

TO HELL AND BACK



Authored by Peter D. Laue
The Lord's Scribe & Storyteller
and his Handmaiden Rebekah

- THE GATES OF HELL SHALL NOT PREVAIL -



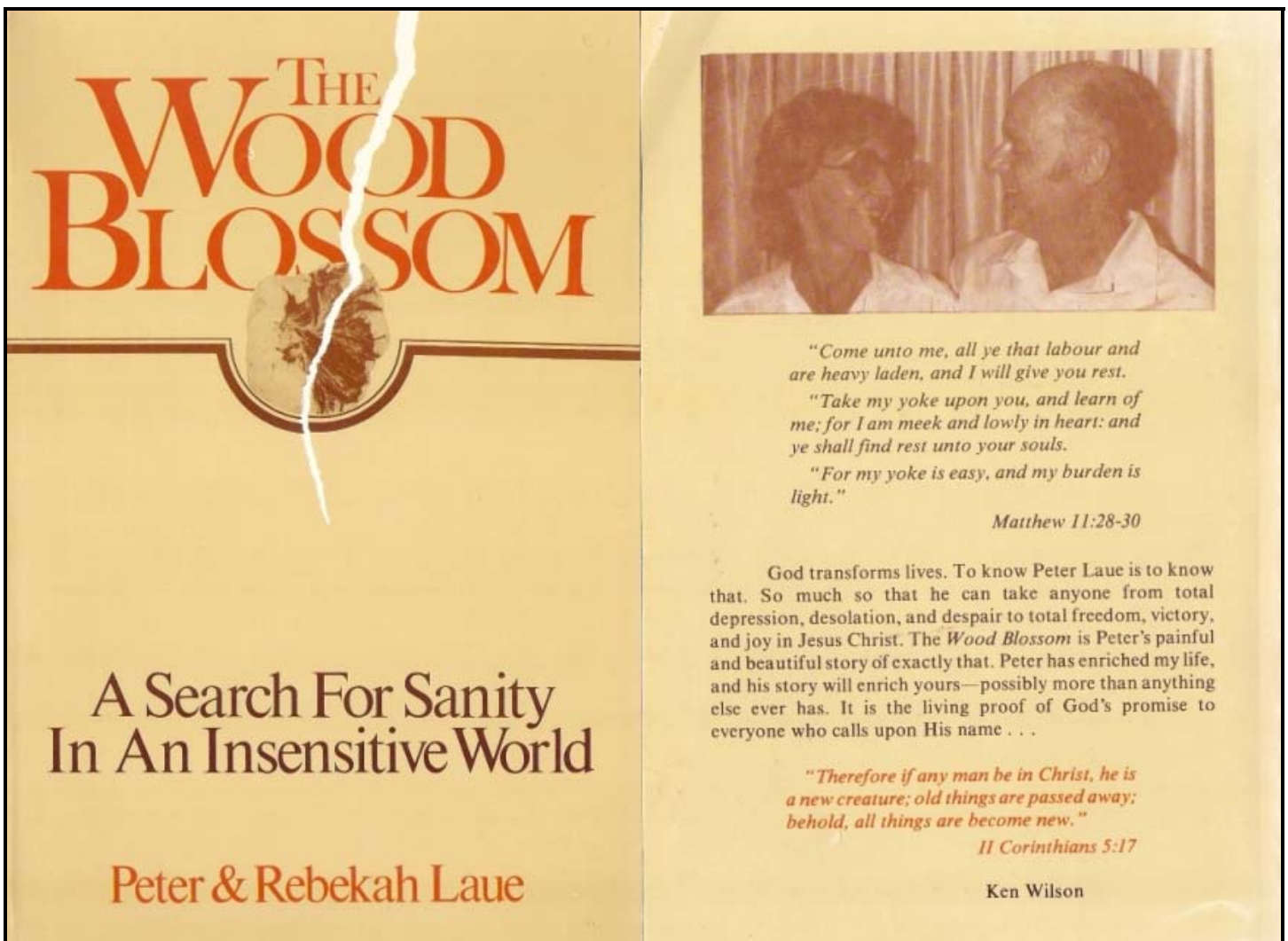
*Behold, I give you power
To tread on serpents and scorpions,
And over all the power of the enemy:
And Nothing shall by any means hurt you*

Luke 10:19

FOREWORD

In 1983 Peter and Rebekah Laue self-published a book titled: *The Wood Blossom – A Search for Sanity in an Insensitive World*. At that time 1,500 copies were printed and distributed over the next few years until the supply was exhausted. Their friend Mary Scott read one of the ten manuscripts that were circulated in hopes of finding a publisher who would risk publishing a book by an unknown author. No publisher came forward at that time. Mary Scott offered to sell her stocks so that the book could be published as soon as possible. Peter and Rebekah gratefully accepted the offer. Mary loves to give books she considers valuable as Christmas presents and chose to give one hundred copies to friends and family beginning with Christmas of 1983.

FRONT & BACK COVERS OF THE FIRST EDITION



The above title and cover is certainly a far cry from the new title but very appropriate as seen from the vantage point of 25 years later. The fact that the writer is now living in a beautiful log cabin on Lake Pagosa with his handmaiden Rebekah and is not incarcerated in a prison or mental institution is only by God's grace. The fact that he did not succumb to voices and

suggestions that were from the pit of hell, is a matter of God's grace. The fact that he is not subdued by medication to corral the extremes in his personality is a matter of God's grace. The fact that the mortgage on Peter and Rebekah's home was paid off seventeen years ahead of schedule is a matter of God's grace. The fact that the book can be presented with a new cover and with additional insights is a matter of God's grace. The fact that it will be available through the internet anywhere in the world at no cost to the reader is a matter of God's grace.

The prompting to publish the book in its new format came from Yvette Bandel in Israel. Others have urged the writer to publish a new edition, but it was Yvette's prompting that tipped the scale. Yvette's passion and compassion reaches into the mental institutions in Israel and many other places through voluminous correspondence and agonizing prayers. Her ministry is world-wide. She accepts prayer requests from everywhere and places them into "The Wailing Wall" in Jerusalem. We have formed a partnership with Yvette and others who have a burden for the mentally ill.

James Stacey is another partner. He lives in England with his wife Tina. He has a burden both for those wrestling with schizophrenia and also for their caregivers. Then there is also Dan Logan, who counseled for many years in state mental institutions and is now preparing a younger generation of counselors to take his place. There are many more crusaders – far too many to mention here by name. James has chronicled his personal battle titled, "Schizophrenia Defeated." He has a story to tell that needs a far broader audience. More can be learned about this man of God who persevered in the presence of overwhelming odds. Go to his web site and become acquainted with James Stacey at: www.schizophreniadefeated.com.

It is the high calling of this scribe and storyteller to stir the social conscience of lawmakers, educators, counselors, doctors, and priests. I desire to make them aware of the plight of people in prison – whether these prisons are built of stone and steel or are the figment of someone's imagination gone astray. Peter's crusading spirit parallels that of other crusaders like John Newton and John Wilberforce, who championed freedom for slaves by helping to put a stop to the hideout slave trade, and Dr. Martin Luther King, who forfeited his own life for the rights of African Americans and other disenfranchised groups, carrying the torch of freedom and dignity to a new level. Still, the greatest slavery exists when we are enslaved by our own selfish, self-centered, and self-serving nature, but are not aware of it.

The painting used on the new cover is by the Lord's artist and Peter's handmaiden Rebekah. It is titled: "THE GATES OF HELL SHALL NOT PREVAIL." It was painted in 1996 and has found its way into many kinds of prisons. One chaplain made this remark: "When I come into a prison with Rebekah's picture, I am surrounded by outstretched hands. It's like feeding a school of hungry piranhas." The effect the painting has is supernatural. God has chosen to anoint the hands of the artist and in turn, the painting. It has ripped the gates of hell off of their hinges for many, allowing them to experience the power of Jesus' words spoken to the apostle Peter:

And I say also unto thee, ‘Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.’ (Matthew 16:18-20)

The keys Jesus has given to the apostle Peter have been passed down from generation to generation. They are offered to us through agonizing prayers of intercession, art, dance, music, poetry, and many books of fiction and non-fiction. Rebekah and I now offer them to you via this book and Rebekah’s painting. Whenever chains are broken, it is not because of fancy words written by another author, but because the anointing of the Holy Spirit has broken the yoke of bondage. Freedom arrives in many ways and different doses, both large and small. So, don’t be discouraged if you don’t have one of those radical conversion experiences like Paul on the Road to Damascus or this scribe. Those who have been radically converted like Paul have paid a huge price. Don’t envy those who have. It is only by the grace of God that they are alive to tell their story.

With the advent of computers, desktop publishing and the internet, it is now possible for this book to reach into many more lives. The cost of publishing the book is negligible and the purchase price is zero when downloaded from the internet. The book is copyright free. It is not published *for* profit, but *to* profit those who have become aware of the hell in which they are living and are desperate to be set free.

What is so amazing to this writer is that he was quite unaware of the hell and deception that he was living in until the age of 37. And that phenomenon is not unusual. We have been tricked to believe that black is white, right is wrong, true is false, sick is healthy, healthy is sick, up is down, and that heaven and hell are only figments of a distorted imagination and religious system. We have been tricked into believing that our little bird cages and the few years of our human existence are the best the Creator has to offer. We have experimented with all kinds of remedies that have cost a lot but did not do a lot. Only when we can say and mean it, **“Enough is Enough,”** will heaven reveal the reality of hell. Only when we can say, **“Enough is Enough”** will we listen to the beat of another “drummer.”

This writer has said, **“Enough is Enough.”** Transformation was imperceptibly slow to start with. But the moment “the old Peter” turned about-face, the ways of the world and the lust of his carnal desires had to release their grip. He now knows and can proclaim with certainty that the orientation of his heart determines the destination of his soul.



The Old Peter – “The Wimp”

A wimp is a self-pleaser and a man-pleaser. A wimp is a professional phony. A wimp is lukewarm, in other words, he is always politically correct. He may be a nice guy, but he has no backbone. The fickle opinions of the crowd are his opinions. He does not have the strength of character to say “NO” to

another beer or another “dear.” He lies and makes excuses rather than admitting that he was wrong. He procrastinates and often breaks his commitments. He talks a lot but does little. The only party he ever attends is his own pity party. He complains about everything and everyone, including God. He is afraid to confront himself or others. He thinks of himself more highly than he ought to. He is just like the apostle Peter who denied that he knew Jesus. Yes, the apostle Peter used to be a first-class wimp. He was ruled by the fear of man. But Jesus saw Peter as a rock; and Peter became that rock after Jesus prayed for him. (See the book of Luke, chapter 22). I hope this definition will shame and challenge every wimp to become a warrior. **It’s never too early or too late to become a warrior!**

The New Peter – “The Warrior”

A warrior is a Father-pleaser. He has acknowledged his sins and has made restitution wherever possible. He has bridled his passionate, unruly human nature. A warrior has submitted to and obeys Jesus Christ as his Supreme Commander. A warrior knows his place and purpose in God’s army. He has been trained and knows how to use the weapons of warfare. He keeps his powder dry until he is called into battle. He knows the Word, trusts the Word, and is able to hear God’s still, small voice. He does not compromise what God says. A warrior knows who the enemy is and how he operates. He knows that the enemy is not made of flesh and blood like ordinary people (Ephesians 6:12). A warrior knows that Jesus in him is greater than any of his enemies; and that Jesus in him has defeated every enemy, including death. A warrior has no fear, except the fear of the Lord. A warrior knows that the battle is the Lord’s, the victory is the Lord’s, and the glory is the Lord’s.



I am sure that there are many – very many who wonder why life has been so hard and why there is so much pain in the world. I am sure that much time and much money has been spent trying to find an answer that will not betray us again.

At a time when I least expected an answer and was not even consciously looking for one, a prophet of God appeared and spoke these words into my heart and I accepted them. I was ready for them. And chances are, if you have found this book and are turning to this page just now, the words you read will ring “true” in your spirit.

There was a time when I called out to you in my Love: “My son, My son where art thou? Come hither unto Me, for thou art mine alone.” But you were lost in a desolate world and could not hear My voice. I created thee to know Me, love Me and acquire mine attributes, to be holy and sanctified, so that thou would be a worthy bride unto My Spirit.

But lo, thou turned away, leaving My heart empty and grieved. I willed to call thee unto Myself in intimacy. So, I took all that was not of Me away, never to be part of thy life again. I made thee to hunger and thirst after Me alone and if thou didst’t search the entire universe over, thou would not be satisfied, except in relationship to Me. Thou art My precious treasure. In

thee I live and move and have My being. It is thou I cherish, for thou now has a heart after mine own.

***When thy life** contained only absolute nothingness, then your wandering in the Valley of Search was over and your journey unto Me began. For all begin in the creation of the longing of My Love and all will return unto Me. I began anew in thee, reconstructing and molding thee from dust to clay to Spirit. For I AM God and thou art My creation. As soon as thou turned thy uplifted face to behold Mine, in full submission to My will, prostrate before Me, I could begin to reveal myself to thee.*

***O, what joy** abounded in the heavens as holy angels rejoiced at our reunion! Heaven and earth stood still as I embraced My beloved once again; and thou became mine forever.*

***Continue ye** in thy love for Me and pray without ceasing unto Me. I wilt not disappoint thy heart ever again, nor wilt thou ever be far away from Me. For we are as one mind, one heart and one spirit. I AM well pleased to call you son and thou shalt have an anointed place at My right hand. Thou shalt call Me thy Father God and I shalt call thee My best beloved son; and I shall name thy name in the Book of Life. We will always know of our love for one another, one Spirit, singing praise in perfect harmony, rejoicing in our love forevermore.*



PROLOGUE

It was a 9 a.m. appointment I didn't want to keep. Peter Laue and I were to meet at my house this particular morning. For some reason, I was not feeling my best. I had one of those spells of depression that most of us have at times.

How could I reach Peter, my dear friend, to tell him of my difficulty? I concluded that there was no way. I felt certain he had already started for my place, and this proved to be a fact when the doorbell rang. I felt trapped in a situation I did not really desire.

As I opened the door there stood Peter dressed in his customary huge cross suspended mainly his clear blue later, my eyes were still practically non-stop for depression had three minutes after his Laue does to you.



door there stood Peter rugged garments with a from his neck. I noticed eyes. Nearly eight hours fixed on his. We had talked this length of time. My disappeared in less than arrival. That's what Peter

In those hours, we informal neighborhood less than conventional swaying, he had the

diners as he had on me. He captivated them with his hearty laugh, his quick, sharp humor and the obvious evidence of a very close relationship with the Lord – not frightening or formidable but nevertheless a fact even to the so-called man in the street or, as in this instance, more appropriately, the man in the restaurant. That's what Peter Laue does to you.

broke only to go to a small, restaurant, and with his attire and big cross same effect on most of the

As you read his book, you will discern suffering ... depression, hurt, humiliation, rejection...you name it.

To have Peter come into your presence as he did on that morning when I wished for almost anything else and to spend instead nearly eight hours of sheer joy, inspiration and praise with him meant that something had happened to this individual that was indeed spiritual—a transformation most assuredly not of this realm.

As you read his story as bitter as it may be, you might possibly realize for yourself a measure of similar spiritual transformation. You may weep as you read but you might also feel some of the wonder that is available to those willing to deliver themselves completely to the One who can turn tears into joy, fear into courage, weakness into strength, hatred into love, despair into hope.

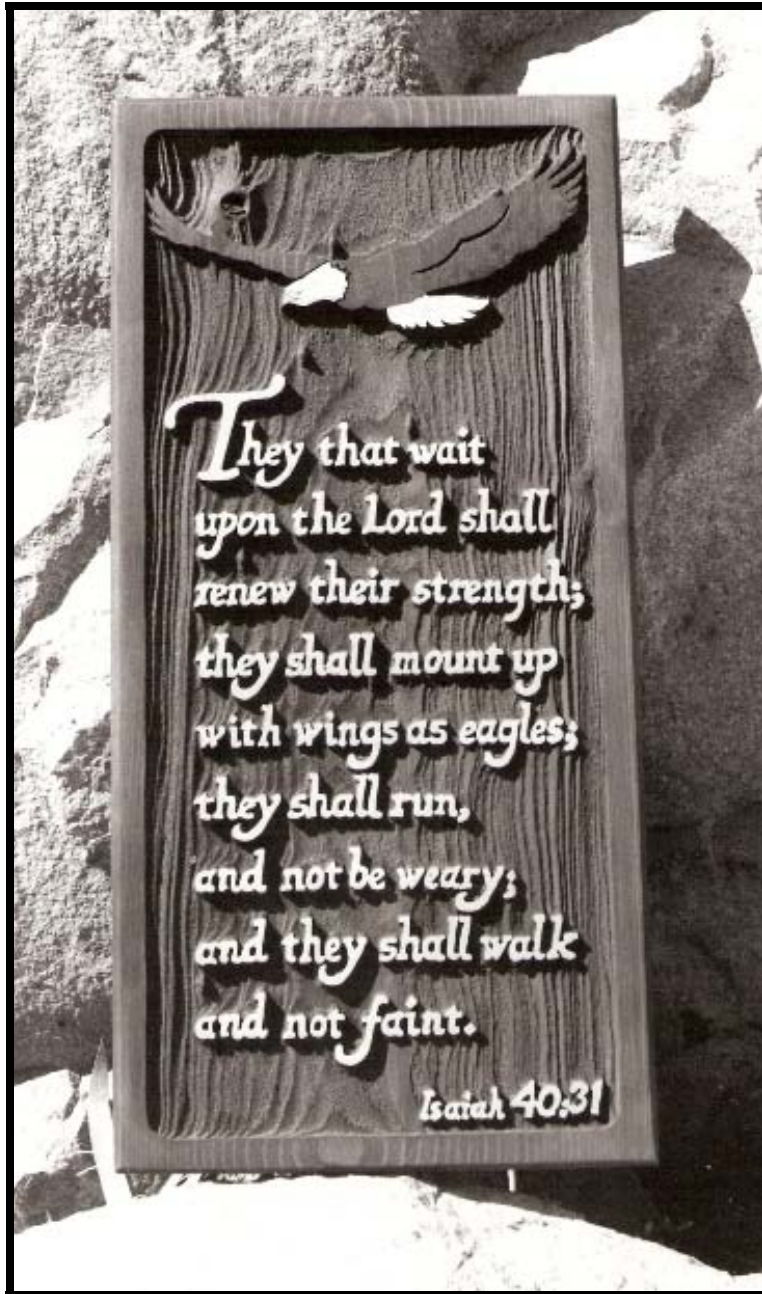
What God did for Peter, He can do for you and me ... if we but totally give ourselves completely to Him.

Harold M. Norman

[The sandblasted sign above the fireplace is made from a slab of aspen wood. It is in the shape of a foot and has a clock in its heel. It reads: "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men." (Matthew 4:19)]

Table of Contents

Foreword	III
Prologue	VII
Preface	IX
Chapter I The Wood Blossom Encounter.....	1
Chapter II The Longest Night	8
Chapter III Edgemont Hospital	13
Chapter IV Web of Delusion	17
Chapter V Learning to Walk Again	22
Chapter VI Where Do I belong Now?	26
Chapter VII Divorce	30
Chapter VIII Hope and Healing	39
Chapter IX New Purpose	46
Chapter X Fulfillment	52
Chapter XI We Move to the Mountains	57
Chapter XII New Doors Open	60
Chapter XIII High Adventure	65
Chapter XIV Songs and Reflections	69
Chapter XV Thoughts and Reflections	77
Chapter XVI Letters between Friends	83
Chapter XVII Misfits and Outcasts	95
Chapter XVIII A Letter to the Churches	116
Chapter XIX An Unexpected Turn	118
Epilogue The Fencepost and “Legacy from a Lovely Lady”	128



*They that wait
upon the Lord shall
renew their strength;
they shall mount up
with wings as eagles;
they shall run,
and not be weary;
and they shall walk
and not faint.*

Isaiah 40:31

PREFACE

Dear Phyllis,

This is a personal letter to you and the many others like us who do not seem to fit into this frenetic society. For the sake of self-preservation, we have learned to put up a front; but the real “we” is mostly in hiding, like a terrified and hunted deer in the forest. We are afraid to show ourselves as we really are for fear of being misunderstood or rejected. At times the strain of pretending has been so great that we have become physically and emotionally exhausted or ill. At times we seem to walk along the edge of an abyss, wondering if we can take the strain of another day or even hour. “If there were only one person we could trust, one person we could talk to who understands our situation, our loneliness, our guilt and anguish,” we say to ourselves. Maybe I am or can become that person for you. Maybe you are or can become that person for me.

God did not intend for us to live like a bird in a cage or a hunted deer in the forest. He does not want us to be the lone survivor in a world of our own making or imagination. He desires for us to have fellowship with Him and with one another. I realize that it takes courage to open up and let others look into our fragmented and unique world—we may even get hurt when we do. But no doctor can help us unless we voluntarily take down our physical, emotional and mental barriers.

Let me help you take down these barriers, by taking mine down first. We do not have to take this step all at once; and no one should do so indiscriminately. I need you and you also need me. You are a unique gift for someone because no one else in the world has had the training, experience, and background that are yours. No one else has a heart that responds with the same compassion and passion to the situations that touch your heart.

God does not create misfits. It is we who have allowed others, including Satan, to label us misfits. Refuse to wear those labels. Peel them off and throw them into the trash. If you have adopted the ways of the world and have soiled your beautiful soul, remember that God’s mercy is greater than his judgment. That’s why He sent His Son Jesus. That’s why I had to write this book.

It has taken me a long time to get rid of the debilitating labels the world pinned on my lapel. It is still a battle, for this world wants us to conform to its vague and shifting definition of “normal.” But how can our souls, our unique personalities survive if we permit ourselves to be molded by the peer pressures of this world? We have all tried to conform, but have never measured up. We have never been tall enough, young enough, old enough, slim enough, rich enough or educated enough. In one way or another, we have always fallen short. Only when we are conformed to the image of Jesus can our souls prosper and be forever satisfied and at peace.

I share my story in *The Wood Blossom* to let you see the conflict that has raged within and without for my soul. There must be others who have experienced similar battles. I want my world and family to grow. I would like to meet those who will gently unwrap the rest of my grave clothes. And I want to be available to help others unwrap theirs. Lazarus could not unwrap his own grave clothes and neither can we.

I have not always been this outspoken with my rhetoric. But ever since I have identified with the apostle Peter, my heart is poured out in gratitude to Jesus. He has pardoned me. I am forgiven. I am healed. I am very alive. When Jesus spoke these words to Simon Peter, He also spoke them into my heart, “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for you that thy faith fail not. And when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren” (Luke 22:31-32). I have been converted. It is now my high calling to “strengthen the brethren,” to encourage the fainthearted and those on the edge of despair.

But who is Phyllis? Phyllis is Rebekah’s sister; and that makes Phyllis my sister-in-law. Rebekah is that special woman I married in 1973 after going through a painful divorce in 1971. Phyllis’ questions about the occult provoked me to retrace my own confusing and terrifying journey. I have always enjoyed writing letters. I not only enjoy writing them; but I also enjoy receiving them. The story of *The Wood Blossom* has been framed in the style of a personal letter.

The difference between the first edition and the revised edition is: “There is less of me and more of us.”

Peter D. Laue

Published – 1983, updated – 2008

Pagosa Springs, Colorado

CHAPTER I THE WOOD BLOSSOM ENCOUNTER

*All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned every one to his own way...Isaiah 53:6*

In the last few weeks I have felt a strange urging to retrace with my pen the experiences of the past six years of my life. So it is very likely that I shall deny myself the luxury of sleeping late in order to relive and write down what has happened.

I met you only one time, and yet I feel a real kinship toward you. Even before we met last summer, I liked you and felt that I could share with you many things that do not dare to surface in the presence of others. I would actually prefer to have you sit across from me, dear Phyllis, and have you unravel my thoughts. But then, this letter would never be written. And the final product would probably be rather disorganized.

