

The life of Wesley Lampe

How far can you remember back into your childhood? I don't think anyone can remember being born. At least I never heard of one. Almost everyone can remember kindergarten, the school, and maybe their teacher.

Chapter 1

I don't know how old I was but I do remember two occasions while I was still crawling. I was probably about one year old. Back then, 1939, people had their milk delivered to their homes by a milk-man. He would drive down the street early each morning and place milk that had been ordered into what was called a milk-chute. This was a box on the porch or built into the side of the house with an opening from the outside so the milkman could leave the milk and an opening from the inside so the milk could be taken from the inside without going out. My parents had one of these built-in milk-chutes. They would place the money for their order in the chute before going to bed. The next morning the milkman would take the payment and leave the milk. One morning as I was crawling around the kitchen, I explored the milk-chute. I opened the inside door and climbed inside. Just then, their milkman opened the door from the outside to take their payment. I guess I remember this occasion because of the up-roar it caused. Did the milkman think my parents were leaving me as their payment? Or did he think someone left me there for my parents to adopt? I don't know but I do remember my dad lost no time in grabbing me out of that chute. That was one of my first adventures. At the same house there was a vacant lot next door where they were beginning to build a house. A large pile of sand was delivered just next to our driveway which ran beside our house. It must have been Sunday as my parents were both home and all dressed up. Some how I got out of house, crawled down the wooden steps, crawled across the cement driveway, and half way

up the sand pile. Again someone ran and grabbed me. I'm sure I was told to never leave the house like that again on my own. Those were my first two adventures. My biggest adventure came later on my three wheeled tricycle. Mother had been telling me how I was related to the trail blazer, Daniel Boone. I guess I took that to mean that I was destined to be an adventurer. One morning I told Mom I was going to explore the neighborhood. I had already been to the end of the block on our street, Elkhart, but the rest was unknown territory. "Don't expect me home for a while because I am going to go all the way around the block." How many parents could let a three year old do that today? I started to the left, went to the corner, turned left on Rossiter, went two houses, turned left on Kenosha, went about twenty houses, turned left on Beacons field, again for two houses and then left again on Elkhart and some eighteen houses back home. My great adventure was completed. I proved you could go around the block and end up back at home. I didn't get lost; I found my way back home. But what I thought might take all day took maybe 45 minutes. I some times wonder if maybe my mother was not following me at a distant that I could not see her. But then, how could she be in the kitchen cooking when I came back to tell her of my great accomplishment? My mother was encouraging me to not be afraid. She was not following God back then but I believe she learned that sense of fearlessness from her Dad, my grandpa Heath. He was a man of God. More about him in a later chapter. What did I learn from these? Maybe I can see now that I always wanted more. Something inside of me was not content. Maybe I always felt I needed to adventure on to find what would really make me happy, where I could rest content. Someone has said that each one of us have a "God shaped hole in our soul that only God can fill." The happiest day of my life was when that hole in my soul was filled. My crawling and tricycle peddling was just the beginning of my search for what life is about.

Chapter 2 Dad

“Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

”What do I remember about my Dad, Reuben Lampe? I have one very warm memory from my early childhood. Saturday night was bath night. If I got dirty during the week, I would take what we called a sponge bath; mix some hot water from the stove with cold water in the sink, soak a cloth, rub soap and rinse. But Saturday was the day we fired up our wood-burning water heater. That gave us hot water for a week’s worth of laundry and then three baths. Mine was first. After playing with my boats, ducks and other toys, the water was pretty dirty. “Time to wash your hair,” came from another room. I would soap my hair from the tub but I didn’t like soap in my eyes so I was not a very good rinser. Then would come Dad to play “thunder storm” with me. He would run clean water into a jug, make the sound of thunder (which meant time to close my eyes tight) and pour the water over my head. I guess I enjoyed it because he enjoyed it and we laughed together. “Oh here comes another storm.” Did my father love me? I have many reasons to convince me of his love but, in my heart, this picture of bath-time warms me most. There was never any doubt who was the intellectual leader in our family; it was Mom. Neither was there any doubt about my Dad’s love and devotion to my Mom. Mom made the call when I needed a spanking but Dad carried it out. It would take place in my bedroom or, more often, in the basement. The hard ones were in the basement. Mom knew when I needed one and I can only remember one time I disagreed. Dad did what I always recalled he really hated. When it was over, he would take me to himself and tell me to please behave myself so he would never have to give me another one. Sad but that would usually only work for a short time. I remember asking Mom and Dad many times for a brother. I wanted a brother to play with and go on adventures with. I was seven when I finally got my brother Bill.

One problem, however, he came as a baby. Instead of a play mate, I learned how to change diapers, and warm up a bottle. I still remembered how to change diapers when our first-born, John, came along. I remember one time, thinking it was my duty to get Bill to supper, that I broke or pulled his arm out of socket. Seven years is just too much difference. It was not until high school and I had my motorcycle that I remember much bonding. There were times I wanted to go for a ride after school and I had no-one to go with me except Bill. He was probably a fourth grader by then and just loved to ride behind me on the huge saddle seat of my Indian Motorcycle. He never got tired and, no matter what he was doing, he was always ready for a ride, the faster the better. I bring up Bill at this time because he was part of my next remembrance about Dad. Once Bill started school, Mom started working. She had a job with the U S government communications corps. She worked a lot of Sundays and used the only car we owned. Dad never missed Sunday School which meant we had to walk the couple miles to Church and back home. I had many excuses for staying home, "Mom isn't going," but they never worked. Dad made sure I got to Sunday School even if he had to carry me. I only remember one subject of conversation on those walks. "Wesley, how is your soul and relationship with God?" Over and over it came, every Sunday walk. "Oh, I'm fine Dad." It seemed like he always addressed me. Why did he not get on Bill? Maybe Bill was too young. Probably, Dad could see I was the one turned and heading in the wrong direction. A Christian classmate saw that also and even wrote it in my yearbook. "To Wes, a great guy, turned and heading in the wrong direction." One night, late, I was coming home drunk. I saw a light was still on in the house, so I drove around until it went dark. I fumbled with the key, opened the front door, and slowly entered. As I felt my way in the dark, I stumbled and fell in the living room. What did I stumble over? It was Dad. He had fallen asleep on his knees in the living room. I had no doubt what he had been doing and who he was praying for. I never forgot that. Later, at University, going to my room late from the library, I would hear

the Bell Tower strike the hour and remember what Dad was probably doing at home. Dad didn't seem at home in the city, Detroit. He grew up on a farm near Carbondale, Illinois. When the Great Depression hit, he took off to go west and work wheat farms. He never returned home. He didn't want to be a farmer. Instead, he went to school to learn book-keeping. There, he met Mom, got married and moved to Detroit. His first job in Detroit was on the assembly line at GM. Men would just show up at the gate and wait for a foreman to come out and pick the men needed for that day. At the end of the day, the men would be paid; the pay back then was \$1 per day. Later, the Unions were formed and wages went up but it seemed like every other year Dad would be out of work for months on strike. He tired of being out of work and found another job in a small tool and die shop. But before he found that job, he worked with his cousin building houses. It was Dad that built our new house next door. I wasn't old enough to help but I watched and learned all I know about building houses. I have only used that knowledge once; I don't plan to ever use it again. Building a house is hard work when you are 70 plus. How can I sum up my Dad's influence on my life? He was not like the other men in the neighborhood. He didn't smoke or drink or hunt or fish. He didn't do any "cool" things. Dad was a plain man that feared God and worked very hard to do what was right. You could depend on Dad. I don't remember him ever making a promise that he didn't keep. He was the kind of dad God knew I needed. I believe it was God that made him that kind of dad and my prayer would be that God would make me that kind of dad. "Well done thou good and faithful ..."

Chapter 3 - Mom

"Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old ..."

Daniel Boone, Dan'l as the family called him, had a brother. That brother had a daughter, Sarah Boone. Sarah married John Wilson

and had a daughter, Mary. Mary married Levi Heath, a Baptist minister. Edwin Heath, my Grandpa, came along in 1867. He married my Grandma, Emma Jane Graham and had 7 children. Three of them died as infants. Mom was a twin; her twin brother was one that didn't make it. Mom was left as one of 4 daughters; she was number 3. She was the only one that did not choose to settle in their home-town. I don't have any warm "fuzzies" when I think of my childhood with Mom. She practiced "tough love." The best description of Mom would probably be "a person to respect." Mom was a reader; she was my teacher, not regarding reading and writing; she was aiming at my heart, to mold my life. Her stories were usually about her relatives who had wasted their lives or who had accomplished something. Those who had wasted their lives did so by a bad marriage, drunkenness or gambling. Those who succeeded did so by education and choosing the right friends. Every lesson seemed to end with, "Wesley, think for yourself; don't just follow your friends." I think she wanted me to be a doctor, or a lawyer. She wanted it "bad." It seemed her life was invested in me and what I would become. When they decided to move, the main reason seemed to be the quality of schools. The night I told Mom and Dad that I had given my heart to the Lord to follow him was a night I will not forget. It was one of the few times my Mom ever yelled at me out of anger. "You are wasting your life. Only dumb people filled with superstition go to those little churches." I really don't remember the exact words but that was the gist of it. I wonder, now, what my Dad must have been thinking as he sat there saying nothing. Now Mom knew a lot about those little churches. Her dad was a founder of little Baptist churches. But Mom had rebelled from her Dad and his faith in Jesus Christ. She told me a story once about how she and some of her young friends used to stand outside of the little Pentecostal Church and make fun of their "silly" worship. She had left home for the nearest big town, Paducah. She and Dad were married in the Episcopal Church there. Years later, if she ever went with us to Dad's little Baptist Church, it was more for a show of respect; it

was what “good Christian people do once in a while.” But before Terrie and I left for Europe to work with O. M., I noticed Billy Graham literature on her reading table. She started talking about how she was somehow a distant relative to him. It was while Terrie and I were away in Europe that we got news that Mom was joining Dad’s little Baptist Church and had gotten baptized. Not a little sprinkle on her forehead or a cupful over her head but a complete dunking. My Mom, with all the respect she demanded, got dunked? I’m not sure I really believed it until we got home and saw a new Mom. She had placed her trust in the death of Jesus Christ on the cross for her sin. My Dad’s prayers were answered. Our prayers were answered. My Grandpa’s prayers, life and teaching had not been in vain. Mom was a new person; it seemed to me that she was much more relaxed; she seemed more real, genuine. Her battle with God and her Dad was over. But even though she had rebelled from her Dad and his faith, I believe, looking back now, that most of what Mom had been teaching me was really what she had learned from her Dad. There were many things she taught me. Over and over by word and example she taught me that when you buy something, you are not wasting money when you pay extra for quality. She always encouraged me to invest in bigger things. “Invest in property because it increases in value with time. Never rent if you can buy. Pay cash when you can because you don’t want to pay interest but invest your money to earn interest.” Mom went with me to the bank to set up my own savings account; I was too young to go by myself. It was Mom that guided me, as a child, to buy my own wood-working equipment and set it all up in our basement. The dust from that saw and sander filled the basement; footprints appeared in that dust on the floor. But thanks to our forced-air furnace, the dust also worked its way upstairs. Mom complained but never shut it down. However, we did start turning off the furnace whenever I was working downstairs. I guess Mom saw it as part of my personal development. Later, I found these principles in the Bible. I wonder if Mom thought about that? I don’t believe that would have made

any difference. She was not teaching me theology; she was teaching me from her heart, her life, things she had learned from her own childhood. Kids learn from observation. They can rebel but they can't erase what they have experienced. They may not even be aware of what they are learning. Looking back now, what was the most important lesson I learned from Mom? I think Mom made me an adventurer. Mom was, herself, searching for something. It was a new dress or a bigger house or a new carpet or a new car. I could see that none of these things ever seemed to satisfy. She got whatever she wanted but then began to want something else. I began to realize, at least in my head, that life is more than things. I didn't go along with being a doctor but I was stuck with "what is worth living for? We are all dying. Is there anything worth dying for?" Mom didn't go that far until late in her life but I'm thankful she gave me that lesson early.

Chapter 4 - Grandmas and Grandpas

"for as much as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord ..."

Grandma Heath was the silent partner, "the wind underneath Grandpa's wings." Grandpa was the leader. He was well educated with a Masters Degree back in the 1800s. During the week, he ran the sawmill. But on Saturday evenings, he would let his workers drive home in the company horse-drawn wagons so they could bring their families to Church on Sunday. I only remember a time or two with my Grandpa Heath. I remember he always wanted me to sit on his lap but he smelled bad. He had had an accident at the sawmill and was crippled. The ointment he rubbed on his hip for pain smelled. The whole house smelled of it. Maybe that is why I mostly remember him on the porch in his rocking chair. He liked me. How would a child know that? Because he made me a corncob pipe. He didn't want to get me started on tobacco so he packed the pipe with coffee and lit it for me. I remember going

around the house puffing on that pipe and showing everyone how adult I was. I was probably about 8 years old. By the way, I don't remember having that pipe when we got back to Michigan; I guess the pipe never got packed. Funny how little things like that stick in your memory. I was still up in Detroit when Grandpa died but my aunts and cousins related details of his death. He was sick in bed and called the family together. He wanted to sing. Maybe it was some of the hymns he himself had written. They related that he was singing heartily, full force. It was after a hymn, with a smile on his face, he closed his eyes and died. That's the way I would like to go.

