

MEMOIRS of Dr. C. B. HASTINGS

CHAPTER I - My Spiritual Journey

A person's spiritual journey is the most important aspect of one's story for it determines the directions taken at significant junctures of life. The journey is like the development of a computer program, in that each decision carries with it accumulating factors that determine the succeeding ones. Now this does not mean that one is locked into the all-determining force of his own choices. The factors of environment and the play of human relations enter also, or as we sometimes say, you have to be in the right place at the right time and know the right people to get ahead. But for the committed Christian I do not believe that these forces operate automatically. They are under the overall guidance of the Spirit of God.

For many years I have been convinced that God has led my journey with a strong hand. That does not necessarily mean that I believe God designed the exact path from the beginning to the end. Who knows what He might have done with me had I made decisions differently along the way? But whatever mistakes I have made--and they were many--I have found that God forgives so as to restore inner peace and He redirects to bring the best out of the bad situation. In other words, for those who are called according to his purpose God works things together for the best under the circumstances.

It has been an exciting journey. I could not have mapped it out in advance. No one could have persuaded me in my youth that I would come out where I did. Nor was I ready at any stage for anything more than light on the next step. Each phase of the journey contributed to the preparation for the next or some succeeding one. That is the serendipity of trying to live in the will of God!

Early Years

If "Man is an omnibus in which all his ancestors ride," then we must pay attention to our heritage. The older we live the more interested we become in delving into that heritage. While we have kidded some of our friends with almost ancestor worship, yet they have taught us to take our heritage more seriously. Compared to them, we have a long way to go in our research, but the near members are well known.

As I look back, I am more aware than ever that my appreciation for my heritage came too late for me to be zealous to pass it along to my children. "Vee git too soon old and too late smart!" One of the sad side effects of youth is the product of our all out determination to establish our own identity separate from our parents. We learn that a little late in the business of making a life. We have to learn that no generation has to reinvent the wheel that makes up the essentials of living. Individuality is a product and not a creation.

My father was largely self-educated in that he worked for every bit of schooling he got after the required minimum in the one-room country school he and his dad helped to remodel. He had no financial support and little encouragement from his own father, who was dirt poor. How can you blame him for resenting his oldest son leaving home to go to school when Grandpa had to scratch out a living for five other children on 18 acres of rocky hill farm in middle Tennessee? I only knew Grandpa from the infrequent visits we made to his farm, but he tried to instill in me the discipline of hard work, care for one's basic tools, and love of the simpler creatures of our world. Grandmother never had a chance for any schooling, but she was a woman of strong faith and courage and a great cook. One of the delights of this city boy

was to come in the dining room in the middle of a hot summer afternoon, raise the cloth that covered the leftovers on the table and sneak a snack. Biscuit never tasted so good!

On the other hand, my mother was raised in comparative affluence. Her father was a successful banker in the small town of Mt. Pleasant, Tennessee. They lived well in a country home with servants and good opportunities for education. I never knew either of my mother's parents, for both she and I were born rather late in the lives of our parents. Grandpa Brownlow had a profound influence upon Mother's Christian life. He was known far and wide among the Baptist churches for his soul winning ability as a layman. Often, he would turn his business over to his sons and at his own expense go to a neighboring town for a week or two to assist in an annual revival meeting.

Because of the fine support Mother had she was able to go to college in Nashville for a couple of years and then study art in New York at the same time her sister, Kitty, was studying music. We are enriched by her paintings and her china, but especially by her love of "beautiful things." She definitely bequeathed to us whatever romantic strains and emotional warmth we show. Unselfish to the core, she yet loved to collect things of beauty. She usually began her Christmas shopping for others by buying "something pretty for myself." We deeply regret that Mother ceased all effort in art when her paints and instruments were burned in the fire that took the old B. H. Carroll home on Seminary Hill, where they had an apartment. Mother took that as a sign from the Lord that she should devote all her life's energy in helping Dad become the best minister possible. She was his constant companion in visiting, his loyal critic and finest example in "personal work."

My parents were of the old school in their Christian ethics and pious practices. From my earliest remembrance we had family prayers twice a day. In the morning each of us took turns reading from the Bible--I largely learned to read from being tutored in those sessions. Then we would kneel and each one pray. Mother always prayed at least ten minutes--for everybody and every little thing. She taught me that nothing was too insignificant to "bother the Lord about." Regrettably, I resolved privately that if I ever had a family, I would never subject them to such rigorous piety. Too late I realized that we could have worked out a more reasonable way that would have enriched all of our lives without turning us off.

From Dad I inherited my love for books and especially the study and teaching of the Bible. Although we parted company theologically later, as I will explain further, I still owe him a great debt for both the dedication and the example of his Bible teaching. He gave me an appreciation for truth in every aspect of life and thought and a keen desire to pursue it in my Baptist freedom. Like most expositors in the pulpit he was sometimes criticized for not preaching more popular style sermons. He replied to one critic who complained that he preached over their heads, "Had you thought you might raise your head?" I think he contributed also to my life-long concern to share the deeper things of both Scripture and theology with the laity. God's truth is too precious to waste on the professionals.

You remember that I was born in the room in which B. H. Carroll, the founder and first president of Southwestern Seminary, died. I have often joked that I was too late. Someone had already gotten his "mantle" of prophecy. The birthplace had little to do with my future spiritual life, but my parents certainly did. Mother often reminded the young boy that he was dedicated to the ministry from birth, even as Saul of Tarsus was set apart by God from his birth. In early years I nearly lost my life from the same colitis that killed my older sister before I was born. That, too, strengthened my parents' resolve to

rear me, as Hannah did Samuel, "for the Lord." Though as a kid I never dwelt much on the prospect I am sure that it was in my subconscious from earliest times.

Besides the influence of Bible reading at family prayers, Dad would often read to me from a set of books on Southern Literature. I particularly remember an essay on "Rubenstein's Playing in New York." That was Arthur Rubenstein in his youth, who lived into his 80s and still was amazing audiences even in Russia. The essay was very comical, and Dad and I used to roar with laughter whenever he read it to us. But the most significant experience came when I was eight, when Mother read to me Henry van Dyke's "The Story of the Other Wise Man."

All of the latent deposit of teaching in the home and in the Church about Jesus suddenly came to the surface. I felt an overwhelming sense of love for One who could respond so nobly to the Wise Man's sacrifices of his precious jewels and his life. With all the limitations of a child, yet with my whole being as far as I knew it, I gave myself to Jesus. The next Sunday I presented myself to Dad before the Coliseum Place Baptist congregation for baptism and a few Sundays later Dad baptized me. As is true all too often I was more worried about my feet floating to the surface of the pool than I was about any great spiritual feelings.

There were times in my years as a growing Christian that I felt intimidated somewhat by the marvelous testimonies of some how Christ had drastically changed them from being a hardened sinner to salvation. The immature cannot avoid worrying about the validity of their own experience when challenged in that way. Yet I came to realize that the security of my relationship with God did not depend upon the manner of the human experience, but upon the character of Him who saved me.

Further I have learned that assurance is not given by simply accepting that certain Scriptures are true. It is the by-product of a growing experience of the person of Christ and His present activity in one's life. As a result, I have been able to balance the paradox of full assurance together with an acceptance of the possibility of apostasy, as is plainly taught in the Book of Hebrews. In fact, I have tried to show in my teaching that Hebrews actually strengthens one's sense of assurance when fully accepted (literally, without the dubious ways of explaining away its plain meaning that some Calvinists attempt).

From a human standpoint there are many starting places to begin the spiritual journey. What matters is not so much where you start as how far you have come. And there have been potholes along that journey that have caused me occasional doubts and fears. But after living with Job and Jeremiah I have long since decided that God appreciates honest doubt and sincere questioning more than He does pious responses. A good argument with God is not necessarily sinful. Even though we may lose the argument He does not turn us off nor reject us. Contrary to human arguments both sides win in the end.

Not much out of the ordinary developed in my spiritual journey until I was in the early teens. First Baptist, Monroe, was blessed with some strong and loving adult leaders of our B.Y.P.U. . [Ed: Baptist Young People's Union] They opened their homes to us and gave us much opportunity for social life. Dad probably weighed in from time to time in his sermons against the sins of the flesh--drinking, dancing, gambling, and bad movies, but we did go to an occasional movie. I still remember being nearly scared to death by the first version of the "Ten Commandments." It was worse for me than any horror movie today!

At school we had the usual temptations from some pretty crass kids, but for the most part I was fortunate to have many classmates who tried to make the most of schooling and live a decent life. With few exceptions my teachers were good people who lived the Christian life without parading it. There was no debate over prayers in school. It was assumed that Christians did their praying at home and at church. We had prayers at Baccalaureate services, but that was about all -- none at football games or in homerooms. You can gather from this that I think all the uproar about prayer in the schools is at best much-ado-about-nothing and at worse a dangerous invitation to the State to control and compromise our religious liberty.

It is true that I had a puritanical upbringing in a rather restricted environment (according to the present mores). But we were too busy with school, church and neighborhood play to feel that we were deprived or warped. I got the usual kidding as a preacher's kid, but that did not bother me nearly as much as my small build, my hay fever and occasional anemia. I did all the usual things trying to compensate. I went out for football as center and got tossed around by big tackles half again as big as I. That quickly persuaded me to change to tennis and stay with my trombone and academics. Boy scouting increased my love of nature and taught the value of working on projects and setting goals.

Though we did not have a band at school we had an excellent glee club and drama group which gave us much opportunity for development. The regional and state "rallies" -- competition in each high school academic subject -- gave me much stimulus for achievement and love of learning. In my sophomore year I won first place in the state in Algebra, the next year second in Physics and my last year fourth in Chemistry. Hence, my life-long interest in math and science. This is the foundation for the development of my philosophy of science and faith which I will recount later.