I have never dared to give liberal expression to my imagination for fear of being called a lunatic. But this hesitation is now largely a thing of the past. Until six years ago my life was quite ordinary. No one suspected, not even I, that all my values were to be turned upside down. Everyone who knew me considered my life, my family, and my children as exemplary. Though I was enjoying the elusive "good life," my personality was beginning to crack. If anyone noticed, he did not say anything. My ambition to scale the lofty heights of success had caused me to abuse myself physically and emotionally. My ambition or pride was actually a sickness. There were enough people around me who applauded and encouraged me to climb higher and higher. I was not able to make pit stops for minor repairs or refueling. I did not know how to stop anymore, yet I could not drop out of the race until I was totally spent.

There were many signals hoisted to warn me of an impending disaster, but I could not interpret any of them correctly. An undiagnosed pain in the right side of my face was probably the first warning I received. X-rays revealed no problems. To handle the matter, I began to enjoy a few martinis at night.

Two years later a depression descended upon me and sapped my vitality. I could perform only the most necessary functions and slept every possible moment. I lost my job and collected unemployment for five weeks. My self-confidence was severely shaken.

My next job was a disaster. I quit after two months. Eventually I was re-employed by a company that I had served well previously. Trying to erase the memory of past failures, I threw myself into my work with singular dedication bordering on a state of frenzy.

I think God was trying to get my attention in a tactful and benevolent manner, but I ignored Him, not deliberately, yet as effectively as I knew how. I began to drink more. Martinis did not agree with me too well, especially at night, so I switched to wine. It numbed my pain; I liked it; it was not too expensive; and none of my friends seemed to object. These were all good reasons why I should not worry about the habit. Alcohol became a substitute for aspirin and similar products, which I had been taught to avoid as much as possible. Any relief from pain was only temporary, however. The right side of my face became numb to the touch. My gums started to deteriorate, and the nerves in several of my teeth died. I underwent painful gum surgery and extensive dental treatment to save my teeth. Nothing helped – the pain persisted. A brain scan revealed nothing.

In the meantime, my wife became obsessed with the idea of moving. I was perfectly satisfied with our housing arrangement and tried to stall a move as long as possible. I did not have the strength to disagree with her preferences. We finally moved. All our savings were required as a down payment. Both of us needed to work to meet our obligations. I believe our combined yearly income at that time was about \$30,000.

Inwardly, I resented having this load on my shoulders. I loved and hated the new house at the same time. I resisted doing any work around the house. Every time the pool service sent their bill, resentment flared up within me. I managed to repress all the resentment, not realizing that the gnawing ache in my face represented unresolved emotions.

I made a valiant effort to bolster my health and deal with the pain. Every morning, winter or summer, weekdays or weekends, I would swim. At first I swam morning and evening. Then the chlorine began to hurt my skin, so I swam only in the morning. I used to put fifty marbles in a coffee can at one end of the pool. Every time I swam a complete lap, I transferred one marble to another can. When the first can was empty, I got out of the pool and took a long, hot shower. I was rather proud of the discipline I imposed upon myself; and I believe that I may have inspired a few others to make better use of their pools. My two boys swam with me for awhile, but they did not keep up the routine. The swimming failed to reduce my pain. Somehow I learned to brace myself better and complain less.

In November of 1969 my strange adventure began. I will try to recall it with as much accuracy as possible and make it sufficiently readable so as not to bore you.

A neighbor had heard about my excruciating pain. He told me about a friend of his who had had a similar problem and had found total relief through a drug called Dilantin. I visited the friend and then his doctor. My appointment was on December 15, 1969: on the same day, I began taking Dilantin, one capsule - 100 milligrams, four times a day. I was convinced that Dilantin would permanently relieve me of all pain. I called my wife and asked her to join me for lunch to celebrate the occasion. She joined me at Genio's in Burbank, a favorite place that I frequented for lunch. Instead of water, I used wine to swallow my first pill. I soon discovered that the medication did not help, but I did not discontinue taking it. I want you to know that none of the strange things that happened to me seemed unusual at the time. They were all very real. Whether the medication opened a new dimension of feeling or perception, a new appreciation for beauty, a new ability to identify with others, I cannot tell you. It is possible, and that is why I mention it.

Since then I have been warned not to mix barbiturates and alcohol. I also have learned that it is far more dangerous to withdraw from barbiturates than from heroin, but I did not learn about these things until years later. I probably would have run out of gas without the possible side effects of Dilantin. I was driving myself so hard that some kind of disaster was inevitable. Unfortunately, I was not aware that I was on a wild roller coaster ride and had lost my brakes. Maybe if someone had placed the right kind of book into my hands early enough, I would have been helped. Who knows?

Most stimulants or depressants eventually take their toll on us. We become less able to deal with stress in a realistic way. Our reason becomes warped in order to justify our dependency. We develop peculiar idiosyncrasies and generally withdraw into a subculture where our behavior is acceptable and considered normal. This change may happen gradually and create little turmoil or very abruptly and cause a great deal of confusion for those near and dear to us.

Let me tell you what happened that made it apparent that my personality was beginning to crack. A friend had given us a very unusual formation of wood called a "wood blossom." This formation is the result of a tree cancer attacking a tree limb. The subsequent struggle of the tree to overcome the disease forms the wood blossom. Very unusual and often grotesque formations of wood result. Indians in Mexico collect these wood blossoms, clean them, and offer them for sale. In Spanish they are called "Flores de Madera."

When the piece of wood was given to me, I liked it, but it was not singularly beautiful or symbolic of anything in particular. However, shortly after I started to take my medication, I literally fell in love with the wood blossom and made a concerted effort to share my enthusiasm with others. My company granted my request to display it in the main lobby. I was permitted to exhibit it at the public library in Burbank, and I even approached an art museum about exhibiting the strange formation of wood. A few days before I was taken to a mental institution, I arranged for a rather spontaneous "wood

blossom festival” at our house. It was a kind of mystical affair that included music, candles, holding of hands, and even prayers of a sort. In my imagination I was already taking the wood blossom all over the world. In fact, I think my brother-in-law will remember that I had asked him to build me a suitable carrying case.

I have asked myself many times why I ever fell in love with an ordinary piece of wood. The only reasonable answer is that the wood blossom may have been symbolic of the life-and-death struggle going on within my soul. The cancer has a parasitic nature. When the host dies, the cancer can no longer live. You can imagine the terrific life-and-death contest that must ensue. I have come to realize that pain and suffering may build a type of chalice into which God can eventually pour His purpose and Spirit. At the time, however, I was reacting to impulses far greater than I was and over which I had little or no control.

I cannot recall when I stopped taking Dilantin, possibly around the middle of January, 1970, or about month after I had taken the first medication. The drug did not alleviate my pain, so continuing to take it seemed useless. Not certain what I should do with the rest of the capsules, I merely placed the container, which was three-fourths of the way full, on the kitchen counter.

I decided that I must get away to sort things out, to cry where nobody could hear me. I arranged for a leave of absence from my company. It was to start Monday, February 2, 1970. Little did I dream that I would be taken to a mental institution that day, the thing I feared most. The events of the preceding week were the most earthshaking of my life and have left indelible marks on my personality. They traced a story on my mind that I have been reluctant to share with anyone. The fact that I am not totally incoherent, more like a vegetable, is a miracle and a grace.

Tuesday evening, January 27, a friend invited me to join him at a yoga class. I accepted the invitation and made every effort to twist my body into different positions. I was unsuccessful and did not enjoy the experience. During the class, however, I looked at a young girl and experienced a strange but powerful exchange of energy. This was a new experience for me and rather pleasant. It seemed as if our personalities were locked in on the same frequency. There was no way of recreating the experience even though I wanted to. I have never seen the woman again, but the picture has faded only a little in almost six years.

After the yoga session, my friend joined me at my house with six other young men and women. The purpose of the gathering was to fathom the mystery of the wood blossom. The atmosphere that evening was very strange, mystical, and somehow very sensual. My wife wore a garment that previously had been reserved for lounging in my presence only. I was surprised that she could be so uninhibited in the presence of others. She had always been very discreet in the way she displayed her femininity.

The evening progressed with music, candlelight, food, and conversation. We all tried to discover the secret of the wood blossom. I considered it to be a masterpiece of nature, a magnificent flower in wood. Someone else saw the face of a boxer with a cauliflower ear. We were not consciously playing any psychological games, but as I look back, I think we might have been giving a Rorschach test to each other. This is a psychological test in which patients are asked to interpret a series of unstructured inkblots. Everyone saw something quite unique and different.

The music by Jim Nabors also had a hypnotic fascination for me. I sat listening with one ear glued to the speaker, and stepped inside one particular song as if it had been written for me. I played it over and over again, completely indifferent to the preferences of our company. Later on I realized why I was so completely able to identify with this song:

YOU GAVE ME A MOUNTAIN

Born in the heat of the desert,
My mother died giving me life.
Deprived of the love of a father,
Blamed for the loss of his wife.

You know, Lord, I've been in a prison
For something that I never done.
It's been one hill after another,
But I've climbed them all one by one.

This time, Lord, you gave me a mountain,
A mountain I may never climb.

It isn't a hill any longer,
You gave me a mountain this time.

My woman got tired of the hardships,
Tired of the grief and the strife,
She's tired of working for nothing,
Tired of being my wife.

She took my one ray of sunshine,
She took my pride and my joy,
She took my reason for living,
She took my small baby boy.

With these words, I was being prepared for the death of my old nature, my old way of life – the driving ambition, insatiable pride, and my desperate need to please everyone. There was a premonition in my soul that I was on the threshold of an awesome experience. A life-and-death struggle was going on in my soul. I was no longer the captain of my own ship, but I did not know it.

The evening progressed. It was quite late by now, maybe close to midnight. We decided to hold hands and pray. It seemed to be important who was holding whose hand. One couple was asked not to participate. No words were spoken. No previous prayer requests had been made. No one knew what the other person was feeling, thinking, or praying for. Suddenly my friend Don said, "My prayer has been answered." I did not know for what he had prayed or how he could be so positive. I had prayed that the crack that was beginning to show up in my marriage would be healed. I felt nothing and had no mystical experience.

Later on I asked Don how he could have been so sure his prayer was answered. He told me that as he was praying, it seemed as if a bolt of lightning were traveling down his spine. He interpreted this experience as a positive response to his prayer. Spiritually, I must have been totally closed, as I felt nothing but pain and agony.

Finally, there were only four persons left in our little party. We began to provoke and tease each other. Our behavior was so contrary to what we knew to be proper that I was totally perplexed. When my wife and I were finally alone, we reviewed our conduct. The atmosphere became tense and harsh. It was as if we were two different people. About two o'clock each of us, on our respective sides of the bed, tried to fall asleep.

The alarm went off as usual at five-thirty. I slipped off my pajamas and went outside to take my customary swim. After about the third or fourth lap, I felt an unusual sensation pervade my body. It was a tingle, like tiny little needles massaging every area of my body, as if every nerve cell in my body were discharging a small amount of electricity. My first impulse was to stop swimming and get out of the pool. Maybe this strange feeling would stop? But then I said to myself, "I will let this strange thing continue, since it is rather pleasant and I must finish my laps."

When I finally got out of the pool, the tingling sensation stopped, and I broke down into uncontrollable weeping. I had not cried for sixteen years. In fact, I thought I no longer knew how to cry. Every ounce of tension that had accumulated for sixteen years was drained from my body. The strange thing was that I never realized how tense I really was until that Wednesday morning, January 28, 1970. I came into the house to take a shower. I continued to cry and shake for maybe twenty minutes. The pain in my face was gone. It was a miracle. I was healed.

These are the first words that I spoke to my wife: "Josephine, I have been healed. A miracle has happened." I showed her my two hands and said, "And these hands can heal."

My wife was concerned about what had just happened. Was I well enough to go to work? I assured her that I was. In fact, I was very eager to tell as many people as would listen about my miracle. I had never heard about Kathryn Kuhlman. As far as I was concerned, my healing was the first miracle in two thousand years.

You can imagine that my conduct that day was viewed by many as rather bizarre. Everybody I met had to listen to my story, whether he wanted to or not, whether he believed in miracles or not. I was like a bolt of lightning traveling through a company of a thousand employees. Nobody tried to stop me. As I look back, I know that I must have left many puzzled, confused, and even frightened people in my trail. I told my friend Les that I would cancel my doctor's appointment for the following day. He encouraged me to keep it, just to be on the safe side. He hoped that the doctor would see my condition and have me committed to an institution.

The examination the next day was very routine. Since I had no pain, it was not very extensive. I may have spent ten minutes with the doctor, really not enough time to share the unusual healing with him. In fact, I was already beginning to learn that it was safer not to tell everybody everything. When I left his office, I had the satisfaction of having kept my appointment, but to my knowledge, nothing had been accomplished.

During the previous night, I had awakened and noticed an unusual fragrance. It seemed as if someone were sitting on the edge of my bed. I did not investigate the fragrance other than believing it might be the laundry soap my wife had used or a box of Kleenex near the bed. The odor was rather pleasant and quite strong. It was more like perfume or deodorant. The following night the same fragrance woke me again. I was filled with a strange anxiety. I felt that someone was in the room. "I must do something," I thought, so I called the well-known founder of a metaphysical group. I do not recall the nature of our conversation, but I remember that I asked for help. A few moments later I was calm again and went back to bed and fell asleep immediately. My wife slept through the whole episode.

A little later on I will have more to say about my association with this metaphysical group. I will not name the leader of the group. Some of her books may be found in the public library. As I remember, she writes profusely. Today I would consider her a white witch, if there is such a thing. Impressionable people, who have a weak sense of identity, follow her around like little puppy dogs. I did for awhile. Doing so is fascinating; but one can become quickly and completely alienated from society. According to her, I was some minor savior the world had been waiting for. I believe everyone in her little flock has some kind of exalted calling and everyone is the reincarnation of someone important.

I want you to know, dear Phyllis, that I swallowed all these things, hook, line, and sinker. When I get trapped by an idea, I cannot think myself free. I have to be either set free by a bulldozer or be blasted loose. Somehow my analytical skills used to build computer systems have only fractional value in the metaphysical world.

I have become aware of numerous groups similar to the one with which I was associated. I have found it next to impossible to persuade members of such groups to dissolve their affiliations. I have discovered that generally such groups do not discredit the Word of God; however, they give their own writings at least equal status and priority. When such is the case, we must proceed with caution. It is written:

For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things, which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into

your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that abideth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds. (II John 7:11)

The following day my friend Jerry took me fishing in Big Tujunga Canyon. He knew something was wrong with me. His own sons had experimented with drugs, and he could tell when someone was under their influence. Jerry said nothing to me about his suspicions until much later. Since then I have discovered for myself that working with someone who is on the edge of going psychotic takes a great deal of skill and patience. Telling someone that he is losing his mind is the one thing you must not tell him.

I did not do any fishing myself that day but just walked along with Jerry. While he was fishing, I picked watercress and took a refreshing swim in the creek. In the water I suddenly imagined myself to be a fish. This flight of fancy was a totally real experience. I then lay on a large boulder to let the sun dry me. I gazed on the wall of granite, and all at once I was inside the wall looking back at myself on the boulder. I imagined the boulder to be Mother Earth and became totally intimate in my relationship. Only a real effort of the will divorced me from the fantasy. My being had dissolved into the rock; and the rock, into me. Every part of my being participated in this union. If I knew how to repeat the experience, I would be tempted to do so. I have never gone back to that particular spot in Big Tujunga Canyon, but I believe I could find it without too much trouble.

The next morning, Sunday, the first of February, I awoke early. The dawn was beginning to break. I went out to the pool. I cannot remember if I was in my pajamas or what I was wearing. I started to walk around the pool and sing, "When He's coming around the mountain, when He comes, He'll be driving six white horses." I imagined that Jerry and his girlfriend were coming and I was to baptize his girlfriend. I could see the taillights of their car reflected in our bedroom window. I strained to hear the approaching car. I heard nothing. The light reflected in the window was the beacon light from the Hollywood-Burbank airport. Then I imagined I was to take Jerry's girlfriend to Big Tujunga Canyon and baptize her in the same spot where I swam the previous day. Nobody came. I became more and more agitated.

My overriding thought still was, "My wife must not know what is happening; she won't understand; she'll think I'm going crazy." The fear of insanity was awesome. I went farther away from the house in order not to disturb anyone. I started to walk in a circle, maybe about twelve feet across. I walked at first, then ran. It was as if I were caught in a vortex. I couldn't stop. The circle became smaller and smaller. Somehow I knew I would not stop until I collapsed. Then I imagined I was standing on a mountain, leaning over the edge and gripping a rope. The scene was very real. Even as I tell you about it, the picture takes on life once more. My mother was hanging on to the end of the rope. She was extremely heavy, for she was grasping all her worldly possessions. The most vivid in my mind's eye were her baby grand piano and a diamond ring. I strained as hard as I could to pull her to the top of the mountain. With my last ounce of strength, I succeeded, and then I collapsed and fell to the ground. At that moment I envisioned that my wife died. I began to sob uncontrollably, for how long I can't remember, maybe ten or twenty minutes. Unexpectedly, my wife stood in front of me. I was confused. I thought she was dead. She took me into the house and tried to comfort me and to reassure me that she had not died.

We called my parents in San Diego. I think the time was between nine and ten o'clock Sunday morning. My father answered the phone. I told him that Mother had died. He said, "No, she is fine." I asked to speak to her, but he said that she was still sleeping. I could not believe what I was hearing. He went to the bedroom to check, then woke her. When I spoke to her, I became more confused. I thought that her crippled right hand had been miraculously healed, but that was not true either.

My wife took care of me that day with a great deal of skill. She tried to make me feel as comfortable as possible, neither asking unnecessary questions nor ridiculing my behavior in any way. She attended to the needs of our two children and did her best to screen them from any bizarre behavior. I

think people are sometimes given supernatural abilities to handle problems without being aware of the endowment. Had Josephine committed me that day to an institution, I might have gone irreversibly psychotic. The fear of insanity was still hovering about me like a dark cloud.

When we deal with people who are on the borderline of a psychosis, a single word can either save them or push them over the brink. A grave responsibility rests upon those who work with and live with the emotionally distraught. Our words and actions become like surgical instruments. Skill, love, tenderness, patience, and authority must form a perfect team. The mentally ill person and the mystic are both living in a world of symbology. I once gave a young woman of eighteen a bar of soap, and she interpreted the gift to mean that she was unclean. In fact, she subsequently assumed the role of Mary Magdalene before Jesus had healed her.

Although God can and does talk to us through signs, we cannot afford to lay aside the screening value of our intellect. Everything God can use, the devil can abuse and pervert. Everything that God can make, the devil can counterfeit. As you know, the devil is known as, and has the reputation of being that great deceiver. A few years ago someone told me that across from every exclusive department store can be found a cheap dime store. Something good is seldom cheap.

I do not want to get too far from my subject, dear Phyllis, but when there is an opportunity for me to say a few things about saints and sinners, mystics and lunatics, it is like uncorking a bottle with a genie inside. A great deal of restraint must be used to limit the genie to a few appropriate remarks. As far as the treatment and care of the mentally ill is concerned, God gave to me a little of what He gave to Dorothea Lynde Dix. Read her biography, *Dorothea Dix – Forgotten Samaritan*, by Helen F. Marshall. The book is pretty strong medicine, but it will make any woman proud to be a woman.



CHAPTER II THE LONGEST NIGHT

*For His anger endureth but a moment; in His favour is life:
weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning. Psalm 30:5*

Now, I must get back to Peter and Sunday, February 1, 1970, the longest night of my life. The rest of the day passed without any bizarre events. I probably drank some wine, Haute Sauterne, my favorite for many years. The pain in my face was slowly returning. With or without pain, I had learned to enjoy my daily quota of wine. I fell asleep quickly, but as in the previous five nights, I awoke abruptly in the middle of the night. I seem to recall that the time was around midnight. An unusual craving for food drove me into the kitchen. The craving was so specifically directed toward three different items that I wonder what I would have done had they not been available. I devoured the food like an animal, scooping the cottage cheese out of the container with my fingers and tearing off chunks of French bread and stuffing them into my mouth. The third item I seemed to crave as if it might have had medicinal value was watercress. It was the same watercress I had picked the previous day in Big Tujunga Canyon. Normally, we would not have had this item in our refrigerator.

I probably had spent about five minutes eating in the kitchen when an unexplained sense of calmness settled upon my soul. I turned the light out in the kitchen and walked into our family room. Without realizing how I got there, I found myself on my knees in an attitude of prayer, awe, and expectancy. To the best of my knowledge, I had never before purposed to be on my knees except by conventional constraint. I don't recall whether our minister asked us to kneel during our wedding ceremony thirteen years earlier, but if so, you have an idea when and where I was last on my knees.

Suddenly, time—past, present, and future—had lost its dimension. I was in a totally different world. I saw a kaleidoscope of my life—actions, motives, drives. Everything I had so carefully concealed from myself and others was revealed to me. The picture was not pretty. The duality of my nature, my motives, everything I had ever suppressed, came alive. I was forced to look at myself. What I saw gave me a terrible shock; I was hollow inside. I had spent almost thirty-seven years of my life trying to please others. Everything I had ever done was a front. I was wearing a mask and the mask had become me.

“Front, front, front; phony, phony, phony; you have lost your personality; you have wasted your life” was the reproach being hurled at my being. “You have never included ME! Your ‘I will--I will--I will’ doctrine, your self-sufficiency, your ‘I can-do-anything’ doctrine stinks with conceit!”

I tried to say the Lord's Prayer, not out loud, but in my spirit. I tried many, many times to say the Prayer. I never succeeded in getting through to the end. “Our Father, Who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy Name: Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done” was as far as I could get. “Thy Will be done, Thy Will be done, Thy Will be done!” Finally it dawned on me—not MY WILL, but THY WILL be done. I had been so convinced that I could give purpose, direction, and fulfillment to my life that I had no need to ask anyone for direction or help. I was to learn differently!

The next moment I saw that our whole backyard was flooded, and I perceived myself running down a steep incline to get to the faucet as quickly as possible. I stubbed my right toe severely on a mound of earth our boys had formed for a bicycle ramp. This scene had actually happened a few months earlier. Now it was happening to me again, but in another dimension. Was I hallucinating or having a vision? Again and again I saw myself running down the incline, stubbing my toe.

Finally, I asked in these words, “God, what are you trying to show me?”

“Slow down, Peter!” came the reply.

The setting changed to a large field of boulders of many different sizes. The boulders were dying and crying out in agony for someone to save them, to rescue them. I did not understand what I saw. In my spirit I asked,

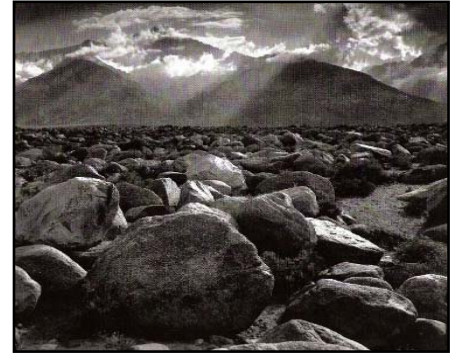
“God, what does this mean?”

It was thus explained to me.

“These are the people who are losing their souls. They are dying slowly; their hearts are turning to stone. They are crying out for help, but no one can hear them anymore. Pride prevents them from asking for help.”

“God,” I asked, “what do you want me to do?”

“Learn the language of those who are dying,” I understood Him to say. To this day I remember that scene—the agonizing cry of the imprisoned souls within those boulders and God’s instructions to me.



The scene changed again. The very foundations of our world were being dislodged. Every planet in our solar system left its normal orbit. Their new directions made a collision with our planet inevitable. Maybe five or six more seconds and our world would be destroyed. It was awesome, frightening, inevitable that this would be the end that had been predicted. How could I experience this and live?