Grandma was the cook and was in charge of the house. She disposed of the slop-jars each morning. Slop jars were the indoor toilets that were used evenings. Each room had one and they were kept covered. Grandma would collect them each morning, take them to the out-house, then rinse them out for the next evening. Her next job was splitting wood for the cooking stove, starting it's fire, and filling up the stove's water tank from the hand pump on the back-porch. Next she would start her biscuits. This was the time I would get out from under the feather ticks, grab my clothes and run behind the warm stove to dress. Those biscuits were big, golden brown and hot from the oven. After getting Grandpa up and dressed, the families were in for a large breakfast. After everything was eaten, I had to have a couple more of those biscuits. That's the only part of breakfast I really remember. I spread on the hand churned butter and loads of honey. More biscuits came hot from the oven. Now it was probably time to run to the out-house. The path ran past the chicken yard with its roosters. Once there, I only closed the door because of privacy; it was not like our bathroom at home; it smelled. I was also reluctant to look down through the seat. I had heard of it but how could anyone ever hide out from the law down there? After breakfast, Grandma fed the chickens, got ice for the ice box and cleaned the house. I was off playing with my cousins but whenever we were by her house, she was always

busy with something. As it got dark, Grandma went room to room to light the lamps that hung on the walls. The families gathered to talk and then a few moments around the stove to heat up before retiring to the cold bedrooms. The room was cold but Grandma had put a bed warmer under my feather ticks. I have but one memory of my Grandma and Grandpa Lampe. Her gray hair was tied up in a bun and she wore an apron for her work in the kitchen. They had a built-in outhouse but I still didn't like using it. Grandpa was a farmer. I remember him as a very strong, stern, man. I would never want to cross him. But did I enjoy my time visiting them? I sure did. I had a whole farm to play on. I only remember the barn. To me, it was as much fun as a castle would be. There were three levels with stairs, ladders, trap doors, stalls, windows, hay. I didn't have any cousins to play with but I explored that barn for hours, level by level being careful to remember my way back to the house. Why would my Dad ever want to move from such a great play-place? What did I learn from my grandparents? One thing was how people can live without plumbing and electricity. More importantly, I saw that my parents respected them. Everyone in town respected them. Respect became a value in my mind. My thought of grandparents was that they are to be honored and respected. So, if I was to respect them, maybe I was to respect God whom they served. I don't remember this as a conscious thought back then but it may have been an unconscious one that just laid there hushed in my mind until later. I am enjoying writing these chapters to my grandchildren. I have one regret however; I wish my own grandparents or parents would have written something like this for me. So, enjoy and Merry Christmas.

Chapter 5 - 4th grade

“When I was a child, I spake as a child; I understood as a child; I thought as a child ...”

Somehow, childhood to me, seems wrapped up in my 4th grade. We had moved from our neighborhood near Detroit to rent a farm house for a year. Dad was building our new house next door to our old one. He needed cash to finish it and so they sold our old house to pay for the new one. For a year, they rented the cheapest house they could find. It was on Mound Road out in the country. In bed, at night, I could see lights from the highway through cracks in our walls. Did that bother me? I thought it was great; it was like living as an adventurer. There were trees to climb and tree houses to build. I found an old 22 caliber rifle, bought shells from the hardware and worked to make it fire; it never did. Wow! Could a 4th grader go and buy 22 caliber shells today? In the winter, the creek froze and I was able to skate for miles along the tree-lined banks and under the bridges. It was paradise for a 4th grader. Next to the property some 600 yards or so, was a small factory with loads of discarded junk where I could find lots of treasure for a nine year old. There was room to build football fields. It was on one of my football fields that I tripped and knocked out my two front teeth. I guess, clearing that field, I missed at least one of the rocks. I remember too, across the highway was a used car dealer. All day long, songs from his loud speakers drifted our way. One song I still remember as it must have been his favorite, "Smoke, smoke, smoke that cigarette ..." by Hank Williams. It played from morning till dark, as long as the lot was open. It was some sixty years later, that I found myself humming that song. Little by little some of the words came back. It had laid dormant in my brain that long. Warren Elementary School (I don't remember its actual name) was great. I got to ride a school bus. Each morning, I walked a quarter mile down the highway to the corner of 11 Mile Road and waited with the gang for our bus. Walking that distance so many times, I came to feel like it was my territory. I have two recollections of my 4th grade. I had my first male teacher and his favorite subject was math. Math became my favorite subject. Maybe, coming from a different school, I was ahead of the rest of my class in math. Our teacher would put up some twenty or more

problems on the board and we worked them out from our desks. Since recess was the next subject, he let us out as soon as we finished and handed in our papers. I worked hard to be first. Sometimes it got lonely on the playground until the rest of the class finished. Back then, I guess teachers could just leave students unattended. Another freedom kids, today, don't enjoy. Once everyone was there, we ran races, played ball or chased the girls. As boys, we would run after the most popular girls, surround them with our hands locked and make them acknowledge we had won. Today, that might be called sexual harassment. My other school-related recollection was a cold fall day that I got sick at school. I don't remember if I went to the office to tell them I was going to walk home or not. Maybe I just left and started walking. It was down 9-mile road to Mound Road and then 2 plus miles down the highway to our house. It was a long walk. It was windy. I felt chilled and faint but knew, if I could just get home, Mom would be there to make me warm and well. I just kept putting one foot in front of the other. Finally, I got home and reached to open the door. It didn't open. Mom was not home. The door was locked. I had to find another way into the house. But, once inside, it seemed just as cold. I was too sick to make a fire so I just went to bed, put on extra blankets and waited for Mom. She made it home just about the time I was due home from school. She had been downtown, Detroit, shopping all day. For sure, 4th grade has to be the highlight of my childhood. When I went to teach at Covenant Christian Academy, they offered me positions in the High School, sixth grade or fourth grade. You don't have to guess which grade I took; it was like living my 4th grade over and over for some 10 years. Some times I tell people that I feel like I am still a 4th grader but in a 75 year-old body. It was some time near my 4th grade that God spared my life at least twice. We were on vacation at my grandparents. I was playing with cousins my age when they suggested going swimming in a local river with a gravel quarry. Our parents had told us not to go swimming without adult supervision but, as I remember it, there were no adults available.

Well, technically, I was not disobeying; I was not swimming, I couldn't swim. The others were out in the middle having a great time while I was stuck wading around near the bank. I wanted to be out there with them. Soon, I found a tree trunk floating down the river. I grabbed it and made it my floaty. Hanging on to the log, I paddled out to the middle. It worked great until my older cousin got winded and grabbed the log with me. The log was enough for me but not enough for the two of us. I went under. I splashed and kicked until the last thing I remembered was wrapping my arms around a pier post. As it turned out, it was not a pier post; it was my cousin, Rosemary. Events of my young life flashed before me and then everything went a white blank. I woke up on the dock where my cousins were working to revive me. I don't think we ever told our parents about that little adventure. The other time my young life was spared was actually in the 5th grade. Again we were on vacation with my grandparents. Dad had to be back for work as we started home. As we were passing by Paducah, they wanted to stop and visit a cousin of mine who was dying of a brain tumor. While there, I became sick and began vomiting. The question came up; "should we take Wesley to the doctor and have this checked out here or travel on back tonight so work is not missed? Then, we can take Wesley to his own doctor in the morning." In the doctor's office, all I remember is, "Get your son to the hospital and I will meet you there within the hour." He later explained that another hour or so and my appendix would have burst. Can you imagine being on the highway, late at night, and having my appendix burst? How could a hospital be found? How far from a hospital would we be? God was protecting me even before I became one of His children. The Bible tells us that our whole life is written out and read by God even before we are born. Only God can know that much. I credit God for saving my life that night. That year on Mound Road was one my parents looked at as terrible. For me, fourth grade was the best year of my youth. How did it help me on my journey to find what I needed in order to fill that God-shaped hole that was in my life? It gave me a base line

for measuring life. Some twelve years later, when God was speaking to me on that sand dune by Lake Michigan, He reminded me that it was my sin, my selfishness, that had robbed me from that happiness of my youth.

Chapter 6 - Smoke

“For him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin.”

Are babies and young children responsible for sins they commit if they don't know they are doing anything wrong? How old does one have to be before they are responsible? It's not an age; it's a condition of the heart. According to my remembrance and remembrances are not infallible, I didn't have to wait that long to know that I was a sinner. Looking back now, in my mind, there was a very definite time when I knew that what I was planning to do was wrong but I did it anyway. I don't remember how old I was and I'm sure there were many occasions before this one. But this is the one that sticks in my memory. I was curious and walking around the house to find something to do. I noticed my Mom's purse on her dresser. In all innocence I wondered, “what all did Mom keep in her purse?” Opening it up, I saw a coin-purse inside. Opening up that coin purse, I saw a “ton” of quarters, dimes and nickels. Mom used them for the coin laundry and would never miss just a couple of them. But, quickly, I put everything back and went to the window. Mom was still outside hanging clothes on the outside line. How many clothes were still in the basket for Mom to hang? Plenty. I went back to her purse and took out two dimes. At this point, I became a young guilty sinner. Two dimes would buy a pack of Lucky Strikes. Those two dimes went into my deepest pocket. Putting everything back, I returned to the window to be sure Mom was still hanging clothes. My next move was to write a note, forge Mom's signature, and take it to the store for my purchase. How do I know that it was not just an innocent act of childhood? It was that going to the window to be sure I would not

be caught in the act. That confirmed that I knew that what I planned to do was wrong but I did it anyway. That made me accountable, guilty. Now I was on my own, doing things I knew were wrong, but doing them anyway.

My parents didn't smoke. Most of the older kids did. Some of my older friends did. Mom and Dad demanded that I not smoke. So, most of my smoking had to be done mornings on the way to school. One night, they left me home and went to visit some of their old friends. As their car backed out of the driveway, I went to the phone. "Jim, I have the house to myself. Sneak some of your Dad's cigarettes and come on over to watch T. V." We lit up and sat down to enjoy the evening. The next thing I remember, Jim dropped his cigarette on Mom's new carpet. We picked it up quick but not before it left a burn mark. We tried spit, water, soap and water, Ajax and water. I was in for trouble. Jim had left before I heard the car pulling up into the driveway. I made a bee-line for my bed. With my lights out, under the covers, I pretended to be asleep. Of course it didn't work. My parents didn't smoke but they knew the smell of tobacco smoke. I didn't think of that. Yes, they found the burn hole too. I got jerked up, taken to the kitchen for one of Mom's longer lectures. Next was Dad and the basement. That habit became an addiction in my life. Even after leaving home, even after turning my life over to the Lord, I still had that habit. No one at Church smoked and I tried to stop by switching to cigars, a pipe, gum, candy drops. Nothing worked for more than a day or two. It was God, the Holy Spirit, that put an abrupt and final end to that habit. Ken was a younger boy that I knew from the neighborhood where we grew up. I began witnessing to him about his need for the forgiveness of his sin. Finally, one night, he was on his knees ready to pray. He had no more objections. But just as he was about to pray, he pointed to my shirt pocket and a pack of cigarettes he saw there. "You hypocrite. How can you preach to me when you smoke?" Well, the Bible says nothing about smoking. "But to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean." Would my smoking keep another soul from

God's forgiveness and eternal life? This was more than just an earthly issue; it had become spiritual.

Someone's soul was at stake. Would my smoking let a soul suffer in hell. That pack of cigarettes never got smoked. God broke that habit in an instant. I'm very thankful that I later heard from Ken that he had become a believer. Again, God covered my failure by His grace.

Chapter 7 - The "Jag" Club

"There is a way that seemeth right unto a man but ..."

As I remember it, the City of Harper Woods had just built the new high school. To alleviate crowding in the elementary school, they moved the 8th grade to the high school building as well. There I was, an 8th grader in the same halls as the 12th graders. I only have one memory of my first days there. No one noticed me, no one. Who did everyone, especially the girls, seem to notice and follow down the halls? It was those guys who wore school sweaters with a big HW letter on the front. It would be another year before I could even try to make a team. But the decision was made; I had to earn me my own letter. When I stepped up to 9th grade, because our school was small, I had my opportunity.

Football was the first sport I could try out for but football was out of the question; I was way too small. Next was basketball. I tried out for basketball but, again, being small, I didn't get to play. My last chance was baseball. There was no JV team and the varsity team had no one trying out for catcher. That was my position. I would have made first string except one of those trying out for pitcher didn't make the pitching rotation and stepped down to catch. He had a much stronger arm than me and took my place. I still made the team, got to play a few innings when we were far ahead or far behind, and earned my letter. I had my letter but I don't remember any satisfaction of being noticed; I don't even think it got me noticed at all. What's next?

That summer between 9th grade and 10th, I caddied at the Country

Club of Detroit. I had to get there early in the morning to get in line but, most days, I didn't get a bag until after lunch. What did the caddies do when they weren't out with a golfer? At the caddy shack, they played cards or basketball. I played basketball. The winners got to play the next team waiting in line. If we weren't playing a game, we were playing 7 (like 21, it was a game of just shooting). After work, while we had to wait to get paid, we played some more. I would guess I may have played up to 6 hours most days. That fall, I was ready for Junior Varsity Basketball. I wasn't that good of a dribbler or rebounder but the one thing I could do was score. I had a spot just outside the key. If I could get there and get the ball, I usually scored. From not playing in the 9th grade, I went to high scorer in the 10th. Two times that year, I scored the winning basket with just seconds left on the clock. It was a real thrill to hear the cheers and get all those hugs. Finally, I got noticed. But the next season, though I still wanted the glory, I was no longer willing to work. I began to miss practices. I didn't play anymore for love of the game. Finally, in the 12th grade, I made the football team and enjoyed playing again. That was it for high school sports. I finished my sports career in college without ever being noticed, not even seen, not even once. I tried but didn't make the team at Michigan Tech. At Texas A & M, Kingsville, I made the team or should I say I made the bench. I practiced every day, ate at the training table, but got to play very little. Are zero minutes very little? Unless there was extra room on the bus, I didn't even get to go to our away games. After that, I was finished with sports. I saw sports would not bring me the satisfaction I was searching for.

Back to high school. As I said earlier, I didn't work much any more at sports. I didn't work much at my grades either. I was good at math but got bored in Algebra class. I remember one day playing a game with our Math teacher, Mr. Exstine; I laid my head on my desk and pretended to be asleep. I watched the board through slits I made with my fingers. I knew the answer to the problem he was working on at the black board. Finally, thinking I

wouldn't know the answer, he called on me as if to wake me up. I snapped off the answer and looked to see his surprised displeasure. It wasn't there; instead was a smile. He had figured out my little game and smiled to let me know he thought it was kind of cute. I passed all my classes but with the least effort possible. I remember Mr. Exstine telling us one time that to be good at math, you had to have a bit of a lazy streak in you. You had to be lazy? I still remember that comment. That word "lazy" fit me. Later, in order to stay popular without all the effort of sports, I stumbled on another way, a lazy way. One day, sitting at my desk, a teacher said something

and I made a stupid remark about it and her. Someone in the class said, "Wes, you are a real Jag."