My Call to the Ministry

The most significant stage along the journey came with the call to the ministry. It probably would have come about sooner or later, given my rearing and environment, but the immediate factor was very unusual. When I was 16 our family had gone to Tennessee to visit Grandma and Grandpa. One day I was helping Mother to mount a horse, for she dearly loved to ride. I was pulling the horse by his bridle toward the fence to make it easier for Mother to mount. I leaned back in pulling and the horse politely stepped on my foot shod only in a tennis shoe. Without thinking I jerked my foot away and pulled off two toenails. The worst part of the pain was the dousing I got with kerosene!

The healing of the wound progressed normally, but my parents were afraid I would catch lockjaw. They hastened me to a country doctor who knew no better than to give me a shot of--what else--horse serum! The medics in those days little appreciated how devastating allergic reaction could be. That night I came as close to death as I have ever known. On recovering from the shock via a heavy dose of adrenalin, I soon broke out in a body rash that covered me completely for three weeks. Soon thereafter we returned to Monroe and I was laid up with nothing much I could do besides pray and meditate. My close call with death convinced me that it was past time for me to talk to the Lord about what He wanted with my life.

Very gradually I improved. The fine pastor of First Baptist, West Monroe, and a good friend of Dad, came to see me. I do not remember that he talked to me about my vocation, but his prayer made a deep impression on me. In my immaturity then I began to bargain with the Lord--a cheap shot under any circumstances. I told Him that if He would heal me sufficiently to go to prayer meeting about five days

away, I would announce my call to the ministry. I shared this vow with Mother and Dad, much to their concern and eagerness.

Wednesday came with its usual attacks of itching in the morning, but by afternoon I was comfortable enough to plan to go. I made it through the service and back home without a single itch! Maybe the excitement of anticipation proved as strong as adrenalin, but I took it as Gideon did his fleece and have never looked back. When I finished my testimony, Mother began the holy shouting that was still acceptable in our religious culture for great expressions of spiritual joy. I remember about two or three other occasions when Mother shouted. You can imagine the impact it had upon this teenager!

A few weeks later Dad asked me to preach the morning sermon. I still have the heavily analytical outline (characteristic of all my later approaches to sermon building) on "He saved others, himself he could not save." A few times during my senior year at Ouachita Parish High I preached in the surrounding Baptist churches. From then on, my educational career was set: college, then seminary with a far-out hope of graduate study. Because of this I was never plagued as some were with spending years seeking a vocation, changing majors with every new school year.

Of course, my conception of the call was largely limited to my chief role model, my Dad. I knew there was always the possibility of a missionary call and the new field of religious education was just beginning to open a little to the possibility of ordination. The pastoral ministry was always the main focus and that was my goal and purpose of education. My church soon licensed me to preach, but ordination always was deferred until some church would call for my services.

During those high school years, the other major influence on my Christian life was the annual encampment of Louisiana Baptists at a very rustic camp near Mandeville, across Lake Pontchartrain from New Orleans. Our church always sent fifteen or twenty young people and adults for the ten-day camp. There were study courses in S. S. [Ed: Sunday School] and B.Y.P.U. and preaching in the morning and at night. Afternoons were filled with swimming, softball, games, and politicking. The church groups divided into two parties, selected their candidates for king and queen, organized to the hilt and crowed loudly when their slate won. We had a big coronation ceremony. In my last year I was campaign manager for my girlfriend who was elected queen. That was my one and only big blast in politics!

For our religious culture it was an ideal combination of social expression coupled with high inspirational events. We lived in the glow for six months and in the prospect for the next encampment. Many lasting decisions in both vocation and marriage were initiated during those days each year.

College Years

For the most part my spiritual development through Mars Hill College and Baylor University was fairly normal. There were the usual ups and downs in my private devotional life. Opportunities for leadership came through the Baptist Student Unions and college departments. In Mars Hill I was director of the college department in S. S. and in Baylor of the B.Y.P.U. at Seventh and James St. Baptist. In Baylor I was co-chairperson for social programs of the B.S.U [Ed: Baptist Student Union].

Mars Hill provided my first shock in relations with my ministerial peers. Having hardly any other model than my Dad, I was unprepared for the widely differing moral and spiritual expressions of others in the ministry. Many were older, having received the call late in life and so arriving with a load of baggage that I did not have. I spent a good many nights talking with the Lord and with buddies wondering if my calling and experience were valid as measured by the others.

Dr. Oscar E. Sams, Vice President of the college and handicapped sorely by stroke, was advisor to our Ministerial Alliance. He greatly resolved my problems when he addressed the issue in the Alliance over what should be our stand about the morality of smoking. In his quiet way he called the hot heads to reflect that most of them were in school supported by parents and others who made their living growing tobacco. If they could not be consistent, they could at least be more forgiving. The emphasis that helped me the most, however, was the way he urged us to respect each other's differences and acknowledge that each of us had his own distinct calling and response to his Lord. It has stood me in good stead many a time in my ministry.

More than any academic progress Mars Hill taught me the preeminent worth of human character. As a small school our faculty was able to relate to each student very closely. Dr. Robert L. Moore, long-time President, was Lincolnesque in bearing and rock solid in character. We both feared and revered him. It was his courage and determination together with the sacrifices of the faculty that saw the College through the bleak years of the Depression. Many of them contributed to my ideal of what Christian character and dedication to education ought to be. On the other hand, I also learned the hard way that strict puritanical rules imposed without trying to educate youth to the deeper ethical bases can be an exercise in futility. One unfortunate by-product of that kind of situation was that it made our boy-girl relations too intense and unrealistic. Students often became more skilled in dodging rules than in building lasting relationships.

From the first sight of the Blue Ridge Mountains this flatlander fell in love with God's magnificent creations. My first year there I logged 176 miles of hiking, climbing most of the peaks within a day's distance. The first major climb with Falk Johnson, son of the librarian, was an overnight climb about 24 miles away on Bald Mountain. Falk taught me most of what I know about mountain hiking on that trip a week before my Freshman year began. It was an unforgettable experience. We witnessed a gorgeous sunset from the peak while several thunderstorms were happening in the valleys below us. Overcome with awe I silently recalled the Psalmist's hymn of praise:

When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers,
The moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;
What is man, that thou art mindful of him?
And the son of man, that thou visitest him?

After graduation at Mars Hill I served with other student volunteers for three weeks conducting S. S. [Ed: Sunday School] enlargement campaigns in several of the associations in North Carolina. One assignment I had near Monroe, NC, taught me what real poverty is like. The little country church was not eager to have a visitor telling them what they ought to do, and it looked at first as if no one wanted to put me up for the week. Finally, one deacon said to me, "Well, go down with us." "Wait until I get my hat and coat, and I will be glad to," I replied. It was obvious when he and I arrived at the farm that his wife was not expecting company. But they did the best they could with me--which was, the other

bedroom with a moldy mattress and broken springs, no screens and not even an outhouse. It was too early for the pullets, so we ate salty ham and beans almost three times a day. I realized then that despite the Depression I had been raised in relative affluence, although Dad's salary while I was in college was only a little over \$300 per month!

My spiritual journey through Baylor was fairly uneventful. I profited more from the courses in literature than I did from the ones in religion. Many of the latter were trite and emphasized the typology of the Old Testament. Even at that stage I was somewhat put off by such pious attempts to interpret the Bible. The course in Paul challenged me to write my own study of Paul's life. Although my resources were old and limited, writing a 100-page paper taught me valuable lessons in research and writing.

Youth Pastor and Ordination in Tampa

Upon graduation from Baylor I returned home, planning to do volunteer student work in the summer and enter Southwestern Seminary in the fall. I was attending an orientation program for the former at Louisiana College in June when I received a telegram from Dr. George H. Crutcher, pastor of the Riverside Baptist Church in Tampa, telling me that I had been elected youth, associate pastor for the year.

There could not have been a better plan to give me the seasoning I needed. Dr. Crutcher, a long-time friend of Dad, had been a seminary professor, evangelism director and home missionary. He had led in the ordination of Dad in 1909. He was of the old school theologically and an ideal leader of men. He was innovative, especially with the working of deacon groups. Each group was assigned a prayer service in rotation throughout the year. Though some of their services were very boring, yet the growth of their leadership and spirituality more than justified the painful expense. He taught me all I know about working with very stubborn church leaders. His patience and perseverance provided the finest role model. He was not afraid to call on me to preach often with him sitting on the front row. You can bet that my practical theological training under Dr. Crutcher was of the purest and strongest sort.

At the Christmas season I gathered some twenty, mostly young people together for an ambitious pageant. I designed the staging, built the electrical circuits, including home-made dimmers, and strung wires on which the Star guided the Wise Men to the manger. It did me in, for on the bus going home to Monroe I caught the flu and lost about ten days in bed.

My ordination was an unforgettable experience on January 30th, 1938. Dr. Crutcher would have none of these quickie affairs. He believed that ordination provided an ideal instruction experience, not only for the candidate, but for the congregation. He had me memorize all eighteen Articles of Faith (the sum total in those days) together with at least two Scriptures to support each one. On Friday night before the congregation and the presbytery he had invited from far and wide he had me quote every one of the Articles and stand in questioning about them. It took almost two hours!

On Sunday morning with Mother and Dad present the morning service consisted in my ordination. Dr. Ed Solomon, editor of the Florida Baptist Witness, and a long-time friend of my parents presented the Bible (a Scofield, naturally). He had a lisp all of his life, but that did not hinder his speaking. At one time he had dated Mother and tried to press his suit with her. He was very proud of his fine horse and a surrey. He would say, "Mith Cora, if you will marry me, I'll let you ride Thamphthon!"