A voice spoke,

“Is there anyone who is willing to stand in the gap? Is there anyone who will give up his life to restrain the hand of judgment of planet earth and its people?”

It seemed as if all of Heaven were assembled, straining, waiting, agonizing until I made a decision. It had to be MY decision. I was taxed to the very limit of my strength.

“Lord, use me,” I said finally. Then it seemed as if all of heaven relaxed and slowly the planets returned to their established orbits. Our world was safe again – at least for now.

The scene shifted. I was standing at the edge of an abyss, gripping a long rope that went deep down into some cavern. Two people, a man and a woman, were hanging on to the rope. I liked the woman. For a long time I strained to remember who she was, but I was never able to identify her. The man was my brother; I liked him too. When I recognized who he was, I received a terrible shock—I saw my brother as the reincarnation of Judas Iscariot! What was I to do?

A voice asked.

“Are you willing to pull on the rope and strain to bring the two to the top?”

A terrifying struggle tore me to pieces on the inside. How could I let go without destroying the woman? How could I ever live with myself knowing that the woman was forever condemned to live in hell? The two at the end were not pleading with me; they were just hanging on. The dialogue was only within my soul. I had to decide. Guilt would be mine forever if I chose wrong.

I looked at my brother. “Oh, Lord,” I said, “You are building a new world. It is beautiful, clean, undefiled; not one speck of sin is to be found anywhere. You know how contagious sin is. One foul word and the process of contamination will begin all over again. But what about my brother? There must be something redeeming about his life.” I sifted his life. In fact, it seemed as if his life were unrolled before me. I struggled to uncover a part of his personality that was precious. It wasn’t as if there were meanness in his life that would condemn him. It just seemed as if his life were hollow, as if it had no features to enhance that eternal paradise with Christ as King.

My memory and analytical capacity strained to the very limit once more to discover a bright jewel in his life. I saw a little mango plant about eight inches tall. My brother had grafted a new shoot into the

fragile, tender stem, which was no thicker than a pencil. He had placed a small plastic bag over the graft to protect it from anything that was unfriendly and harsh. He was eager to show me the plant. I can't remember now if the graft had taken. I think so. I remarked to myself, "What tenderness in my brother's soul. In my Father's house are many mansions. He shall be a gardener. His world shall be a world of plants and trees and flowers. His ideas shall not be multiplied in the hearts of men. He shall commune only with nature."

(edited into the text on January 27, 2008 – After pondering the above portion of the vision for many years, here is what I know to be true – at least true for me. The two people hanging on the end of the rope were me, Peter. The light and the dark in my soul were very pronounced. Whatever I did not like about myself, I projected into others – in this case, my brother. It is human nature to do this. We do this often and whenever we do so, we are unwilling to come to grips with our own fallen and sinful nature. It is impossible for our soul to be cleansed until we stop projecting our sins into others.)

I resolved to pull on the rope as hard as I could. I strained and strained and suddenly found myself to be in my body in our stone block house on Wheatland Avenue in Sunland. I felt dirty, contaminated; my whole being was in an uproar. My soul had been polluted; my mind and body had been polluted. I rushed to the bathroom and stayed for at least an hour.

What was this powerful experience? What did it mean? Was I out of my mind? Had I gone crazy? I recall trying desperately to hold on to my mind. How does a person hold on to his mind? I held on to mine by reminding myself of my responsibility to my family. I have always had an unusually strong sense of responsibility. Promises and commitments are like eternal verities. I must not let go for the sake of my wife and children. "I must not let go! I must not let go! I must not let go!" This sense of duty and responsibility could have been the silver thread that allowed my body, mind, and spirit to become fused again.

I also recall a fleeting thought before I entered into my "Road to Damascus" experience, before "Humpty Dumpty" was dumped off his throne. I had said to myself, "Yes, I believe my relationship with my wife is strong enough that the new Peter who shall emerge will not be cast away." As the years passed, I would learn how unable we really are to give each other the freedom to grow and to change.



To the best of my knowledge, my wife and children slept throughout the entire episode. I was fearful that they might have witnessed a portion of what had transpired and would have me committed to an institution. But my prayer was answered, my fear unfounded. Everyone had slept soundly. I believe that if anyone had touched me or spoken to me during the trance-like state, the consequences could have been catastrophic for me.

When I finally left the bathroom, my whole being was still in uproar, my intestines raw, my mind whirling. Something mighty had happened. The change in my body chemistry was a powerful witness to the supernatural experience. I felt so very, very unclean.

I went into the living room and looked out the window toward the east. I said to myself, "If I can hold on until I can see the dawn spread across the eastern horizon, I shall live." The dawn finally came. I started to relax. I went back to bed and fell soundly asleep. I slept late. It was the first day of my leave of absence. When I awoke, I did not swim. I had no strength left to exert my will, to put up a front, to give direction to my life. I was at the mercy of others, at the mercy of the seen and unseen worlds.

I don't know if I told you about the fascinating adventure and struggle I have had with the question of reincarnation. I think that I have finally arrived at some healthy conclusions on this subject; and I hope to be able to skillfully record the peculiar meandering that my lively imagination has followed. I think that I have discovered some vital links to this jigsaw puzzle of reincarnation, and I would not be afraid to have anyone challenge the way I interpret my experiences and conclusions. Something in my psychic nature had been powerfully wrenched open. I had to learn how to live all over again.

I began to question everything. Something in my psychic nature had been powerfully wrenched open. I had to learn how to live all over again. Who was I? What was the purpose of my life? Was my experience the result of a sick mind? Was I hallucinating? Did I have a vision? Had I talked to God? Was my experience akin to that of Paul on the road to Damascus? Was I the reincarnation of the apostle? How could I possibly ask anyone such questions without being considered a lunatic? Does “Thy will be done” mean that I am not to have a will? During the next year I would become prey to confusing systems of thought. I would become the target of many “goofy” ideas.

The world is full of people who want to recruit others to believe as they do, act as they do, and assume the standards they have. Their work is known as proselytizing. I became totally defenseless and thereby the mark of every scrupulous and unscrupulous belief of others. It almost seemed that others wanted to unload into me, to manifest themselves through me. What happens to us when we have no will is fascinating and tragic at the same time. I have never been involved in spiritualism; but I imagine that I must have been a choice medium for all kinds of spirits. There is a big difference between never asking for direction, having no direction, and always asking “Father what is Thy perfect will for my life?”

Whether my wife went to work that day, I cannot recall. I believe she stayed home. She knew something was wrong. There must have been an eerie feeling around my personality. There was no hint in her words or actions that she had been a witness to what had happened during the night. I just drifted through the day, grateful that I did not have to go to work.

Sometime during the day I noticed the remaining capsules of Dilantin that were sitting on the kitchen counter. “Maybe the Dilantin has caused me to have these strange experiences,” I thought. “Yes, that must be it. As soon as the poison is out of my system, I’ll be all right again.”

The idea was as if someone had rescued me. I shared it with Josephine. “Yes,” she said, “you’re right; it must be the effects of the Dilantin.” We both seemed to cling to the notion as if it were a lifesaver. I subsequently agreed that if I should demonstrate any further bizarre behavior, my wife could commit me to a mental hospital. The effects of the Dilantin would eventually wear off, I thought, and everything would be all right. I no longer felt threatened. It was as simple as ABC. Why hadn’t we thought of it earlier?

A few hours later—it must have been around five o’clock—I began to drink my normal quota of wine. Rather, I gulped it down. I remember sitting on a bar stool at our kitchen counter and breathing in an agitated manner – not for long, just a few breaths actually. Then I lost consciousness. The events of the next several hours do not exist for me except as others have related them.

Before I continue to narrate this strange adventure, dear Phyllis, I would like to pause for a moment. Imagine yourself in our kitchen on Mt. Whitney where you have been before. Your sister is baking peanut butter cookies at ten o’clock at night. It is October 23, 1975. Almost six years have passed. I have had much time to sort out my life, to separate the wheat from the chaff. The process of sifting has been painful, yet very fascinating, a real adventure.

I am finding out that sensitive people do not have to apologize for being sensitive. We are persons who have been ushered into a new world. We have been initiated into mysteries that elude the grasp of our ordinary five senses. We do not have to be ashamed of these experiences or hide them, but we do have to share them with discretion. Sometimes we arrive at some new insight. At first, it is unformed and fragile. When someone else comes to almost identical conclusions and expresses them, we are encouraged and grateful. I was thrilled yesterday when I discovered the following two paragraphs in a book entitled *The Meaning of Persons* by Dr. Paul Tournier:

There comes to me a mystic, who on several occasions has had visions. I am enthralled by what he tells me. I discover that this apparently rational man has a profound intuition regarding spiritual matters, amounting to veritable revelations. Only once, he tells me, did he broach the subject with

his brother, not openly, but by a discreet allusion; and he felt, or thought he felt, that his brother was beginning to wonder if he was quite sane. Since then he has carefully kept his treasures to himself. Now I understand why he asked me a moment ago what difference there was between visions and hallucinations.

The more costly an experience is to us, the greater its significance in our lives and the more it occupies our minds—and also the more we are afraid of its being misunderstood, or that it will be cheapened by some misapplied remark or suspicions. The more refined and subtle our minds, the more vulnerable they are. When we are alone we are haunted with doubts about the genuineness of our deepest intuitions and feelings—like my friend the mystic. What hurts him in fact is the contrast between his life as seen by others, and his secret life, which is entirely dominated by the visions he has had.

By the way, Paul Tournier is a Swiss physician and a prolific author. He is one of the best friends we sensitive people have. I have read three of his other books; they are all excellent. Maybe I shall have an opportunity to share a few more lines from his books later on. I am telling you this so that you and whoever will eventually read these words will not feel so isolated. The world is full of mystics in hiding. Some are in convents, some in mental institutions, some in prisons, and many in ordinary jobs. We are beginning to learn how to live in the world without being a part of it. We are beginning to learn with whom we can share our intimate experiences. We are learning to put up a shield against those who mock our experiences and will not accept us the way we were created. We realize that our sensitivity is a gift from God. We pity those who are all intellect, all reason, all dollars and cents. We pity those who consider it a waste of money to hang a painting of the Madonna and Child in their living rooms. We pity those who do not allow themselves to be admonished by these words of St. Paul:

*“Be not forgetful to entertain strangers; for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.”
(Hebrew 13:2)*

I did not reach the oasis of such thoughts and conclusions for nearly six years. First, I had to learn that my own peanut-size brain was very important yet totally dependent upon the grace of God. I had to grow up all over again, a very humiliating idea for a man who had meticulously observed all the conventions established by our society.



CHAPTER

III

EDGEMONT HOSPITAL

*For He shall give His angels charge over thee, to
keep thee in all thy ways. Psalm 91:11*

Let me stop editorializing and return to the heart of my experience. Shortly before midnight, I woke up at Edgemont Hospital, a small mental hospital in the heart of Hollywood. The day was Monday, February 2. I did not know how I got there. I was told that I had had an epileptic seizure but that my conduct thereafter was coherent. I cooperated with the decision to be hospitalized and willingly let myself be taken by a friend to the hospital. I wish I could remember the details, but I can't. My wife could not accept the fact that I was experiencing a lapse in my memory. I wonder how many people who have no recollection of their crimes are behind bars today?

When I had regained consciousness, I looked around and immediately knew where I was. The thought that I was in a hospital in no way frightened me. Apparently I was sufficiently prepared for the idea. In fact, I was somewhat relieved. Upon opening my eyes, I first saw an attendant and then our gardener friend, Joe. His presence was reassuring. I had always liked Joe. We had some kind of unspoken bond. He had given us the wood blossom a few months earlier. I looked at my wife. Her eyes revealed fear and concern, shock and bewilderment. I cannot remember what I said to her, but her anxiety made me feel uncomfortable. When I was finally left alone, I was glad. I felt safe in the hospital.

When I awoke the next morning, I knew I was on the closed ward of a mental hospital. I had no desire to be anywhere else. I felt a loving, tender concern for all the patients and was extremely interested in what had brought them to this place. I tried to be as helpful as possible. The patients talked freely and told me their stories. I believed everything they told me, having no idea that these stories could be the result of a sick and tortured imagination. I had trusted people explicitly all my life, so I did not screen these stories with my intellect. Everyone pulled on my heartstrings. The idea of dedicating my life to helping these poor, misunderstood people entered my mind. One young man said that he had a prickly cactus stuck in his throat. He had tried to convince the doctors to operate, but they would not listen. I believed him. He talked intelligently about Kant and Nietzsche, and we played chess together.

A young woman who had slashed her wrists was brought in. She was screaming. A patient asked me, "Do you know why she's screaming?"

"No," I answered.

"The hospital is trying to force her to commit herself, to sign that she is insane," she volunteered. "She's screaming because she doesn't want to admit that she's insane.

"How cruel," I thought; but before the day was over, I discovered that the patients could be real "con" artists. For example, each patient was allowed one cigarette an hour. Since I didn't smoke, the patients would use me to get extra cigarettes from the nurses' station. I knew this wasn't right, but I didn't know how to refuse their requests. I was disappointed because I desperately needed to trust people.

Before the day was over, arrangements were being made to transfer me to the open ward. I didn't care which ward I was on. I thought this was a most fascinating experience. A new world was being opened up for me. My wife was rather solicitous. She wanted me to have the best care. There was a great deal of back-and-forth dialogue about my transfer. I was responsible for most of it because at first I did not care where I was, but I suddenly became extremely fearful of the patient with whom I played chess. His very presence threatened me. Why, I don't know. I had become sensitive to the

psychic emanations around me, but I had no way of protecting myself or understanding the phenomenon.

Because of my wife's insistence and the pressures she put on the hospital staff, I was transferred to the open ward. The new quarters were very pleasant, almost like a living room with convertible couches. I believe I slept soundly the second night in the hospital. I was totally exhausted and tranquilized. The doctor had prescribed Stellazine and Sinequan as the principal medications. Stellazine is an anti-psychotic drug; Sinequan, a tranquilizer. Sinequan was prescribed in dosages of 25 milligrams four times a day. The amounts of Stellazine prescribed, I cannot recall. I also took a sleeping pill at night.

A therapist was assigned to me, a man probably in his late thirties, probably about my age. He came to see me every other day. He tried his very best to be of help. I enjoyed his company because he let me talk. I always enjoyed talking if there was someone truly interested in what I had to say. I still do. Probably the need to talk is also expressed in the need to write.

My therapist seemed to take careful pains not to agree or disagree with my opinions. He was very accommodating, even to the point of bypassing hospital regulations. I remember the time I had requested Epsom salts for rinsing my mouth. My gums were hurting, and I still felt unclean. I thought that rinsing my mouth with a solution of Epsom salt would help. The hospital refused my request; so my therapist proceeded to buy some for me in a nearby drugstore. The self-prescribed treatment did not help. In fact, it made my mouth feel very raw. Eventually, the Epsom salt was discovered in my room and taken from me.

About the third or fourth night I came close to having another supernatural experience. I did not want any more experiences like the ones I had before; I was afraid of them. I thought I would not be able to stand one more hallucination or vision. I remember being aroused out of a semi-sleep one night by the sound of an ambulance siren passing by the hospital. I do not recall the details, only the tremendous fear that came upon me as I came out of a light sleep. I did not dare go to sleep again. I convinced myself that there was still a residue of Dilantin in my system. As soon as my body eliminated the drug, I reasoned, I would not have any more hallucinations. I made every effort not to fall asleep that night. As soon as I would begin to doze off, I would get up and take a shower. I must have been in the shower eight or nine times that night. During one of her rounds, the nurse found me in the shower. She asked me what the problem was, and I told her of my fear of going to sleep and experiencing something I could not handle. She gave me an injection, after which I fell asleep quickly and slept well.

Since that night I have had a few more frightening experiences. They were clustered around those days when my wife divorced me in May of 1971 and another period of time when someone had persuaded me to fast. I was told in May of 1972 that a host of demons was living in me and the only way to exorcise them was for me to fast. After twenty-four hours of going without food, I began to have terrifying experiences. I broke the fast and became free of unpleasant psychic disturbances. In the meantime, I have discovered that there are numerous well-meaning persons around who have very strange and unhealthy views about demon possession.

My stay in the hospital lasted nearly three weeks. In almost every detail, it was very pleasant. I quickly formed friendships with the patients and staff. I could talk freely to almost everyone. Only a few seemed sinister and unapproachable. Some patients wondered if I might not be a doctor in disguise. I felt as if the patients were my kind, especially the younger ones. I had never felt so free. They trusted me and I trusted them. I didn't want this time in the hospital to come to an end. It was like a vacation, and yet there was a premonition that this way of life was a luxury and would not be allowed to enjoy for very long.

I listened to the patients, studied them, watched them select their foods. I watched them form symbiotic relationships, which I knew could not last. I sat on the lawn and listened to their music. A

new world of sound and song and lyrics opened to me. I was enchanted with the beauty and truth of the song "Blowing in the Wind." I was ushered into the world of country music and loved it. I could hardly wait until I had my own portable AM/ FM radio, so my wife went out in a pouring rain to buy a radio for me. She was willing to do anything for me that was reasonable.

I remember the celery party we had. I noticed that the patients expressed strong cravings for certain foods that were not always available. Celery and sunflower seeds were high on the list of these special food items. I asked Josephine to bring in some celery packed in crushed ice and not to forget the salt. Our little party was a big success. There were other foods that were highly favored by the patients. Some day I hope to have an opportunity to candidly study the correlation of various foods to our mental and emotional equilibrium. A great deal more exploration needs to be done on how diet, sounds, and colors affect our mental health.

This may sound strange, dear Phyllis, but I would consider it a real privilege to be an undercover patient in a mental institution. Some new insights might be revealed to me. I have always had a highly analytical mind and enjoy correlating seemingly unrelated facts. Maybe one day someone will read these lines and extend an invitation to me to become more intimately involved.

I was a witness and participant in a mania that affected a number of patients. I noticed that ideas are highly contagious among mental patients, although the same could apply to every group of confined people. Maybe you recall the prediction that a part of California was going to break off and fall into the ocean. At one point during my hospital stay that prediction became the subject of conversation. Many of the patients sensed the catastrophe was imminent, including me. I remember calling my wife about the catastrophe one afternoon when dark, foreboding clouds began to cover the sky. Everything becomes symbolic when your mind is not in order. I recall that several patients, including me, were planning escape routes out of Los Angeles. A song that had the city of Phoenix as part of the lyrics caught my attention. I was convinced that the best route would be via Phoenix, Flagstaff, and then up to the Continental Divide in Colorado. I had all kinds of fascinating ideas about starting a new colony with a remnant of people. These people would eat no meat and would use no knives or forks. Knives reminded me of cutting; and forks, of stabbing.

You can see, dear Phyllis, how much liberty my mind had to entertain "way out" ideas. I wonder how the prophets of old felt when they were instructed to write down their visions. The fear of a catastrophe remained with me for several years. It was finally replaced by faith, by a solid confidence that my God would never leave me nor forsake me. I had become convinced that He truly loved me.

I cannot remember the chronological sequence of all these events, but I believe the most significant have remained with me. I recall one night very powerful vibrations of fear, feeling terribly threatened by a new patient, about sixty years of age, who was in my room. I knew nothing about the man, but his presence overwhelmed me. I took my blankets outside and found a lawn chair on which to spend the night. I am surprised that none of the nurses complained about my being outside. Usually a patient would receive some kind of shot if he was unable to sleep in his bed. The following day the new patient and I became acquainted. I had no subsequent attacks of fear. He seemed to have a personality similar to mine. I usually do not care for those who are very much like I am, or at least like I was.

Describing the power of healing that I experienced a number of times while in the hospital is very difficult. It was similar to what I had experienced early Wednesday morning, January 28. As I was talking to various patients, an electrical current would suddenly fall upon my body and seemingly emanate through my pupils. Without warning, my eyes would intimately connect with the eyes of the person with whom I was conversing. It seemed as if the windows of our souls had been opened and a powerful jet stream of electrical power were pouring through us. By and by, I noticed a calm spirit settling upon both of us. The pupils of the other person then became quiet as if they had been rotating rapidly before. The eyes resembled a placid sea. I sensed that a supernatural healing had

taken place. The experience left me happy but drained. Later on I asked if any unusual recoveries were reported. I was informed that some unexplainable healings had taken place. In a mysterious way God was beginning to use me as His instrument. I have learned a great deal about being used by God. Yet, how God fulfills His purpose through us remains largely a mystery and probably always will.

While I was a patient in the hospital, my brother and father came to see me. They came all the way from Escondido, a trip of about two and a half hours. They were greatly concerned about what had happened to me. My father was highly incensed by the diagnosis. He did not believe I belonged in a mental hospital. He tried to convince the doctor that the decision to put me in such a place was cruel. In fact, my father feels that even to this day. My brother was also genuinely concerned. I could feel his protective love streaming out toward me, but I could not bear to have him near me. I felt terribly fragile in his presence. "Don't touch me, don't touch me," I kept saying. My being still trembles as I recall those moments.

My wife came to see me every day. She was the only friend or relative regularly permitted to visit me, but her presence was painful and oppressive to me. I dared not tell her. How can you tell someone that her sacrifice of time is not appreciated? I didn't have the heart to hurt her feelings. She seemed to be desperately trying to rediscover the Peter she loved and married. I tried my best to be the person Josephine expected me to be, the Peter she could relate to, but it was extremely difficult for me to put up a front, to display the Peter she knew. Her solicitous concern for my welfare made me very uneasy. The new Peter was not allowed to come out in her presence. Oh, how I wished the doctors would tell her in a very tactful way not to visit me. How unnecessarily hard we make it for one another because we don't understand, because we don't give another person the freedom to grow, to change, to experience life, dear Phyllis.

My therapist told me that my biggest hang-up was my inability to say "no". I believe he was right. The hospital used to allow us to have a few dollars for such items as cigarettes, candy, or hot chocolate, which were available through vending machines. Some patients soon discovered that I was easy prey for a short-term loan. I quickly discovered that some people never paid their debts, yet I did not know how to refuse a request for a dime or a quarter. The only way to be left alone was to have no money. I have learned not to befriend those who do not live up to their commitments. A broken promise is like a broken trust—it is always painful to me. I myself have been guilty of broken promises; but I try to be more and more careful about making commitments that are beyond my financial, physical, emotional, or intellectual resources.



CHAPTER IV WEB OF DELUSION

*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.
Philippians 2:5*

On Friday, February 20, I was discharged from Edgemont Hospital. The complexion of the hospital had changed somewhat. Some of my best friends had already left. I departed with mixed emotions. Part of me wanted to stay longer; another part reminded me that there was work to be done. The kind of work that lay ahead was nebulous. I knew only that a great deal of love had been placed into my heart for those with emotional and mental problems. I wanted to help them but had no idea how.

Josephine made every effort to have the hospital records reflect a very nondescript, non-threatening diagnosis for me. Whether or not she was successful, I never found out. I believe between the therapist and my wife, they agreed that a diagnosis of “depressive reaction” would not put a stigma on me. On two separate occasions I tried to get a copy of the records but without success. I tried on numerous occasions to have the examining physician, psychologist, and therapist tell me or write down for me their diagnoses. It seems everyone is allowed to know except the patient. By looking over a shoulder here and there, I discovered the final diagnosis, for the benefit of the insurance company, was “schizophrenic with psychotic reactions.”

We don't burn human beings at the stake today, but we surely find other ways of making their lives miserable. A diagnosis like schizophrenia does not give a person the red carpet treatment when applying for work, for insurance, or renewal of a driver's license. Still, sweeping the official records under the carpet, although common practice, is contrary to the Christian ethics imparted to me. We have a long way to go before we stop stepping on those who are already down. I am so grateful Jesus recognized that the downtrodden need representation from on High. Whenever I have an opportunity, I try to alert doctors and lawyers not to allow themselves to be used as a big stick that beats down defenseless victims. Even representatives of the church often take a position that contributes to a great deal of misery in this world.