Maybe, it was on my way to the principals office, I conceived of the Jag Club. Every Friday, we would pick out one kid who made the most stupid remark or did the most stupid thing that week. That would make them "Jag of the Week." My old car was called the Jag Wagon. Each Jag of the week got his name painted on that car. Girls didn't do "stupid" like the boys but they could be honorary members and get their names on the car by doing our homework or just being nice to us. Seniors, everywhere seem to have a reputation for getting what is called "senioritis." As a senior, I stopped working all together. I needed mercy just to pass the 12th grade. My chemistry teacher, Mr. Exstine again, passed me with a "C" when I earned what, at best, was a "D." He cared for me enough that he not only passed me but got me my scholarship to Michigan Tech. Are teachers even allowed to be that nice today? A few events from 12th grade come to mind. We had over an hour for lunch so we often took the car and ran to the drive-in for a hamburger and fries. It gave us a chance to have our smoke as well. One day, 4 of the Jags were late getting back from lunch. Too many tardies meant spending time after school for an hour. Jim was in the back seat and had not finished his cigarette. He didn't want to be seen smoking on school property so he put it out in the car. Well, he thought he had put it out. About two hours later,

someone ran to tell me my car was on fire. Before I could get there, the fire department had already arrived and put it out. You know, that car still started up and ran. I drove it home that afternoon. Of course, there was no windshield and I was sitting on the seat springs. What ever happened to that car? I can't remember. Did I junk it? Did I get it running again? I don't know. (Some advice for my grandchildren - take a picture of every car you get and keep them in a scrap book.)

However, when class elections came along, with a picture of a burning car, my posters read: "Wes has a burning desire to be class president!" I lost that election but had enough votes to become Social Chairman or something. Each year, the senior class officers got one day off to run the city of Harper Woods. City Hall was empty except for us. They must have been running the city from somewhere, maybe home. We were free to play with whatever there was to fool around with until someone got into the police files. What a gold mine for 12th graders. We looked up the records of anyone we knew had been arrested. We looked at all the photos from crime scenes, murder victims, suicides, mug shots. We didn't stop until a couple of the kids got sick and had to run to the rest room. I wonder if students ever got to run the Harper Woods again.

I didn't like what I was back then but even with all that rebellious attitude, I believe God was showering His mercy on me. One day the Jags decided to skip school to have a blast in Toledo, Ohio. The drinking age there was only 18. We were on the four lane divided highway from Detroit to Toledo. We were in a hurry and put the peddle to the metal. Suddenly, a railroad crossing signal began to blink. I looked and saw no train. I floored it. As we crossed the tracks, we heard the whistle. By the time I looked in the rear view mirror, the train engine was already across that four lane highway. That could have been the last stupid thing the Jags did.

There were many more times that I knew what I was about to do was wrong but I did it anyway. Somehow they didn't feel wrong

enough for me to stop doing them. I wasn't thinking about right and wrong. I was doing what I felt I had to do to get what I wanted. I wanted to have fun, be happy, satisfied with life. If someone got hurt, that was his/her fault. My saying became, "I have to look out for number one; if I don't look out for myself, nobody else will." I think I might have felt that I was a victim. After all, I was the one that wasn't happy; it was because too many people were against me. In truth, there was only one person really against me, spoiling my life. That person was me. How often now, Terrie and I pray for our grand-kids asking God to protect them from themselves. Can I find any value in all these foolish high school undertakings? For sure, I was not finding what I was looking for. Maybe it was just a lot of avenues being eliminated. Maybe I would find life by elimination? What was left to eliminate?

Chapter 8 - Failure in the Snow

Job 38:22 Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow?

Maybe college would be different. I could get serious, become an engineer, earn a lot of money and buy what I was looking for. College certainly was different from high school, at least my high school. Michigan Tech was located in the northern tip of the Upper Peninsula. Just after Thanksgiving, we had our first snow; I waded to class that morning in waist-deep snow. We soon found the underground tunnels for the steam-heat system to be a better route between classes. That system didn't get us to the Library, however. It was final exam time for my Chemistry Class; I needed an "A" on that final just to pass Chemistry. Do you see a pattern with me and chemistry? My room-mate, Rog, was also looking to improve his grade. Next to our room lived a chemistry whiz but I forget his name. Our Professor, Dr. Heath, had informed the class that he had some old tests filed in the Library that we could study as preparation for the exam. The problem? The night before the exam, we encountered a blizzard. Well, at least we would have our pick

of those old exams. I remember the four of us making a human chain, with our heads down, hands locked, leaning into all that wind and snow, we marched. We made it but I was having a hard time hearing. After a while, with melted snow running out of my ears, I found out why. Well, we looked in the file for some of the old tests. It was old all right. The only test left was a stained mimeo-graphed one that he had given in 1938. Well, it was better than nothing. Our friend helped work out the answers to all of the questions. The next morning, I walked into class, picked up a test, and went to a seat to begin our two-hour ordeal. After putting my name on the blank, I looked at the first question; hey, I knew the answer; it had been on the test we studied the night before. I knew the second one as well. I knew all of them. It was the same test he had given in 1938. I was done in 10 minutes. What should I do; sit there like I was struggling with this exam or just go ahead and hand it in? After all, he told us about the exams on file. I got up and walked to the front. Others probably thought I was giving up. Dr. Heath, took the test out of my hand, gave it a quick look and then gave me a smile and a wink. I aced that exam and passed Chemistry with a "C."

Hockey was the big sport at Michigan Tech. They played the Big Ten teams and I remember, if my memory is right, that we won just about all of them. Our seats were in the Student Section, right at center ice. We got there in time to get rink-side seats. One problem; those seats were at ice level. We had already walked on snow to get there. Now, our feet were like sitting on ice. It was on the way back to our room after a game one night that I felt snow inside my engineer boots. I stopped and took off my boots but there was no snow. The bottom of my feet was numb. As we continued walking, it felt like snow in my boots was getting thicker and thicker. Were my feet now frozen up to my ankles? Would I lose my feet? In panic, I started to run. When I got back to our room, I quickly got undressed and to the shower room. I turned the water on hot and stepped in. A word of caution; don't ever do this. I began to feel my feet again but they did not feel normal; what

earlier felt like snow in my boots now felt like coals of fire; I was in pain for, what at least seemed like, days.

We lived on the third floor of Houghton Hall which meant flights of stairs every time we went anywhere. There were advantages, however; it was great for our radio antenna. We needed an antenna because Houghton-Hancock only had one radio station and that went off the air as it got dark. With our wire stretched out from our window to a near-by tree, we could care less. In fact, we waited for that local station to sign off. Once the local station was off the air, we could get Elvis and “rock and roll” all the way from Nashville. There was another advantage to the third floor that was not such an advantage for two of our floor-mates. They were what students might call “nerds” today. They spent a lot of extra time in the Chemistry Lab. With winter, came snow and snowmen outside their window. From the lab, came nitro-glycerine that they had put together. It was great fun. They would open their window, throw out some of their brew and try to blow up snowmen, three floors down. They had their nitro in a glass container on top of their desk. One night, as they sat studying, that nitro went off.

Sirens got our attention and we didn't see our friends for some time. There was so much blood on their floor that it dried, curled up, like potato chips. For the rest of that school year, they spent time every week at the hospital having newly surfaced glass pulled out of them.

All that snow would have been great if I skied but I hadn't started skiing yet . Maybe I could make the Basketball Team. After all, their main sport was hockey; maybe I could make it at a weaker sport. I didn't waste much time at that; I was cut after only a couple days of practice, maybe a couple of hours. Well, more time for other interests. But in the whole school, there were maybe 60 girls; most of those were married. Most Friday nights would find us at some local high school dance. Even there, we were mostly out of luck; all the girls in that area were warned about Michigan Tech students. In town, the only girls seemed to be office workers

(and there were few offices in Houghton). Those we talked to said they were trying hopelessly to save enough money to get out of town and to a city. I started thinking about other colleges; the weather would have to be warmer and there would have to be more girls. That hole in my soul was not being filled at Michigan Tech; if anything, it was just getting deeper and more obvious.

Chapter 9 - Adventures in Texas

Luke 15:13 Not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country ...

From the far north to the far south went a young boy, one who was fleeing from God but not even knowing it. I just wanted to get away, away from everything, but why? It would still be years before I would discover the answer to that. My first experience with Texas was a long journey. Kingsville was down in the lowest tip of Texas, just south of Corpus Christi and north of Brownsville. Not having much money, I took the cheapest way I could find, the Greyhound Bus. It was 3 or 4 days later; I don't remember which anymore; after hours and hours of waiting for connections in Bus Depots, after endless hours staring out the window at power lines and cows, at about 2 a.m., the bus driver woke me up and asked me if my destination was Kingsville; we were there. He dug my bags out of the compartments and pointed to a lone taxi under the only street-lamp. This was Kingsville? I was short on money but had no idea how to get to my dorm hall in the dark and I was very tired. It was pay up or spend the night outside in what felt like a damp oven. In front of the dorm, as I collected my bags from the taxi, it was even more pitch black (can it get darker than pitch?), 2 a.m., darkness. There were no lights outside the door but there was a light on somewhere inside the dorm office. From the light showing under the door, I made my way inside the dorm. I couldn't find any light switch. Feeling my way in the dark, I stumbled unto a couch. I put my wallet and watch in one of my shoes and used my shoes as a pillow. I was out; when I woke, I was in the middle of

morning rush hour with students rushing to breakfast or who knows where. Welcome to Texas A & I. That was the name then. Now, it is Texas A & M, Kingsville. Why was the town called Kingsville? It was surrounded by Kings Ranch, told, at the time, to be a million acres. Compare that to the 50 acres we call our farm now.

What else do I remember from my time in Texas? Not a whole lot. Studies there were a lot easier than at Michigan Tech. I had a lot of free time. Every night seemed to be Poker Night. Folks in Texas were great. Later, I heard there were only two Yankees in the whole school, myself and a fellow from Maryland on a Basketball Scholarship. We were spoiled. Not needing to study much, I had a lot of time to make friends. Whenever someone was going home for the week-end or holiday, I was invited along. Most of them lived on ranches and had much to offer me. I remember one family asking me what food dish I would most enjoy. I love shrimp and they fixed shrimp. First, came a large mixing bowl of chilled shrimp and sauce. Then came fried shrimp by the tray and last, it came grilled. I don't remember anything they served with that shrimp. More often, it was barbecued steak with all the trimmings. Everyone wanted to show me how much better Texas was than any other state in the Union. I was happy to let them prove it on me. People there were always inviting me to their Churches. They seemed to be filled with good-looking girls but I only remember how everyone fussed over me to make me feel at home. I was even invited to sing with the choir at one church. I don't think I heard a thing during the sermons. To me, back then, every sermon seemed to boil down to, "God loves you and you need to repent." It was not a message I was interested in. If I spent the weekend on campus, there were always dances. The problem was that most of the music was music I had never heard before and I didn't know how to dance all their stomp moves. One girl, over 6 foot, wearing what all the girls seemed to wear, cowboy boots, had few boys tall enough to dance with her. The fellow from Maryland and myself were among her few choices. We must have looked

funny being the only ones with shoes. I guess I could have worn my engineer boots. I'm sure I would have been noticed. Weekends were not

the only times I enjoyed great cooking. Our dorm cooks were Mexican and the food was great. Chili without any of those beans was one of my favorites; I didn't care much for beans in those days, still don't. And we were able to have a bowl of chili with just about all of our meals. I did have a problem once with the hot seasoning. Friends encouraged me to try a little "blue onion" in my chili. Just one sliver but that bowl of chili never got finished. Some times, the steaks were tough but they were always tasty. I think they got their steaks from somewhere closer than Omaha. I have never found cafeteria food like that again: I doubt I ever will.

Going to football games at Texas A&M, College Station, was a blast. We would arrive on Friday evenings and stay in the dorms with students someone knew. Most of these were cadets who loved to show us how they handled the lower ranking cadets. Walking on campus, we would meet group after group of cadets. Every group had to greet us with individual "howdies." If there were four of us, we got four "howdies." At least, I think what they meant to say was "howdy." To me, it sounded more like "hadi." At the games, hats would fly, cannons would be fired, a mule would run out on the field and the band played. Great fun but, most of all, I enjoyed story after story about the treatment freshmen cadets had to endure. I had been in ROTC at Michigan Tech but nothing like this. Of course, this was Texas. To me, Texas came to seem more like another nation than just a different State. I suspect many of them may have felt that way as well.

My room in the dorm was long and narrow with the switch at the door. My bed was at the far end of the room by the window. One night, as I was turning in, I switched off the light at the door and made my way to bed by what light was coming through the window. I threw back the sheet, jumped in and pulled the sheet back over me. Suddenly, that bed came to life. I felt them crawling all over me. What were they? I could only imagine the worst. Were

they spiders, scorpions, or what? I ran to the door and the light switch. It turned out they were just crickets but there must have been 50 of them in my bed.

They must have come through the window looking for a damp, soft home; they found my bed. Those crickets were a problem on the roads as well. There were times they would cover the road under street lights at the stop signs. Your car would slide to a crunching stop.

Everything considered, I had a fun time in Texas but I guess it was not fun my soul was thirsting for. Well, I had tried the north; now, I had tried the south. I guess what I was looking for was not a place, either. Now, engineering, too, no longer seemed a possible solution for filling that hole in my life; it had been conquered and found wanting. It would take something more challenging, maybe something bigger than me, something worth giving up my life.

Chapter 10 - The University of Michigan

“Ec 1:16 I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly: I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit.”