In the midst of reminiscing of those days in Tennessee during his presentation Dr. Solomon looked down at me and said, "Thon, you don't know how cloth I came to being your daddy!" I believe if Mother had had a gun, she would have shot him on the spot!

Southwestern Seminary Days

My year out in Tampa was great practical experience but it dropped me way behind my peers when I got to Southwestern Seminary. Most of them had good part-time churches and I was comparatively unknown. It was not until the fall of my second year that I was called to my first church, a quarter-time church that met in a ranch schoolhouse between Tahoka and Brownfield, Texas. At least half of the time I hitch-hiked the 325 miles one way, for on \$20 a trip I needed every penny I could save. In the summer of 1940, I worked on the Ridgecrest staff as public relations person (glorified reporter and photographer: more later). For two trips to the West Point Church I had Charles Dickson to supply for me. When we got back to school that fall, he informed me that the church had fired me -- I was too pro-British for those western isolationists!

Southwestern faculty when I arrived still had many of the original men, most of whom had taught Dad. Two men in particular had profound influence upon my life and thought: Dr. W. T. Conner and Stewart Newman. Dr. Conner was recognized as the ablest theologian Southwestern ever produced. He looked and talked as Abraham Lincoln must have. His manner put the fear of God in the hearts of all but the more brash, of which we had a generous number. He had studied in Rochester Seminary under A. H. Strong, an old-line Calvinist. But his own theology was "modified Calvinism." He taught me a rugged honesty in dealing with the Scripture text and he never tried to dodge a hard question or skip a troublesome issue. It was under his teaching that I become disillusioned with the Scofield dispensationalism in which I had been tutored both by my Dad and my Baylor professors. I finally broke with that artificial system of interpretation when I saw its glaring inconsistencies and its manipulation of Scripture to fit its scheme. The straw that tipped the scales was in discovering that the dispensationalists actually believed the Cross to have been an afterthought since Israel did not accept Jesus as the Messiah. Their overly neat way of relegating all the social teachings of Jesus to a future millennial reign of Christ on the earth was the final blow.

Of course, this proved to be a sore contention between Dad and me, which I have long regretted. We soon learned to observe a gentleman's agreement not to discuss eschatology when we were together. I don't think he ever quite forgave Dr. Conner for leading me astray. Saddest to me was that it kept us from talking together over the deeper understandings of the Bible, which both of us loved to study and teach.

Dr. Conner contributed also to a major emphasis in my ministry, although I probably did not make a conscious connection at the time. Though he was an able thinker and well read in contemporary theology, he never wrote for the scholars and professionals. He had a gift of simplicity in thought that enabled him to communicate the profoundest truths to lay people. He gave to me the inspiration to my later ministry in adult education, for I have always believed that any truth theologians may obtain is a sacred trust to be shared with the humblest of God's little people.

Stewart Newman, professor of philosophy of religion, was a "young Turk" among the old guard at Southwestern (he is still an "old Turk" among the young upstart fundamentalists who are coming out of our schools these days). He used a text by A. M. Fairburn, written in 1902 (typical of the age of the texts we used for the most part in Southwestern in those days). Though it was more an apologetic for the Christian faith than an exposition of philosophy, it had a profound affect upon me. Beautifully written in the classic style of the turn of the century, it was a model of concise reasoning. Dr. Newman was not afraid to challenge our minds to the fullest and to raise issues most of us would have preferred swept under the rug. He contributed greatly to my theological stamina!

Two other professors also were hardly less influential. The first was Dr. T. B. Maston, who is still influencing generations of South Westerners in Christian ethics. More than any other, he moved the massive cultural mountain of racial prejudice that all of us had inherited. He also raised the most serious issues of war and peace at a time when to remain silent would have been very profitable to him.

Our librarian, L. R. Elliott, who also taught advanced Greek, was easily the most boring teacher I ever had. He was meticulous to a fault and nearly wore us out with his scrupulosities. But he turned on a light for me and helped me see the vision of the fascinating world of New Testament Greek. I would never have chosen Greek and probably not graduate school had it not been for the vision he gave me. Who, then, dares to say that L. R. Elliott was a poor teacher?

During the summer of 1940, between my junior and senior years at Southwestern, I served as public relations staffer at Ridgecrest. It was little more than leg work as a reporter and photographer, but it was an enlarging experience for me. I had the job of interviewing the featured speakers for each of the program weeks and write daily articles for the Asheville Citizen and weekly articles for the Baptist state papers. I not only learned a lot about basic journalism, but also about the human side of many of our denominational leaders. I learned that you cannot live by inspiration alone; it soon becomes boring and ineffectual. I learned that you must look past human frailties and discover those qualities of character that make for great leadership. I learned never to so idolize a leader that you accept everything that is said without exercising critical judgment of your own.

One seemingly minor experience had lasting consequences. I had climbed the little mountain overlooking the Ridgecrest campus to "Inspiration Point" one evening alone. Feeling close to the Lord and a bit awed by the opportunities I had had through the summer, I asked the Lord to take my life and help me make some contribution to the denomination that I had come to love and appreciate. Little did I know how that semi-vow would turn out. If He had told me I would make my major contribution in Baptist-Catholic relations, I would have been shocked and probably offended! The Lord certainly knows better than show us more than a few steps ahead in life at any one moment. Nor was I in any position to understand the possibility of my contribution in adult education with Baylor Extension and Park Cities. That all unfolded later.

Harrisburg and Marriage to Jeanette

Upon graduation from Southwestern I had a half-time church at Myra in north Louisiana. My income was barely enough to keep me going, even living at home in Monroe. I had struck out with all the girls I had dated in college and seminary and Mother was getting worried! The Church at Gibsland, La., asked me to preach in view of a call. When I arrived that Sunday, I found that there were four of us they were

considering without benefit of a search committee. I almost backed out, for I knew that such a situation was not good for either the church or for us candidates. Anyway, I came in second in the vote, for which I am eternally grateful. It left me open to the much better possibility that soon came from Harrisburg, Illinois. And you know what happened there!

Since this is a record of my spiritual journey and not a full autobiography, I must pass over so many exciting events. Of course, the one life-directing event was meeting and marrying Jeanette Allard. I will reserve for later any attempt to evaluate the effect of our union upon my spiritual life, but for now let me say that it has been profound.

Harrisburg, First, was still a thriving church in the early Forties. Dr. S. H. Frazier had been pastor until he was called as a reserve chaplain in June of 1941. The church wanted a graduate of seminary, who was single and could live with the Frazier family in the parsonage, and who had no full-time church. There were three of us who graduated single that year and the other two had good churches. So I arrived with my 1937 Chevrolet in August, 1941.

The very active Brotherhood of the church taught me much about the value of winning men to Christ. We went out every Thursday evening into the home of someone who had been befriended by one of our men. Usually the time was right for a decision during the course of our prayer meeting with the host. At least half of the men we led to Christ I later baptized. The Brotherhood also led the association to conduct a tent revival with a fire and brimstone preacher from Mississippi they had heard about. It was a rugged two weeks, so much so that most of our people, even the men and the other pastors, could hardly stand the tumultuous preaching of that fireball.

During the Sunday service in our own church at mid-point I called our people to repentance. They had neither responded to Chester Swor, a great preacher of the love of God, nor to our present fireball. Somehow the Lord used it to stir consciences. For almost an hour at the invitation time people were publicly confessing their sins, seeking out others for reconciliation, and in general "getting right with the Lord." It proved to be the turning point of the revival and saved the whole event for us.

Another major event was the project to recondition the auditorium with volunteer labor. It was carried out against the opposition of the wealthy member, a mine owner, who had controlled the finances of the church for many years. I learned about venturing upon faith and relying upon the response of the common members, and the church learned that it could be independent of its "sugar daddy." And all during the project Jeanette and I were trying to do a bit of late-night dating without the prying eyes of certain church members!

Easily the factor that proved to be most maturing in my preaching and pastoring was the entry of the U.S. into the War after Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7th. Suddenly the need for spiritual guidance for myself and for my people became the uppermost concern of my ministry. I left off my "scholarly" attempts to prove the Bible is true--"carrying coals to Newcastle" as it were--and sought out the Word of God for those trying times. By temperament and education, I was more pacifist than hawk. So, I tried to help my people keep some semblance of balance in their emotional judgments. But I was under much criticism because of my stance.

Chaplain in the Army in Georgia and Europe

As the War wore on, I became convinced that I could not longer stay apart. With Jeanette's fearful support in the summer of 1943 I volunteered for the Army chaplaincy and was sent to Harvard to the six weeks orientation school while she left for Monroe to stay with my parents until I was assigned.

As I prepared to leave Harrisburg Jim, the younger Frazier boy who was in high school, said a prophetic word: "You are going to learn what sin really is." I not only learned about sin, but the worst kind of evil of mankind--war.

It can bring forth heroes and courageous deeds, but there is no way to romanticize or glorify it. And cruelty, vengeance, rape and oppression are not just perpetrated by the enemy, but by one's own troops as well. For the Christian caught in the evil it took all the faith and grace possible to overcome fear and loneliness. While I had many opportunities to help men in trouble, I found trying to provide genuine worship experiences for them a frustrating ministry.

Jeanette and I learned to travel light in all aspects of life. We moved, at least from one apartment to another, fourteen times in a little over two years. We learned to celebrate Christmas and birthdays at odd times and to seek our happiness in little things and brief moments. However, all in all we were more fortunate than most. I was in Jessup when John blessed our home with his arrival and stayed in the States almost a year afterward.