But anyway, dear Phyllis, let's get back to my release from the hospital. Financially the experience was not upsetting to us. We had two insurance policies, and what my policy didn't pay, my wife's covered. I also became eligible for collecting all my accumulated sick leave and other fringe benefits.

Many of our closest friends had not been told that I had been admitted to and released from Edgemont Hospital. Our closest friends lived only a few blocks away. They knew nothing. Josephine tried as hard as she could to draw a curtain between that part of my life and our friends. But eventually everyone found out. I believe she tried to protect all of us from unnecessary grief. It was not to be so. Many or most don't know what to do with or say to someone diagnosed as mentally ill.

No one really knew what to do with me or for me when I arrived home. I did not know what our boys had been told. I did not know what to tell them. I did not share my mystical experiences in detail with anyone. No one knew what was going on in my mind. I could only feel that my wife and the therapist were trying to glue the broken pieces of the “Old Peter” back together. At the same time, I made it a point to discredit my past achievements as completely as possible. I was trying to destroy the image of the Peter my wife had fallen in love with and married. The “New Peter” was basically Peter as he was as a child, a person motivated primarily by feelings or attempts to be another St. Francis of Assisi.

I assumed no responsibility besides picking up the children from school. They were both attending Village Christian School in Sun Valley. Peter was in the fifth grade; Johnny, the first. I sat on a lawn

chair, listened to country music, stared at the pool, and read. I told myself that I must slow down my mind, which was continuously racing, thinking, analyzing. I had become like a high-speed computer that doesn't know how to turn itself off. Like a mouse in a maze, I was caught in the intricate system I had designed. Intellectually, my work had been highly rewarding, but it had made a thinking machine out of me. There was no need for me to feel—just to think. “The Thinker” a statue by Rodin, became the focal point of my attention as it uniquely depicted my frame of mind. My friends had become analytical experiences rather than sources of either emotional or intellectual fulfillment. Now I rebelled, totally rebelled, against the concept of thinking all the time. I just wanted to be led by my feelings. I took a sledgehammer and destroyed “The Thinker,” a gift from my wife.



Listening to country music was a soothing experience. The beat of the music was very relaxing and reassuring. The pace seldom changed. Little by little, I noticed that the lyrics were often very cute, very earthy. They described ordinary people, ordinary situations. Sometimes there was sadness, sometimes joy, expressed in the songs. Even God was given a place in some of the songs. I liked that. The music began to soothe my troubled spirit. Later on I learned how Saul had asked David to sing and play the harp for him.

And it came to pass, when the evil spirit was upon Saul, that David took a harp, and played with his hand; so Saul was refreshed and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him. (1 Samuel 16:23)

I knew nothing about evil spirits, but I did learn that music helped my troubled soul. Slowly I began to unwind.

The Twenty-third Psalm interested me. “Lord,” I thought, “the merits of the Twenty-third Psalm escape me, but how can everybody else be wrong?” I forced myself to memorize the Psalm. Memorization was an exercise in discipline and very difficult for me. I must have practiced for a week or more, trying at the same time to determine how the words might apply to me. “He leadeth me beside the still waters.” Maybe if I kept looking at the calm water in our pool, my mind would slow down. I looked at the water. “He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.” I did that too. All of these things were a portion of the answer for which I was searching. I discovered that colors, sounds, and words are highly significant to our emotional wellbeing. In these areas is a world of unexplored possibilities for helping the emotionally and mentally handicapped man, woman, or child.

I did a great deal of reading. *The Prophet* by Kahlil Gibran was one of my favorite books. I read it many times, and later on, when I was an aid at Olive View Hospital, I gave several copies away. I tried to read every book that Gibran ever wrote or that was written about him. When I discovered that he was a vegetarian, I was convinced that my brother must be the reincarnation of Gibran. The flimsiest evidence caused me to believe that certain individuals I knew were the reincarnation of some famous personage of the past. My brother is a vegetarian; so that was sufficient evidence for me to make the connection. I even checked my brother's birthday against the year Gibran had died. Strange how our minds work at times.

One book in particular, *Saint Francis* by Nikos Kazantzakis, played havoc with my imagination. I recently purchased a used copy. I plan to read the book again to see how it will affect me six years later. Almost every member of my immediate family became a vital character in that book. I identified with St. Francis; my parents were the reincarnation of his parents; my brother, Brother Leo; and my wife, Sister Clara. I did not dare share these vain imaginations with anyone. They were secret, exalted treasures in my heart. “One day the world will know who I really am,” I thought. “They will find out for themselves; I won't have to tell anyone. God is keeping a blanket over my true identity for a good reason. He is first training me.”

Here is the logic I used to establish that my brother was the reincarnation of Brother Leo. According to the story, Brother Leo was extremely fond of pork. St. Francis sometimes chided him for taking much delight in eating, especially meat. My brother at a very early age witnessed the slaughtering of a pig. The sight revolted him so much that with the added encouragement of my father, he vowed never to eat meat. Furthermore, we children were brought up with the belief that reincarnation was an established fact. We were also taught that we must pay for all our transgressions, either now, or in some future life on earth. This precept is called the law of karma. I concluded that my brother was paying for his propensity toward pork when he was Brother Leo by being a vegetarian in this life. Our minds are fiendishly clever in proving to us that foregone conclusions are true. We fall into a trap from which it is next to impossible to extricate ourselves. And I did not dare to ask anyone for help.

I recall vividly that when I was quite young, possibly eight or nine, my mother read a book to me about the life of St. Francis. At that time, as I remember, I identified with the Saint. I wanted to be like him; however, there is a big difference between wanting to be like him and actually thinking I was he. If you have never read anything about St. Francis, dear Phyllis, the novel I mentioned is very easy and pleasant to read. There has also been a very beautiful film made about his life, *Brother Sun and Sister Moon*. If you are further interested, a collection of short stories, *The Little Flowers of St. Francis,* will fill your free hours in a delightful way. St Francis and his friars were quite at home in the supernatural world of visions and miracles. Today some of these friars would probably wind up at Edgemont Hospital. Who is to say where the world of the mystic ends and the world of the lunatic begins? I certainly would not want to be the judge.

I continued to take the same medication that I was given in the hospital. I had no need for sleeping pills, for I slept well. I saw my therapist once a week. He began to annoy me; he just smiled and wanted me to talk. I vowed each time that I would get him to talk about himself the next week, but only two or three times did he give me that satisfaction. He thought I was making fantastic progress. I have no idea how he defined progress. Once I got really angry at him for being so noncommittal. He thought that expressing my anger was a major breakthrough. My facial neuralgia would generally flare up when I had to see him. As I look back, I believe that most therapists and “shrinks” are working in a vacuum. Unless they have established a meaningful relationship with God and are truly guided by the Holy Spirit, it is the old story of the “blind leading the blind.” I would not mind being analyzed for the rest of my life. Maybe a little bit of what is in me would rub off on the therapists in the process. I think that many doctors may be patients in disguise, looking for answers and hoping to discover some of them through their patients. There is a certain element of fun in being a patient because the doctor usually does not have much of a guard up in his patient’s presence. Generally, he does not realize that while he is trying to help someone, that person is also influencing him.

My wife was the greatest help and also the greatest hindrance to my emotional stability. What bothered me most was the querying look she would give me as she came home from work. She said that one look would suffice for her to know if I was progressing or regressing. Can you imagine, dear Phyllis, being scrutinized so closely? Let’s say, for example, that you have a problem with weight or smoking or alcohol. The minute your spouse comes home, he or she checks around to see if you have indulged in some unpardonable manner. Wouldn’t that put you on edge? I have always had a difficult time disguising my feelings, especially since my “Road to Damascus” experience. Finding out that someone is either ashamed or frightened of your behavior only aggravates the way you feel. I have learned that if you can’t heal a cripple, don’t point out his infirmity to him or to others. To do so is very unkind and generally drives him further and further into a state of seclusion where no one can reach him.

There were also redeeming features in the relationship with my wife. For one thing, she saved me from being gobbled up by the metaphysics “queen” and her little flock of admirers. I was ready to surrender my intellect to the tutelage of her metaphysical mind. In her little exotic world, I would have had a princely status of sorts. In fact, she graciously revealed to me the new name I was to have in

my eternal heavenly estate. It was almost as if she had the capacity to cast a spell over me. She considered nothing I said or did to be abnormal. Her acceptance was very reassuring in my confused and frightened state. Somehow she had won my confidence. She could do no wrong.

One time I did a crazy thing. I was still enchanted by the magic of the wood blossom, and I thought it belonged on the altar of the church of my “metaphysical friend.” I had a florist make a floral decoration using the wood blossom as a centerpiece. This little episode was an extravagance that cost me fifty dollars. Later on I asked that the wood blossom be on display in the meeting hall of her church. During an after-service reception, one person engaged me in conversation about the wood blossom. He said that it reminded him of a cabbage head, and then he related that cabbage has curative values for cancer. I do not want to “boohoo” his statement as a possibility, but at the time I heard it, I was electrified by the idea. I was ready to go off on a thousand tangents. My “tutor” and her followers gave me unlimited opportunities to go on flights of fancy.

My wife hated that woman because she was able to twist me around her little finger, so to speak. As often as I dared, so as not to arouse the complete displeasure of Josephine, I attended the church services. I even managed to get her to attend an early Easter sunrise service with me. That was a fatal mistake—fatal to my relationship with that church, but at the same time, vital to the renewal of my mind.

Before I tell you about that fateful Easter morning, I will digress for a moment to recall what happened the prior week. Standing amongst the citrus trees in our garden, I was suddenly transported in time to the crucifixion of Christ. I did not have a vision. It was as if I experienced the event only in my soul. At that moment I was the apostle Peter, denying Christ, and I wept bitterly. Every fiber of my being shook. Oh, how I cried! The experience was powerful. I was ashamed to my very foundation. I vowed from that day on, come hell or high water, I would never deny my Lord again. I remember thanking God for allowing me to build my commitment on a foundation of genuine sorrow. From that moment on, I walked around believing that I was the reincarnation of the apostle Peter.

Throughout the whole Easter morning church service, I cried. I don’t know why. I was trying desperately to hide the tears from my wife. but quite unsuccessfully so. At the end of the service, my “pastor” greeted each person at the door except Josephine. She called me “Gregory.” When my wife heard this, she became blind with rage. Having restrained any verbal outbursts until we were in the car, she then lashed out, questioning me with “Do you believe that trash? Have you completely lost your mind?” When I did not give an immediate reply, she froze up and assumed the posture of a statue. That day our marriage hung in the balance. I cried most of the day. I told my wife many things about my mystical experiences. She was furious. She hated to see a grown man cry. She disliked having anyone play on her sympathy. I couldn’t defend myself in the presence of her alert mind. All I could do was cry.

I told Josephine of my being the reincarnation of the apostle Peter. One day she would believe I was because I would be used by God to perform many miracles. I tried to convince her that our concrete block house and the large boulder in front of the house were silent witnesses of the truth. She thought I had truly gone mad; whereas I was convinced that I had found my true identity. Our marriage was preserved temporarily when I agreed not to go to that church again. I told her that I must find another church though and agreed to select one with a more acceptable doctrine to her.

That night my life was to change drastically again. My nerves were frayed. I was like a defenseless infant, having no idea how vulnerable I was. I fell asleep as usual but became semi-awake about three o’clock. It seemed as if very gentle dew were falling on my body, my spirit, my whole being, as if I were being invaded by a new sense of well-being. The sensation was very gentle and somewhat similar to what I had experienced in the pool. “Should I allow this to continue?” I asked myself. I had the feeling that I could wake up and chase this mystical experience away. But since it was quite

pleasant and renewing, I decided to let it take its course. It seemed as if this heavenly dew must have rained down upon me for two or three hours.

The alarm woke me. I was pleasantly weak. My need to argue, cry, rebel, feel sorry for myself had vanished. The first sentence that crossed my lips defied everything I had ever said, "Josephine, I must tell you this. The Bible is true, and I believe in the Holy Trinity." The words came out in a whisper. It was as though someone else were speaking through me. I was terribly afraid of Josephine's reaction to such a confession. I don't remember her reply. Maybe there was none.

Something unusual had happened. For many months I had no idea what it might have been. My body chemistry changed that night as did my interests and affections. The anti-psychotic medication reacted violently within me. It seemed that every time I took a pill, all parts of my being would come under excruciating stress. I discontinued the medication and was accused of being uncooperative, infantile, and stubborn. I submitted to other types of medicine that were similar, but the results were identical. My wife refused to accept the fact that I underwent such violent stress while taking the medication. She became terribly angry. My love for her stopped. I could see her only as a calculating, reasoning, selfish female who had an enormous need to control others.

A desire to read the Bible, almost devour it, came upon me. I took my Bible along wherever I went, including the bathtub. I had never read it in any systematic fashion. I decided to start with Genesis. This sudden and complete preoccupation with the Bible was reported to my therapist with a great deal of alarm. I tried to ignore my wife's apprehensions. I even tried to read the Bible to my therapist. He was very uncooperative and allowed me to read only the first chapter in the book of John.

As I look back on my peculiar and unpredictable behavior, I am not at all surprised that Josephine was confused and frightened. This man who had been so stable, so predictable, so correct, so reasonable in all his actions, had thrown all rationale to the wind. I was giving my wife one emotional whiplash after another. She was trying to hold on to me, while I was trying to break the fetters of my previous lifestyle. Anyone who tried to have me conform to the "Old Peter" I considered my jailer. My wife became my jailer; she became Cleopatra, dominating and using Mark Anthony for her own selfish ends. She became Nefertiti, the queen of Egypt, beguiling Moses with her beauty. She became Bathsheba, a stumbling block in the life of King David. I met her over and over again in a host of disguises as I worked my way through the Old Testament. She became Martha in the New Testament, and I even found a place for her in the life of St. Francis.

One sentence Josephine spoke caused me to look at reincarnation in a new light. She had taken a day off from work to spend with me. Whenever she sensed that I was unusually shaky, she would try to stay at home. On the particular day in question, we decided to take a leisurely pleasure trip to Oxnard. We always enjoyed following Mulholland Drive to the coast, a scenic route that divides the San Fernando Valley from the Los Angeles basin. Along this stretch of road, I pondered a new way of viewing reincarnation. Apparently, I must have been reminiscing to Josephine about my life as the apostle Peter in order for her to make this remark: "Do you realize that the mental hospitals are full of Napoleons, Mary Magdalenes, Christs, St. Peters, and St. Pauls? It seems as if only famous people come back. There are no ordinary people in mental institutions."

Those few words were probably the greatest present I received from Josephine. They were like a wedge that caused me to reconsider the validity of reincarnation. I was not able to relinquish the idea at that time, but I did begin that day to accumulate facts to support a new hypothesis about reincarnation. I also entertained the possibility that I might be suffering from severe delusions of grandeur. It was extremely important that I arrive at such conclusions on my own. A premature understanding of my emotional problems could have caused me to become totally and permanently psychotic. I am sure that my wife must have been a tool in God's hands that day without being aware of it.

CHAPTER V LEARNING TO WALK AGAIN

*But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another,
and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin. I John 1:3*

As I work with people today in my new calling as a counselor, I draw heavily upon my own personal experiences. I can identify with a large number of people because I have wrestled with a variety of confusing situations. I don't feel threatened when I don't have all the answers or when I have to go to someone else for help. My needs give someone else fulfillment and employment and vice versa. That way God makes sure that we don't tower over one another.

After the Easter experience, I grew closer to my children. They were eleven and seven years old at the time. They had been in a Christian school since kindergarten. Reading the Bible on my own seemed to bring us closer. So far our only exposure to the Bible had been as we had helped the children with their memory verses.

One day our younger son, John, reported to us that he had asked Jesus to come into his heart. I was fishing for a reaction from my wife to these words and asked her, "What do you think of that, Josephine?"

"Oh, that's kids' stuff," she replied. Her reply signaled me to proceed with caution.

Later on, Johnny explained to me that there were three things you were supposed to do after you invited Jesus into your heart. First, you were to tell at least one other person what you had done. Second, you were to read the Bible. The third instruction was either to fellowship with other believers or to pray diligently.

Johnny had received Christ sometime in the past but had never had the courage to tell us. I felt very much ashamed that we had stifled the spirit of the children so that they could not freely share their lives with us. Later on, I approached our older son, Peter, and asked him about Christ. He told me that he had invited Jesus into his heart when he was six years old, or five years earlier. I am ashamed to say that his faith had no opportunity to grow in our family.

I was really happy to know that my boys and I were on the same team. I could turn on the radio to any Bible study at any time in the presence of my two children. They may not have paid particular attention to the Bible studies, but at least they did not get angry. We could discuss openly ways we might woo and win Josephine to the Lord. I was delighted when John brought some Christian stickers home from school and proceeded to put them on a number of our light switches. "By and by, as she flicks the light on and off, Jesus will rub off on her," I thought. But the more we schemed to claim and catch Josephine for the Kingdom of God, the more she rejected and resented our efforts. One day someone gave me a little comic book entitled "Big Daddy." It presented arguments in favor of the creation theory of man versus the evolution theory. I gave the little booklet to Josephine to read. She was so angry that I would read and believe "such infantile hogwash" that she practically exploded. But instead of losing her composure, she gnashed her teeth so hard that she broke a portion of her front tooth. She stormed out of the house and drove off in a frenzy.

As soon as I discovered that my experiences were not entirely eccentric and unique, I began to regain my emotional stability. I remember the following incidents very clearly.

I was in the bathtub primarily for the purpose of letting the warm water to help relax me. I learned that warm water and a good book were effective tranquilizers for me. I laid my book aside and pursued the following dialogue, "Lord," I said, "You know how rational a mind I have. This business of asking

Jesus to come into my heart really doesn't make sense to me. But if Johnny can do it, I can do it too." I proceeded to invite Jesus to come into my heart. As soon as I had done so, I said, "Lord, I don't feel any different, no surge of warmth, no burst of energy, no radiant illumination or insight." I was disappointed. But I did make this remark to myself. "This is the first thing I've done that I don't understand." As I look back, I would consider that experience in the bathtub as my first halting step of faith. I had taken a step that my logical mind could not understand.

The next step was as difficult as the first. I had to tell someone that I had asked Jesus to come into my heart. The instructions from Johnny were indelibly lodged in my heart. Whom should I tell? My wife and my therapist already considered me mentally ill! Telling them would only further complicate my relationship with them both. I decided I must tell someone who didn't know me very well. I figured that the principal of our children's school would be the best candidate. I drove to the school and parked my car. I probably sat in the car for ten minutes, trying to talk myself out of going ahead. All kinds of arguments came to me why this was the wrong time and the principal was the wrong person. "If Johnny can do it, I can do it too," I finally said to myself. I got out of the car and looked for the principal. It was after school hours. After a cursory examination of the school grounds, I breathed a sigh of relief. "Well, maybe another day," I thought.

I went back to the car, ready to drive away, but something within me gently admonished, "Peter, you didn't look very hard or very long for the principal." Reluctantly, I got out of the car and continued my search. I finally found the principal and was horrified to notice that he was not alone. Telling one man would be hard enough, but two! The thought terrified me. But I went ahead, reminding myself that if our seven-year-old son could do it, I could too. The verse "A little child shall lead them" comes to mind as I relate this incident to you.

Anyway, dear Phyllis, I introduced myself to the two men and quickly told them the purpose of my visit. I expected to get that scrutinizing look I had learned to recognize as "I wonder if he's all right in the head?" Instead, I received a hearty welcome and a warm embrace from both men. Then one of them suggested that we pray and thank God for what He had done for me. That was a new experience—public prayer in the hallway of a school. I was powerless to struggle against the suggestion. I allowed the prayer to come down upon me. The experience was both new and renewing. I myself have done the same thing since then, having shocked some and surprised others with my spontaneous nature.

Those two men did much for me that day. I wasn't crazy after all! Here were two respectable and employed people who believed that my experience of conversion was a gift from God rather than the product of a sick mind. If only I could convince my wife and my therapist, my life would be in order again.

As I became stronger in my new faith, the tension in my marriage increased. I was not as ready to consider the preferences of my wife. I limited myself to receiving religious instruction only from the radio. On Sundays I began to search out church services where I could feel comfortable. Although my wife no longer tried to stop me, our relationship became increasingly taut. I tried to get everyone who would listen to pray for her conversion. I was positive she would go to hell in her present condition. She became terribly angry when I mentioned that others were praying for her soul.

I underwent excruciating cycles of physical and psychic distress. I did not correlate this pressure to the tense relationship with my wife. The stress would come on me out of the clear blue sky. There were no warnings and no particular events that triggered it. Tranquilizers did not help. In fact, I was taking them sparingly. If I could have done what I felt like doing, I would have taken a brick and thrown it through our television. I know that would not have helped, but at least it shows you how I felt every few days. To alleviate the tension, I would squeeze a piece of putty in my hands and pace back and forth like a caged animal. I didn't know how to release the tension or cope with it intelligently. My

severe stress was obvious to my wife, and she was quite concerned. Occasionally, she sat with me in the bathroom while I soaked in a tub of hot water. During such periods I talked profusely. The stress would leave me as suddenly as it had come. The release was accompanied by a light shower of electrical energy pervading my body. My wife could sense the change and would ask me to put my arms around her. Somehow she could feel the release also and be refreshed by my embrace.

I encountered powerful, unexplainable urges to go different places, meet different people, and eat particular types of food. I did not struggle particularly hard against these impulses unless they were morally wrong or illegal. My wife was quite protective and did not want me to entertain anything that was new or that didn't make sense to her. Sometimes she was able to restrain me or at least, slow me down.

I remember one weekend participating in a type of encounter group. The desire to share in an all-weekend affair starting Friday evening was enormous. The idea of meeting primarily young men and women from all walks of life appealed to me very much. We were to meet in a church basement, get acquainted, and together explore the underprivileged and perverted segments of our society. I didn't last the whole weekend. We were allowed to sleep only about two hours each night. Little sleep was to help break down the artificial defenses or "masks" we were wearing. I did, however, participate in visiting the tattoo shops in Los Angeles and a bar on Sunset Strip where only men who had questionable designs on other men went. I also attended a Black Panther meeting. The atmosphere in the meeting I can only describe as extremely hideous. I had many feelings, but I cannot put my finger on exactly what it was I felt. I discovered that I had acquired the ability to perceive things outside the range of the five senses. But I did not know what to do with this extra perception. I could not stay in the Black Panther gathering. This clandestine brotherhood is committed to a life of revenge, violence, and rebellion. The angry atmosphere was more than I could handle. I was not the only one who needed to slip quietly out of the meeting.

Outside there were a few other agitated souls pacing back and forth on the sidewalk. A skinny, young man started to pick a fight with a much bigger man. There really was no contest. I sensed that the young man's thoughts were terribly disorganized. I felt a strong desire to pray for the young man. I told him if he was willing to get down on his knees right there on the sidewalk, I would pray for him. I felt that whatever was wrong would be healed. I can't remember whether he knelt long enough for me to enter into a real spirit of prayer. I don't believe so.

We were subsequently bused to another place. The young man wanted to sit next to me on the bus. He was very much attracted to me. I was somewhat leery of the confusion and need in his personality. When his glance fastened upon my glance I experienced a powerful transference of energy between us. The incident lasted for possibly forty-five seconds. As I am writing these lines, I am wondering if I might have seen a demonstration of divine healing as described in the book of Acts, chapter 3, verses 4 through 7: "And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said 'Look on us...'"

The experience was quite similar to what had happened in the hospital, but much stronger. The young man's eyes started to reflect more and more peace and serenity. No words had been exchanged, no prayer spoken. Then he began to sob and sob. The tears welled up deep from within his innermost being. He could not stop until his whole being was limp. His words, as I remember them today, more than five years later, were "I want to be clean, I want to be clean. What do I have to do to be clean?" I do not recall whether or not I urged him to start reading the Bible diligently. I did tell him that he must stop taking drugs right away, including marijuana; he must go to the dentist and have his teeth cleaned; and he must be kind to his mother.