Back home! I took the train this time and made it in less than a day. I think I spent the summer working in a hardware store. What I remember better was spending time at the local drive-in hamburger stand discussing my future with Rog. He had stayed at Michigan Tech but was looking to enhance his resume and get out of the snow. I was looking for a career change. As a child, I believed God existed; I even prayed. As I got older, I didn't see any need to even think about a god. That summer, my views changed again. I was looking for something bigger than myself. It was not “smart” to talk about a personal God but how could I explain the world, where did it come from? I settled on thinking of God as an impersonal “force” in the universe that would account for creation. I didn't think very deeply. That simple notion was good for now and I would learn everything about creation in my

next adventure: Physics. The University of Michigan seemed to meet both Rog and my needs plus there was in-state tuition. Physics at Texas A&I was my favorite subject. Transferring to U of M, I had to get special permission from the Physics Department to skip some of the basic courses. I sat in the counselor's office. Was it pride? Was it just being stupid? I talked the Professor into letting me sign up for everything I wanted. I would take Differential Equations and Physics Mechanics together. He told me I needed the Differential Equations before starting Mechanics but I was sure I could handle them together. I wanted to get into the question of creation and felt a course in "light" might help unlock that door. Could I manage two advanced Physics courses together? Then, the straw that broke me, "would I want to take French, German or Russian as my foreign language?" In truth, I didn't even know English. Verbs, prepositions, articles were all terms I knew very little about. And, I was not taking Conversational Russian. One day, a friend, sitting next to me in class, tried to explain something to me using French and German. That was when I woke up and knew I was completely out of my league. I did well in Differential Equations. I just passed my two Physics classes with a D and a C. Before my final exam in Russian, I studied all day some days. I had to pass that final or fail Russian. I studied hard. By the time I took that exam, I knew enough that I probably could have passed the mid-term. That was the end of my time at U of M. What did I learn about creation from my Physics classes? I learned that Physics, at U of M, was not even trying to answer that question. Was light waves or matter? I learned that there was evidence supporting each of these theories. Their answer: "don't worry about which is true; this quantum formula works in either case." I lost my faith in Physics. I guess I was asking for too much. Do I have any good memories from that year? Not enough to make up for the bad but I have some good ones. Rog and I didn't want to mix with under-class men in the dorm so we rented a room. All I remember about our time in that room was the times I went down stairs to pay rent. Our land lady was elderly and living alone; as I

sat, she just wanted to talk and talk. After a time or two, we devised a way to get back upstairs. "Give me five or ten minutes and then yell down that I have an important phone call." It worked. Now, I feel bad that we were not willing to give her at least a half hour a month. She cleaned our room once a week. Our complaint? She would move papers on our desk that we had to search for to find. Rog and I got tired of eating at the Michigan Union so we started paying by the month to eat at the Michigan Co-op House. All the members took turns cooking. Once, a Jewish fellow was due to cook. On the menu was pork roast. It was to cook for four hours at a certain temperature. He was late getting started and so he doubled the temperature and cut the time to two hours. We sat at the table waiting. I remember the outside of that roast was almost crusty but the middle was like chewing bubble gum. We continued paying our fees there but mostly so we could fix eggs late in the evening after study.

I don't remember how we met Bill. He had been a star recruit for the U of M football team but was not doing too well because of injuries. His Dad had been a Scout Master and Bill could tell stories, one after another for hours. Bill, Rog and myself decided to rent an apartment. That apartment brings back a couple memories. One was the time I was on a ladder painting the ceiling. I fell but I didn't want to spill the bucket of paint I was holding. Instead of dropping the paint and landing on my feet, I held the paint over my head and landed on my back. It didn't work. The impact from my fall spilled paint all over the rug and myself. There I was, lying on the floor, covered in paint, holding that mostly empty can over my head.

Rog, or Bill one, knew how to make a sandwich spread out of canned meat. That was our main diet. Once in a while, they would grill steaks. The only thing I could cook was spaghetti. After one of my meals, we were gone for a few days. When we arrived back, there was a surprise in the kitchen. Left-over spaghetti in the sink had grown a beard of penicillin that reached all the way over the

sink to the floor. After our time in that apartment, I would think very carefully before renting to male students. I finished my time at U of M pretending to be a “beatnik” artist. Adventures had worn out. Popularity was not worth the effort. Engineering was not enough for me. Ready for something bigger than myself, Physics had let me down “big time.” Next, I discovered I was a coward. I remember I wanted to just end it all. I felt like I was ramming my head into a brick wall and it was not moving and I was getting tired of trying; it was never going to move. But, not being sure where I might wake up, I “chickened out.” One night, I resolved it by saying to myself, “I wish I could just go to sleep tonight and never wake up.” It might have been one of those nights I heard the bell in the tower and thought about what my Dad was doing. What next?

Chapter 11 - Salvation at Last

Eph 2:8 - “For by grace are ye saved ...”

Almost 21 years old and here I was back home living off my parents. “Get a job” was a song that seemed to be ringing in my ears. Meanwhile, it was back to the Country Club of Detroit as a caddy. I think that may have been the year the National Amateur was held there. I had a good golfer and we made it all the way to the semi-finals. With just 4 golfers left, we lost. Had we won that day, I doubt we would have won again; the final round would have been 36 holes against Arnold Palmer. Arnold’s forearms looked to be the size of my legs; they were pure power. By the way, as I remember, it was my old “burn a hole in my parents carpet” buddy, Jim Gill, who got to caddy for Palmer.

It was a Sunday evening, driving home from the Country Club, I passed a church holding its service out doors under huge trees. I had been trying to read the Bible but it was not making any sense to me. I had passed these services before and wondered why they met out doors. I could go and find out. I would sit on the back row and just listen. That was the plan but, as soon as I sat down, two

fellows my age got up and sat next to me. Bob and Dick seemed like good guys and didn't let me get away without becoming somewhat friends. If I ever showed up at that church again, I knew two fellows I could hang with. I returned the next time to their morning service. What I remember most about that church was how the men sang. I had grown up where men mostly just mumbled the words while the women did the singing. I soon found myself in a Sunday School class taught by Jim Barns, vice president of Ford Motor Company. I don't remember what he taught but I can still recall some of the stories he told of how he lived out his faith at Fords. I was impressed.

Back to getting a real job. My cousin Johnny was a graphic designer. He worked at what was called a job-shop; they did contract work for the major auto companies. Johnny encouraged me to just show up at one of these job shops and tell them I could do the job. I guess they were hiring anybody, they hired me. I could have handled the design part but this particular shop put me to work doing 3-D illustrated parts diagrams. I had to do some free-hand art. I lasted a couple of weeks and then was shown the door. Looking for another shop, I was driving by Chrysler Engineering. I decided to stop and see what they might have.

"Sorry, no job openings but, since you have some college, would you be interested in taking our aptitude test?" I remember thinking it was a waste of time but I would do it quick. I had just finished a course in solid geometry and this test seemed to have a lot of solid geometry. I didn't waste much time on it and was shocked when they told me I had scored the second highest grade in the history of the test. With that, came my choice of two jobs plus paid time off to finish my degree at Chrysler Tech. Did I want to work in a production department or in Advanced Design? I chose Advanced Design. We designed parts to be placed on experimental cars with the idea that, if they worked, they would go to production. My first week was mostly learning how to print on my detail drawings. I only remember a couple projects I worked on: self-adjusting brakes and adjustable tire pressure. Neither of these designs ever

made it to production. Because of my math, I soon got placed on jobs that were more testing designs than creating them. I remember loading a Friden electric calculator with so much it would take hours to give the answer. One morning a disassembled VW Bug showed up on our department floor. We started working overtime (68+ hours per week) helping production on the design of the Valiant, Chrysler's first compact car. On the lighter side, each morning, I would drive past the parking gate into a lot full of Chrysler product cars. I was driving a Ford. I got attention. It was not long until the whole department was talking me into deals on DeSoto's, Chrysler's, Dodges and Plymouth's. Finally, I took a great deal on a Plymouth. Working at Chrysler, I began to feel like an adult. I moved out of my parents' house and into a room at the Highland Park YMCA, a few blocks from work.

Meanwhile, I was meeting Bob and Dick at church services. I'm not sure why; but I seemed to be enjoying it. One Sunday, they wanted me to join them and other young people on a Labor Day week- end at a Bible camp ground on Lake Michigan. "Who all was going?" "Yea, I would go along." It was all talk about God. It matched pretty much what I remembered from my early childhood but I was not very interested. I was interested in me. One morning, I just wanted to be alone and away from all that talk. I took off to the beach. I got tired of walking and ended up sitting on top of a tall sand dune. As I sat there, looking at nothing, I became aware of the sound of waves splashing on the shore. I closed my eyes and could keep time with the splashes. Why were they so regular? I couldn't get past that question. There must be some force controlling them. They were predictable. Was a personal God the reason? The world was certainly not predictable, at least not my world. I opened my eyes and looked first at the sky. It was beautiful. The forest and the sand with all their color contrasted by the deep blue of the lake was beautiful. But why did I think it was beautiful? Why does anyone think anything is beautiful? Things are just things; they are what they are. Also, if a loving God made everything beautiful, what about Detroit and all

the garbage and crime? If God made everything beautiful, why was there a Detroit? Why was I so unhappy? Suddenly, I sensed an inner voice, clearer to me than if it had been a vocal voice being spoken right at my ear. "There was a time when Detroit was beautiful." When? "Before man got there and messed it up." "And, there was a time when your life was beautiful." When? "Before you took over your life and began to leave a lot of garbage behind." I doubt those were the exact words but I got the message. In a flash, I saw myself as small, smelly and despicable. Five minutes earlier I believed God was just a force. Now, we were talking, person to person. All I remember saying was, "God, forgive me for the mess I have made of my life. Please take over. I trust you to make it the way you want it. If there is anything for which you could use me, I surrender my life to you." I felt as if a hundred pound weight had floated off my back. I felt free at last; that hole in my life was finally filled with peace, the peace of God. How had I put up with myself for so long? I walked back to my car, got my Bible, found a log in the woods to sit on and began to read. Where should I start? I didn't know anything about the Bible. I had been trying to read it but it just seemed full of nice stories that didn't apply to me at all. I had already tried Genesis. So, I just opened it up and began to read. I believe it was God's hand that lead me to open up to I Corinthians, chapter one. As I read, it was like God was over my shoulder pointing out one truth after another. "Did you see that? That has been your problem." Here are a few verses that stood out to me:

I Corinthians 1-3:

"Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?"

"The foolishness of God is wiser than men;"

"For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God."

"The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him;"

“For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.”

The day wore on. I only finished reading the first three chapters.

The conclusion: this joy and

communion with God was so precious that I decided I had no better way to spend the rest of my life than passing the gospel message on to others who were looking to fill that hole in their lives. I concluded that 5 minutes with the God of the Universe was more significant than a life-time of self-centered endeavors. But could I do that working at Chrysler?

Chapter 12 - God's Training School - Life

II Co 12:9 “And He said unto me, my grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.”

It seemed like things at Chrysler changed as soon as I had put my faith in Christ. Maybe it had already started building up. I was getting bored at work. I remember turning in a project I had worked some 6 weeks to complete. “We don't have another project for you just yet. Why don't you start over and redo everything; you might come up with some new ideas?” I started but noticed myself spending more hours at some of my co-workers desks talking about God and salvation. The boss noticed it also. In his office, he told me Chrysler was not paying me to be an evangelist; “stay at your desk and look busy, especially if visitors are in the room.” One of the older engineers, Jim, a Christian, noticed all this and suggested that God might be calling me to full-time service. Maybe, I needed to get enrolled at the Detroit Bible College. That was like a word from God. My time at Chrysler seemed to do little but change next year's model enough so it could pass as new. And, really, most of that took place on the clay models that changed the look of the body. That was not my job. That was not even done on our floor. The bosses didn't seem to mind the time we spent in the “John.” There were days I read the newspaper from cover to cover. One day, after lunch, I had to use the restroom. I don't remember if we were on the 10th floor or the

7th; I think it was the 7th. We had two restrooms on each floor with 6 or 7 stalls in each. That day, every stall was occupied on our floor. I went down a floor; they were all occupied. I kept going floor by floor until I came to the ground floor. It was becoming an emergency. Finally, in the visitor's restroom, was an empty stall. Time left at Chrysler was short.

I was soon enrolled at DBC, Detroit Bible College. One of the first things I learned about Bible

Colleges was that they were not free. I could return to live with my parents but I would still need money. After enrolling at DBC and paying my first tuition, student fees, library fees, parking fees, etc., I was on my way to my parents house praying about money. I began to pass some of those engineering job shops. I stopped at one and told them I had worked at Chrysler but only wanted a part-time job because I was going to college. "What college?" they asked. When I told them DBC, they laughed and wanted to know who at DBC had sent me to them. The owner was a Christian who had friends going to DBC. I could work, whenever and as much or as little as I wanted. How did I happen to end up at that one shop? I don't remember a whole lot from my time at DBC. I finally enjoyed a language, Greek. I learned about all the parts of speech, tense, voice, etc. My only regret is that, after I graduated, I stopped using it until I started pastoring. By then, I had forgotten too much. I am still working to regain what I learned. The two best experiences from my time at DBC were Chapel Services and the students I met who loved the Lord. Chapel was a hundred plus students singing hymn after hymn and then hearing special speakers from mission works around the world and here at home. One speaker was working with Child Evangelism and recruited me to work with them one summer in Northern Michigan. We taught 4 five-day clubs a day; working with kids just seemed to be my thing if I could just keep my voice. The next year I heard of work in British Columbia and Alaska. I spent that summer living and teaching kids in Indian villages. I learned to eat salmon for breakfast, lunch and dinner, week after

week; we ate it boiled, steamed, fried, baked, dried, smoked, salted and maybe some ways I have forgotten. I probably learned as much from those summers as I did from my formal studies. While at DBC, I met fellow students who were committed to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ to the world. We would meet each morning before classes for prayer. These were to be my partners in serving the Lord. We went door to door together. We worked with youth and children. We also worked hard to recruit other students to our morning prayer meetings; poster after poster and announcement after announcement were made but very few results. One day, as social chairman, I posted one hand-written 3X5 card on a bulletin board announcing the forming of a student bowling league; I was overwhelmed by those wanting to sign up. Life teaches us lessons in many forms.