The transport from New York, which we left Christmas day, buttoned up below decks, to Southampton, England, was quite eventful. On boarding with some 6,000 troops on the old A. T. George Washington the dozen or so chaplains reported to the Transport Chaplain assigned to the ship for our duties. We discovered he had just had oral surgery and was incapacitated for the whole trip. On checking we found that I was senior chaplain by a few weeks, so it fell my lot to organize the chaplains for both our religious duties and with the special officers arrange the recreation programs. We were so busy during those 12 days at sea in the midst of a convoy of more than 200 ships that we had no time to get seasick during the storm we weathered on the crossing. The sudden load of responsibility and demands upon me for planning and directing the others gave me much valuable experience.

From our training base at Aldermaston Manor, near Reading, we were sent for a month to the neighborhood of Glasgow, where our men were on special duty loading the wounded from the Battle of the Bulge aboard the Queen Elizabeth and Queen Mary. That February was the coldest (-16 degrees one morning) and one of the prettiest I have ever seen. I fell in love with Loch Lomond on a brilliant morning after a five-inch snow and came to appreciate the people of Scotland through their generosity to us Americans.

We crossed the Channel and after a couple of weeks were on our way to our first engagement, the anti-aircraft defense of the Rhine bridgehead at Remagen. There were 16 battalions of 40 mm. anti-aircraft and 8 of 90 mm. around that perimeter. I was less than a quarter of a mile away when I heard the Remagen Bridge fall in. We were not under fire more than about three days, for the front was moving rapidly to the east. Our men soon were taken off their guns and assigned to trucks in the "red ball express" that sought to keep Patton's army supplied as it raced toward Berlin. On VE Day we wound up in Kassel, which was almost completely destroyed by Allied bombing.

Our headquarters unit was stationed in the former home of a German pastor who evidently had been loyal to the Nazi regime. One of my men found his Bible from which the book of Esther, that told of another abortive effort to annihilate the Jews, had been deliberately torn out in accordance to Hitler's orders. That Bible is the most cherished book in my library.

Two events right after VE Day had a lasting impact on my spiritual life. We were still under the ban of fraternizing with the Germans, but I was anxious to move my small services to village churches wherever possible. On one occasion my assistant, Roger Ewell, who played the violin, and I had arranged for a 2 o'clock service. When we arrived a group of about a dozen villagers were waiting and asked through an interpreter for the privilege of sitting in on the service. I readily agreed and encouraged them to sit with us, but they insisted on sitting behind the organ out of sight of the little group of my men. As I played the field organ and Roger his violin, I heard a strange sound--women's voices singing. At the end of the song I told the men to turn to "Silent Night, Holy Night" even though it was June.

At the familiar tune all the Germans stood and joined with us as they sang "Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht."

The next event was a day trip that several of us made to the concentration camp at Buchenwald. We spent several hours with a Polish youth touring the camp which still held about three-fourths of its prisoners. The horror of the place and the terrible condition of the prisoners will remain with me through life to convince me, though I needed none, of the horrors of war and the inhumanity of man. The two experiences together underscored another fact: war brings out the best and the worst in human beings. I came face to face with the realization that the Christian veneer of American and other Allied troops wears away quickly under stress to reveal the sordid lusts and greed and injustice to which most of us are prone. Vietnam, then, was no surprise to me.

My great fortune came unexpectedly after VE Day, when my anti-aircraft battalion was headed for two years minimum of occupation duty. I suddenly received orders to transfer to the 8th Infantry Division's Medical Battalion for return to the States and retraining for the invasion of Japan. On returning in July 1945, during my thirty-day leave several notable things happened. I conducted the wedding ceremony for Sunny and Bob Wheeler in Vienna, then our little family spent about three weeks at Current River in southeast Missouri. It was a beautiful, quiet place--no radio and a newspaper two days old. It was there that we got the news belatedly that the atom bomb had dropped on Hiroshima. It was the height of "good news, bad news." The good news was soon apparent: our division would not be going to Japan and would be deactivated in a few months. The bad news was terrifying. I can honestly say that I did not sleep a bit that night trying to figure out what this event meant for the future of our nation and our civilization.

Immediately, though, it was apparent that the only way I could be discharged was by being declared surplus. It was not hard to prove once we were moved to Camp Gruber near Muskogee, Oklahoma. At the main Protestant service in the Camp chapel one Sunday we had fifteen chaplains and five enlisted men present. My experiences during the last months after VJ Day were so frustrating that I readily opted out at the first opportunity and rejected the pressure to stay in the reserves. If I had stayed in, my retirement pay would have put us now on Easy Street, but it also probably would have meant Korean war duty.

Graduate Study in Southern Seminary

We were pretty well convinced the Lord was opening doors for graduate study at Southern Seminary. The GI Bill made it possible for us to have a meager but adequate living on the poor salary of the Baptist Church in Brandenburg. The break in pastoral ministry from Harrisburg made return to school much easier. It is doubtful that we would have returned otherwise. My graduate work opened up a whole new and larger world of the mind and soul for me. In later years when I had opportunities to observe the ministries of my peers in Southwestern who did not go on to graduate school, I came to appreciate more than ever what it meant for me to go to Southern. My degree also made it possible for me to launch Baylor Extension, to serve as liaison with Catholic and Orthodox, and to direct and teach on seminary level after retirement. The struggle was painful and hard on my family, but now we are truly grateful for the enlarged education. It is strange how many times in life you think you have arrived in your education only to discover there is so much more you need to do.

But let me be more specific about my spiritual journey at Southern. There were two routes one could take in majoring in New Testament: English or Greek. The English route majored on the historical-critical approach to N.T. books, which at that time was not an issue in seminary education as it is today. However, I chose the Greek route, for I believed that it was the foundation of all other N.T. study. We were under the remarkable teacher, Dr. W. Hersey Davis, the associate of A. T. Robertson, who was Southern Baptist's major contribution to N.T. scholarship in America. I did not get to know him closely, but he instilled in all of us a rugged honesty with the text of Scripture. We developed a healthy skepticism of all humanly devised ways of imposing one's theological presuppositions on the text. He made us conscious of how easy it is to preach and teach only those passages which agree with your theology and gloss over or explain away those that challenge.

He had a keen insight into the riches of expository study, which has been a lifelong inspiration for my study and teaching.

Of almost equal influence were my two minors, one in the O.T. Prophets and the other in Social Ethics. In the Prophets Dr. Leo Green was only able to teach half of one semester due to chronic illness. But in that brief time, he opened to us the life and work of Jeremiah that has been a cornerstone of my ministry. At each lecture I would begin to take notes fully, but by the half-hour I would find myself lost in the wonder of Jeremiah and forget the notetaking. There have not been many worship experiences to compare with those seminars.

The seminars in Social Ethics under Dr. J. B. Witherspoon, who had taught Dad in Southwestern many years before, was the perfect counterpoint to the "flight into antiquity" of the Greek and the Prophets. For the first time I was introduced to contemporary sociologists of religion. It was a soul-enlarging experience, especially for its ecumenical influence. My experience in the chaplaincy had challenged my Southern Baptist parochialism seriously, as you can read in the evaluation essay, I wrote for the Home Mission Board's Division of Chaplains on my release from the army. But the Social Ethics seminars gave me much of the theological and philosophical bases for my later ministry in Interfaith Witness.

The pastorate at Phillips Memorial in Brandenburg was a rugged experience. Four days a week I commuted a hundred miles to school. At first, Jeanette tried to take some courses, but when Larry came bouncing into our lives it proved too much for her. She was already *de facto* pastor, while I preached on

Sundays and tried to move the deacons and most of the congregation slowly into the Twentieth Century. We learned many lessons of faith during those years, not the least of which was the providence of God in sparing John's life when he fell out of the car on a curve at fifty miles an hour. Also, we reestablished friendship with Harold Marsh who was my Baylor roommate and his new bride, Alta Lively. Their dedication and inventiveness in the Lord's work have always been an inspiration to us.

Pastorate in Marshall, Texas

Our move to Central Church, Marshall, in the Spring of 1949 came unexpectedly. I had finished my oral exam--the last one Dr. Davis was able to give because of his illness, which soon took his life--and was set to stay in Brandenburg until I had finished my thesis. In February the pulpit committee at Marshall called and invited me to come for a "trial sermon." Dr. S. H. Frazier, who had been pastor of First Baptist and was then Central's interim pastor, had recommended me. The committee and the church had such implicit faith in Dr. Frazier they hardly examined me at all. No questions were asked about my doctrinal beliefs, my goals, hardly anything but the necessary human questions involved in the move. I came with the proviso that I be allowed a month's leave of absence to return to Louisville and finish my thesis.

We spent a very hot month of July in a trailer house in a park. The work was very confining and tedious almost beyond enduring. We wondered many times then if it was worth it. But the experience of writing the thesis on "Parousia and Related Terms in the Greek N. T.," the discipline of scholarly research, the struggle to offer a real contribution in my chosen field, and finally the lonely rewards of satisfaction in producing a work that had little or no popular appeal -- all of these added up to a major contribution to my life. One of the disillusionments of my ministry at Marshall reflects both my naiveté and the anti-education bias of much of Southern Baptists. I soon discovered that my deacons cared little for the benefits of my graduate study in preaching and teaching. They coveted my doctoral degree to enhance the reputation of their church. It had split off First Baptist six years previously and they were still taking advantage of everything to justify their separate existence. However, my relationship with Dr. Arthur Rutledge, pastor of First Baptist, did much to improve the attitude of the two congregations. We had known each other in Southwestern when he was doing graduate study and I was an undergraduate. My friendship with him through the years since proved to be most rewarding. I had chosen to write on the three Greek words in the N.T. that referred to the Second Coming thinking that it would lead me into a full-scale study of the Book of Revelation and a thorough understanding of N.T. eschatology. To my surprise I discovered that none of the three words were used in Revelation, except the word, "revealing," and that only once in the first verse! It proved to be my final break with my premillennial, dispensationalist upbringing. I discovered how futile are all the humanly devised systems of eschatology and how they can usurp the mind and energies of Christians from the weightier matters of the Gospel. Once you have accepted the reality of the Second Coming and the Judgment and eternal bliss in heaven, all the rest is pure speculation. And your speculating is just as good as the next Christian's. But more later.