I never saw the young man after this episode, but I do recall two very interesting things that happened to me within a short time after the experience. First, I became terribly agitated. While the rest of the encounter group attended some kind of political rally, I paced. I must have walked around a big city block ten times, trying to keep from flying into bits and pieces. I prayed as best I knew how, quite

disorganized, quite incoherent, I'm sure. Somehow I tried to keep my mind on God. When we finally got back to the place where my car was parked, I excused myself and left for home. I was totally spent.

On the way home, I began to feel terribly dirty, unclean, contaminated, polluted. I was not able to correlate the experience with the young man to the way I felt. It was several years before I began to relate the effects of prayer to a change in my metabolism and other changes in my physical and emotional states of health. It was several years before I understood that I needed to ask for wisdom before I prayed. It was several years before I realized that people can be like parasites, draining one of physical and emotional strength. It was several years before I learned how to recognize who these parasites are and how to protect myself from them.

On my way home from the encounter group, my physical body was in a state of uproar. It seemed as if someone had poured a pint of filth into my blood stream. I scouted around in my mind to see if there was something I could do or eat to be clean again. My thoughts struck upon fresh pineapple. I stopped at a market to buy one. The fresh pineapple helped a great deal. Once home, I may also have taken a warm bath to wash away that feeling of dirtiness.

Dear Phyllis, I do not understand the spiritual or psychological laws that come into play as we pray for people or just plain associate with them. I do know that in some way we all affect each other. Unless we are unusually strong, it is wise to associate as little as possible with those who do not contribute to our sense of physical, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing. Avoid these persons like the plague unless you are positive God is sending you. When God sends you, He will also protect you and equip you. Health rubs off and so does filth. Filth can often be cleverly disguised. Ask God to help you recognize the counterfeits.

Many people, too many, are preoccupied with the business of collecting and distributing information that eventually will completely pollute our personality. Eventually, we will not even have a desire for that which is clean and pure. Unless we continually dream "The Impossible Dream," we will finally slide into a very low estate. The God-part of our nature will fall sound asleep. I believe we must always encourage and inspire each other to focus on Jesus and never compromise with the enemy. We must be willing to shun filth with a passion. We must learn to recognize it in all its subtleties.



CHAPTER VI WHERE DO I BELONG NOW?

*In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you.
I go to prepare a place for you. John 14.2*

Before I get lost in trying to solve the problems of the world, I must get back to the events of 1970. I went back to work as a systems analyst the last Monday in April. I worked only half time, generally arriving at work about ten o'clock in the morning. Some of my associates could see immediately that something major had taken place in my life. I asked them how they knew that I had experienced a profound conversion. They said, "It shows in your eyes." I felt a new kinship with some of my former working associates but was quite defensive in the presence of others. Some welcomed me like a long lost son into their midst. One person told me that he had been praying for me a long time. Some individuals started to reveal their personal lives to me. One person told me how fortunate I was to have had such a convincing experience with God. Then he told me about himself and how he had stopped drinking fifteen years ago. It was years after he had quit drinking that he realized there was a God who was helping him. He gave me a little card from the Alcoholics Anonymous organization. I carried it with me for over five years and learned to appreciate the AA program. I looked at the card and read the prayer many times. "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference." Another person told me that it was a pleasure to have me around now. I asked why, and he said that I seemed to be at peace. Previously, he said, I was uptight, always in a hurry.

By and by my eyes opened more. I had never considered myself to be a tornado, only a dedicated, enthusiastic employee who loved his work. I realized then that my intense nature must have been a source of discomfort or irritation to some people. I certainly would not like to be around someone who cannot relax. And to have someone like that forced on me would be rather unpleasant.

My love for systems work and my ability to concentrate were gone. I was more interested in people, their personal lives, their problems, their mystical experiences, their relationships with God, and so on. Although I tried as hard as I knew how, I must confess that my contribution to the company was minimal. One person, a real religious fanatic, monopolized most of my time. I did not particularly care for him; nevertheless, I followed him around like a little puppy dog. I think what I learned from him was not to be like him. He was obnoxious and rude in the way he exhibited his faith. Josephine met him only once and disliked him instantly and intensely. Many times he took me to prayer meetings that lasted past midnight, much to the chagrin of my wife.

Toward the end of July there came a layoff in our department. I was one of those dismissed. Although I could agree that the decision to lay me off was realistic, the dismissal still came as a blow. I had been with the company for almost nine years. I was not ready to face the strain of proving myself in a new job. Some more healing within me was necessary before I would be ready to face the public again. I therefore asked my therapist if he was willing to certify me for total disability. There was no hesitation on his part. A week before my termination day, I did not return to work and thereby became eligible for total disability compensation. Two years earlier our company had offered its employees low-cost disability insurance. I became the grateful recipient of a substantial monthly check from this policy. We would have no financial worries in the foreseeable future. I began to recognize the hand of God working in my life! He was planning for my provision while I was still asleep.

I felt no particular pressure to hurry up and go to work again. I was satisfied to dream about a variety of new professions I could learn. One day I wanted to become a barber; the next day, a mechanic; and the day after that, a gardener. I was also quite unsure about which church I liked best. For awhile

I felt at home in the West Hollywood Presbyterian Church, which is an unusual place. It is near the Sunset Strip in Los Angeles and appeals to a rather transient and unpredictable group of people. No one criticized my behavior or asked questions. Whenever I attended, I felt welcome. My absence was not considered a form of backsliding. My wife and children did not want to go with me. Their reluctance to join me bothered me, so I decided to find a church that would be acceptable to my wife. I struck upon the brilliant idea that she couldn't possibly refuse to accept the church affiliated with our boys' school. She came with me a few times, but soon decided she could not be comfortable in a church. It was not very difficult for her to influence the boys to stay home with her. After awhile, I went alone, then only every other Sunday. I never struck upon a formula on which we could agree. I was very sad and felt extremely torn inside. The people at the church considered my wife a heathen, an unbeliever, a person sure to go to hell. Those opinions were based on my uncalled-for remarks. Everyone offered to pray for her and to pull her into the safe camp of their faith. All of this put our marriage to the test. Much unnecessary grief was created in the name of Jesus.

Unbeknown to me, Josephine became very disenchanted with my therapist. She proceeded to look around for someone else to treat me. One day she announced that she had heard about a psychologist who also taught at UCLA. She went to see him and liked him very much. I did not object to seeing another therapist because I felt it was all a part of my training to become a counselor myself someday. I, too, liked the man. He was very easy to talk to. I felt that here was a man with whom I had a kindred spirit. When he told me that my wife was the really sick person, he became my immediate ally and friend. He recommended that we get out from under our heavy financial burdens and assume a more relaxed lifestyle. He did not need to convince me to make such a change. But my wife was married to her job and would not budge.

The psychologist followed a system of therapy called "Reality Therapy." He did not threaten the world in which I was most comfortable. He tried to assist me in finding as much fulfillment as possible in that world. When I voiced the desire to work with drug patients, he proceeded to help me find a suitable job. I became a volunteer worker on the drug abuse ward at Olive View Hospital in Sylmar. Soon I was totally fulfilled and could hardly wait to get up in the morning to go to work.

Before I tell you about my experience at Olive View Hospital, dear Phyllis, I must share what I consider to be valuable new insight. I was still experiencing violent periods of distress in my body and spirit. I did not know when they might come, why, or for how long they would stay. These attacks were very frightening to Josephine and me. Although I did not lose control of my conduct during these periods of turmoil, I was afraid I might. I cannot tell you what losing my composure would have entailed, but I was certainly afraid to find out.

I remember sitting in the bathtub early one morning reading the Bible – the book of Isaiah, I believe. I was reading about some idolatrous queen of Babylon and immediately connected my wife with her. My anger towards Josephine was enormous. Instead of expressing my anger towards her, I went to the yard and cut down some unproductive grapevines. Fortunately, I have always had a great deal of respect for the law and for life; otherwise, this letter might have been written from a prison cell or a highly secured mental ward.

One day I got the idea that I had a perfect right to take authority over my violent attacks of distress. I treated these attacks as if they were hurled at me by our archenemy, Satan himself. "I will take no more of this harassing," I said to myself. But what to do? Every bit of analytical skill I had employed previously to design exotic computer systems, I now applied to the solution of this problem. I tried many things, but the most effective and dependable solution became a combination of physical exercise and simple prayer. I learned that I must never allow the distress to assume full-blown proportions. At the slightest indication of agitation, I headed for the swimming pool and swam vigorously. Prayer was generally limited to saying the name of Jesus over and over again. Sometimes I said the name of Jesus in combination with someone else's name I felt to be in distress. The tension was generally over in about thirty minutes.

Realizing that I was not completely helpless was the beginning of rebuilding a new healthy will. Today as I know the Bible a little better, I pray along these lines, "I can do all things through Christ Jesus who strengthens me." These are the instructions of St. Paul in his letter to the Philippians. They are as applicable today as they were almost two thousand years ago. The name of Jesus has not lost any of its authority or power in the presence of the enemy.

In the meantime, I have also learned a few things about being an intercessor. When we are an intercessor, we are compassionately concerned for the welfare of someone else or a group of people. We are willing to feel and experience another's burden and carry them in prayer to the Throne of Grace. We are willing to wrestle and agonize in prayer until we sense that the prayer has been answered. We might be aroused to pray in the middle of the night for either someone close to us or a stranger. We might pray for a situation for an hour or intermittently for a number of years before we have the assurance that the prayers have been answered. An intercessor is tenaciously stubborn in his prayer life. If you want to learn more about intercession, I recommend two books: *The Way of Divine Love*, by Sister Josefa Menendez, and *Rees Howells Intercessor*, by Norman Grubb.

Many of us struggle with strange feelings and phenomena. We can easily become confused and frightened when we cannot find explanations for these peculiar experiences. I believe that these two books, placed in the right hands at the right time, will set many a tortured soul free. Anyway, the Good News is that we no longer need to be like hapless medicine balls, which get mercilessly kicked around. The Good News is also that for every trial God will make a way of escape for His chosen people.

Some of these thoughts and convictions were part of the equipment that I brought to the drug abuse ward. The first day there I had a discomfort in my spirit towards the prisoners on the ward. I was not able to come very close to them. "They might really be bad and even dangerous," I thought.

When I went home after the first day, I asked God, "How can I help these people if I can't love them?" In some mysterious way, God showed me that these prisoners on the drug abuse ward were SICK, not BAD. The complexion of my attitude changed immediately. The next day, as I stepped off the elevator, I knew I was where I belonged. An unseen Presence met me, filled me with joy and the confidence that I could be of help. I believe that it was the Holy Spirit who came to greet and to anoint me. He filled me with the desire to be a friend of outcasts and prisoners.

My duties were to be a friend, companion, and escort for the patients. They were not permitted to leave the ward without an escort. I would be asked to accompany them to the X-ray department, the dental department, to take walks with them, and so on. Sometimes they would talk to me, but often they were silent. By a strong inner prompting, I felt restrained from asking questions. Every confidence I considered a sacred trust. Somehow I regarded it a privilege to be allowed to see the turbulence, the despair, the rebellion of the souls of these men and women. Often I would play games with the patients, listen to records, eat with them, or watch television. They said I would never need to take drugs, that I had a natural high. I could not quite comprehend what they meant at the time.

For several months my spirit was very buoyant. Every day was an adventure. I allowed myself to be drawn into the presence of one patient after another. There was nothing premeditated about what I would talk about; but I recall that very often I repeated the story of how I asked Jesus to come into my heart. In fact, once in awhile I was approached to retell the story. Some just would not believe such an unusual story when it was told second-hand. I had many opportunities to share my faith in a very unpolished way. Only time will tell how many seeds were planted and how many were watered.

During that time I was eagerly devouring the writings of Kahlil Gibran. I took his book *The Prophet* with me to the hospital and read it whenever I had a moment to myself. Soon I found a host of persons who enjoyed *The Prophet*. Many of the patients had read the book. By my bringing it along, they met one of their old friends. The fact that so many knew and loved *The Prophet* built a bridge

between many patients. I used to bring the very fancy edition of the book to the hospital. Curiosity would prompt many to ask, "What are you reading, Peter?" or "What's that book you're always carrying around with you?"

I would answer, "Have a look," as I handed over the volume. Almost every time, the person would remain glued to the book until he had read it. I believe that the writings of Kahlil Gibran may become a preamble to a personal commitment to following in the footsteps of Jesus. The fact that the book is so extremely popular shows me that people are really hungry to know God.

After I had worked at the hospital for almost three months, I developed a very critical attitude toward the psychiatrist on the ward. I started to see and imagine all kinds of intrigues between doctors, nurses, and patients. The excruciating pain in my face came back in full force. I tried to find out what caused the pain. I thought perhaps I should ask to be assigned to a different ward. I went to the tuberculosis ward, but the atmosphere was so depressing that I lasted for barely a day. I decided that maybe I was supposed to discontinue this type of work for awhile. Five weeks later an earthquake destroyed the hospital. Since then I have discovered that the pain in my face is like a fire alarm for me. Whenever the pain flares up, I ask myself, "What's wrong?" Little by little, I am learning who the culprit is and how to handle the situations that come up. Very often, however, the only way God can get my attention is to make me quite uncomfortable in a given situation. Pain can be a real blessing in disguise. It can tell us that something is wrong before it is too late. Painkilling remedies should therefore be used with a great deal of discretion.

Today I view mood-and-mind-alerting drugs like Russian roulette. One never knows when someone might be adversely affected by medication. Sufficient numbers of people have seen the adverse effect of penicillin to know that what may be healing for one individual can be deadly for another. The same holds true for drugs that relieve pain or attempt to balance our moods.



CHAPTER VII DIVORCE

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28

Six years have passed since I wrote the last sentence; and twelve years since the episode that took me to Edgemont Hospital. The pain of reliving the past had become so acute that I had to discontinue the story. In the meantime a limited edition of the first six chapters were published. Responses from the readers urged me to continue this account. Enough time has elapsed and enough good things have happened that I can see a shaft of light, even in the darkest episodes of my life. I can remember the past well, but the same sense of urgency to tell you about it, dear Phyllis, is no longer there. My interpretation of the mystery of the wood blossom has even changed, is possibly more accurate, and is a good place to continue the story.

Since we met some six years ago, I have acquired a skill that allows me to make beautiful, carved wooden signs. Not only have I had the pleasure of making many of these signs, but we have also published a handbook of instructions and have taught many others how to make the signs. I am able to take seemingly worthless pieces of wood and by a technique called sandblasting, transform them into objects of beauty, worth, and inspiration.

Now let me tell you how my fantasies concerning the wood blossom changed. On one of the many missionary journeys that we undertook beginning in 1978, we stopped at a Franciscan Mission in San Miguel, California. We had stopped there previously, and the friars knew my fascination with unique shapes of wood. Friar Tom greeted us by saying that he had saved for me a chunk of wood, which he had stashed away in the heater room. We found the splintery piece covered with dust and cobwebs. It did not look like much, and I was even hesitant to find a place for it in our already crowded car. But courtesy and tact had me graciously receive a piece of rough, construction redwood, about two inches thick, twelve inches wide and twenty-six inches long.



On my arrival home, I put the piece of wood in a corner of the garage and forgot about it for several weeks. A young man who was living with us at the time sanded it smooth on all sides. We discovered that it was a beautiful piece of redwood with some rich grains and interesting knots. Finally, I

sandblasted the words "Love" (Galatians 5:22) long before our friends, Knight, from Lubbock, previously splintered showpiece for their Tom would like to know ungainly piece, so I



was writing, these thoughts came with great joy and clarity, "You have taken a nondescript, worthless piece of WOOD and have caused it to BLOSSOM." All of a sudden I felt that the mystery of the wood blossom had been solved. Now I have the joy of applying my skills not only to castaway wood but also to castaway lives. The wood and the lives I have been allowed to touch have already traveled to the far corners of the world, and maybe one day I shall, too, as I envisioned in my fantasy. You can

"The Fruit of the Spirit is into the wood. It wasn't Robert and Joyce Texas, claimed the chunk of wood as a home. I felt that Brother the outcome of that wrote him a letter. As I

see that what often is thought of as a psychotic fantasy may be tinged with prophetic truth that takes men of God like Joseph or Daniel to decipher.

The wood blossom itself no longer exists. When Rebekah, my present wife of ten years, saw it, she cringed with pain. She saw in it a grotesque form created by a parasitic attack on a defenseless tree, an attack that eventually killed the tree. I finally gave it away so that it would not torture her delicate soul. Only the picture on the cover of the book has survived. The white line is to indicate the split in my personality – separating the light and dark nature fighting for dominion. This battle goes on in everyone. It is more dramatic and more obvious in some than in others.

Many other seemingly irrelevant experiences in my life have fallen into place. My thoughts about reincarnation are certainly not the same any more. The writings of Kahlil Gibran, especially *The Prophet*, no longer hold such a pre-eminent place in my library. When psychiatrists today guardedly write down their diagnoses, their words are no longer a threat to me. Like all of us, they know only a part of the truth and need as much help as anyone else. St. Paul writes, “We see through a glass darkly.” Today a mental hospital represents no threat to me, but more nearly a sanctuary. I agree with Paul Tournier when he writes in his book *The Healing of Persons*:

And our mental hospitals are filled with people whose natures are artistic, gentle, and intuitive, crushed by the struggle to live, incapable of keeping up with the speed of the men of action, incapable of earning their living, defeated by the wounds inflicted on their sensitivity, stultified by their feelings of inferiority and social uselessness, discouraged and lacking faith in themselves.’

I love these people of whom Paul Tournier writes. Many live cloistered and in places set apart for God’s saints. Others live in hidden away places where the world cannot trample them to death. I have met a few of these special saints. I see them as heaven’s special messengers bringing healing in their wings, spreading the fragrance of the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valley. This is an account of one of these messengers who descended the staircase into hell and lived to tell about it.

TESTIMONIAL OF A DEAF WOMAN DIAGNOSED WITH SCHIZOPHRENIA

I sat in my rocking chair. Pieces of my life lay at my feet, shattered into a million pieces. I was one of those who had been hospitalized for mental illness, labeled a schizophrenic, given tranquilizers, and sent home.

I had accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior and Lord just the month before. Experiencing the joy of the newly reborn, I thought I was on my way. I gave up cigarettes, a habit of six years standing. My life had just begun. I had a church to go to, Christians to fellowship with, and even deaf people (of which I am one) were being ordained to the ministry.

Farmington State Hospital, the scene of much confusion. Patients sat around and many of them smoked to pass the time. Bewildered and disoriented, I took up the habit again. My mother and a friend came to visit. I did not know what to say to them, and so merely chain-smoked.

Given a pass to go home for a few days, I regarded surroundings that should have been warm and familiar as threatening. Used to hospital routine, I got up at 6:00 a.m., dressed, and frantically paced the floor. I was glad to be taken back to Farmington where routine provided the only security I knew at the time.

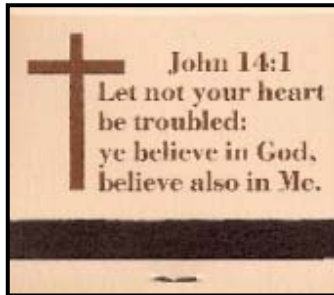
Soon, I was discharged permanently. My doctor did not talk with me, but relied mainly on nursing reports. I asked Mom, “What happened?” She gently replied that I had been mentally ill. Aghast at this, I cried, “Me?” I had been proud of my mind, my abilities, my drive and motivation. Now, I had nothing except for the love of my mother and grandmother to sustain me.

Days and weeks passed. I sat in my rocking chair and rocked. In my anxiety and depression I rocked so much that I broke three springs. Where do I go from here? Will my friends reject me because I had lost control of my mind? What of those people who had seen me during my breakdown? What did

they think? I was desperate. Pride of accomplishment, which had been my mainstay in life, was taken from me. I was naked and vulnerable. People who had been involved in the circumstances of my breakdown had seen my inner self that all of us keep private. This was very humiliating.

Time went on relentlessly. I was not interested in people, books, TV, magazines, nothing. I spent much time staring into space. Why? I had just started to live. I didn't understand. I cast around, looking for something to hold onto. My eyes fell on a little brown book with Jesus' words printed in red. "Yes! I want only to know what Jesus said while He was among us so long ago."

I devoured His words, striving to understand. The words, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me" drew my eyes like a magnet. I read these words over and over again. I felt Jesus was saying to me, "I know you heart is broken. I know you do not trust Me. Don't do anything to harm



are crushed (John 14:1). I know your understand. But, I beseech you to yourself. I ask you to trust Me."

Hope, real tangible living hope, bones. I was on the road to recovery.

seeped quietly and surely into my

Dear reader, I share this story to Bible. I would like to honestly say alive today if I had not been

affirm the reality and power of the that I am not sure I would still be converted to Christ before my

breakdown. I had a full bottle of Thorazine, a powerful tranquilizer. It was not until later that I learned that if I had taken these pills, I would not have survived.

The struggle for wholeness continues. I have been hospitalized a few times since then. Problems I still have, and they are sometimes hard to live with. With John 14:1 as a guide, I continue my search for understanding. Counseling is giving me insights to work with.

I would like to end my account with a verse from the book of Psalms: "The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times." (Psalms 12:6). The words of Jesus gave me what I so desperately needed: the word of assurance that He was in control of my life, that He understood; and that I could trust Him with the unanswerable questions. I learned that Jesus is, indeed, worthy of my trust.

BB

Today Rebekah and I live in a beautiful log home at the edge of a lake, surrounded by high, majestic mountains. I pray and counsel with individuals who have become discouraged and confused about their place in life. This, too, was a fantasy that has become reality. Who are we to say that God cannot speak to us through a dream, a vision, a song, a piece of wood, or the grandeur of His creation? God certainly does speak to us in a multiplicity of ways. It is our ability to understand His Word and His ways that is so limited! I would not be able to make many intelligent moves today without the nudging and leading of the Holy Spirit. I have learned to lean on and listen to His Unseen Presence and pray for those whose reality excludes the power and presence of God in their lives.

As I return now to the story that was so abruptly discontinued six years ago, much of the distress is gone. I know that the end is victory, joy, and liberty from fear and anguish for me and others. There is a purpose to suffering that we cannot comprehend until we have passed through the tunnel (I Peter 1:6, 7). I hope you will have the courage to travel with me the rest of the way until we are safely ensconced on Lake Pagosa, where we live today. Pagosa is an Indian word that means, "healing." Our log home faces east. Thirteen thousand feet high peaks scrape the skyline. We are very happy here and have shared our home with many since our move in 1977. You are invited too, dear Phyllis. Please come. Maybe you will touch the hem of Jesus' garment in this beautiful setting.

I have met many who, like me, are struggling with dreams and fantasies that as yet are unfulfilled. We need to help each other sort out these dreams, premonitions, and powerful persuasions so that we can accomplish the unique task for which we have been placed in this world. I share my intimate struggles, for I believe they are common to many (I Corinthians 10:13). Knowing that we are not alone, knowing that there is someone who has found a way out of confusion and anguish is often enough for others to take heart and try again.

Almost a year had passed since I was hospitalized in February 1970. I had no desire to try any further volunteer work at any type of hospital. I was confused about what I might do next. I just wanted to read the Bible and be left alone. Any quizzical looks or questions to establish the state of my mental equilibrium were totally offensive to me, especially those from Josephine. The only one I was able to trust and confide in was my therapist.

The relationship with Josephine deteriorated more and more. I did not want to lose her; my prayers were filled with desperation. When Los Angeles was hit on February 9, 1971, with a major earthquake, I was sure it was in response to my prayers. The unexpected shock and damage to our home shifted the emphasis from my mental health to getting our house repaired. For a few weeks our gratitude for being alive and unhurt overshadowed all problems, and my wife and I were reasonably comfortable with each other. I could even handle the fact that our seven-year-old son, frightened by the earthquake, wanted to sleep between us.