Let me tell you about one of our projects for kids in the inner city of Detroit. It started as a Friday night Bible Club. We drove a school bus down the streets picking up children. At first, we met in a store-front church; a small congregation would rent an empty store and use it as a church; this one was on Gratiot Ave near Mount Elliott Street. I remember Jay, a fifth grader; he was our trouble-maker. Somehow, he would come to club showing off as much as \$50 to the kids. I guess that made him the leader. At times, he would run out of our meetings, taking others with him. They ended up across Gratiot Ave at a hamburger joint. Where did he get all that money? One day, I went to visit him at his home. No one answered the door. But Jay came running across the street to meet me. He told me we couldn't go in just then because his Dad was there visiting his Mom. As we walked down the street, he pointed to a house and said, "my Dad lives there." A few houses later and he would point to another house and say, "my Dad lives there." Down the street and on the next streets, this was repeated and repeated. When I asked him where he got all his money, he told me he visited his dads on Friday evenings. I kind-of avoided that subject after that. Later, we held After-School Bible Clubs in the local Public Schools. The Christian Business Men's

Association of Detroit sponsored the clubs paying for those who had to stay late to clean and close up.

Back at DBC. It was my senior year. Going to Chapel, one morning, we had a speaker come in from off the street. Greg was traveling around the country, by faith, (meaning he had no money for food, bed or transportation) speaking at Bible Schools. His purpose: to recruit students to work in Europe that summer as student missionaries. These young people called themselves Operation Mobilization. Bill Nottenkamper and myself sat with Greg after lunch to learn more. Was this to be another adventure with God? What was I about to step into? Would I be willing to go to Europe without a paying job?

Chapter 13 - God Supplies

Mt 6:33 “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness;
and all these things shall be added unto you.”

I had never done anything like this before: Bill and I, with maybe another hundred young people around the U S, determined to seek God’s will by trusting Him to provide money by prayer alone. We would trust God to supply each of us \$500 for our summer in Europe. We would tell no one about the needed \$500. If anyone asked us how we were to be financed, we would reply that we were trusting God to supply whatever we needed. If they asked how they could help, we would reply that we needed their prayers. When Bill and I got to New Jersey to ready for our flight, the money we needed had already been sent or promised. We had already learned a life-changing lesson.

What an impression as I sat, for the first time, in that circus tent on the grounds of a French castle. We were singing “How Great Thou Art” with maybe more than a thousand young people from all over Europe, all singing in their own language. I kept looking for the leader of O M, George Verwer. I had never met him and didn’t know who to look for. I did notice this one skinny fellow who

came in late and took a chair in the front row bowing his head as if to pray. “Probably someone wanting to impress George by looking spiritual.” I was soon rebuked. It was George; he was that skinny fellow. As George got up to address us, I soon lost that first impression. He was small on the outside but how God spoke through him. I came to know George as a package of raw energy. He just never seemed to stop. Was it just George or was it the Holy Spirit? Probably, it was the combination of both. I remember one day we spent in town, up and down stairways, passing out flyers. By the end of the day, I was exhausted and on my way back to the train and headquarters. Who should I meet but George, going in the opposite direction with a group, calling me to join them to continue for the evening. I thought I had energy to spare but I couldn’t keep up with George. My first job on O M was to drive to Holland and pick up some young people. Over the winter, mechanics had fixed cars, vans, and trucks for our work that summer. I was given an old ambulance, and an envelope with French Francs and a map. All by myself, not knowing a word of French, I drove off before midnight with limited gas. About 1 a.m., I needed gas in a hurry. I didn’t see any gas stations; windows on all the buildings seemed to be shuttered closed. Finally, I saw a lighted gas pump by the road. I stopped and waited. Soon, a man came out asking me something. I couldn’t understand; I couldn’t answer. I pointed to the pump and pointed to the gas cap. Then I raised my hand hoping he understood to fill it up. He did. Next, it was time to pay. I looked at the pump; there was a number on it. I looked in the packet I had and counted out that number in francs. He was not happy and made a commotion. Finally, I just opened the packet and let him take out the payment. I had been counting out Old Francs; the pump was counting in New Francs. Once I picked up the Dutch kids, language was no longer a problem. They spoke Dutch, English, and French. We were back in France, about 5 in the morning, making good time on the highway, when I noticed what looked like steam coming from the hood. Everyone

else was asleep as I opened the hood. It was not steam; it was smoke. George used to sell fire extinguishers and had supplied all the vehicles with one. I reached inside for it yelling for everyone to wake up and get out. We put out the fire and stood in the morning mist wondering what to do next. Where could we find a phone? Whom would we call? I may have remembered my first car that had burned and how it started and got me home. We decided to see if our ambulance would start; it did and got us all the way back to our headquarters. For me, looking back, it was an exciting adventure. At the time, I was just glad it was over.

That summer, I was the driver joined with a group to work in Italy, over the Alps in a Bedford Va with no heater. Up the mountains at about 25 or 30 mph, we were glad when we started downhill. It was a lot warmer. We were in Italy but traffic had slowed. We were inching along. My first impression of Italy came in that traffic jam. Besides all the laundry hanging on lines, I saw how expressive Italians were. I noticed a young man using a roadside phone. He must have been making an important point; he started waving one hand but then went to two, losing control of the phone. As we went door to door with our limited Italian, we got the warmest reception. Most everyone wanted to help us learn Italian. I remember getting one question over and over: "Do you know my relative who lives in America?"

Believe it or not, one time the answer was "yes," a preacher I had met in Detroit.

At times, our team split up. A fellow from Switzerland (I think) and myself went off from the team further up the mountains to the smaller villages. We had a light-weight, two-man, tent. In truth, it was probably a one-man tent. Some times, we had an orchard to camp in but some times it was on the side of the road and some times it rained. We learned it paid to wake up when we wanted to roll over so as not to touch the tent top causing a leak for the rest of the night. I learned to like cheese that summer; everyone else ate it. At first, I just had bread and tomatoes. After a while, with no meat, I tried just a little cheese on my sandwich. Soon, I tried a lot. Soon

the summer was over. We had sold hundreds of Bibles and Billy Graham's books. We left thousands of gospel flyers everywhere. It was on my way back from Italy that I met Phil Poston. I don't remember why I didn't go on to India or Turkey; many of the others did. I ended up going to England. Phil asked me to join him and a couple of his friends to evangelize Little Hampton and southern England. George gave us the use of another of the old Bedford Vans. It was one of the winters that it snowed in England. There we were, living in that Bedford Van, in a public parking lot. It was freezing. Sleeping in that van was cold. We finally got some horse blankets. We may have tried them on top of us but found we kept warmer by sleeping on top of them. Many mornings, a cop came by to talk. Was he interested in our preaching or just making sure that we were alright? To shave, we broke the ice on an outdoor water spigot and hopped up and down to keep warm while trying not to cut ourselves. That winter, I preached in a lot of churches; they seemed to enjoy my American accent. Phil got us into his old highschool to share our experiences with a couple classes. That led to about a month of going from one class to another. Many teachers had us come back for a second or third time. We gave an open invitation for students to trust Jesus with their lives; some did. We also took a lot of youth meetings up and down the South Coast of England. One night, in Brighton, after a service, we were told that President John F. Kennedy had been assassinated.

As spring approached, I began getting letters from Bill Nottenkamper who had gone home after the summer. He was organizing the Detroit Literature Crusade. Billy Graham had donated tons of books. The American Bible Society had given tons of Bible portions. Bill wanted me to help. The problem: no money to get home. God was providing what I needed. The sale of books and gifts we were given for preaching were enough to feed us and buy gas. I began to pray. If God wanted me back in Detroit, He could, again, provide the funds without me telling others. One Sunday, Dave (I think that was his name) joined us for Church. As

he left to return to Worthing, he handed me an envelope saying God told him to give it to me. I was used to folks handing me gifts of a pound or two to use in our work. Thinking this was one of those gifts, I stuck the envelope in my pocket and forgot about it. Later, as I changed clothes, I opened the envelope. Inside were 11 five-pound notes. I was back to O M Headquarters for help in booking passage back to the States. The 55 pounds paid for passage on a freighter hauling furniture to New Brunswick and Air Fare from there to Detroit. It was during that trip that we ran into a hurricane at sea. The size of the waves made that ship look like a toy. We passed an oil tanker in the middle of the night. The next day, seated with the captain, we learned the tanker had broken in two during the storm. Somehow, all of this reminds me of something I thought as a child. One of my reasons for not wanting to be a Christian was that it would be boring. Sure.

Chapter 14 - A Helper for Life

Ge 2:18 “It is not good that the man should be alone ...”

The Detroit Literature Crusade involved about 25 of us, most were students from Detroit Bible College. It involved hundreds of churches. I didn't know it at the time but one of the churches assigned to my care would later be a church I would pastor. How did the Crusade turn out? Looking back, I believe most of the work God did was in the hearts of us young people. There were enough failures to keep us all humble. There were enough victories to build our faith for future service. Now that I was back in the States and the Crusade was over, I needed something to do. The Christian Business Men were still looking for teachers to work in their After-School Bible Clubs; there were few teachers for the inner city schools. I felt led to take 4 schools in the inner city near the Open Door Rescue Mission. My plan: I would live at the Mission and help out. From each Bible Club, I would take the top students and engage them in further study at the Mission. I found another job-shop that allowed me to

come in early and leave at lunch so I could be at the schools by 3 p.m. to teach. The shop was about 45 minutes from the Mission. How could I redeem this time? Fred Perry, a friend from the Detroit Bible College, was in Turkey with O M. The Lord led us to pray together for the conversion of at least one Turk a week. I would pray for that one soul every morning on the way to work and Fred, working at the University in Ankara, would hold Bible Studies looking for that soul. I learned how hard it is to pray for 45 minutes for a single objective. I read his letters over and over looking for prayer material. It was hard praying but that just made God's answers even more precious. Fred was seeing souls come to Jesus. The Turk Government was also seeing something, I guess they saw it as a threat, and kicked Fred out of the country.

Meanwhile, I also wanted to start an international Bible study at Wayne State University. I contacted Inter Varsity. They could not help me but wanted to introduce me to a Terrie Lacson who led a Bible Study for girls in her building. It seemed like a good study but it was all girls and Terrie seemed to be doing a great job by herself. Soon, I found myself very busy with work, clubs and the Mission. At the Mission, men who wanted a warm dinner had to first sit through a gospel service. We saw the same men coming in night after night. As some of these men became familiar with the Mission, they got the courage to come back after midnight to sneak in and look for money in the office. The office was on the 3rd floor. They would climb up the fire escape, open the kitchen window and make their way down the hall, past my room, to the office. Our cook knew what they were doing. He seemed to be a believer

but had a drinking problem. One night he took a baseball bat and waited in the dark. The window opened and a head came through. The cook hit a home run. The next night, at dinner, we heard the victim warn the other men: "Be careful trying to sneak in at night, someone here has a fist like iron."

Busy as I was, I still had time to worry. I was 26 years old and

single. Not to worry; I had come up with a plan. I remembered all the girls in Texas. The churches there seemed full of them. My plan: go to Texas, preach in churches there, and look for a good wife. Just to be sure this was God's plan, I told my boss I needed a day off. I would spend that day fasting and praying. I was sure a problem like this would take the whole day. As soon as I started praying, laying out my plan, I heard that inner voice again. "Where did I lead you and what did I lead you to do?" Yes, I knew God had led me to work with these children but I would never find a wife here. "Is anything too hard for me? Can I not bring a wife to you?" Yes, but ... There was no "but" about it. It had taken about 45 minutes and it was all settled. I would continue doing what God led me to do and just trust God to send me a wife. I enjoyed a day off.

Back to those 4 Bible Clubs. We had all the kids we could handle. In one school, I was by myself with some two hundred kids. I needed a helper. Somehow, an Afro-American woman, Mrs. Vera Strong, heard of my plight and came to help; she must have been sent from God. She was a woman of prayer and had a heart for children. Her own child Ken, however, was far from the Lord. I heard he was possibly running numbers, prostitution, and attending Black Muslim rallies. He once remarked that, coming out of those meeting, he would be so filled with hatred that he was just looking for a white man to kill. But ... Ken had a mother who never gave up on him. Whenever Vera and I would take a moment to pray about anything, Ken's name would come up along with our other petitions. One morning, Ken was listening to the car radio and a preacher got his attention. Before it was over, Ken was praying for forgiveness and surrendering his life to serve Jesus. As he told his mother the news, his mother told him about this guy she helped in the Bible Club. Ken and I became brothers. I had more experience with the Lord but Ken had a big heart; he wanted to do more. His vision was to

preach to all of Detroit. Our plan: we would start at Martin Luther King High School. We would invite all of Detroit to the meetings.

He would lead the meetings and we would both preach. He went to the Detroit News and found a reporter to write a full page story. The story included our pictures and our need for helpers. Terrie and the girls in her Bible Study happened to read that story. Terrie recognized my picture. The girls decided to volunteer. In front of Martin Luther King High School one evening at about 7 p.m., the group of us gathered for the first meeting. Where were all the people? There were few. We had some invitations and decided to pass them out to folks in the neighborhood. Across the street, there were a few girls flagging down cars. I was afraid to approach those kind of girls but I noticed one who was not afraid. Not only did Terrie run across the street to talk to them and invite them to the meeting but she also saw the men on the porch who were no doubt working with them. They got invitations from Terrie as well. It was getting late and we had to start the service. My guess, there were less than 25 seated in an auditorium that might have seated 500-1000. At the end of the service a mother and daughter came to receive Jesus and His forgiveness. Two souls saved for eternity was worth it but there would have to be a better way to reach all of Detroit. Years later, I attended a Billy Graham crusade at the new Ford Field. Ken was introduced at the beginning of the service to give his testimony. He was and is still putting one foot in front of the other to serve Jesus. He's the Pastor of Grace Bible Chapel and his radio messages reach all of Detroit. With the Crusade behind us and Fred out of Turkey, I still had those 45 minute drives to work each morning. One morning, I reminded the Lord that I was still waiting for Him to send me a wife. That inner voice came again, driving in the dark of that morning: "Have you not noticed Terrie, a woman of zeal for the work of the gospel?" In a moment, I felt both joy and wonder at my stupid blindness. Why had I not seen this before, myself? Now, how would Terrie react to all of this? It was back to prayer.

One "plus" for my not seeing this myself: when Terrie and I disagree, I can say, "Lord, why did You send me this wife?" That's when God repeatedly tells me that He knows what He is doing. It

is Terrie and myself that need to recognize God's role in our marriage. He started it and He will finish His good work. I don't know who that girl from Texas would have been but I'm sure she is no match for the one God sent me. God always has the best plan for those He loves and He certainly loves me and He loves you too. How does the song go? "God knows my name." He knows your name too.