The two and a half years in Marshall were on the whole happy and profitable. We were blessed with much joy in the coming of Nancy just a few weeks before we left. There also we entered into school life with John enrolling in first grade. It was a 27-year commitment that I am not sure is completed yet!

Buckner Orphans Home

The call of Robert Cooke Buckner to become chaplain at Buckner Children's Home and dean of Bible in the Buckner Academy was also unsought. It proved to be a momentous step, but one that was a decided change in the direction of my ministry. The preaching and pastoring there were some of the most difficult of any of my career. The 600 children and 150 adult employees who were required to go to all religious activities proved about as difficult to minister to as my men in the army. Most of them came from broken homes with little or no cultural background, so education was doubly difficult. Except for my optional courses that I taught in the Academy I had a hard time communicating and motivating the students in the required courses in Bible and doctrine. But I learned some great lessons in making my teaching as simple as possible.

We had what looked like an ideal educational system: a fully integrated social structure of home, church, and school. But with poorly trained teachers and even less capable group parents we could not reap the supposed benefits of such an integrated society. Just a few years after Mr. Buckner was forced out of the leadership the system was changed so that the academy was closed, the children bussed to school and the older ones to neighboring churches. We learned that we may have been educating the children to some degree, but we certainly were not preparing them for life in the world.

Mr. Buckner had been very eager for me to devise a program of adult education for the workers in the Home. What A. A. Hyden and I came up with was no impressive or comprehensive curriculum, but it did give me a beginning vision of what could be done in adult education. And that soon became the dominant factor in my ministry.

In those years, 1951 to 1955, Dallas Baptist Association became very active in the centralized training schools for S. S. [Ed: Sunday School] and Training Union leaders. We would vie each year with Houston to see who could enroll the most, some years going as high as 15,000 in the schools in several parts of the city. Although they lasted only one week a year, they provided more in-depth Bible and doctrinal teaching for lay people than any other Baptist program. Still, the people expressed in many ways the hunger they had for much more. It was the seedbed for the later Baylor Extension.

We established some life-long friendships at Buckner with the Hydens, the Brownings, the McBrides and the Boldins, which have given much pleasure through the years. Gail came along to cheer our home and balance the sexes in the family. School for the boys in those formative years was not all that we could have desired, but they did the best they could under the circumstances. We began to take longer, more ambitious vacations. One on the Gulf Coast almost cured us of wanting ever to go to the beach again. But we were among the first to camp out on the new grounds of Glorieta Assembly, during its first full summer of operation. It was the beginning of our long love affair with the mountains of the West.

Baylor University Extension Division

As I have indicated, forces were beginning to impel me in the direction of adult education. A strange prevision of my future work with Catholics opened the first door. The Catholic Church announced a plan to establish the University of Dallas and appeal to the people to donate to the cause. We were concerned that many Baptists would unknowingly give to a Catholic school. I was chairman of the

committee appointed to investigate the proposed plan and inform our Baptist constituency. Our committee brought out all of the available facts about the proposed University, but it went further and called upon Dallas Baptists to see the need for a Baptist school. Evidently the Association was sufficiently impressed to ask me to serve as chairman of an education committee to investigate all the possibilities.

We knew the odds were against any new school, especially with some of our smaller schools in Texas already having a hard time. About that time, I became acquainted with the Howard Plan, an extension program of Howard College, later Samford University, operating throughout Alabama. I made a trip to investigate it and another program of intensive year-round teacher training operated by the First Baptist Church of Montgomery. Our committee soon realized that only a step-by-step program would be accepted either by the Association or the State Convention. We recommended that we approach Baylor and sell them on the Howard Plan, but only for Dallas Association. It was my dream that one day all of the Texas Baptist schools would have a unified extension program for training adult workers in our churches throughout the state.

It was a struggle to persuade President White and his deans, then the trustees to give the extension division the academic direction and accreditation if the Association would underwrite the financial cost above the small tuition we would charge (\$6/hour!). By that time, I was so deeply involved in the project that when the agreement was reached our committee felt that I should be the initial director. We used Fred White, C. E. Colton and Henry Kinkeade as center directors and other pastors and available teachers who could qualify by education and experience for university level teaching. My graduate work was beginning to pay off at last!

My teaching in Baylor Extension was both rigorous and rewarding. The discipline of preparing four lessons each week was especially hard, but it taught me much about organizing the content and making it understandable to students who had never had college courses in Bible. My family endured my erratic hours and the tension of my study at home. I know I was not too good a husband and father during those days. I am grateful for your patience and forbearance.

Soon after beginning Baylor Extension, two big family events occurred. We bought our first home. Although in bedrooms it was tight, we loved our new house and enjoyed living there in the hills and trees. Then soon along came Roger to add much excitement to our family. We will never forget Miss Duncan, our retired English professor of Marshall days, who came to live with us for about a month to help with the family after she was 80 years old.

We learned to live on faith, for in adult education you never know how your well-planned curricula is going to attract and hold students. However, adults, who have to invest heavily in time and energy from busy lives, brought to our classes an unparalleled motivation to their study. Their eagerness to learn left us teachers drained mentally and emotionally at the end of a two-hour session each night.

Believing that no area of biblical study was off limits to seeking lay people, we included courses in hermeneutics (study of methods of interpretation), Christology, even Greek for lay people. With a class of seminary graduates taking a refresher course in N.T. Greek, I devised a primer, using many of the Laubach techniques in teaching adults to read. It never was published, but I taught it twice in Baylor

Extension and once in Northwest Center. Students who stayed with it seemed to emerge with a better reading ability, though admittedly weak in grammar, than with the standard teaching methods.

I learned as much from teaching the introductory courses in Old and New Testament as from any. Since I was the Director, I began with the assumption that I would get less experienced teachers to teach those. I soon found that all of us had to teach such courses. The discipline of having to go straight through each Testament, skipping no troublesome passage, was of great value. I learned again how easy it is for preachers to pick and choose those scriptures that are congenial to their personal theology and either ignore or explain away those that do not. In a survey course, you cannot do that.

Spiritual growth was also furthered by the demands of seven interim pastorates I held during those five years. Hillcrest Baptist was a special challenge. Its previous pastor for 14 years was a full-blown dispensationalist, so much so that when I would read the scripture lesson I had to pause on occasion while the whole congregation turned the page of the Scofield Bible. When the committee I asked me to serve I tried to indicate that they would probably find me out-of-line from what they had been taught for so long. They indicated that they needed someone so badly who would trust their lay people and love them that they were in no position to argue with me about my theology. They had really suffered from the domineering leadership of their former pastor. It was a very rewarding experience.

By 1959 we had gotten involved in the movement to establish the new Baptist college in Dallas. We were committed from the outset of Baylor Extension to turn over our work to the new administration when it was launched. In the state Baptist affairs, there was a strong and almost desperate searching to find some way to save Decatur Junior College, which was about to close its doors from lack of support. It was in a backwater, geographically, culturally, and educationally, so its days were numbered. Our associational leadership, faced with the tremendous problems of launching a new school, decided to go along with the idea of moving Decatur's assets and administration to Dallas. The advantage that was so appealing was that it would start the new college with a ready-made accreditation and administration. But I knew our metropolitan culture would never respond to the president and faculty they would be bringing.

I tried with no success to persuade Baylor to establish a Junior College branch in Dallas that would provide Dallas area students with the basic liberal arts and enable the University at Waco to major on upper class and graduate programs. It also seemed to make sense to move the schools of business and law to Big D, where the students would profit much more from the business community there. It was of no use. The Baylor trustees had stars in their eyes about making Waco bigger than the University of Houston! And President White was afraid of appearing to compete with SMU. I was the only one who voted against asking Decatur to move to Dallas.

By that time other forces were combining to make us realize the handwriting was on the wall for our Extension program. The people were finding it more and more difficult to schedule classes that tended to compete with local church activities. Pastors were getting restless over the increased level of education of their leaders. The Association was not expanding our financial base after Baylor stopped further subsidies. And Baylor with other Baptist schools operating similar extension programs were increasingly under scrutiny by the accreditation associations. So, when Herbert Howard approached me in late 1959 about coming to Park Cities to launch an intensive adult education program, I felt it was providential in every aspect. It would give me a chance to test my ideals and visions of adult Christian

education in a local church capable of almost unlimited support. It would give to my family a much stronger church life and better educational opportunities. I went, not without some disappointment that Baylor Extension could no longer be my main ministry, but I did keep the privilege of teaching one course each term until the new school began in 1964.

In 1959 we had the first of many exciting vacations in the mountains around Telluride and then Cuchara. It was a time of real joy for the family even though the living was rough and the traveling long and arduous. The challenge to climb them, the delight in their majesty, and their peacefulness all have contributed to the molding of our lives. John and I will never forget the hurried trip back to Telluride at Thanksgiving in the Renault when we lost our brakes on Thanksgiving Day in Santa Fe and ran into subzero cold in Telluride. Our efforts to persuade the men of Park Cities to buy the old hydroelectric plant at Ames proved futile, and we always have regretted that we did not buy the three-story house on the corner lot for \$3600 then. It is probably worth \$150,000 today!

