now that I have run my little course from birth up to the time when I discontinued publication of Mission Messenger, I shall bow out gently thanking you for the great patience you have exhibited in reading these monthly accounts. Brother Garrett has shown more than ordinary longsuffering with me and I appreciate it a great deal. Nell joins with me in this farewell and in the fervent prayer that God will bless all of you very richly indeed. Grace and peace be unto you!