Chapter 15 - Two Become One

Gen 2:24 "... shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."

Terrie was about to finish her Masters and PhD (Chemistry/Biochemistry) in just $3\frac{1}{2}$ years, record time at Wayne State University. Not sure about it presently but it was a record back then. I was still working at a job shop; I changed shops every time they finished a contract. I have no idea how many different shops I have worked at. Terrie had finished her orals and was now doing post-graduate research. Only her Dissertation was left to finish. Did I volunteer or was I entrapped to do the typing? I enjoyed doing the first copy, even with all those chemical words I didn't know (remember my experience with chemistry?). Terrie turned it in to her Advisor. Soon, without a word possessor, I was typing it again. If Dr. Boyle made a correction on page 72, I had to retype everything from page 72 to the end. Next, may have come a correction on page 32. Before it was finally finished, I could talk to Terrie's colleagues as if I had done the research myself.

December 18, 1965, we were married at the Alliance Church in Dearborn, Michigan. It was a week before Christmas so we would not miss too much work. We didn't have to buy any flowers because the Church was already decorated for Christmas. Terrie's advisors took her shopping for her wedding dress. Terrie's Sunday School teacher and his family took care of the reception and food.

We planned a small wedding but how could we not invite my relatives? What about those in Terrie's Bible Study?

All those from the Lab and her Church could not be left out. I was Youth Leader at my Church; they all wanted to attend plus those from Detroit Bible College, the Bible Clubs and O Mers. Looking back, it was a great wedding but it was a blur at the time. The honeymoon was another adventure. A friend of mine had sold me a super car. It had come from Arizona and had only a few miles on it. The problem: coming from Arizona, it had no heater or defroster. It was December and even though we were driving south for our honeymoon, we had problems. We dressed warm and sat close but that windshield still frosted. So, as I drove, Terrie's job was to keep the windshield scraped. We were both glad to get down to warmer weather. While south, we visited Terrie's Missionary friend in Greenville but, mostly, we were just together going nowhere special. It was on our way back, going through Pennsylvania, that we encountered a slight problem. It was Christmas night; we had passed Harrisburg

looking for a motel for the night. After a couple of exits, we found one. Now, it was time for dinner.

But we did not anticipate that all the restaurants would be closed. There was a Country Club open but we had no formal wear. We backtracked exit by exit, looking for any kind of eatery, until we were back in Harrisburg. Surely we would find something there. We did. That Christmas night, we sat on stools at the Greyhound Bus Terminal eating hot turkey dinners.

Our first apartment was on Warren Ave across the street from Terrie's lab. It was a one roomer; I woke in the mornings only 10 feet from the stove and the inviting aroma of frying bacon. It certainly kept us close. Of course it was too small for all the wedding gifts we received; those got stored for a time with my parents. A larger problem was parking. There was no over-night

parking on Warren Ave, a tow away zone. The alley only had 2 legal parking spots; there were 70 apartments in our building.

Fortunately, back then, parking tickets were only \$2. On Wednesdays, I would drive home from work, stop in front of our apartment, give Terrie a signal on the horn, and then drive around to the ally where Terrie would be waiting with a bag lunch. We ate dinner on the way to Prayer Meeting. Soon, Terrie received her degree and we were praying and asking God for a \$1000 in order to join O M. We thought, with so many Christian contacts from our Churches, the funds would come in quickly. They did not. In fact, I don't remember any gifts from them. We were surprised when we saw where the funds came from; I don't even remember. Now, before leaving, what would we do with all those wedding gifts? We stored a trunk-full in my parents' attic. The rest, we returned, put up for sale or gave away. We had so many, just the sale of the gifts might have been enough to answer our prayer for funds.

By the time we got to Europe, Terrie was pregnant with our first son, John. After the summer in Italy, we settled in Bolton, England, to work with the team there and wait for John. He was born February 5, 1967. It was 5 a.m. when Terrie woke me that it was time. I was thinking time meant minutes. I didn't bother to dress but just threw on my overcoat, grabbed the 10-pence piece on the fire-place mantle, and ran as fast as I could to the phone, a couple of blocks away. It was broken; someone had tried to rob it but only left it unworkable. My brain was working a hundred miles an hour. I remembered there was a police phone another block or two down the road. Out of breath, I told the Sargent my emergency. He told me to get the blank off the phone and go home to sober up. I finally convinced him to call an ambulance. We made it. We were at the hospital and the baby was not yet born. I was then told that they would take it from there and I could come back later to visit Mum and Baby. It was Sunday and after Church I returned to the hospital to see my wife and child. "Oh, she is still

in labour.” I had to almost demand to see her; they didn't allow visitors in the Labor Room. I soon found out why. In a small room, just large enough for 6 beds divided only with curtains, were 6 women all screaming in pain. Nurses were shouting from one of these rooms to another one down the hall concerning who would be next to be wheeled into Delivery. I don't think I have ever prayed in more desperation than I did walking back from that experience. This was not what I was expecting. Six o'clock that evening, after a day of labour, John Wesley was born. He became the talk of Bolton. I would knock on a door to sell books and Bibles and would be greeted with, “How is John Wesley?” Come June, we were back in

Italy chaperoning a team of young people from Europe and the U S. We were working to help a small Church in Cremona. At the end of the next summer, I was sick and Terrie was pregnant. We left most of our things in Italy, planning to be back soon. That plan would get changed.

Now, might be a good time to relate how God spared John's life several times. One of these times was in Cremona, in our attic apartment with no heat. Our bedroom had one of those three stage wood stoves. Before lunch was John's nap time while Terrie prepared lunch for the team. That morning, as Terrie was busy in the kitchen, she had a strange feeling about John's safety. She walked to the other end of the attic and opened the bedroom door. She could hardly see for all the smoke that filled the room. She was able to get John out safely but what if she had waited another 15 minutes? A few years later, we were in Married Housing at Eastern Michigan University. John seemed O K but maybe a little quiet; he was playing with Dan in the playpen and eating fine. Terrie was busy at the sink. Suddenly, John was turning blue. Terrie opened the door and screamed for help. It just happened there was a P E

Instructor with her class close enough to hear Terrie's cries. She was able to stabilize John enough to get him to the emergency. Dan had a different rescue by God's hand. It was years later; Dan was teaching when he developed a bad knee. A year after surgery, there was still a problem. It was bone cancer in the knee and Dan was scheduled for amputation of his leg from above the bad knee. That Sunday, Dan came to the front of the Church for the Elders to pray for healing. I remember sitting in the hospital later, asking God why it could not be my knee instead of Dan's. After surgery, we went to Dan's bed; he still had his leg. When the doctor opened his knee and compared the X-rays, he noticed the cancer had gotten a bit smaller. He decided to just drill a hole in the bone and pack it. He would compare later X-rays to see what was happening. Six months later, the hole was gone, the cancer was gone and Dan was cleared to continue life with two legs. David also had a miracle healing. I was out of town for a week and Terrie was home alone with the children. David had been playing with our dog, Samson, and had a fall. Terrie fixed him up but, later, noticed that he didn't seem his usual self. Maybe it was a concussion. After a spinal tap, the announcement was: bacterial meningitis. He was placed on antibiotics in hopes that his fever would begin to come down in the next few days. Again, the Elders prayed; again, God worked a miracle. The next morning, there was no fever and his spinal tap had no sign of meningitis. These are some we know of. What about those we don't?

Chapter 16 Without - Except for God

Phil. 4:19 “ But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches ...”

Back from Europe, I was again living with my parents. Only this time, I brought along my wife and a very lively 2 year old. After only a few days, they suggested our using their car to visit friends instead of our friends coming to visit us. The hand-writing was on

the wall; we had no car, another baby on the way, no place to live, and only two hundred dollars between us. We needed a job. I went back to one of those job shops running an add for a designer. During the interview, they expressed their interest in me for a different position; because of my degree from a Bible College, they would offer me a management position. This was a salaried position that could lead into part ownership. My parents took it as an answer to prayer and even offered to front the down-payment on a new car. My lunch box was ready for Monday morning, my first day in a great new future. Terrie seemed happy as far as I could tell. Sunday morning, as the Pastor was sharing an illustration in his sermon, that still small voice spoke again: "Wesley, what about your commitment to preach the gospel?" I had to turn down that great offer but how could I tell Terrie? She was the one pregnant and living with in-laws. I would think and pray about it. That evening, the Pastor shared another illustration. God spoke to me again. Who did I love more? We were driving back home in the dark of the night. I didn't dare look at Terrie as I told her I could not take that new job in the morning; we would have to call them and turn it down. Then, I finally turned to see her reaction. She was all smiles. The Lord had already spoken to her; she was not comfortable with my new job either. I don't remember how my parents reacted. They probably took it as just another of my crazy adventures.

What were we to do? Remember, we had no car, another baby on the way, no place to live, and only two hundred dollars between us. We felt the Lord wanted us back at the University of Michigan where there must be other students looking to fill that hole in their lives. We would go by faith, trusting God to supply our needs. We would do what He wanted us to do as long as He provided what we needed to do it. Two houses down from my parents sat an old V W Van for sale. Bob wanted \$150. I offered \$125. He took it. But, that night, his Dad talked him into taking \$100 because it would be used in the Lord's service. We packed John's crib, a trunk and two

suit-cases, all of our belongings, into our van and headed out to Ann Arbor to find a place to live. Looking back, we were a little like Abraham but we didn't even think of that at the time; we had to find a cheap, \$100, apartment for rent. There were no \$100 apartments in Ann Arbor. Ypsilanti was only minutes away from Ann Arbor; we tried there. Again, no \$100 apartments for rent. But, God's hand, through a Christian brother, led us to a friend of his who had a vacant apartment, unfurnished. He was asking \$150 per month; we offered him all we had, \$100. He would talk it over with his wife. He countered with sticking to the \$150 per month but we could pay \$75 for the first 2 weeks and no damage deposit. We took it. What choice did we have?

And we had \$25 dollars left. We filled the gas tank and went grocery shopping. That night, the trunk was our table and the suitcases were our chairs. Two frozen dinners were heated and served but we had no silverware; Terrie found John's rubber coated baby spoon. She took a bite from her dinner and then passed the spoon to me; that's really eating together. As word got around town, it was only a few days before we had a fully furnished home. By the two weeks' end, we had received more than we needed for the rest of the month's rent plus utilities plus food and any other needs we had.

Soon, we had nine students living with us. A couple worked with us; the rest were taking classes at U of M or Eastern Michigan University. They lived upstairs in our first apartment and we moved into the downstairs apartment that became available for rent. Terrie did the cooking for all of us. During the day, a team of us were out on the doors. At night, Terrie and I would knock on doors or follow up those interested in a Bible Study. We had a ton of free baby-sitters, girls from the colleges or those who had been with O M were always asking when they could come to baby-sit.

Months (or years?) later, we came to a fork in the road. It was a Friday and we got bad news in the mail, two bills. I think they were gas and electric, totaling \$260. We had nothing. To buy John's milk, I had to carry a box of bottles I found on the fire escape to the store for refunds. Was God telling us it was time for us to get a job? We thought about it that Friday. We reminded each other that God had never failed us yet. We should, at least, give God a chance to supply this need. The bills were not due until Monday; that gave us Saturday to check the mail for gifts. If Monday came and we had to owe money, we would go get a job. We didn't believe God wanted us to ever owe anyone a debt. That Saturday, two checks came in the mail; one from a Doctor friend living in Pennsylvania and one from someone we never heard of from Detroit. Both were for \$100. That gave us \$200 but we needed \$260. At church, that Sunday, I stood at the door shaking hands with folks as they left. An elderly gentleman shook my hand and I felt some wadded paper. I didn't even look at it but just placed it in my pocket. It was like what people in England did to give me a gift. It had never happened in the States. When we got home, I retrieved that wad of paper. You guessed it; it was \$60. How close we had come to doubting God. He could have given us \$300 but I think He wanted to teach us how He knows our exact needs. Let me share one more example of God's care. Terrie had been going to the University of Michigan Clinic in preparation for Dan's birth. Every week, they asked her how we planned to pay for her delivery. They wanted her to, at least, begin bringing in small weekly payments. Terrie told them that we were trusting God to have all the money by the time of delivery. They repeatedly reminded her we would need the money when we came for delivery. It was the same conversation, week after week.

Daniel was born on a Saturday. We had the money that had been given to us in answer to prayer when we drove to the hospital. But, being a Saturday, the business office was closed and we were unable to pay. They got their money a few days later as we left the

hospital with Dan. It was just another instance where God showed us His grace and His ability to provide our needs.

I'll share a funny story from our time on Summit Street. Our apartment was next door to a Day-Care Center. Their play-ground was adjacent to our driveway. The team and students were all away and Terrie was left at home cooking, cleaning and taking care of John and Dan. Dan had just started talking. One of the team, Micky, had parked his broken down car in our drive. On the hood of Micky's car, John and Dan played Church. John was the preacher and Dan the song leader. The daycare kids and workers became the congregation on the other side of the fence. John stood at the antenna and preached over and over, "Repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand!" Then, Dan, with his baby talk, would sing "Trust and Obey." Meanwhile, students, on their way to class, passed by our home. John and Dan would give them tracts as they passed. One day, as a mental patient from a half-way house up the street passed by, Terrie heard John tell Dan: "Dan, here comes that lady that never takes our tracts.

Let's stone her." Okay John." As they were gathering stones, Terrie's voice from an open window warned the boys, "You better not." Children are a gift from God and a ton of fun but they don't come with God's nature; they don't have to be taught how to get into tomfoolery.

It was while we were at Summit Street that Rebekah came along. I sat in the waiting room waiting along with a mother and two fellows who were also waiting for her daughter to deliver. There were two fellows there because they didn't know which one was the father. The Doctor came in to announce the birth. "Everyone is fine and you can come in to see Mom and Baby as soon as we get them all cleaned up." The fellows asked: "Is it a boy or a girl?" "Everyone is fine and you can come in to see Mom and Baby as soon as we get them all cleaned up." As he left, the fellows spoke

up: “ It's not rocket science; all he has to do is look." Rebekah is our only daughter; we wish we had more daughters like her. As she grew, she became one of the boys except during family football games; since she was a girl, she got to wear the only football helmet we had. She got knocked down but always got right back up, never taking being a girl as a reason for special treatment.