Park Cities Baptist Church

The Ministry at Park Cities Baptist Church opened up a whole new world for me. Up to then I had been very cozily in the mainstream of Southern Baptists' theological and educational life. But we needed to innovate to meet the challenge of well-educated, highly motivated people. The University of Christian Life (UCL) was my effort to provide a stimulating program of short courses in Bible, Christian doctrine, Christian history and ethics and contemporary life. For several years it proved highly successful, so much so that we had inquiries and adaptations by almost 200 churches throughout the Convention. It met our needs then, but in the long run I realized its weakness. On the part of the educator he had to keep ever-more stimulating courses to attract and hold the interest of the people. On the part of the "student" there were little or no demands upon his own earnest study and participation. It was too easy to listen to well-trained lecturers and lose the value of the educational experience. And it began to suffer from the competition of TV as the old Training Union had suffered from the automobile.

For me, however, it was a most challenging time. The programming was hard and the lecture preparation was even more difficult than in Baylor Extension, for we usually had no textbooks or assigned reading. I taught more than fifty different courses in the ten years there, many of them, like archaeology of the Old Testament way out of my field. But it stretched my mind and spirit even as the increasing burden of administrative problems added to my tense life. In an effort to provide some business experience for John and Larry I launched "Hastings and Sons Religious Books." It could have done well, if we had had the time and energy and know how it required. One year we actually grossed a little over \$10,000 in sales, but then lost it all in the disastrous flood that invaded our lower den and ruined \$500 worth of books.

It was an exciting time all round for the family during the Sixties. It was painful for me to take John to Hardin-Simmons as the first of the children to enter college. Then Larry had a wild experience one summer on a ranch in New Mexico and soon thereafter headed to the "culturally-deprived" region of Stillwater, Oklahoma, to enter Oklahoma State University. He lasted a year and a half and came home to enter SMU, a wise decision, we thought. Then Nancy took off for her summer AFS stay in Japan with Shizue and the Kaneko's. This experience involved us far more than we expected when as a result of their friendship Shizue came to live with us and go to school at Mary Hardin-Baylor and Hardin-Simmons. John and Helen married in Fellowship Hall of Park Cities in 1965 without the presence of her

parents in Brazil, but with the assistance of her large family and our good ladies of the Church. They soon entered Army [sic: Air Force] life and worked to complete their education. By this time Larry was heavily involved with Young Life and briefly started a career with them after he graduated from SMU. Mother and Dad moved from Knoxville to a little cottage on Fernald Street in the Garland area in 1967. So, it was a busy time for all.

With the coming of Bob Feather to the staff in 1964 I moved from Minister of Education to that of Adult Educational Director. Harold Hughens and his family had moved to Monroe, but I had already infected him with the mountain virus. We have kept up a most rewarding friendship since 1960.

The lightening of the administrative load was welcome, but Dr. Howard was still not satisfied with the slow growth of our Sunday School. He was ever conscious of the competition from First Baptist and from the subtle norms of most Baptists that measure success by how many buildings are erected and how much growth is produced. It was not enough that we had a unique ministry in both the city and the nation and that we had a vision of developing lay people for greater Kingdom influence in their world.

In the early Sixties we began to ride the wave of the lay renewal and priesthood of believer's movement. The team of lay leaders brought to our church by Howard Butt revolutionized our people and charged them with such dynamism that it frightened the pastor into cooling things off. The specter of Pentecostalism also worked against us during those days.

The Church had always been more open to ecumenical involvement than most. This along with Herbert's public stand for an ethical attitude toward race relations got us branded in the Convention as liberal. But as events proved, the image and the reality were quite different. When Dr. Howard finally got six months leave of absence to study in New York, we were just facing the crisis of sit-ins and the challenge of blacks to invade the white churches. Some of us on the staff hoped that we would follow an open policy, but the deacons became thoroughly scared of any radical elements. They had all kinds of caucuses and finally a showdown deacons' meeting at which they laid down almost impossible requirements for any black to be accepted as member. My voice was not all that influential, but I did give the deacons a written statement of my strong views for open membership to no avail. James Flamming, as minister in charge during the Howard absence, tried to stem the tide but eventually had to go along. It was a disillusioning experience, capped by Dr. Howard's opposition to our gentle chef, Roy Hayden, for his going to the Martin Luther King, Jr., funeral. He went somehow.

Our Church had good relations with the Jewish Temple down Northwest Highway. This proved to be one of the key factors in my growing interest in ecumenism. I became chairman of the Associational Committee on Work Related to Non-Evangelicals, as our Interfaith Witness Department used to be called. By that time, we were scheduling rabbis and priests to lecture in the UCL program.

I remember so well our neighbor, Mike Rizzone, whose daughter, Felicia, was an almost constant playmate with Roger and Gail. He used to come over when I was working in the backyard and tell me about the wonderful new world for Catholics that the Second Vatican Council was opening up. My attitude then was the old cliché, "The more Rome changes, the more she stays the same!"

Mrs. Dana Whorton, our strong advocate of ecumenism in the Church, finally got Jeanette and me involved in a living-room dialogue with Catholics, led by Father Bob Rehkemper. It was an eye-opening

experience. By 1968 I was heavily involved in the Associational Committee and attended a number of conferences led by Joe Dick Estes and my old classmates, Jase Jones and Bill McLin, of the department. Bill McLin came to my office one time and tried to talk me into joining their team at the Home Mission Board, but I was not interested at the time.

In 1968 I was invited to participate in the Conference on Religion and Science, sponsored by the Oak Ridge Association of Universities, at the atomic center at Oak Ridge, Tennessee. It was a ten-day affair that boasted three Nobel Prize winners among a galaxy of some of the most competent scientific communicators you would find anywhere. We all knew that it was a propaganda effort on the part of the scientific community to enlist the support of religious leaders throughout the nation for atomic development. But it was a great experience, especially since in addition to remarkable lectures, we were permitted hands-on inspection where possible of many of the labs at Oak Ridge. It was right down the alley of my life-long interest in science. I think I came away more intelligent than I could ever have been and more informed on the marvels of the human body in its genetic functions. We were exposed without apology and without pressure from both God-fearing and agnostic, if not atheistic scientists. Dr. William Pollard, our director and chief lecturer, went on to become ordained to the Episcopal ministry and is noted for his writings in the field of science and religion.

By the late Sixties, the tension on the staff at the Church had become so great that it was affecting our lives badly. Certain deacon elements were putting much pressure upon Dr. Howard to justify the work of our large staff. He required us to keep track every day of the phone calls, the visits, the trips by name and purpose and even time of day. Several of us began to look in other directions, though none of us were unhappy in the least with the warmth of response of the people generally.

My direction led me to two friends: Bob Bratcher of the American Bible Society [Ed: ABS], who had been a classmate in Southern in the Greek Department, and to Dr. Arthur Rutledge, my old friend from Marshall days, at the Home Mission Board. Bratcher was encouraging, but after several weeks he informed me that due to financial strictures the ABS was not putting on any more translation consultants.

Interfaith Witness at the Home Mission Board

About that time Dr. Rutledge sent Hugo Culpepper, Director of the Missions Division, of the Home Mission Board, to talk with me about a position with the Department of Work Related to Non-Evangelicals. He suggested either the field of Jewish or Catholic relations. Although I probably had more experience at that time with Jews, I felt that both Jase Jones, as one of the field directors and long-time expert in Judaism, and Joe Dick Estes, director of the department, were all that was needed in that field. My growing interest in Roman Catholics I knew ran counter to all my early experience and training, but I felt that by the grace of the Lord I should tackle that immense field. I was totally unprepared for the way that ministry developed.

It proved to be an auspicious choice. I was greatly encouraged by my close friends both in the Church and in the ecumenical circles. We knew that it would be a fateful decision for the family. We almost waited too long to move for the sake of Gail and Roger's schooling. The sudden change to a much smaller and weaker school system and to a more limited church program was not good. But the Lord was opening up a challenging new ministry that I could not turn down.

I hope my family has forgiven me for the hardships the move entailed. It was especially hard upon Jeanette, for the need to occupy our new house on Carriage Way put tremendous pressure upon her. It was also difficult for Mother and Dad. Mother was already in a nursing home in her ninetieth year. Fortunately, Larry and Dad's many friends in Park Cities Church provided him with much-needed support. When she died in September, we soon saw that Dad could not live alone at his age of 86, so we moved him into the up-stairs bedroom. We had a full house with Gail and Roger in the bedrooms downstairs and my study in the den. The Department of Work Related to Non-Evangelicals (as it was called until 1971) had been established in 1966 by Hugo Culpepper, Director of Missions, with Joe Dick Estes as first director. It combined the old offices of Jewish Evangelism and Catholic Information. Bill Burke, a priest converted in the Fifties in an independent church, who later became a Southern Baptist, had joined the HMB staff in the early Sixties. He was very knowledgeable and effective in informing Baptists about Catholics, but by reason of his conversion he was unable to relate to Catholics except on a private relationship. He retired in 1968 upon the death of his wife and moved to Pennsylvania. I had known him in conferences and knew that his strategy was altogether conversionist. He had modified his hardline views of the Church somewhat as a result of the changes that were beginning to take place after Vatican II, but he was increasingly ill at ease with the more ecumenical stance of Joe Dick Estes.