Before long the tension in our relationship reappeared and continued to grow. At that time I did not know why, but today I can make some reasonably intelligent guesses. My wife hated religious fanatics, and I was quickly becoming a prize example. The persons I began to call my friends were equally "nutty." They fasted, prayed in tongues, and had long hair. After being prayed for at the North Hollywood Assembly of God Church, I secretly began to pray in tongues too. When I joyfully shared this bit of news with my parents, they also became alarmed and investigated this phenomenon. Their fears were allayed after reading the book "*They Speak with Other Tongues*," by John Sherrill. Several years later, both of my parents received this gift of the Holy Spirit.

Those whom I befriended were able to convince me that I was not sick and was wasting my time and money seeing a psychologist. They said that it was my wife who needed help. On my next appointment, I shared some of these revelations with my doctor. He agreed that Josephine did need help but felt that he was not the person who could reach her. Whether he said this mainly to placate me, I am not sure. I have discovered since then that all of us at times fall prey to the temptation of telling others what we know they want to hear.

The fact that I cancelled further doctor's visits devastated Josephine. All hope on her part that I might be restored to sanity evaporated. My own conviction that I was on the right track was strengthened by frequent visits to the North Hollywood Assembly of God Church, where my "psychotic" fantasies were not challenged as aberrations of a sick mind. Suddenly I was sane. Others had visions and heard directly from God!

There was only one thought in my mind now: "How can I get Josephine to believe as I do?" I was convinced that in her present state she would go to hell. I had to get her saved! I recruited all my new friends to pray for her. I even wrote to Kathryn Kuhlman on her behalf. And when I received an answer, I slipped the letter under my wife's pillow. I was oblivious to what I was doing to our relationship. I was single-minded and blind. I was doing everything wrong. Today I would not approach anyone the way I did Josephine. Divorce was looming on the horizon, but I could not see it.

One day Johnny, my son, and I were listening to the song "You Better Sit Down Kids" sung by Glen Campbell. Tears poured down my cheeks as I listened to the words and melody. I sobbed uncontrollably but didn't know why. My destiny was already sealed. My soul and spirit already knew what my mind could not accept. The song speaks of a father who calls his children to himself for a heart to heart talk. He asks them to sit down and then struggles for the words to share the

heartbreaking news that he must leave. He says, "Your mamma is staying, but I'm going away, because we, "Don't see eye to eye." He reminds the children to say their prayers at night, to stay in line and help mamma at every turn. He assures them of his love, asks them for a kiss and then turns to leave with the parting words, "My eyes are just red kids, I'm too big to cry."

YOU BETTER SIT DOWN KIDS

Lyrics by Glenn Campbell

Better sit down kids
I'll tell you why, kids
You might not understand, kids
But give it a try, kids
Now how should I put this
I've got something to say
Your mother is staying
But I'm going away
No, we're not mad, kids
It's hard to say why
Your mother and I
Don't see eye to eye

Say your prayers before you go to bed
Make sure you get yourself to school on
time
I know you'll do the things your mother asks
She's gonna need you most to stay in line
Keep in mind your mother's gonna need
Your help a whole lot more than she
Ever did before

No more fights over little things because
I won't be here to stop them anymore

I know you don't want this, neither do we
But sometimes things happen
That we can't foresee
Now try to be calm, kids
And don't look so sad
Just cause I am leaving
I'll still be your dad
Just remember I love you
And though I'm not here
Just call if you need me
And I'll always be near

Chorus

Well, I have to go now
So kiss me goodbye
My eyes are just red, kids
I'm too big to cry

One man in particular seemed to escalate the alienation between Josephine and me. I listened to his words and prayers as if they were oracles from God Himself. He would frequently take me to prayer meetings that lasted until one o'clock in the morning. I would sneak back into the house like a thief in the night. One day he took it upon himself to visit my wife in order to try to convert her. His efforts only made matters worse. How I cringe today as I ponder the events of the past! Jesus does not coerce anyone to follow Him. He goes before us. My friend was definitely on the wrong track by being so aggressive. I wished I could undo his words and visit. I can't but I have learned what not to do.

Whenever my soul was in distress, I would call this man. With a few words and a simple prayer, he could allay my fears and distress. I became quite dependent upon him. He became my guru or mentor, so to speak. I believe this gave him a great deal of satisfaction. One time when I desperately needed him, he was not at home. There was no one else to call. In my despair, I cried out to God directly, and He comforted me. From that moment on, my dependency on that friend and others like him gradually began to wane. Today I consciously avoid such dependencies upon human beings for my spiritual, emotional, and even financial wellbeing. I see many others around me today with an

unhealthy dependency on a few friends, even their church. Eventually, many of these friendships are broken, resulting in much heartache and bitterness.

Josephine hated my friend with a passion. Her opinion of me sank to an all-time low, as I looked to him more and more for advice. My growing admiration for Kathryn Kuhlman was also an abomination to her. Once I had the opportunity to attend one of Kathryn Kuhlman's miracle services at the North Hollywood Assembly of God Church. It seemed as if a powerful, invisible magnet were pulling me to go. My wife considered my admiration for Kathryn Kuhlman totally infantile. We were in spiritual warfare at its highest pitch. I did not attend the service.

The climax to our battle came on Saturday, May 1, 1971. The children were unsuspecting pawns in this struggle as they continued to sleep with us in the same room. The anguish became unbearable; passion and pain came to a climax. I pondered alternatives and finally left the bed quietly to pray in a far corner of the house. "Lord," I said, "I must have a miracle this night, for I cannot survive this way any longer." I prayed with urgency and in great desperation. Suddenly I saw, with the eye of my spirit, the fairytale "Sleeping Beauty." Josephine was Sleeping Beauty. The thorny hedge of rose briars represented the impenetrable fortress to her very rational mind; and I was Prince Charming holding a large sword with both hands. I prayed out loud, and I prayed in tongues. Over and over again I slashed at the hedge of thorns. I was oblivious to everything around me. I did not know how long I had been praying or that Josephine had come into the room and tried to arouse me from my prayer. Finally, exhausted but at peace, I was ready to slip back into bed. I knew I had "prayed through." But in the family room were assembled two ambulance attendants from Los Angeles General Hospital, a neighbor, and my wife. My spirit was calm and poised. "Maybe someone at the hospital needs to know about Jesus," I thought. I was ready. I felt God was with me and all around me.

There were harsh words and there were pleading words from Josephine. She must have been very frightened, for in my spirit, I had truly attacked her. I wanted those walls to come down—the walls that imprisoned her soul. How often do we attack those we pray for? "Lord, make them change!" we pray. I was not a man of physical violence, but apparently I could be a man of enormous spiritual violence. Terror filled Josephine's eyes.

"I cannot compete with your unseen God," she said. "This is the hour that you must choose between me and Him." I was compelled to leave my past behind. It was impossible for me to deny the God I had met.

A few urgent telephone calls to doctors and pastors ensued. I gathered up a few belongings and allowed myself to be taken to Los Angeles General Hospital. It was about one o'clock Sunday morning, May 2, 1971. I was calm, almost euphoric on my trip to the hospital. I could not help talking about Jesus to the two ambulance attendants. My relationship with Josephine was severed, but I was as yet oblivious to what had happened between us.

Several doctors examined me but could find no obvious cause for hospitalization. They were astonished that my wife had not accompanied me. They recommended that we see a family counselor to resolve our differences. About five o'clock I took my few belongings and walked to a nearby Holiday Inn to call someone to get me. I could not call Josephine. There was an incredible wall between us now, and the thought of asking her to pick me up only instilled fear in me.

I telephoned my mentor. He took me to his apartment where I slept soundly until noon. Then he took me to my home. No one was there. I hurriedly packed a suitcase and took the car that was in the garage. Josephine had gone to her parents with the children. I proceeded to drive to San Diego, escaping to my parents. I felt like Moses being driven out of Egypt.

Two days later the sword came down on my life. My mother woke me gently, and



we talked awhile. Then she showed me the divorce papers that had come. I was stupefied. I could not believe what was happening and would not accept it. I remember stepping into the yard. My eyes fell upon a tree that my dad had pruned back almost to the ground. Sap was oozing from the trunk. Only a tiny branch was still intact. I felt like the tree, the life force flowing from me. With the crown of life cut off, with wife and children gone, how could I possibly survive?

Had I written this account six years ago, I would have tried to vindicate myself and possibly would have thrown all kinds of abuse at Josephine. When all manner of pleading was of no avail, a vicious and vindictive side of me took over. It was a part of me that I had never met. For many months I gave it the opportunity to express itself. In a final hour of great anguish and desperation, I took my wedding ring, filed it down until it was powder, and committed the dust to the ocean. I burned a personal letter of anger and anguish and desperately tried to start a new life. I did not protest the property settlement or child custody arrangements. I was too exhausted to fight. Divorce to me represented the ultimate failure in life. I was crushed.

Over the years I have asked myself if this divorce could have been avoided. I look about and see marriage after marriage fail. It seems to make little difference whether or not one or both partners or neither of them believes in Christ. It seems to make little difference whether they are Catholic, Lutheran, charismatic, or whatever. Divorce seems to strike like a vicious enemy who is finding gaping holes in our lives. God did not intend for His children to experience the pain of divorce. Is it possible that our marriage was outside the will of God to begin with and doomed to fail from the outset? It would seem to me that this may be one possible answer to failures of any kind. We ask God to sanction and bless contracts that are entered into without His counsel or consent; and we try to perpetuate them without His knowledge or wisdom.

I remember an incident that stands out and that I would like to relate here. I attended several Christian Businessmen's breakfasts, where different speakers shared their testimonies. At one of these, the speaker told about his time in prison, how his wife had left him, and how God had miraculously worked to bring them back together. This testimony filled me with a great deal of hope, and I felt that it was specifically directed towards me. After the meeting was over, I approached the speaker, briefly shared my situation, and then asked him to pray for me. I remember the prayer quite well. He asked for a healing of our marriage and for a double anointing of the Holy Spirit to rest upon my life. I felt a great warmth and well being rush over me, and I was confident that the prayer would be answered. For a while, renewed hope sustained me; but I realize today that the prayer was answered only partially. I believe that when we are in the midst of a great tragedy or trial, bending signs and symbols to our preferred interpretations is quite easy. I like to offer this as a warning to those who may have the habit of putting out fleeces to determine their next course of action.

The next two years were very hard for me. For the most part, I prefer to skip them. It was not until I met and married Rebekah that order and wholeness began to return to my life. I spent those two years pretty much as a recluse, reading, swimming, taking walks, and participating in a weekly fellowship of teenagers who had adopted me as their "uncle," so to speak. I was thirty-eight years old at the time of my divorce, had two sons (eight and eleven), and had been married for fourteen years. My visitation rights were very limited, and I was never allowed to see my boys alone. I had many mixed feelings and much advice about the custody arrangements, but I am happy today that I did not pursue any suggested court action. The children are now adults, and our relationship is sound and loving.

During that intervening period of my life, I felt like a turtle without a shell. I could not look at someone without feeling his pain and confusion, whether real or imagined on my part. I made it a point to be inconspicuous in my apparel and to keep my eyes anywhere but on the faces of others. When I overheard someone relate his problems at a checkout counter, strength and life would flow from me in waves of compassion until I myself was drained and exhausted. It seemed that others could tap into my life force and draw it from me without my willing it to be so. This did not seem right to me. I

learned to identify those who habitually would take strength from me and began to avoid them. I also learned how to put up a guard so that few were able to take from me what I was not prepared to give freely. Today I am able to look at my sensitivity as a gift from God.

During this time I read many books, generally dealing with the subject of health. I would peruse the shelves in the library, place my hand on the title of a book, and ask Jesus to direct me. Generally, a feeling of well-being would surround a title, and I would check out that book. I even strayed into the field of art and found that art can be very healing for the soul. I developed a daily pattern, which I reluctantly gave up when I remarried. Every morning I would take my book to the nearby adult community center. I would sit in an attractive patio, read, drink coffee, and enjoy at least one piece of excellent Danish pastry. Then I would swim in a well-maintained, heated pool. This daily ritual would consume generally half the day. Quite regularly, I visited my brother-in-law, who helped to shepherd me through this difficult time. My visit was enhanced by at least one generous glass of wine. I also had a plentiful reserve of my own to help soothe my troubled spirit. I had adopted a comfortable pattern of alcohol consumption that worried my parents.

Once a month I drove to Los Angeles from San Diego to visit my boys, see a doctor who had taken a personal interest in my well being, and attend a Bible study and Sunday evening service. These were very difficult trips for me. I felt like a stranger in my own home. The locks had been changed. It was painfully difficult to have a meaningful visit with the boys when a person acting like a watchdog was always present. I did the best I could but was always terribly shaken after each visit.

During one of my visits, the doctor discovered that my liver was not in its proper place and asked, "How much do you drink, Peter?" I greatly minimized the amount. His examination scared me into sobriety for several years. Now I enjoy an occasional glass of wine when offered one.

Once I asked for prayer from the Bible study group. A number of those present laid their hands on my head and began to pray in the Spirit. Suddenly the group stopped, and one of them said, "You have demons, and they are so deeply lodged in you that they won't come out. Fast for ten days. This will weaken their hold on you, and then we can cast them out." They gave me a list of twenty-one demons they had discerned.

I acted upon their suggestion as if it were a doctor's prescription. After fasting for twenty-four hours, I became very ill and started to imagine all kinds of peculiar things. I decided that their instructions were not valid for me and broke the fast. Since then I have learned that some people have a type of metabolism that makes fasting dangerous for them. I happen to be one of them. Every time I hear a pastor proclaim a unilateral fast for everyone in his congregation, I get very upset. This prescription is definitely foolishness. There are some who are so sensitive about their walk with God that we can easily and inadvertently place condemnation on those who are not supposed to fast. A good book that deals intelligently with this subject is *God's Chosen Fast* by A. Wallis. My understanding and attitude concerning fasting is—anytime we deny ourselves that beloved cup of coffee or favorite drink, we have begun a fast.

Praying with many tears is something I remember from that period in my life. Each night before going to sleep I would pray for various situations. As I started to pray, I also started to cry, often sobbing until there were no more tears in me. Exhausted, I finally would fall asleep. For a while, I considered these tears a sign of sensitivity and spirituality. I allowed the tears to flow unchecked. As my life began to assume a sense of order and wholeness, the river of tears gradually diminished. I am reminded of the beautiful promise, "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy." (Psalms 126:5). Tears are both healing and cleansing. No man is ever too big to cry.

As I review my first marriage, divorce, and time of readjustment and healing, I ponder the power, the problems, and the beauty of the sexual relationship between man and woman. The force that binds two people together in marriage is truly awesome. It can cause the greatest saint to stumble. It is most beautifully bridled and expressed in marriage, but unfortunately it is also misused, sometimes

consciously, sometimes unconsciously. I have learned that few of us can brag about the purity of our passions and must cry out with the psalmist, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." (Psalms 5 1:10)

Suffice to say that my need for God became more obvious to me after my divorce than at any other time before that. I became aware of many unclean and impure thoughts that had been neatly tucked away previously by a highly ordered, structured, busy and "successful" life. I came face to face with myself and realized my need for His Grace.

Although the divorce was very painful, it did bring a measure of relief. I no longer had to live up to the expectations of my former wife. I believe two persons can literally drive each other crazy if their yardsticks of "normal" or "perfection" are too different. Had we continued to live together without either of us being willing to accept the other, I believe that we could have destroyed each other, and possibly the children too. Love gives another person room and time to change. We were both stubborn and stupid and blind in our respective persuasions of what would please God.

I seemed to drift rather quickly towards those who loved me just the way I was and whose religious persuasions were similar to mine. It was good to be accepted once more. Every Monday evening I would listen to the songs of a room full of teenagers. They freely shared their problems and their adventures and prayed for each other's needs. They also allowed me to share my heartaches and prayed very compassionately for my children in Los Angeles. I felt loved by these young people and I began to heal. For many months I held my hand out for prayer until one day a twenty-year-old young girl said, "Peter, you're a big boy now; start praying for yourself." I accepted the advice and did.

On numerous occasions I accompanied this group to large youth rallies held at major hotels in different cities. A thousand young people would charter busses and rent a hotel for an extended weekend congress. Speakers like Nicky Cruz, Corrie ten Boom, and Billy Graham, would be invited to address the youth. And there was always a great deal of music. I felt totally at home. On the first trip we drove to Denver, where we rented the Hilton Hotel. As I stepped into the hotel, I remarked to myself, "Strange, just a little while ago I would not cross the street to go to church. Now I have come a thousand miles to attend these services."



CHAPTER

VIII

HOPE AND HEALING

*He healeth the broken in heart and bindeth up their wounds.
Psalm 147:3*

In February of 1972, Rebekah, that special person who was able to love me just as I was, came into my life. I wasn't looking for her and she was not looking for me. Had I known that she would eventually become my wife, we probably would have avoided each other. The encounter came on one of my frequent walks that had been prescribed by my doctor. While walking one day, I noticed a church on a hill. The architecture of the church intrigued me. I walked up to it and tried the door. It was locked. I looked around for signs of life. I found the secretary, Rebekah, in the church office, introduced myself, and stated my petition. She was glad to unlock the church. While she was doing that, I candidly asked, "Does your pastor talk about the Holy Spirit in his sermons?" A glow of recognition came over her face that told me she was a Spirit-filled believer.

I looked at the unique architecture and the use of adobe brick. Then I thanked Rebekah and turned to go. She invited me to stay a few minutes and have a cup of coffee in the church office. I can't remember any details of our conversation, but I do know that Jesus was at the center. We both recall that there was great peace, joy, and freedom during the few minutes we spent together; and we both sensed the presence of the Holy Spirit. How people experience the presence of the Holy Spirit varies, but those who know Him know His unique presence. It may be a special physical warmth, waves of rest and relaxation, a supernatural sense of well-being and peace, or even a physical manifestation like a tingling sensation.

Several weeks later I found myself going back to the church for another cup of coffee. As time went by, the intervals between my visits became shorter and shorter. Each time we visited, there was that unmistakable presence of the Holy Spirit and the sharing of Jesus. We had many cups of coffee together in that little church office and I wondered how Rebekah got all her work done. Outside the church office we did not see each other. Neither of us was attracted to the other in an emotional or a physical way. I choose to believe that Jesus worked in a sovereign way to unite our lives and to make my life whole once more through marriage.

It is certainly easy to deceive ourselves and to choose to believe that God is in the midst of a decision, an event, or a relationship when this may be the furthest thing from the truth. Let me offer an example. While working at the Los Angeles County Hospital, I was persuaded to part with my last copy of *The Prophet*. As you may remember, it held a pre-eminent place in my library, and to part with my only copy was a real sacrifice. Possibly a year after I had relinquished my last copy, I told a friend about this void in my life. My friend lit up, walked over to a bookshelf, procured a copy of *The Prophet* and handed it to me. "This is amazing," he said. "Yesterday while at the dump, I spotted an object and was drawn to pick it up. It turned out to be this book. It's yours." I truly felt that this was God at work to reward me for my sacrifice. I repeated the story over and over with much joy and thanksgiving.

Today I question if the book was placed once more into my hands through God's intervention or was Satan eager to sidetrack me? I have learned that there are many prophets and many voices that proclaim the truth in part and in poetry. The essence of all truth and of all ages, however, is distilled only in One. His name is Jesus. (John 14:6)

Along similar lines, there is another story that I have frequently repeated. The wife of a dear friend was highly distraught at one point in her life. She did not know which way to turn or where to get counsel or direction. As she sat in a clover patch one day, she said, "If I find a four-leaf clover in this patch, I will commit my life to Jehovah's Witnesses." She found a four-leaf clover and joined the

group. Little by little, every member of her family joined her. She did not encourage her husband to continue our friendship, and over the years, we have drifted apart.

I am concerned about the way we often interpret fleeces or events in our lives. There is certainly comfort in being able to believe that God is in the midst of events, but this may not always be so. The Bible calls Satan “the deceiver” (Matthew 27:63) and “a liar and the father of lies” (John 8:44) It is easy to be deceived. Those who rely more on feelings are more prone to become the dupes of deceiving spirits. Be careful, dear Phyllis, to examine what and whom you believe.

But now I will go back to the unusual events that brought Rebekah into my life as my wife and shepherd girl. At one of the weekly fellowship meetings, two young men shared with us the story of *The Ten Commandments*, a motion picture produced by Cecille B. DeMille. They had recently seen it and were highly motivated by the story. I also had seen it some years earlier but could not recall that it had significantly influenced me. But as the story was being told that evening, I felt urgency and a desire to see the movie again. A few days later I was able to fulfill my wish.

The movie deeply affected me this time. Although I did not feel that I was Moses, I identified with much that had happened to him. I was totally lost in the story. I took note of the monologue that accompanied Moses when exiled by Pharaoh and copied the words at the earliest opportunity. I show them here italicized and in bold letter for emphasis. The words gave me hope and challenged me to persevere.

“Into the blistering wilderness of Shur, the man who walked with kings now walks alone: torn from the pinnacle of royal power, stripped of all rank and earthly wealth, a forsaken man without a country, without a hope, his soul in turmoil. Like the hot winds and raging sands that lash him with the fury of a taskmaster’s whip, he is driven forward, always forward, by a God unknown or a land unseen; into the molten wilderness of Zin, where granite sentinels stand as towers of living death to bar his way.

“Each night brings the black embrace of loneliness. In the mocking whisper of the wind he hears the echoing voices of the dark, his tortured mind wondering if they recall the memory of past triumphs or wail foreboding of disaster yet to come. Or whether the desert’s hot breath has melted his reason into madness. He cannot cool the burning kiss of thirst upon his lips, nor shade the scorching fury of the sun. All about is desolation. He can neither bless nor curse the power that moves him, for he does not know from where it comes. Learning that it can be more terrible to live than to die, he is driven onward through the burning crucible of desert, where holy men and prophets are cleansed and purged for God’s great purpose. Until at last, at the end of human strength, beaten into the dust from which he came, the metal is ready for the Maker’s Hand.”

Those who have seen the film will probably remember that the priest of Midian had seven daughters and Moses was asked to choose one of them as his wife. Zipporah, one of the daughters, asked Moses, “And which one of my sisters did you choose?”

Moses’ answer was, “None of them.” Zipporah replied with these words:

***“Our hands are not so soft, but they can serve.
Our bodies not so white, but they are strong.
Our lips are not perfumed, but they speak the truth.
Love is not an art to us, it is life to us.
We are not dressed in gold and fine linen;
strength and honor are our clothing.
Our tents are not the columned halls in Egypt;
but our children play happily before them.
We can offer you little;
but we offer you all we have.”***

I realized, at that moment, that I did not need the Queen of Egypt as a wife, but a shepherd girl like Zipporah. In place of Zipporah, Rebekah was speaking to me. It was a strange phenomenon, quite supernatural. Without much further deliberation, I asked Rebekah the next day to be my shepherd girl. To do so was not particularly easy because there was no romantic involvement. Rebekah was not the kind of woman I was physically attracted to. And Rebekah, too, was astonished at her reply when she said, "Yes" because I was not her "type" either. We believe the Lord directed our footsteps and that our marriage was His choice. Our only desire was to be in His Perfect Will.