Chapter 17 - Back to the University of Michigan

Rev. 3:8 “... behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it:”

During our time at U of M, there were 4 or 6 of us seeking souls and preaching the gospel. Most of these had been with OM, Mickey, Scott, John and Fred, which gave us a sense of unity. Most of our time was spent in the dorms, going from door to door. We asked the students if they were interested in knowing God in a person to person way. If they were not in, we left a gospel tract (a flyer with the good news of salvation and a phone number for contacting us). For those that responded, we scheduled Bible Studies in their room and they could invite others. We usually had several studies a day with 1 to 10 students per study. When we did not have a study, we continued door to door. West Quad was one of the dorms where we worked. It was during the anti-war era and a lot of the students were active. As we went up to the upper floors, our eyes began to water and the smell of left-over tear gas was in the halls. Some of the rooms with windows facing the streets below were fitted with chain link fencing.

From their reports, during the night, they would open their window, pull back the chain link, and fire Molotov Cocktails at police cars below using inner-tubes as slingshots. As soon as they shot, they had to be quick to put the chain link back and close the window because tear gas was soon being shot from the police. Did this really happen? We did see the chain link window guards and the inner-tube sling shots. Plus, there were the tears in the

mornings at West Quad. Those, who were up all night in battle, were usually asleep when we knocked.

Once we had student converts, we were able to be recognized as a student group. This gave us the privilege of reserving the Grad Library Steps with sound equipment each Friday at lunch. This was the center of campus. As soon as we started preaching, the crowds formed. Some were interested to hear but many were there to challenge us. We always had a group of SDS (students for a democratic society), the Rainbow Party and other anti-war groups. After preaching, we engaged the students in smaller groups. Soon, we were being invited by Professors to share our message with their classes. Dr. Sachs, the Pastor of the Grace Bible Church, heard us and began preaching with us using his Hebrew learned from his Jewish parents. He began one of his sermons singing "Onward Christian Soldiers." That attracted a large group of the anti war crowd. A Jewish doctor, Merrill, was at U of M doing post-doc work. He passed by one of our Friday Sermons at the Diag and wanted to join us. He was most

effective working with students and professors who were having trouble because of objections from their studies in Evolution. I remember one night when he joined me in one of our room Bible Studies. Several Freshmen students began to argue with him. A week later the resident of the room related his "take" on that time. He had seen those Freshmen arguing and was convinced they had no facts but only wanted an excuse for not surrendering to Christ. That was used to show him that he needed to surrender his own life to Christ. A revival was breaking out. Another student told us that he decided to follow Jesus because he saw us preaching peace, Jesus as a Peace Maker, while the rebellious were stirring up hate. Another student, Steve, a Jewish SDS President from Wayne State University was converted and joined us. He had been part of a large group of SDS leaders flown to Moscow for instruction on

how to take the U S down. While there, they were warned to watch out for these Jesus

People who were interfering with some of their plans. That led Steve to investigate on his own. The short of it, he became a follower of Jesus Christ. A group of born-again Catholics from Notre Dame came to reach out to Catholic students. Their group grew and grew. I remember a dorm door opened by a red-haired Catholic fellow. I asked if he wanted to know for sure that he had eternal life before he died. "No one can know that" as the door was slammed in my face. We were talking to students a couple of doors down when this student came in and asked how he could know for sure he had eternal life. We talked and a week or two later, we met him at one of the Catholic meetings. He ran up to us, with that bright red hair and the biggest smile, telling us he was now a born-again Catholic.

East Quad was a different story; it was a Liberal Arts Residential College. Students lived there, co-ed, and had all their classes in the dorm. They were a tight-knit group and we had little response. One exception was a tall, good-looking fellow with long, golden brown, hair. Rob was the president of the Conservative Club. His passion was conservatism but his god was his long hair. We never mentioned hair but just studied the Bible. Rob soon trusted Christ and surrendered his life to Jesus. One day, we showed up and Rob looked different. He had cut his hair. He explained that God had spoken to him, asking him if he loved God more than he loved his hair. The only way he could be sure was to cut it. Only God knows the hearts. Every dorm seemed to have its own character. Some had more "Jocks."

You would think they would be the busiest of students but they always seemed to be home and free to talk. Ken was one of these. He had a baby but was not married. Soon, he was married and Terrie was baby-sitting Courtney. Ken related to us that it was after

one of our Bible Studies that God spoke to him about getting married. After signing his pro-basketball contract, Ken came by with a nice gift for Terrie and me.

After the Kent State incident, where students were shot by the National Guard, both students and the police seemed to be backing down. SDS was no longer holding rallies on campus. One of the SDS members sought me out after one of our Friday Lunch Meetings on the Diag. He wanted to tell me he was giving up on SDS and had even gone so far as to enlist in the Army. I pressed him but he was not ready to yield his life to Christ. With the anti-war rebellion fading away, the revival seemed to be fading as well. Our team seemed to be getting smaller also. Bill Nottenkamper and Ed Peterson were starting a ministry emphasizing Spiritual Warfare. Some of our team joined them and moved away.

Others were back with OM. One day, all by myself, walking to campus, I prayed asking God to send me at least one team member. Maybe an hour later, I was sitting in a room talking and praying with a student, Dave D. We became a team; later, John D and John Z joined us. Dave had some hippie friends. Soon, with their bare feet and loads of beads, we were sitting on the floor studying the Bible. They soon became Believers. They started getting married. Pat, who seemed to be the leader, went on to Bible College and became the Pastor of a Church in DC.

Meanwhile, God was leading us in a different direction. Rebekah had been added to our family. How many children was God going to give us? We had to start thinking differently. We were not just two workers who had a couple of kids; we needed to start thinking as a family. Part of this involved finding a Church. We might have been looking for an OM Church, one that was true to the Bible and had a heart for the students we were reaching. Our search took years. Our Yellow Pages had a lot of “cross- outs.” I believe we visited every Bible Teaching Church in the area, many more than

once. We would stay at one for maybe a month or two before we noticed that they lacked heart for the students or didn't seem to have a place for us. One had plenty of heart for the students but asked us to sign an 18 page doctrinal statement that was just too detailed and dogmatic for us at the time. In Ypsilanti, there was a

small Christian and Missionary Alliance Church. We had been married in an Alliance Church in Dearborn. It seemed they believed exactly like us but we saw no students there at all. We were ready to give up. We would never find the right Church for us. That's when God spoke to us. We had been looking for the right Church for us. God wanted us to look for a Church where we could serve them.

That would be the Alliance Church. We were there, maybe a few months, doing a little preaching and going door to door in the neighborhood. I was looked at as the Assistant Pastor. One week, after the Sunday sermon, the Pastor reached under the pulpit and retrieved a letter. He then read his letter of resignation. Suddenly, I was left as the Pastor. I had preached plenty but not every Sunday and not teaching a series. I had to study and get back to the Greek. It took about six months for them to get a new Pastor. The day the new Pastor took over, another Alliance Church, in Wayne, Michigan, needed someone to fill in and preach. I was asked to do that job. That leads us to another chapter.

Chapter18 - Wayne Gospel Tabernacle

Acts 4:33 “.. and great grace was upon them all.”

That first Sunday, as I stood at the pulpit, there was one family in the back of the far left section. There was Brother May and his wife, founders of the Church, seated toward the front in that same section. A couple of elderly women were toward the front in the middle section. Another elderly couple was in the right section. One family with children was present. Terrie was seated in the

back. There may have been a couple other families that I don't remember. In short, it looked like a vacated auditorium. The Church was surrounded by a subdivision of maybe a hundred and fifty homes. Alliance Churches are good at attracting the faithful from afar; they seldom draw their neighbors. A few of these remaining folks were from the neighborhood. Terrie and I were still living in Ypsilanti. How long would we have to drive before they would find a new Pastor? After a few months, we were still driving. One Sunday,

they approached us and asked if we would become their new Pastor. Terrie and I prayed. It would mean leaving the campus. As we prayed, we became convinced this was God's will for our family. Our answer would be "yes." Dave D had become part of our family; his answer was also "yes."

Leaving campus, meant giving up a \$25 a week support. No problem; the Church offered us a salary of \$35 a week, a step up! The largest step up was the Parsonage. We would now live, rent free, in a nice two bedroom home within walking distance of the Church. The problem was, we now had 3 children plus John and Dave. The back, enclosed, porch became a bedroom. People sometimes ask, "how did you manage on just \$35 a week?" We didn't; there were so many times 4 or 5 boxes of food were dropped on our front porch. A church in Toledo invited us to preach at their annual Christmas Banquet. Our station wagon was so filled with gifts, especially for the kids, that I could not see out of the rear-view mirror. The short: God was really our provider.

Our Church began to grow. One reason was our Saturday Outreach. John D, John Z, Dave, Fred W (our new Assistant Pastor who served with no salary) and myself went door to door each Saturday to all of the homes in that subdivision. In the Church basement, we found boxes of discarded "Power Magazines" left over from years past. We gave one at each door. One family at a

time began to show up. Fred was an excellent administrator. I never was. He knew the inside workings of a Church. I didn't. I didn't always like his advice but, when we took it, it saved us from a lot of trouble. Dave made contact with the teens in the neighborhood. They became faithful attenders but also became problems. It was like a game they played. Every Sunday, after the services, they would hide in the Church. We had to go room by room to get them out, keeping guard at the doors to prevent their friends, still inside, from letting them back in. We won, ... most of the times. Times they won were evident by missing items from the office, small items but enough to prove they won.

Royce was one of those we met at the doors. His wife had recently left him but he still had contact with the rest of her family, mostly sisters. He became a follower of Jesus and immediately began witnessing to them. He invited them to Church every Sunday. One of them, Linda, had promised she would come but never did. One Sunday, she showed up. As I preached, Linda's face lit up. Soon, she was a new, born-again Christian. Linda worked as a waitress in an all-night diner and became the most powerful witness for Jesus that we had ever seen. Immediately, she wanted Bible Studies in her home. Soon, her husband, Rick, and the children were following Christ. Linda began teaching a Sunday School class for the wee ones. After only a few weeks, her class was too large and had to be divided. I remember a Sunday School Contest our Church was part of. We divided our Church into two teams. I stacked the deck against Linda. She was on one team with a couple other leaders while I took Dave and another super leader on mine. I don't remember who that was now. Week by week, Linda's team would bring in more new ones than us. It was the last Sunday of the contest and our Church was in second place. We worked hard but Linda worked harder. As I remember it, my team's total was almost 200 (can that be right?). Linda's total was over 200 children and parents by that last Sunday. We asked her how she did it. She started on Saturday, getting all her contacts to promise to come.

Sunday mornings, before breakfast, she called each one to see if they had a ride (and to be sure they were up). Those who had no ride, Rick, or others she found, would pick them up. In their large Buick, Rick made trip after trip with as many as 13 kids packed in their car. I'm sure a lot of them were not in their seat-belts. We lost the contest but gained a lot of new friends.

One Halloween, although I think it was probably Fred who warned against it, we decided to run a carnival in the Church basement for all the "trick or treaters" from the neighborhood and beyond. Each class room became a game booth: knock cans off a stool with a baseball, fish for prizes with a rod and hook, spin a wheel, and more. Winners all got candy or other small prizes. Upstairs, we ran a gospel film over and over. I think we gathered every kid from that neighborhood. I'm sure they left early enough to get their candy from the rest of the houses as well. I thought it was a huge success. As I was warned, some of the elderly folks in the Church did not agree. It was never repeated.

After working a while at \$35 a week, my salary was increased 43%. We were now receiving \$50 a week. Not long after this, a board meeting was called but they didn't call me to the meeting. The Church Treasurer had called the meeting because the Church was in the hole \$1000. "Wes and Terrie are both able to work and earn good money; their tithe would be enough to get us out of this hole." Not known to anyone at the time, this Treasurer was depositing the checks from the offerings into the Church account but was keeping the cash. Brother May smelled something. On his way to the meeting, he stopped at the bank and took out \$200. When the meeting came to a vote, Brother May asked how much we owed. "\$1000 and there are 5 of us?" "Here is my \$200." The Church lost our Treasurer.

About two weeks later, I received a phone call from the Pastor of a church where this family had visited. He told me about the sermon

he had preached that Sunday, using, as an illustration, the story of his pastor friend in West Virginia. This Pastor had also been getting \$35 a week, got a raise to \$50, and the Treasurer left the Church. On their way out, the family that left our Church stated: "He wasn't even worth the \$35 a week." Anyway, the complete offerings were now being deposited and God had shown us that He was aware of everything.

One morning, Terrie told me she was having labor pains and needed to get to the hospital for the birth of our fourth child. I was now a veteran to these things. No need to hurry; we probably had hours. As we dropped off the kids at different homes, Terrie kept urging me to hurry. What's the hurry? It would be this afternoon before the birth. We finally got to the hospital. I pulled up to the door where they met Terrie and wheeled her in. Meanwhile, I found a parking place and walked in to find Terrie's labor room. There was no labor room. Terrie was in delivery; David was born in the hospital. That was close!

Since this was my first Church, I often ran into problems. I would go to Brother May, the founder of the Church, for advice. He would be in his workshop building another Grandfather clock. I would share my problem and that would remind Brother May of memories from years past. Story after story would be told but he never addressed my problem. One day, as I drove to his house, I prayed and asked God to help Brother May address my problem; it must have been a major one. Once again, he started telling me stories. I left frustrated. On the way home, I complained to God; why did He not have Brother May answer my problem? All of a sudden, it came to me. All of his stories were the answers to my questions. Now, it was a matter of remembering those stories.

After 5 years, the Church was pretty much full, mostly by folks from the Neighborhood who walked. It was good they didn't drive because we had limited parking and neighbors were complaining

about all the cars parked in front of their homes. The Church was also in good hands. Fred and other mature Christians had joined the Church to care for the many new converts we had. It was a great time but John, Dave, and I missed working with students. We began praying and looking for a Church near a college campus that might be looking for a pastor.