This background is important to understand the change in strategy which my coming to the office made possible. On arrival no one, Dr. Rutledge, Hugo Culpepper, nor Joe Dick sat down with me and said this is our policy and this will be your strategy. I was both overwhelmed with the new sense of freedom in ministry, which had almost dried up at Park Cities, and with the uncertainties of my new role. To add to the frustration within three months Dr. Culpepper had left for Southern Seminary and Joe Dick had resigned for a pastorate in Deland, Florida. Soon Tommy Starkes was promoted to be director. He had a brilliant mind and was the most effective communicator, especially with college students, we ever had. But he was young and untried as an administrator. Through his four years we got along well together while he endured the tedium of an administrator at the Board with increasing impatience.

All of that added up to my having to work out my strategy largely on my own. I came thinking that my chief role would be still to inform Baptists of contemporary Catholic life and practice so that they could be effective witnesses. However, because our department's work was related to Jews, Catholics (and soon the Orthodox), as well as the sects and the ever-burgeoning cult groups of the Seventies, we soon realized that a single, conversionist strategy needed enlarging. We tried to broaden the meaning of witness, beyond soul-winning and converting others to become Baptists. We needed to respond to different faiths in particular ways that would enhance our witness rather than defeat it. All of this I began to develop in my early conferences. But I was still thinking that my sole mission was to Baptists. I was not prepared for the new eventuality.

Meanwhile, that first year was rugged on all of us and demanded the utmost in faith, love and patience. Nancy and Shizue left for Japan in September amid much anxiety over visas that arrived just barely in time. Mother died the same month and in November we moved Dad from Presbyterian Hospital in Dallas to our home. Two days after Christmas Jeanette went in the hospital for breast surgery. When I got the word that her tissue proved positive and that she would have to have a radical mastectomy, I was nearly devastated. By God's providence Buren Smith was with me at the time. I shall always be grateful for the wonderful support he gave me in that crisis. John and Helen spent a couple of weeks with us and helped immensely when we brought Jeanette home.

We had a full schedule of travel and conferences. Since I had three over the Super Bowl weekend in Miami, Roger and I went, but were disappointed in the loss of Dallas to Baltimore. Soon Dad was in the hospital for two sessions with an infection of the bladder. The strain on the family with my irregular schedule was especially hard on Jeanette. We learned to live one day at a time on faith and pure grit.

My first national Catholic conference was in September 1970, for the Liturgical Conference in Louisville. There I heard Sister Jane Marie Richardson in a marvelous address on prayer. Our friendship begun then has deepened and enriched our lives greatly. In 1974 she conducted a prayer retreat that Jeanette and I sponsored privately for about 20 of our friends.

1971 was the beginning of the new phase of my strategy. We began in February the series of regional dialogues that brought together Baptist and Catholic leaders from several states, the first being at Daytona Beach for the southeast. This beginning made possible almost all of our strategy of getting Baptist and Catholics together on all levels, from the national Scholars' Dialogues begun in 1977 to the two-church dialogues on the local level, largely initiated by Father Joe O'Donnell of the Glenmary Home Missioners.

In May we had a three-day prayer retreat for Baptist and Catholic pastors at the Monastery at Conyers. We found a growing spirit of spiritual oneness and mutual trust. Then, a remarkable thing happened. Father Frank Ruff, the Glenmary who from the beginning in Atlanta had taken me under his wing and introduced me to the Archbishop and many Catholic leaders and different types of meetings, in one of our prayer sessions asked us to pray for the Pope and the coming Synod of Bishops' meeting in Rome in September. He said the Synod was to decide the lifestyle and ministry of priests for decades to come.

I thought about the challenge to pray for the Pope. This preacher who was raised in Catholic Louisiana would never dream of such a thing. But Frank's earnestness was persuasive. On my return to the office I realized that if the Synod meant that much I had to get over there and find out first-hand what was going on. It was a bold hope, but fortunately our Trustees at the time were much more open to boldness than presently. At Glorieta in August they approved my going. It was an eye-opening, mind-blowing experience. I could only go as a special correspondent for Baptist Press, for the sessions were always closed to the press and outside observers. We had reporters for twice-daily news briefings and some devious underground sources that supplemented those. It was a terrific opportunity for me to get a view of world-wide Catholicism and broaden my perspective accordingly. What I was not prepared for was the response of Catholic leaders to my going to the Synod. Generally, it was amazement that Southern Baptists should be so concerned about their world affairs that they would allow me to go and support me in the work as full-time liaison with them. I was soon discovering as many opportunities to speak at many different kinds of Catholic meetings about our Baptist views as I was to Baptist conferences. As you well know I was able to follow with the three succeeding Synod meetings through my last in 1980. Our family situation did not permit me to take Jeanette the first year, but we were able to arrange for her to go each of the succeeding years. We were able to follow the three weeks of Synod meetings with about two weeks of touring of Europe. It was a boon we could never have had any other way.

By this time, I was developing the new strategy with both Roman Catholics and the Greek Orthodox. The latter was a special challenge since the culture and theology and religious style was so different from what I had been learning from my Catholic experiences. I had from the outset determined that I

would not make my research into either religion an academic one alone. It demanded that I immerse myself in the life of the people as much as their welcome and my integrity would permit.

It was hard at first to overcome my ingrained prejudices from my youth and my education. Along with that I had always been impatient with religious ostentation and pageantry. I even wrote an essay in Southwestern on "The Dangers of Worship"! I had always held that Catholic worship made too little demand upon the worshipper for genuine understanding of what they were doing. It was easy to be a Catholic, for one does not have to decide on conduct or faith. It is all spelled out in detail. One knows exactly whether he is or is not acting as a true believer. Conversely, I held that our Baptist way of life is the hardest because the priesthood of believers demands that each one decides in the light of conscience and the inner Spirit of God what to believe and how to act. Contact with such as Frank Ruff and Jane Marie Richardson and others began to make me realize that I was not giving the individual his right to a fair witness of the reality of faith. As I compared practices, I realized ever more deeply that shortcomings in practice and weaknesses of religious systems are far more common to all denominations than appears on the surface. All ritual is the product of traditions built up over many decades. Whether they are meaningful or superficial or even hypocritical depends upon the faith and dedication of the individual and not so much upon the system.

Every dialogic experience I had led me to a deeper examination of my own faith and practice as a Southern Baptist. We have a great heritage and I am greatly influenced by and indebted to those pioneers of religious liberty and soul freedom which are ours. In spite of frequent criticisms during the first few years by Baptists of what I was doing, I became convinced that our Baptist way of life was more than ever precious to me. It had the bad side effect of making me highly critical of the growing ways I saw developing in our Convention that failed or even denied our Baptist heritage. But without my dialogic experiences I never could have written with such fervor "Introducing Southern Baptists."

Paradoxically I became more and more dedicated to an ecumenism that would build upon a solid biblical basis and preserve the best of the different family heritages of Protestants. I became more and more committed to the ideal of the Kingdom rather than the denomination. This has enabled me to accept all of the excellencies of both Roman Catholic and Orthodox life without having to wait until the errors I still perceive are all purified. Some of my perceptive friends have pointed out that one reason I am so comfortable around those peoples is that they offer no threat to me, either in proselyting or in my status. Maybe so, and I could wish that Baptists were not so critical of each other as to keep us ever on our guard when we are together. It is truly wonderful when the Spirit of Christ prevails to such extent that people can be themselves without masks and without anxious defenses.

I am particularly grateful to my supervisors who made it possible for me to have two brief sabbatical study periods. The first was at Washington, D.C., in the summer of 1974 and the second at the Ecumenical Institute at St. John's College in Minnesota. Jeanette was able to go along on the latter where we had a fine apartment on the shores of a beautiful lake. The daily rubbing of minds of the seven scholars from almost as many denominations was another enlarging experience for me. I had the opportunity of doing most of the writing for my book that was published in 1981 by Paulist Press and doing the spade work for my manuscript on "Harmony," which still has not been blessed with a publisher.

Since this is supposed to be the story of a "spiritual journey," I have had to limit family events to those that I felt were essential to understanding the journey. I must take note of the "wedding year" of 1973, for each one was a remarkable spiritual experience. Nancy and Ken married in June in a unique worship experience in the Manhattan Baptist Church on the U.N. Chapel. We will not soon forget Ken Medema singing as he led the wedding party into the church, nor Shizue's singing that melted all our hearts, nor Grandpa receiving the communion at the altar from his granddaughter.

Then Shizue and Mike married at Thanksgiving time in Abilene in a service wholly dictated by Mike! In December Larry and Linda married in her home in a beautiful setting. Our international family was beginning to fill out wonderfully. By then Gail was in school in Samford, the only one of our children to graduate from the same school in which they entered! Family members must have caught my wanderlust by then. At 90 years of age Dad was able to realize a life-long dream and go with a group of seniors to the Holy Land. Roger was unhappy at West Georgia College and moved to Dallas to find work while living with Larry, who had just returned from Minnesota where he and Linda had spent a miserably cold winter. Dad was feeling more and more lonesome since Jeanette was working full-time at Jefferson Avenue Baptist Church (since 1972) and I was on the road so much. He talked us into letting him return to Monroe, where he had a small room in a hotel a block from his old church and as he said "close enough so I can walk to the bank, the drug-store, the hospital and the funeral home!" It was the first time Jeanette and I had lived together alone! Gail and Steve ushered in 1977 with their marriage in the Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, where Steve had been part-time youth director. It was Granddad's last family occasion, for soon thereafter he broke his hip trying to get out of bed and had to undergo surgery. He came through the repair fine, but it took so much out of him at his age that he never was able to walk again except a little with a walker. In one year, I made ten trips to Monroe, saw him safely in a good rest home in south Monroe and trusted him to the Lord and to my dear friend and helper, Harold Hughens. It was difficult in the fall of 1977 to leave the country for six weeks with Dad there. I know he never forgave us for not bringing him "home," but our circumstances made such impossible.