At this point, I am asking Rebekah to tell you her views of our meeting:

The Lord worked rapidly to establish a rapport between Peter and me, and He did it by quickening my spirit when Peter asked about the pastor's sermons. It happened as I was unlocking the church door; I knew we were on the same frequency. Peter enjoyed the tour of the church, and when he turned to leave, I was very much prompted to ask him into the office for a cup of coffee. It was from a coffeepot that was given to me by my spiritual mother, Lois Crowley, and that was kept going constantly. He accepted. Our conversation was focused on Jesus. When he returned in a few weeks for another cup of coffee, I again enjoyed talking with him. I could see that he knew Jesus in much the same way that I did, and so we could enjoy Jesus and each other at the same time. He sometimes would get lost in thought in the middle of a sentence, or not remember the direction of his conversation, but this did not disturb me. I understood very well, for I always had a problem in concentrating on what I was saying and in expressing myself. I could feel the delicate balance of his soul. When he returned more and more frequently, I started to get a little nervous, for I could not do my work and talk to him, too.

One day as I was trying to mimeograph the church bulletin in a little workroom, Peter followed me in and insisted on talking to me. He asked me if I would be his shepherd girl, and the words, "Yes, I will," slipped out before I realized what I was saying. I thought, "Now, what does that mean?" I put the words out of my mind because of the task at hand. The next day he returned. We went into the church to pray. I shared some of my problems, and he reinforced his desire for me to be his shepherd girl. Again I said yes.

Later, doubt started creeping in. I would sit at my desk and try to work, all the while arguing with the Lord about this situation. "No, Lord, that's all right. I don't need any more men. I can handle things better without having to worry about another man. You and I, we can do it alone. Besides, Lord, you know that my ideals are very high, and I don't know a man alive who could come anywhere near fulfilling them. It just isn't possible." On and on I went, day after day, telling the Lord that I could not possibly afford to be connected with Peter. "He's a nice man and all that, but definitely not my type," I said. Sitting at my desk one day, again telling the Lord that emotionally I was too bruised to possibly consider any relationship, the Lord spoke to my spirit in such a strong, clear voice that I was shocked. "This is the man I have prepared for you, now you take him!!!" He said, in a tone so strong and commanding that I immediately stopped my tirade, said "Yes, Sir," and turned my thoughts so completely to obedience that I never had another doubt in my mind that Peter was to be my husband.

Meanwhile, Peter was having his own doubts. I had two small children to raise, and the responsibility seemed to overwhelm him. He blithely told me that I could set a wedding date, but when the day drew near, he backed out and said that he couldn't handle it. He would tell me that he might call me in the evening, but then again he might not. Every evening at nine o'clock the phone would ring, and we would talk for hours. The Holy Spirit's presence was so incredibly strong during these conversations, and He would teach us and show us so many things, that I decided to keep a journal. It wasn't very long that I kept it up, for there was so much to write that I literally developed writer's cramp! Even though Peter was hesitant, I proceeded to make a quilt with symbols of the church embroidered on it and to clean and clear out dresser space for him. There was only joy and expectation in my heart for the big day!

The day before the wedding I dropped by Peter's place to give him a message and found him furiously scrubbing the floor on his hands and knees. He hardly looked at me as he told me of receiving a letter from a relative stating that this marriage was all wrong and that God would withdraw His blessings from Peter's life were he to go ahead with it. This information did not bother me in the least, for I had heard from God and I knew! I did not feel a need to try to convince him that our wedding was right or that the writer of the letter was in error, but just left him scrubbing away! The next day was beautiful, hot and summery. Peter had a radiance about him that was very powerful. Pastor Lusk of the Lutheran Church of the Incarnation, where we met, officiated. We had a small gathering of close friends and family to witness our coming together. Peter told me later that he had determined to stand against his relative's attack; and the moment the pastor pronounced us man and wife, the spell was broken. The Lord had brought us safely through another testing time.

Now I hand the pen back to Peter:

It was about a year after we met before we married. Certain delays and postponements were my fault. I was reluctant to assume any new responsibilities. Rebekah had two children, ages eight and nine, whom I would have to raise. This prospect was not very attractive, for the younger one had some real problems. I also had to wrestle with some very critical advice concerning my marriage to Rebekah. I finally discredited the advice and walked up to the altar of the church where I had first met her. Only when the wedding vows were said, did I feel waves of release sweep over me. It seemed as if large chains dropped from me and I was set free. I can reason that only when we step into the perfect will of God are we set free. At this time we have been married for ten years. Our daughter is married, and our son has graduated from high school this year. He has grown up into a capable young man, and his problems are a thing of the past.

The willingness to assume the responsibilities associated with marriage and children, home and yard, brought further healing into my life. It was a difficult but important step. As I look about me today, I see that there are many lives that have been scarred by divorce and disasters of many kinds. There are many who do not have the courage or strength to take that first step of assuming responsibility again. My heart goes out to them.

Shortly after we married, we purchased a home with a big yard in the country. I was reluctant to make this purchase and needed much prayer and encouragement from my wife before we finally consummated the deal. For me, the thought of putting up a rural mailbox was like building a whole house. The fear of failure was tormenting me every step of the way. In many ways I was like a child who had to learn to walk all over again. Some people have strokes and are paralyzed physically. My paralysis was emotional—just as real, but not visible.

Much healing flowed between Rebekah and me. We had both been severely scarred emotionally. We were not able to see ourselves as whole, but we were able to see one another as perfectly whole. This was God's gift to both of us. Thus, we were very secure and comfortable in each other's presence. I have learned a great lesson from our experience. I surround myself with people who see me as whole and whom I can see whole. And frequently when I pray for someone who has a difficult time with a child or a friend, I ask Jesus to give the person a picture of the child or friend as radiantly perfected.

Rebekah wants to put in a few words here:

One evening during a telephone conversation with Peter, the Lord gave me a picture of Peter in my spirit. I saw him standing on the side of a mountain, dressed in a white robe. Part of the robe was draped over one arm, and he was looking out over a great distance. His expression was all-knowing and all-wise; the wisdom of the ages was written on his countenance. I knew that I was seeing him complete and perfected, as God must see him through the righteousness of Christ. This has been a wonderful blessing in our lives,



for I did not see him as ill or incapable in any way, but wonderfully raised up in Jesus Christ. This then set him free to go on in the Lord, to grow in Him, and to heal in God's perfect timing and way.

Peter continues:

Daniel, our son, provided me with my first opportunity and challenge to be a counselor. It was a desire I had had since I was twenty years old, but achievement was thwarted by the discouraging advice of well-meaning people. Daniel could not read or write and had no desire to learn. He had been diagnosed as being hyperkinetic with learning disabilities and brain dysfunction. He also had dyslexia, an astigmatism that causes a person to see and write letters in reverse format. For example, a "b" would look like a "d." He could not sit still in school, and many of his behavior patterns were very antisocial. In other words, he was a handful.

At last I had a challenge that I considered worthwhile. Although there were no financial remunerations connected with helping Daniel overcome his handicaps, to me it was a challenge that was equal to designing a complicated computer system, as I had done in my earlier years. I needed Daniel as much as he needed me. I had an incredible amount of patience to spend hour after hour with him. We tested and tried all kinds of ideas. Daniel was like a weasel, quickly finding a way to escape into his own world. Finding a way to hold his attention for even a few minutes was almost like a game. I tried all kinds of tricks, and so did he. We also gave him Ritalin to counteract his hyperactivity, but the effects made him like a zombie. We felt that it was destroying his personality rather than controlling it. With cooperation from teachers, and many prayers, he slid from one class into the next.

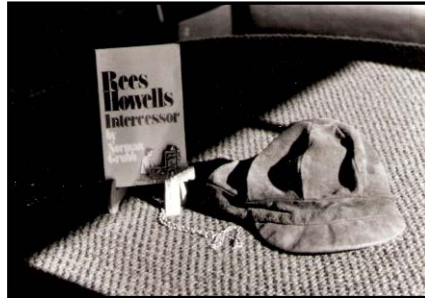
As a result of these years of trial and error and prayer, we can offer some compassionate advice to those who are struggling with hyperactive children. We have learned that diet plays a part in controlling the temperament. Soothing colors for clothing and room decorations help. Music needs to be calm and at a low volume. Television may have to be completely eliminated for some. We sacrificed our television viewing in order to avoid continuous strife about programs we knew to be injurious. We have not had a television set plugged in at our home for eight years. We also observed that certain friends brought out very antisocial behavior, so we tried to steer him away from them. No kind of discipline seemed to be effective. Daniel finally managed to wear out his dad, but then there were others who took a genuine interest in him and helped him to grow up and discover his own potential.

Early in our marriage, we decided to read to the children every night and pray together before going to bed. The discipline was pleasant after we all became accustomed to it. We maintained it for about six years. After the children entered high school, too many evenings were taken up by other activities. We read the entire Bible together and at least twenty other books, such as, *The Chronicles of Narnia* by C.S. Lewis, *Tramp for the Lord* by Corrie ten Boom, *In His Steps* by C.M. Sheldon, and others that not only build character but are also enjoyable and entertaining.

I totally disliked yard work, and still do, but I do my share of it. Once while I was pulling weeds in our front yard, a car pulled up alongside where I was working. Unbeknown to me at the time, the driver's attention was caught by the massive cross dangling on my bare chest. I had made a commitment to wear this cross regardless of place or circumstance. The driver wanted to know if there might be a place for rent or sale on our block. He felt comfortable to approach a Christian brother, he related later. We invited the man and his family into the house for some iced tea and use of our telephone. His name was John Allen.

Rebekah has just asked if she may tell you about the cross, so I will rest my hand for a while.

A book entitled *Rees Howells Intercessor* had come into Peter's possession. He avidly read the story of the Welsh coal miner, whose faith was so strongly built up and who was then so mightily used of God. The book tells about the Lord's instructing Rees not to wear a hat. In the 1800's in England, a man always wore a hat; undressed. Rees's obedience to distress to his family. It the Lord and be obedient, no reading this story, Peter felt the so we started looking for one. Our cross of bronze, which Peter liked Mission in California. So, I ceremoniously draped it around indeed. On our trip back home, we stopped by to visit the psychologist he used to see. Before we entered the office, Peter surreptitiously slipped the cross inside his shirt. Yes, we talked about the Lord with the doctor, but the big bronze cross was a little too much.



otherwise, he was considered the Lord's direction brought great strengthened his resolve to follow matter the consequences. After Lord wanted him to wear a cross, son Dan found a magnificent very much, in the San Miguel purchased it for him. We his neck, and he was very proud

Over the next few months Peter noticed that in one place he would wear the Cross boldly, while in another, he would hide it under his shirt. This was around the time that it started being popular for men to wear crosses. None of the crosses were as large as Peter's. His mother even offered to buy him a little gold cross to wear in place of it, for she thought it ostentatious. About the same time we noticed that we had a difficult time carrying our Bibles into a restaurant after church; and an even more difficult time praying before we ate. We were embarrassed. Ever so gently Jesus led us to examine our feelings and our motives. Were we ashamed of Him, of talking to Him or about Him in a public place? Were we so weak in our faith that a disapproving glance, or the fear of one, could quench our spirit? We decided that we would not want to be overbearing or obnoxious in the proclamation of our faith, but we did not want to hide it or be ashamed either. Gradually, as Jesus built us up in His love and increased our faith, we became more comfortable in our statement of who we were. After all, we reasoned, we were not being actively persecuted as the early Christians were, so why were we so timid? Some did object to the crucifix on one side of the cross, reminding us that Jesus has risen. Yes, we know He has risen, Glory to God! But we felt an intense need to be reminded of the price that Jesus paid for us and who we are.



Peter felt himself being built up in his inner man, his spirit being strengthened by this quiet declaration of who he was and Whom he followed. He had denied Him once before and was determined never to do it again. As he continued to wear the cross, he discovered he could just be himself wherever he was and whomever he was with, and that he was not being swayed by his surroundings nor the company he kept. He found himself being steadied, his nerves being calmed. Decisions were easier to make, and he found himself doing things with his hands that he had thought impossible.

God honored his decision to wear the cross boldly and without compromise. I Samuel 15:22 states: "And Samuel said, 'Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to harken than the fat of rams.'"

Peter will continue now.

The seemingly insignificant contact with John Allen became pivotal in terms of finding my place in the Body of Christ. At that time, the idea of pursuing a career as a Christian counselor had become uppermost in my mind. I had the tentative support of two charismatic churches and some financial backing from the California Department of Vocational Rehabilitation. I had briefly mentioned my goals to John. A few days later, a gift was waiting for me at our front door. It was a professionally made sign that read: PETER D. LAUE – COUNSELOR . A little later it was John who introduced us to the craft

of making sandblasted signs. The very first sign sandblasted sign he made for us is pictured below. It opened a brand new world to both Rebekah and me.

John happened to be a commercial artist and sign maker, and he used his talents to really bless and encourage me.



CHAPTER IX NEW PURPOSE

And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. Acts 2.17

After some hesitation, I launched out into the field of counseling on February 6, 1975. The step was not an easy one. I had not had a regulated or disciplined life for five years. It had made no difference what time I got up in the morning or if I got up at all. An emotional paralysis had set in that made it progressively more difficult for me to lead a normal, regulated life.

After I had taken the first step, the second one was quite easy. It felt good to have a key to the church and to open its doors at nine o'clock every morning. All fear had gone with my first positive step. I looked forward to every telephone call and visitor, even if it was only a salesman or the mail carrier. After a while, a few counselees appeared, and I thoroughly enjoyed my contact with them. "Finally I am doing some good," I thought. Trying to help others benefited me tremendously. Once when I prayed for a lady on crutches, both of us were surprised when she walked out of the office without them. At first, I took very much to heart everything I was told, and by the end of the week, I was completely oppressed by the burdens of others. I guess I must have seen myself, instead of Jesus, as the "burden bearer." For quite a while I had what might be called a "savior syndrome." Friends gathered around me every week and prayed that these oppressive burdens would be lifted. After a while I learned what I was doing wrong. From then on, I listened with compassion, but I did not allow others to dump their burdens on me. My pay for counseling was the satisfaction of being able to lighten another's load.

I had the idea that a counseling sign would look good in front of the church. Whether I needed it to bolster my ego or to let people know that I was available as a counselor, I am not sure. Today I am convinced that the inspiration for the sign came from the heavenly realm, for it dramatically and beautifully has changed my life and that of many others. Calling my friend John Allen, I asked him if he would create a suitable sign for me. He was happy to be able to help. After discussing some possible ideas and approximate size, John went away to do some private thinking and research about the sign. A few weeks later, John and I got together again.

He popped the question, "How would you like to have a sandblasted sign, Peter? I'll do all the work; all you'll need to do is pay for the materials."

"If it looks good, that's fine with me," I answered. We drove around Escondido and looked at some signs that had been sandblasted. They all looked very attractive. John proceeded to learn the process. I was his guinea pig, so to speak.

When John asked me to help him make the sign, I wasn't very much interested. For me to work with tools of any kind was still a nightmare. But he did finally persuade me to be a spectator and keep him company. Eventually, he was even able to put an X-Acto knife in my hand and have me make a token contribution to the overall effort. At that moment, with my industrial engineering mind, I could see a whole array of signs and ideas. The idea for Crafts for Christ was born!

The finished sign was exquisite and powerful. Oddly enough, the sign was never mounted at the church. It was far too dramatic and bold for the little building. The sign has been in and out of closets for years but has never found a suitable place for display. Maybe it has accomplished its purpose? Both John and I learned the new craft, which has given each of us much joy. We have shared it with many others, and it has become the cornerstone of a ministry that is now called **Crafts for Christ**, a Cradle for New Ideas.

Over the next year I timidly toyed with a few signs that I made out of scrap wood and granite, but not until I made the first five-dollar sale did I explode with enthusiasm. The events that led up to the sale are worth recording here. Our local Christian center had invited a guest speaker by the name of Harald Bredesen. Rebekah and I decided to hear him speak. We loved the warmth of his personality and the stories he told about himself. This man loved God in a very convincing and childlike manner. When his book was offered for sale after the service, Rebekah bought a copy. Its title was **Yes, Lord**—an autobiographical sketch of his life. Rebekah read the book and said that I might like it. Eventually I picked up the book and read it. It was a good book, and I thoroughly enjoyed the frank way Harald spoke about his own flaws and how graciously God had dealt with his shortcomings. There was one chapter I must mention that unlocked a very secret door in my own personality.

Harald Bredesen, about as charismatic an individual as there is today, is not afraid to be known as such. Not ashamed to confess that the gifts of the Holy Spirit also belong to this age, he openly uses them wherever they may be appropriate. He relates in the book that he frequently communes with God by praying in tongues. When I read this about a public figure that I loved and respected, I was suddenly set free. “If Harald can do it, I can do it too,” I said to myself. All the anxiety I had concerning my gift of speaking in tongues quickly and completely vanished. The many whispers and allusions of psychiatrists and pastors that had referred to this gift of the Holy Spirit as gibberish or demonic no longer put me in bondage. I am glad to see articles like the following beginning to appear in our daily newspapers. This particular story was printed on July 6, 1979 in a California daily newspaper.



Speaking in tongues ‘legitimate’

PASADENA(AP)— Christians who participate in glossolalia—speaking in “unknown tongues”—are taking part in a legitimate religious experience, says the report of a study by psychologists at Fuller Theological Seminary.

Tests used were designed by the seminary’s clinical psychology department to determine whether tongues-speakers were stable people or were exhibiting signs of instability.

Psychologist H. Newton Maloney says findings were that glossolalia did not indicate instability and had no more effect on personality integration than participation in any mutually supportive group.

“Glossolalia,” he says, “must be viewed as a valid form of religious expression and not as a psychopathological symptom.”

Those whose behavior has come under the scrutiny of a psychiatrist, or one in a similar profession, know the excruciating pain caused by people who question the soundness of a person’s mind. I wish to share with you, dear Phyllis, the diagnoses of my case by four professional men, licensed to treat the mentally ill. I do this to point out that the diagnoses and treatment of the mentally ill are often as much a matter of personal prejudice as clinical expertise. A doctor who does not believe in God and the validity of what is commonly called “The Full Gospel” certainly will be bound to treat his patients differently from a man who does. The four diagnoses read as follows:

2/22/71

Mr. Laue has been under my care since he was hospitalized for a depressive reaction at Edgemont Hospital on February 2, 1970. His symptoms included periodic facial pain, depression, and feelings of being quite overwhelmed by work and family problems to the point where he was unable to function on his job. He was discharged on February 20, 1970, somewhat improved, and

was seen regularly for outpatient therapy until this date. Progress has been very much up and down with the downs predominating. There have been increased feelings of inadequacy, sometimes reaching panic stages. The patient has seldom understood consciously the reasons for his difficulties. He attempted some part-time work for his employer for about three and a half months during the spring, but was unable to continue and finally had to stop work altogether. He tried again a few months later to do some volunteer work, but this too was unsuccessful and he had to stop after a few weeks. Symptoms seem to have been increasing in frequency and severity in recent weeks with such things as hyperventilation and extreme panic occurring occasionally. Prognosis is poor. It does not look as though Mr. Laue will ever return to work.

The second diagnosis:

May 18, 1971

Gentlemen:

The patient is a 38-year-old, married Caucasian male who was first hospitalized for three weeks at Edgemont Hospital in North Hollywood in February 1970. The diagnosis at that time was "schizophrenic reaction". He was seen by the _____ Clinic until January, 1971, when he withdrew. He has also been seen by Dr. _____ from October 1970 until May 1971, for Reality Therapy. He states that he was baptized of the Holy Spirit and tongues and has found a new way of life. He was taken to Los Angeles County Hospital two weeks ago when his wife called an ambulance because he was in a religious trance and speaking gibberish. He was released. He has gone to live with his parents in San Diego and plans to stay in a trailer in a large orchard in Escondido for a while until he maps out his future. He is not taking medication at the present time. He last worked as a systems analyst for ten years until last summer when they placed him on part-time.

Mental Status: The patient is alert, polite, and cooperative. He is well-groomed and speaks with a German accent. He is very intelligent and has a good fund of knowledge. He states he has severe anxiety and finds relief in prayer. He is able to place himself in a trance. He has a fixed delusional system with many religious references. He has had hallucinations, which he attributes to an abrupt withdrawal from Dilantin abruptly. He is very paranoid and has very poor interpersonal relationships. He is very distressed in that his wife has now served him with divorce papers. His associations are loose at times but he tried very hard to present a normal picture. His judgment and insight are poor.

Diagnosis: Schizophrenic reaction, paranoid type, chronic.

The third doctor's report:

November 24, 1980

According to my records, I saw Mr. Peter Laue beginning in September 1970. I saw him on an intermittent basis through December 20, 1971. During that fifteen months, he showed definite signs of a schizophrenic breakdown. Because of the severity of his psychosis, he was unable to be employed. He puts such demands on himself that any form of employment would have precipitated the need for hospitalization. He spent a good deal of time ruminating and lapsing into hallucinations. Fortunately, he became phobically interested in religion and this enabled him to be diverted from his psychotic fantasies. During these months, he was very depressed over the emotional loss of his children. His wife threatened to keep him physically away from his children.

Before his breakdown, he had been a highly successful industrial engineer, creating some of the most meaningful systems analyst programs. Because of his thriving need to be perfect, he lapsed into a major depression, which was basically covering an underlying schizophrenic process. If this gentleman had not found his religious dimensions and had not become zealously attached to Christianity, he would have become a psychotic patient for the rest of his life. It is my professional opinion that his psychotic processes are still dormant and will be waiting for expression for the rest

of his life. Thanks to his preoccupation with fundamental Christianity, his most recent letters to me show a total covering up of this schizophrenic process. I doubt, however, that Mr. Laue could ever assume a job in the traditional employer-employee model. I believe that such stress would be the catalyst for a resurgence of his schizophrenia. Everything should be done to encourage him to remain phobically centered on his Christian endeavors.

The fourth doctor's report:

August 29, 1991

Diagnosis: 1) Recurrent, major depression, no underlying bi-polar. 2) Personality Disorder, Mixed, primarily schizo-typal, with obsessive-compulsive features.

Discussion: The patient presents a difficult diagnostic picture. He gives clear recurrent, major depressive episodes with some evidence for hypo-manic episodes and certainly evidence for a kind of schizo-psychotic experiences. Earlier psychiatric evaluations have diagnosed him as schizophrenic with depression and anxiety. I think years ago we would have called him "simple schizophrenia" with episodes of Major Depression. It does not appear that he has had common schizophrenic deterioration and so I question the primary diagnosis of schizophrenia. On mental status exam he tends to make relational contact with the interviewer, unlike a schizophrenic and has a withdrawn, depressed mood with a surface posture of trying to please, to look good, to make a good impression, attempting to appear better than he really feels on the inside. When the direction of the interview is removed from his grasp and he is placed in uncomfortable situations and confronted during the interview, he becomes quite anxious, uncomfortable, seemingly almost paranoid, and expresses a strong desire to "escape to his safe, complete environment he has created about himself."

I think an argument could be made for primary diagnosis of schizo-affective disorder. I also wondered about an underlying Post Traumatic Stress Disorder due to his childhood. Although he touched briefly on his being raised in Germany and moving frequently for the "safety of his mother", he avoided detail. Psychologically, his siblings have fared less well.

The patient described his SSDI being discontinued in 1981. He says he lived off of what little money he had saved, sold his house, and received gifts from supportive Christian friends until his disability income was reinstated. He describes deterioration financially over the years; he lives simply, but not poorly; he lives a very committed religious life and his goals are spiritual, not materialistic.

When I first started the interview with Mr. Laue he understood the nature of my evaluation and his superficial presentation was quite good. When I took over the interview and controlled the situation, pressing him and confronting him, I saw him regress and deteriorate emotionally. I believed his own statement that "he would rather die than leave his safe, complete environment." (Mr. Laue is permanently and totally disabled and he must remain in his safe created environment for adequate functioning.) Different from many borderline functioning individuals, he has the intelligence to create his own environment, withdrawing from the stress and stimulation of the world. He has completely immersed himself in a spiritual relationship and has developed the support of a religious community, thereby superficially appearing "together."

I think he is capable of managing his own funds, and I do not think he can be gainfully employed and I don't think he is a candidate for vocational rehabilitation. As a psychiatrist I would be interested to see his response to intensive psychotherapy and/or psychotropic medications. Realistically, I think that he is best left in his "safe, created environment", with psychiatric intervention only if he deteriorates as he ages.