Chapter 19 - Lansing Bethel Alliance Church

Mt 7:7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

Lansing Bethel Alliance Church was only a couple of miles from Michigan State University. They were looking for a Pastor. Surely there would be students in the Church. We were told there was a French Professor from the University that attended. He was there that first Sunday but he was not a professor; he was a grad student working as a TA. The rest of the congregation was one family, extended by marriages and children. I think there was another woman with her sister. They didn't have it but, by faith, they offered us \$100 a week. This plus a two bedroom, one bath, house, across the parking lot from the Church. The Church and Parsonage were all paid for. Terrie read the bulletin and wondered how a student would ever feel comfortable here. But there was something about the faith of Becky, that grandmother. She was the head of that family and they all respected her. It was Becky that

countered the concern of those who said they couldn't afford \$100 a week. She agreed but said, "nothing is impossible with God." We were sold on Becky but it would take a lot to reach students here. But, if Becky could step out on faith, so would we; we began packing. It was 1976. We had been at Wayne for five years. God had done great things there. What would He do in Lansing?

John D was married now and moved into an apartment near the Church. Dave D was also married and moved his family near-by.

Doug, one of Becky's sons, joined our team. We started visiting the Dorms at MSU. They were sure different than those at the University of Michigan. Appointments were seldom kept; we just had to catch them when they were in. Students at MSU seemed more interested in other things. We finally found a Dorm where students were more serious; it was the Dorm reserved for graduate students. Most of the graduate students were from other countries: Nigeria, Senegal, Taiwan, Saudi Arabia, South American, plus others. We soon found Scott S. He had a friend, Larry M. John D started working in the Student Married Housing units. We began to see International Students attending our worship services. Our one TA student graduated and left us without a piano player. Terrie gave herself piano lessons and I played along on my trombone. Sometimes, Terrie and I would be playing in different keys. None too soon, Marv L, an African American student we had met at Eastern Michigan University, contacted us. He was now working as a head of Human Resources at the University. He had a great gift for the piano and worship. Some times he would just make up a song and play it on the piano and sing until the congregation caught on. Scott and Larry became leaders in the Church. Scott became our Youth Pastor. Larry played his trombone and blasted away on his favorite, "Victory in Jesus." Marv introduced us to another African American, Lou T. Lou was the Superintendent for the Michigan School of the Blind. He was great with the students and children. Our four kids just loved him. He and his family would bring blind students from the school. A grad student from Nigeria, David O, with his wife and children, found their way to us. Our son, John, taught the Sunday School Class which included David's children along with Lou's and Marv's. Wherever John walked, these children were in a line following him. One morning, I met John on the stairs with his entourage and asked him to do something. I remember one of those young fellows speaking up to John, "Do you take orders from him? You are bigger than he is."

One day I was on the roof of the parsonage with others nailing shingles when Terrie called me to the phone. A grad student from MSU, Gary, wanted to know about our Church. "By the way," he asked, "What is all that pounding I hear?" Later that afternoon, I got another call from Gary. He needed help with a load of shingles he had been carrying on his bike before he had a flat tire. I don't remember how he knew we were out of shingles. Gary, with his gift of helps, was always at Church fixing something.

Even with six inches of snow on the road, we would see Gary peddling to Church on his bike. He would be wearing socks on his hands in place of gloves and a t-shirt for a scarf. Once the Church was filled, I would say about a third were Becky's family and additions (sisters, children, grandchildren in-laws and others), about a third were students and about a third were African or African Americans. Part of our Morning Service was devoted to prayer. Marv would lead from the piano. We would sing for awhile and then pray for awhile and then sing again and pray again. Some times, the prayers would be in tongues. That is, those from Africa might be praying in their native language. Of course, how would I know? Jose, from Venezuela, always prayed in Spanish. And so it went. I remember one visitor, early on, from Alliance Headquarters. He said our Church would never grow because, in order to grow, we had to have a homogeneous congregation. Well, it turned out we did have a homogeneous

congregation; they all loved Jesus Christ. We started out to build a student ministry. God gave us something far better.

Speaking of our worship and prayer times, a funny remembrance comes to mind. Janice, Larry's young wife, began asking the Church to pray that she could find a job. One Sunday morning, she got up to testify that God had answered our prayers for her. "I have found a job as a stripper and I start tomorrow." I saw a lot of shocked looks until she added that she would be stripping furniture

for refinishing. It was her idea of a joke. That was the kind of congregation we had. Another time, I was with the Youth on a 5-day canoe trip. Jose was with us. One morning, we were paddling down the river and came upon a cottage with a refreshment stand. The owner asked Jose if he would like a pack of gum. Jose took the gum and said, "Thank you." "That will be 25 cents." "Oh, you're not giving it to me?" He paid the man and opened the package of gum. He asked the man if he would like a stick. "Sure," he said. "That will be 10 cents," Jose countered. One time we rented the YMCA for an all nighter. We played so much basketball that I was hardly able to walk for a couple days.

Lansing was a great place to live and raise a family. It was ideal for the children. Across the road was all woods and small lakes; the Church parking lot was ideal for the younger ones to play on their toys, bikes, etc. My office in the Church was always just a few steps from our house and the children. It was even better than having an office in the house; I had privacy. John and Dan soon had paper-routes in an adjacent subdivision. All four of our children went to a Christian school. If I remember right, our total cost was only \$400 a month. I don't remember where that \$400 a month came from. During the summer, we would spend a week at Beulah Beach. John and Dan would be up early each morning waiting in line for the refreshment stand to open. One evening, Dan left the service and was gone until someone asked us if it was our son who was asleep on the side walk; it was Dan. On \$100 a week, we

didn't eat out much. Terrie made home-made pizzas. While at Beulah Beach one year, we went to an Italian Restaurant near the Camp-ground. When we started eating, John said, "this doesn't taste like pizza." Mom answered, "This is real Italian pizza." A little later, John took a sip of his water. "This must be real Italian water too." The restaurant was on well water. I think everyone in that restaurant heard him as the whole place broke out in laughter.

\$100 a week also prompted us to spend our vacations back-packing in the north woods. Each child had a backpack. Even our dog, Sam, carried his food in his own pack. Terrie and I carried the tents, food and cooking gear. The children packed their own sleeping bags, water canteens, clothes, plus whatever else they wanted. They soon learned that a warm six-pack of Coke a Cola was not worth packing. They all learned how to dig a little hole for a toilet. David got his first fish from the Mosquito River while we were hiking on the shores of Lake Superior. He was yelling so loud, I thought he had fallen in. I met him on the trail to the river running with that small trout held over his head with the most excited smile I could ever imagine. One summer, after a hot week on the trails, our last meal had spoiled and we were famished. We stopped at a restaurant to eat. Terrie had made everyone garlic neck bands to

ward off mosquito s. After a few days, we didn't need them; our clothes were saturated with the odor. I can only imagine what people in that restaurant must have thought of us. It didn't matter as we were starved. While in Lansing, the children and I made a 17 foot canoe. I don't remember the kids doing much of the work but they all learned how to paddle. We took our canoes north to the Manistee River and 5 day and night trips down stream. One summer, I played Moses. I had trusted a map instead of our compass and took the wrong fork in the trail. A couple of hours later, we were still not at the fresh water where we were to put up camp. The kids began to notice tree trunks with bear marks. With our

canteens low on water, the kids suddenly got very thirsty. That's when I learned how Moses must have felt with all the grumbling. It was getting late. We had to turn around, go back two hours (without water) and then some more hours to where we had planned to camp. We never enjoyed a swim in a river more than

that night. Rebekah was always just like one of the boys but I remember she was a little more concerned with the toilet thing.

It was a great 10 years. God had done great things. There was only one problem: my mother had passed and Dad was living alone in Florida. I was trying to take care of his checking account from Michigan. He was paying for repairs and services that he didn't need. Dad would say, "But the young fellows were so nice." We drove down several times but it was a 24-26 hour non-stop trip. One trip, I remembered driving through Kentucky. The next thing I remembered was the Welcome to Michigan sign. I had driven the whole state of Ohio without knowing it. We began praying for a Church closer to Dad that needed a Pastor.

Chapter 20 - Atlanta

Amos 3:3: "Can two walk together except they be agreed?"

The District Superintendent called me saying he was looking for someone to fill the pulpit of a very unique Church. It was not your typical Christian and Missionary Alliance Church. He was looking for someone who was not your typical Christian and Missionary Alliance Pastor. Well, I was different but later learned that I was not at all like the Pastor who had left. The Church did not look like a church.

The Pastor had been a great lecturer. I was more of a motivator. The people were really great people but most were well established in careers or business; they had little time for knocking on neighborhood doors; they wanted to increase attendance by inviting their friends and colleagues. Their friends and colleagues did not always feel comfortable listening to my preaching. My target was always the neighborhood. I thought the folks at Church could change. They thought I could change.

They even established a clothes fund for the Pastor so I could buy at least two new suits a year. What was that all about? I'm getting

ahead of myself.

Our move to Georgia was quite an adventure. On one of our trips to my Dad in Florida, we had a realtor in Atlanta line up ten houses for us to prospect on our way. The Church helped us to secure a loan on one of them that day. Packed to the limit, we drove from Lansing. As we came to Atlanta, the speed limit on I-285 was 55. Traffic was moving at maybe 85. The minimum was 45. We struggled at times to keep up to 40. What must our next door neighbor have thought as we drove up with a moving truck, an old V W van loaded down with a canoe on top, kids, two dogs and a large crew of volunteers from the Church to help with the unloading?

Because of a past problem, many had left the Church; they never returned. Those who remained needed encouragement. The first few years saw lots of that. Each summer, we invited the neighborhood children to Vacation Bible School. Soon, they became a part of our children's ministry.

Wednesday evenings, we had the Church filled with these children. Their parents began to come. Some of these folks from the neighborhood began to take leadership in the Children's Ministry. I was flying high; we were reaching the neighborhood. One of our youth, Brian, began a Bible Study in the High School located across the street from the Church. Students were beginning to follow Jesus. The Principal began to oppose the Bible studies. But since the Principal was not popular with the students, this only worked to attract more students to the studies. After a year or two, the Principal was at another school.

I don't remember when but the time came when our little Church was almost filled. I would guess it was after about five years.

Meanwhile, I was building relationships with the original members. We enjoyed golfing, meeting for breakfast, and getting our families together. As we began to outgrow our building, the leadership, Elders, began to meet for week-end retreats. We would go out of town for Friday nights and Saturdays. We would study, pray and make plans for expansion. After a few of these retreats, I

began to notice what, to me, was a problem: we would agree on a plan during the retreat but, come Sunday morning, they were no longer behind it. I felt, with all the teens and children in the neighborhood, we needed to build an all-purpose building that could be used as a gym during the week and a meeting place on Sundays. People from the neighborhood were in favor but many of the original folks, those with more money, who had built what we had, were not. We really loved these folks but I began to push what I felt the Lord wanted. I felt they just needed to know the Lord's plan. I forgot that God does not work that way. He has given us "free will" and probably protects it more than we do. As I pushed, one by one, families used their free-will and found other churches. I felt like I was losing my friends. We still met; even continued golfing but it was not the same; we didn't talk much about the Church. Those who remained were soon looking for another Pastor. It was not long until we were looking for another church. What did we learn? Except two agree, they cannot walk together. It was about this time that Joan, a realtor we met at church, talked us into buying some great deals she had found in rental properties. We didn't have money to buy many. That was a problem because it was a job that required full-time oversight. The properties were well built, required little repair, were well situated and underpriced. We had no problem renting them. We ended up with maybe 6 units. Dan and Liz as well as Billy and Rebekah invested in units also. For the most part, we had great renters. Some of them even became wonderful friends. Had it not been for the last two renters, we would have continued. One of them worked for GM and had wonderful health coverage. He also got hooked on crack cocaine. In and out of rehab time after time, they ended up owing us some \$5,000. Another family also got behind a couple of thousand. We just didn't have the time or the heart to evict them. We decided we were not the landlord type and sold all our properties. Soon after we sold out, the housing market took a nosedive. If it were not for those renters falling behind and our soft hearts, we would have been belly up in debt. Even with all they owed, God spared us

and even gave us a good profit. God doesn't have to guess at the economy like we do.

After all our children had finished High School, the Lord worked a miracle to get Terrie teaching again, after 24 years at home with the children,. She started as a part-time instructor at what is now Georgia Perimeter College. She was soon asked to be full-time. Not long after that, she was Full Professor. When she retired, she was awarded Professor Emerita. I also began to teach at a local Christian School. My favorite grade as a child was fourth grade. That was now the grade I was teaching. It was a great ten years. I even had the privilege of teaching two of our grandchildren. Meanwhile, we helped Dan and his family buy a small farm in Danielsville, a suburb of Athens and UGA.

A small Church was forming near campus and we wanted to help out. Driving from Atlanta to Athens worked for a while but eventually got to be a bit much. Land adjacent to Dan's went up for sale. It had been planted in pine trees. We purchased it and became farmers, tree farmers. Next, we began to build. With all the trees we had, we purchased a sawmill and began sawing oak for our first project, a barn. It would have been a lonely job except for the company and help of grandkids. Did they do much? I worked to get the younger ones to pound at least one nail. Anthony helped a lot except when Jake and video games called. Most of the work was done by Dan and me. Once I retired and Terrie continued to teach and earn money, we began to build our house. We had a retired builder do the framing.

Meanwhile, I sat up a wood shop in the barn and began building the cabinets and cutting the trim. The hardest job was the flooring. On my knees to measure and then up to cut and then back on my knees to fit and then up to get another board and back to measure. David did the painting with some help from Elvira, Anthony and Jake. It was the first house we ever built. It was the last house we ever build.

As I close this exercise, I have a couple of comments. One, it has been a blessing to remember, in writing, all the blessings God has

poured upon us. Often, I wonder why God is so good to us. Maybe God has spoiled us in order to show others how good He is. That's the only reason I have been able to think of. My second comment, the way to receive all the blessings God has for us is to let Him. We have to let go and let Him administer our lives. God can manage our lives better than we can. Mt 6:33, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Ro 8:28, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Hard things can work for our good because God has given us His power (the Holy Spirit) to make them turn out for our good.