Dad died in February of 1978 at the age of 93 just at the time we were making plans for Roger's wedding in Dallas. It was a time of sorrow and of rejoicing--both at the funeral service and at the wedding the next day in one of Dallas' worst ice storms.

Another remarkable family experience was the double ordination of Ken and Nancy by Oakhurst Baptist Church in Decatur. It was a thrilling service, marked by the evidence of the change of attitude of Ken's father. As a conservative deacon from South Louisiana he had said that he would participate with us in the reading of Scripture, but he felt he could not lay hands on a woman in ordination. But he was caught up in the emotion and spirit of the occasion and also participated in that high moment with the rest of the congregation. Jeanette and I have never had any problem with the scriptural justification of women's ordination as you will be able to see from my later discussion of my theology of the Word of God.

My final year at the Home Mission Board was very rewarding. I could not ask for more fulfilling experiences. In the Spring Paulist Press published *Introducing Southern Baptists: Their Faith and Their Life*, which was well received, particularly among my Catholic friends. In the summer I had a final conference for advanced Interfaith Witness Associates at Ridgecrest, bringing together the six friends who had worked with us the longest. As the year drew to a close, Glenn Igleheart led our Department to a retirement banquet that brought many friends together, including Harold Marsh, Glenmary and Monastery priests, as well as many from our Division at the Board. The Glenmarys, with whom I

worked for many years, gave us a separate banquet, which was greatly appreciated. They not only are dear friends, but they have had a profound affect upon my Christian life.

Most of all I deeply appreciated the retirement reunion of our family at the Hughens' home in Monroe during the Christmas holidays. The highlight of the occasion was a "This is Your Life" presentation that all my children worked up and Larry served as master of ceremonies. The low point was jerking the tablecloth at our lovely meal. Then I had to break in a window because I had left the key in the house. I broke a chair arm in climbing in!

Retirement and Thereafter

We entered our first year of retirement fully in the dark as to where my ministry might lead. I knew that because of much travel in other states and few friends in Atlanta Association I could not count on much locally. In the Spring I got a call from Dr. Morgan Patterson, Dean of Golden Gate Baptist Seminary in California, asking me to serve the coming school year as Director of the Northwest Center of the Seminary in Portland, Oregon. Our long-time friend, Bill Hendricks, had recommended me, much to my surprise. I knew that it would be a difficult assignment for several reasons: it had been 17 years since I had been in a Baylor-type classroom, so any courses I taught would have to be brought up to date and raised to seminary level. Also, I knew the Northwest Baptist climate was very conservative and I was not sure how the students would respond to my "progressive" theology. Although I had had much experience in both Buckner Academy and Baylor Extension teaching students with poor educational background, I was not prepared for the low level of ability and spiritual maturity that I found. Many of the students had to qualify even to take the nondegree program we offered. Some of them had not been Christian more than a year or two and many had come from other than Southern Baptist backgrounds.

It was a sore strain on us from the standpoint of being so far away from our family, especially at the time of Roger and Annette's divorce. The work was physically and psychically exhausting, for we had to schedule all of our 15 hours of courses on Mondays and Tuesdays because our students all had part-time jobs as well as church leadership and family obligations. I taught seven hours each Tuesday. Even though I tried to take care of my health in the fall of the second year I suddenly lost so much stamina I could not make it through the three-hour night course. The diagnosis was diabetes, which fortunately I have been able to control with a minimum of oral drugs.

The students responded to my teaching beyond my expectations. One of the great joys of those two years was that because I stayed one year longer than my predecessors, I was able to see the fine growth of many of the students. As I entered more and more into their lives, I came to love them and appreciate the sacrifices they were making in their zeal to get as much education as possible. We also made many friends in among the staff and other leaders of the Northwest Convention. We could have stayed a third year, but we needed to get home and I wanted to get to writing "Harmony Among Christians."

Our work permitted many short trips in the Northwest. It is truly one of the most beautiful areas of God's earth we have known. We were two hours from Mount Hood in the Cascades and two hours from the Oregon coast. Moreover, the location plus the added income enabled us to make our once-in-a-lifetime tour of China and Japan. Although Red China was just opening up to the restricted tourist tours, it was an eye-opening experience, our first in a Communist country. At the close of the second year we came back via the Canadian Rockies and Yellowstone National Park, two of our long ambitions. At the end of

the two years we added the flight to Anchorage and the cruise ship on return to Vancouver. We can never be grateful enough to God and to the patient understanding of our family ("We are spending our children's inheritance!") for such experiences.

Upon our return to East Point I bought my Kaypro computer and plunged immediately into writing "Harmony." I had the full encouragement of my Paulist Press editor and the tentative agreement of Father Avery Dulles, one of the outstanding Catholic theologians of America and my long-time friend, to write a foreword. In January of 1985 I finally finished the manuscript and sent it to Paulist. For weeks I heard nothing while at the same time trying to negotiate with Broadman Press of our S. S. [Ed: Sunday School] Board to accept joint publication. Finally, in May my Paulist editor informed me that because they had suffered so much criticism from the Vatican for publishing a posthumous work on ecumenism of the eminent European theologian, Father Karl Rahner, with which they disagreed, Paulist could not possibly accept a work by a Protestant author. Then Broadman informed me that because of increasing pressure from the fundamentalists in our Convention they could not publish a work which would be criticized as leading to Church unity! Since then I have had the manuscript in more than a dozen publishers, but none have responded beyond commending me and referring me to other houses.

"Harmony" was intended both as my major work resulting from my ministry in interfaith relations and as an appeal to Baptists and ecumenists alike to find a true biblical basis for cooperation. Its rejection on all sides has been a serious trial of faith in God's direction and my acceptance in my own communion. I could always publish it privately, but marketing it is almost beyond my ability and patience and such would have only limited distribution.

Soon, however, I was challenged again with teaching two courses for the Spring term at Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C. "Contemporary Catholic Theology" demanded much preparation, for although I had tried to familiarize myself in the field while active in my work, I did not have the time and hardly the background for this much deeper study. In about nine months I read more than thirty books of Catholic theology and tried to understand the highly involved philosophical background such entails. Then when I started teaching the course, I found among the eight students lots of interest and zeal but very little background. Most of them had had no philosophy in college or seminary nor even the basic historical theology that would have helped greatly. I was forced to prepare full lectures for the first six weeks in the two-hour class.

The other course was somewhat easier: "Doing Missions in the Ecumenical Context." I had sixteen students there and most were sympathetic to my approach. We made many friends among the faculty and staff of the Seminary while living in a nice apartment provided for the visiting professor of missions. One great loss to us was the death of Professor John Steely, who had been a friend since my days at Southern Seminary. He was one of the most beloved and respected professors of the school. His loss was deeply felt also by our dialogue teams with whom he had been a vital part for almost ten years.

This brings to a close my "spiritual journey" up to the present. In reviewing this I am amazed at the number of friends and teachers who have influenced my life in very definite ways. I have counted 32 of them. And there are undoubtedly more whom I have missed. It points up a vital truth of the Kingdom that God works his will upon us largely through our friends, those who enter to some degree into the relationships of mind and spirit. We sin against them when we try to use them to our advantage, but we also ignore their role in the plan of God to our great hurt.

By no means can I say that "I have arrived into full spiritual maturity." But I have come a long way from a timid, only child whose Mother bought all his clothes for him even into college years. It has been an exciting, if sometimes difficult journey, for I have proved over and over again the hand of the Lord upon my life and that of my family. Many things I would have changed if I were doing them over, but that is just the point of growing into maturity: you never can borrow on the future for wisdom for the present. You can only rely upon faith and the grace of God that always is available to rework our lives when we sin or make dumb mistakes.

The major human factor in my journey has been the accompaniment of Jeanette. When we married, she seemed to be sensitive to the disparity in our formal education. We regretted that our family circumstances did not allow us to pursue to the end her college degree. But she was in no whit behind me in her godly faith and practical Christian service.

When first married I proposed that we arise early each day and spend time studying the Bible and biblical history. Neither one of us is a morning person, so it proved futile. It did not take many years for us to realize that our growth together in the Spirit would come in the heat of Christian service far more than in book study, important though that has been in my ministry. We have grown together in our ideals, our way of viewing the Christian life, in biblical understandings, in all essential Christian concerns. I have reminded her many times of my gratitude for our oneness in all this. We have seen too many cases of preacher couples who were not compatible in their Christian views and ideals. Life would have been miserable for us if we had not this sense of unity. And it is the basis of the human unity we experience in our married life, the enjoyment we have in each other, in seeing beauty in God's world, in delighting in the experiences of life together.

Our children have played only a slightly less influential role in my life to that of Jeanette. Each of you has been unique in your approach to life. Each has been a fresh challenge to parenthood and a new delight. I am keenly aware of the disappointments to you that some of my decisions and my disciplines have brought, and for these I ask your forgiveness. But you have honored us with your lives and your service in so many different roles in your own spiritual journeys. And we are grateful.

Truly I can say with the Psalmist, "The lines have fallen unto me in pleasant places." Every day is a gift from God. "This is the day the Lord hath made. Let us be glad and rejoice in it!" With Paul I cannot say, "forgetting the things which are behind," for they bring back too many grateful memories. But I can say "pressing on to those things ahead," for with Browning I believe "the best is yet to be." Heaven's reward will be pure *lagniappe*, as the Cajuns say, for I have already been richly rewarded in this life and known more fulfillment than many are permitted in this world of injustice and ingratitude.

So--"Go with God!"

Ed Note: This was complete in February 1998