A diagnosis can therefore be more like a judgment and can have a very debilitating effect on the functioning of the patient in society. It can be like cold steel on a sensitive soul. I remember quite vividly a battery of psychological tests followed by a psychiatric examination. These periodic examinations were requested by my insurance company. The outcome of the examinations determined if I would continue to be eligible for disability. There was intermittent conflict between a major insurance company and Social Security. Neither was eager to pay my disability. I became a pawn between these two giants. During one of these I asked the doctor if he would mind reading my file to me. He did, and I was astonished how accurately it recorded my biography.

The actual examination was very brief and was limited to a few questions. I was asked, "Do you still speak to God?"

"Yes, I do," I answered.

Then the doctor proceeded to ask, "Does your God answer you?"

"Yes, He does," I replied.

This concluded the examination. When I asked if I would still be eligible for disability, the doctor told me "yes." I was quite surprised and I wondered why. The doctor said; "You may talk to God all you want, but we don't expect Him to answer you."

I rejoice that I can hear God's voice. I am in excellent company with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, St. Paul, St. Francis of Assisi, and many others. Who knows, maybe some of their counterparts of the twentieth century are on disability today! If the world diagnoses them as "crazy", they should be compensated for wearing such a demeaning label.

The impact of the book **Yes, Lord** was by far not over. One day I quite idly traced the words from the jacket of the book and decided to sandblast them into a piece of scrap granite. I was not particularly impressed with the results and put the finished product out of the way on top of a cupboard. Several months later, after much coaxing, I was persuaded to exhibit our work at the Garden Grove Community Church in Garden Grove, California. I took the "Yes, Lord" sign from its place on top of the cupboard and rather reluctantly brought it with us. My contribution of to the beautiful statuary artwork flourishing at our exhibit, but only selling.



Grove, California. I took the "Yes, the cupboard and rather reluctantly signs looked very meager compared produced by Rebekah. Sales were what Rebekah had made was

Unexpectedly, a lady noticed the "**Yes, Lord**" sign and eagerly produced a five-dollar bill to purchase it. I was electrified! It was the first money I had earned in six years. I did not realize how much I needed and coveted this type of approval and vote of confidence. Before the exhibit closed, I received an order for a second "**Yes, Lord.**" I was excited, but little did I realize how germane with promise these two sales were. We have sold several hundred of these signs since that day, and with each sale has come a new friendship. The sign has even been reproduced in statuary art and is now available in many stores in the western states.

Here is a letter from a friend who tells the story better than I. This man was brought into our lives through one of the many "**Yes, Lord**" signs we made.

February 16, 1982

Dear Peter,

I am sorry I haven't written sooner. I want to thank you for your hospitality, which you extended to Hans and myself. Peter, I want you to know that God used you to confirm something to me that I had been praying about. Many years ago (I think seven) as I was driving my car, the Lord spoke to me and told me He would heal me. Well, since that time I lost the sight in one eye and I'm visually impaired in the other. This loss of sight is due to the diabetes I've had for almost 29 years. (The

disease is called diabetic retinopathy.) I first started having trouble with my eyes a little over ten years ago. I had lost the vision in my left eye back then and five years later, a surgery restored some of it. I still had the use of one good eye up until January of 1981. When my good eye went out, I spent a month at home last year in anguish and despair. I was also very angry with the Lord. However, God in His infinite goodness lifted me out of my despair and began to deal with me in a most wonderful way, and started changing me and showing me deeper truths that I never would have received unless I had lost my sight. I had been to prayer meetings during that ten-year period, attended healing services, had hands laid on me, and people praying for me constantly. But God did not choose to heal me then. Last August ('81), I went to a Morris Cerillo meeting expecting a healing for my body and instead I received a spiritual healing. And when I asked the Lord about my physical healing, He said, "Not yet, Carmen," and at that point I surrendered my entire being to Him and said, "Yes, Lord, no matter what happens—whether you heal me or not, all I want is to know You better and be what You want me to be."

You see, Peter, when I first became a Christian and surrendered my life to Jesus Christ, I echoed a prayer from my spirit. That prayer was, "Lord, I want everything you have for me and nothing less. I want your very best, and whatever it takes for you to do it. And if I scream and holler and tell you to stop, you go ahead and do it anyway!" Peter, the Lord has honored that prayer, and I've been through many deep waters and many lessons were hard, but Praise God, He conformed me to the image and likeness of His Son Jesus Christ. He is changing me from what I am to what I ought to be.

Well, you're probably wondering how you fit into all of this. I'll tell you. About a month before we visited you (we were at your place January 21), I asked the Lord again about my healing and asked whether or not I was imagining if He told me my healing was coming. This time I asked Him to show me, and it would have to come through someone else who didn't know me, for I would be sure it was through the Holy Spirit directly from Him. And then we came to see you by the leading of the Spirit, as you know, and Praise God, the message came through you! And God confirmed it through another three days later. I just want to thank you and Rebekah for the love I felt when I was in your home; the love that came from you was almost overwhelming.

I had breakfast with Hans the other day and he mentioned your invitation. I hope my wife and I can visit with you sometime. Thank you for the "Someone Touched Me" plaque. It is a constant reminder of God's promise.

Your brother in Christ, Carmen



CHAPTER X FULFILLMENT

Delight thyself also in the Lord, and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass. Psalm 37:4, 5

On February 2, 1981, I saw the fulfillment of a dream and a prayer of many years. On that day I was sitting in the conference room of Nancy Barker, Chief of Volunteer Services for Mental Health and Mental Retardation for the state of Texas. Also in the room were her assistant and two chaplains. I had been invited to tell the story of Crafts for Christ in order for this group to determine if others might benefit from what I had learned. The feeling was like that of my first five-dollar sale. My audience was captivated as I shared the story and presented a hundred slides to make every aspect of my adventure come alive. After some brief consultation within the group, they decided that Crafts for Christ should have a place at the Volunteer Service Convention the following October. We were being given the opportunity to display, explain, and teach our craft in Arlington, Texas, in October, 1981. On February 2, 1970, I had been hospitalized at Edgemont Hospital. Since then my desire and commitment had been to return one day to the mental wards with understanding and compassion. Exactly eleven years later to the day, the gates swung open and my dream came true.

But it didn't happen all at once. The way to Austin was a progression of many steps over many years. Crafts for Christ was not an instant success learned from a textbook. It came because of my burning desire to relieve the intense emotional pain of those who could not cope with the turmoil in and maybe around them.

My personal anguish at the age of twenty, as told in letters in Chapter 16, was probably the most compelling reason for the desire to be of service to others. The foundation for a life of helping was laid during my tour of duty in the armed services, where my sensitive, feeling nature came into contact and into conflict with the harsh reality of life. In order to survive, I chose a life of logic and pleasure and quite unconsciously suppressed the deep longings and urgings of my soul. But the deep-seated needs of my being were not to be denied forever. They emerged quite suddenly and unexpectedly as the wood blossom came into my life. Then, my feeling nature once more asserted itself until I finally realized that logic and feeling must each occupy their rightful place within me. My soul was beginning to find peace!

I had a great longing to share this peace with other troubled souls, but I quickly realized how difficult it is to come close to anyone in pain. Perhaps through the craft I enjoyed I might be able to build a bridge to other lives. I had the confidence that as I taught others how to use their hands, the doors to their hearts might open. And they have!

Every new sign I made was an occasion for celebration. My enthusiasm seemed to be contagious, and people started to come to our home in Escondido to watch and learn how to make sandblasted signs for themselves and as gifts for others. Some stayed for a few hours, some overnight, and some for a few weeks. We started to have a house full most of the time. People let their hair down in the relaxed setting in which we lived and worked. It was easier to talk across the kitchen table scattered with paintbrushes than in the church office.

One day a haunting melody caught my attention as it came over the radio. The next time it was played, I listened carefully to the words. It seemed that once again, God was using a song to speak to me.

THE HIDING PLACE

Lyrics by Jeffrey Leech

In a time of trouble, in a time forlorn,
There is a hiding place where hope is born.
In a time of danger, when our faith is proved.
There is a hiding place where we are loved.
There is a hiding place, a strong protective space
Where God provides the grace to persevere.
For nothing can remove us from the Father's love.
Though all may change, yet nothing changes here.
There is a hiding place to give relief.
In a time of sorrow, in a time of grief.
In a time of weakness, in a time of fear,
There is a hiding place where God is near.



The song expressed a growing desire within me to provide a place of shelter and rest for those who were overwhelmed by the problems of life. But how does one translate such a desire, probably shared by many others, into action? How do you cradle a person without crippling him? How do you help a person in need without destroying his incentive to help himself? Does love always say "yes"? Or is "no" sometimes the right answer? Words by Abraham Lincoln helped guide me in making decisions and translated them into numerous sandblasted signs as pictured here.

Before long, we had created an attractive sign on a piece of granite with the words **THE HIDING PLACE**. As part of the design, a cluster of violets adorned the sign. In my own mind they signified those tender souls that need a special protected place to heal and blossom. We placed the sign underneath a group of young birch trees that we had planted in our front yard. We were open for business, so to speak.

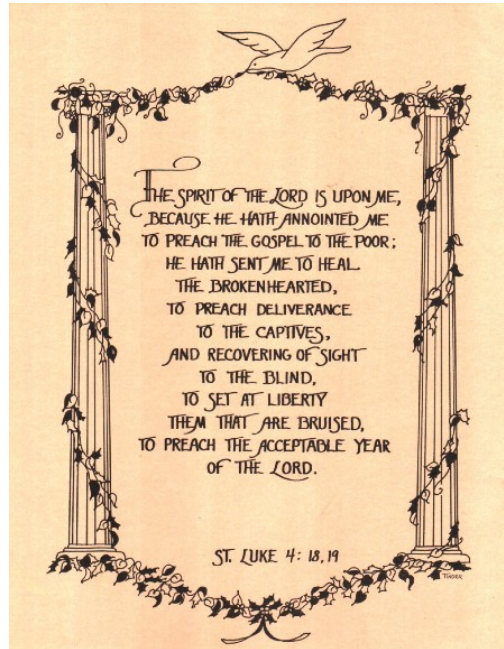
I would like to believe that my painful and confusing past was preliminary and necessary to mold a life that was sensitive to the needs of others. When I lived a life of logic only, what made sense and was legal could influence and direct my life. When my feeling nature was unlocked, it seemed that a new channel for communication became available. One might say that up to age twenty, I had my radio tuned to FM; from age twenty to thirty-seven, to AM: and now I can switch back and force to either frequency. As a Believer in and a follower of Jesus, I have an additional frequency. We might call it HS, standing for Holy Spirit. Before I take you farther on the road to Austin, dear Phyllis, I want to explain to you how this frequency works in my life.



It is with the leading of the Holy Spirit, in part, that I travel through life now. The direction that I perceive in my spirit, I do not follow without screening it through my logical mind. I have been misled before by what I thought was the sovereign voice of God. I am much more cautious now and test the spirit by the Word of God to make sure that I am not being deceived (I John 4:1-3). I have discovered that the devil is very willing and able to whisper Scripture verses into our ears, though he distorts them, takes them out of context, and causes us to misconstrue them.

There are numerous ways that the Holy Spirit has directed my life and has shown me things about myself that I needed to know. The Scriptures are probably the most frequent way God speaks to those who are eager to know and do the will of God. I remember how in 1972 two verses from the New Testament forcefully and repeatedly caught my attention. Many years later our friend Brian Burnett crafted a beautiful sandblasted sign using the below design for his pattern.

For at least a year I lived under the false notion that I was uniquely chosen to make these verses come alive to others. I was under the erroneous perception that no one else in the world was given these verses to be their “marching orders.” No doubt, the devil tried to use this form of deception to puff up my ego. After pondering the verses from the Book of Luke, chapter 4:18-19 for quite a while, I asked God to make their meaning clear to me. I believe that whenever a verse in the Bible rings true for us, the Holy Spirit desires to get our case, He was handing me my writing this account for you to may not be immediately known calling, to let everyone know everyone’s dark tunnel. In fact, I am fulfill at least a part of my other words, don’t quit, don’t that there is hope at the end of towel! Try again!



under the erroneous the world was given these orders.” No doubt, the devil from the Book of Luke, chapter asked God to make their that whenever a verse in the Spirit desires to get our may not be immediately known case, He was handing me my writing this account for you to calling, to let everyone know everyone’s dark tunnel. In give up. Don’t throw in the

God can speak to people through a method such as opening the Bible at random and letting their eyes fall upon a verse. This is sometimes referred to as the “dive bomber” approach. It is better, as we mature in the Lord, to read a portion of Scripture and let the Lord illuminate a verse for us. This way we avoid misunderstanding a single verse taken out of context. Error is easily introduced into our lives when a teacher emphasizes a particular truth over some other truth. We have to watch out for that! It happens quite often.

I mentioned earlier that songs have had a profound effect upon me and have directed me to take certain courses of action. I remember how the song and melody “He Touched Me” captivated my soul. Shortly after Kathryn Kuhlman died, the words and melody were continuously on my mind. I tried my best to bring some variety to my humming and singing, but without success. I finally asked in my spirit, “Lord, what do you want to tell me?”

Suddenly I saw, in my mind’s eye, stationery with the words “He Touched Me.” I wondered if I was to create such stationery. After a while and somewhat reluctantly, I sketched the design. Only then did the persuasive melody leave me. Then I heard these words in my spirit: “The anointing which was on Kathryn Kuhlman will be spread upon many and including the stationery.” (Acts 19:11-12). Over the last five years, I have had thousands of sheets of stationery with the words ‘He Touched Me’ printed. I have enjoyed the stationery and so have many others. The majority of the things I see in my mind’s eye have been translated into tangible projects. Far too many ideas are still-born and never see the light of day. To live primarily in our thoughts and imagination is unhealthy and unproductive.



Paintings and pictures have touched my spirit deeply. God can use them to direct some poignant truth about lives or to teach people themselves. Pictures can be like dreams. They can touch us deeply. We may not always know why. I

also touched my spirit has used them to direct some poignant truth about lives or to teach people themselves. Pictures can be like dreams. They can touch us deeply. We may not always know why. I

would like to share a happening that vividly demonstrates the importance that art can play in our lives. The incident occurred in 1972. I had been invited to an art exhibit in which a number of different artists were showing their work. I strolled rather quickly past the various pictures until a painting of a band of wild, unruly horses suddenly caught my attention. As I stood in front of the picture, I felt waves and waves of the Holy Spirit flowing through me. The feeling was very pleasant, but I had no idea how to interpret them. I knew, however, that somehow the picture was special for me, and therefore, the scene was permanently engraved on my mind. About three years later, as I was washing dishes, the picture again flashed in my mind. With great clarity, accompanied by a sense of the presence of the Holy Spirit, these thoughts came into my mind, "The unbridled horses represent your unbridled emotions. As they are bridled, I can use you as a dependable vessel." Over the years I have had a number of dreams of wild horses dashing down a hillside. Very slowly and reluctantly, these horses are submitting to wearing bridles.

I have learned to appreciate the importance of good, wholesome art in our lives and homes. Its significance was most forcefully taught to me by a story told by Larry Christenson in his book *The Christian Family*. In very condensed format, this is the story and finally, its effect on my life.

A widow had three sons. Each of her sons had chosen to become merchant seamen. With great sorrow in her heart did the widow see her youngest son leave the house to go to sea. Her secret desire had been for one of her sons to settle nearby to fill the void and loneliness of her declining years. One day she voiced the pain and sorrow in her heart to a friend.

"How is it that each of my sons has chosen the sea?" she asked. "No one in our family has ever chosen this profession before."

The friend pondered the question as he looked about. His eyes came to rest on a masterful painting of a large sailing ship on the dining room wall. The captain stood at the prow scanning the horizon. Finally the friend spoke, "Your sons saw this sailing ship every day they lived in this house. The spirit of adventure and the desire for the sea was born into their hearts through this picture. Words were not necessary to mold their lives."

I hid the story in my heart, marveling at the potential of the idea. Some time elapsed before Crafts for Christ was born. We acquired the knowledge and skill of a unique way of carving words and pictures into wood, glass, and polished stone. We experimented with different ideas. We shared our knowledge and skills with others and saw lives being changed and homes being renewed. We noticed old things, such as horoscopes, nudes, and nondescript paintings being removed from walls of homes, motel lobbies, and restaurants. The vision of claiming "Wall Space for Jesus" was born.

Business at "The Hiding Place" in Escondido was brisk. Our pay was the satisfaction that we had given a troubled soul a sanctuary and a place to be refueled. We did not have a need to hold on to people; we just wanted to equip them so that they were better prepared for life's problems. The fact that I had learned to make sandblasted signs—and enjoyed making them—helped me to deal with stress, which I seemed invariably to pick up from others. Overall, things were going well. We had a comfortable home, low mortgage payments, and a growing number of fine friends. There was no need to make any drastic changes.

One morning as I was making the bed, a thought of unusual clarity and authority came to me: "Start looking for a larger place." Shortly before during a prayer meeting at the home of Harold and Carmen Rowe, we had expressed our willingness to submit our lives to the Will of God and to make whatever move would be best for our children. However, when this very clear directive came to me, I was taken totally by surprise. And Rebekah was even more stunned because for the first time in her life she had the opportunity to build a comfortable nest for her family.

At this point our daughter, Heather, was finishing junior high school. She had received the name of the high school she would be entering and had approached us with apprehension. She told us that

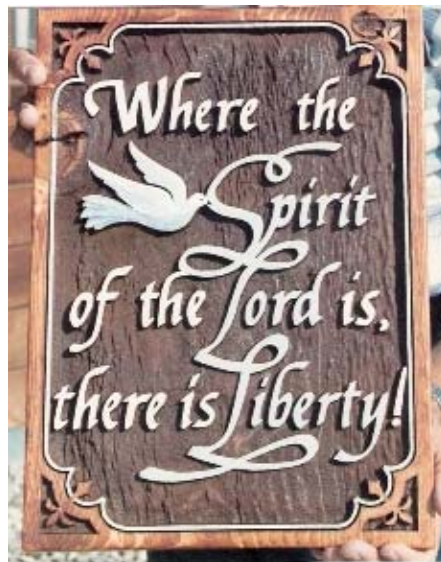
she was afraid to go to that school. This surprised us, for Heather is not usually one to be fearful. Rebekah and I contemplated this turn of events. We both made the decision, “Lord, we will be willing to go wherever you want us to go that the children can be in the right school and the right environment.” We both felt that this important decision pleased the Lord, Who was preparing us to be open for something new to happen.

We did not feel any sense of urgency to make a move. We pondered the directive to find a larger place, wondering if indeed it had come from God. We had no idea where we might even begin to look. There was only one idea that surfaced. Rebekah and I had always liked the mountains and hoped that we might be able to live there some day. “The Scripture does say that the Lord wants to give you the desire of your heart,” we said to each other. (Delight thyself also in the Lord and He shall give thee the desire of thine heart. Psalm 37:4)

We made several trips to Idyllwild, California, and looked at a few available homes, but did not feel that this was the right area. The first clue to a possible location came as a result of a telephone conversation with a real estate saleswoman. She asked me what kind of work I did. As best I could I told her about the sandblasted signs we made. She responded with the words, “You should live in an area visited by tourists.” Suddenly the word “tourists” became singled out from her conversation as very important. I had a lead! I must confess that this is very meager information to go on for a major move. Sometimes I wonder how much information Abraham had before he departed from his land. The Bible says:

Now the Lord had said unto Abram, “Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land I will show thee.” Gen. 12:1

It seems appropriate for me to ask Rebekah to narrate the next part of our adventure. God used her in a unique way to bring us to Pagosa Springs, the halfway point on our way to Austin, Texas.



CHAPTER XI WE MOVE TO THE MOUNTAINS

*He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
He leadeth me beside the still waters.
Psalm 23.2*

A note from Rebekah:

In order for you to fully appreciate the wonderful, intricate way God works His purpose in us and in the lives of others around us to bring blessings and fulfillment, I must go back in time to 1946. I was attending Pearl Harbor Elementary School in Hawaii. There I enjoyed very much playing with a girl named Barbara Fuller. Barbara's family moved away at the end of the year, and I did not see her again until the first part of my senior year of high school when her family was stationed in Hawaii again. She approached me and introduced herself. She wondered if I remembered her and offered her friendship. I did remember her very well, but by that time I had been so many years in a deep depression that I had nothing to offer her. All I could do was stare at her. She had blossomed into the "All-American Girl," blonde, blue-eyed, with a terrific personality, enthusiastic, full of life and joy. She was soon into everything, becoming head cheerleader, editor of the school yearbook, officer in clubs, and so on. I avoided her, as I did everyone else, feeling so "out of it."

Almost twenty years went by. Peter and I had established our home in Escondido, when the Lord brought Barbara to my questioned, "What about thought of her had weeks, I spoke to my who had also known San Diego, and we had the years. I asked Betsy if Barbara. She said she with me for her. I asked could find out where the Lord was up to



A little while later, Betsy

extraordinary events to me as we were rejoicing over having found Barbara's whereabouts. Betsy would go shopping every Tuesday with a friend. The Lord impressed her to go shopping this particular week on Wednesday instead of Tuesday. She hesitated for a while wondering if it would be inconvenient for her friend to change shopping days. However, when the Lord persisted, Betsy called her friend, who readily agreed to go on Wednesday. As they were walking along at the mall, Betsy thought she recognized the person in front of her.

She called out, "Melvin, is that you?" And Melvin Sousa, a childhood friend of Betsy's and mine, responded, "Betsy, is that you?" Melvin's mother lived in the area, and he was visiting her. He had flown in as a pilot for Hawaiian Airlines. Betsy, bless her heart, had the presence of mind to ask him if he knew anything about Barbara. He didn't, but remembered that our high school class was holding its twentieth reunion shortly and had published a booklet with available names and addresses. Melvin flew back to Hawaii, obtained the booklet, and sent it to Betsy, who forwarded it to me. And there it was. Barbara's name and address!

mind. "Barbara?" I Barbara?" After the persisted for several childhood friend Betsy, Barbara. She lived in kept in touch all through she knew anything about didn't but agreed to pray her to let me know if she Barbara was, for I knew something.

related the most

I need not tell you how excited I was. “Okay, Lord,” I said, “now what?” I sat down at the table and penned a short note, introducing myself again. I asked her if she remembered me and offered my friendship. Within a few short days I received a long, long letter from Barbara, telling me of the events of the past twenty years. She had gone to the University of California at Berkeley, met and married a French count, spent some ten years in France, and had three sons. Her youngest had a rare eye disease, and she had, for the first time in her life, encountered a situation that she could not handle. She had become a member of the Catholic Church and was searching out not only any doctor who could help her son, but also every religious person who held hope for the boy’s healing.

I read the letter with amazement as I realized that because of the many trials in my life, I now had something—or Someone—to offer her. I quickly sat down to write, with Jesus standing behind me dictating the entire letter. What love and confidence came forth from the Savior for her in that letter! What a privilege for me to write it! Some very lively correspondence followed.

Once Peter said, “I can see Barbara sitting in that chair,” as he pointed to a dining room chair.

“Oh, sure,” I said.

Later, almost one year to the day, Barbara walked in our front door, greeted us, and headed right for that chair! I let out a little yelp, praising God for his goodness and His sense of humor.

Shortly after her visit, she asked us if we would be willing to visit a family friend who was very ill. He had emigrated from Holland and was living in Los Angeles. He had undergone six operations, which left him in worse condition than before. He was now in much pain, with internal bleeding every time he moved. He was housebound. Peter and I prayed and felt led to go see him. We visited him, enjoying very much his outgoing personality and the Old World decor of his apartment. Before leaving, we felt very much led to pray for him, and we did. A few months later we received an amazing letter from him. He said that he had just come back from a 3,000-mile selling trip and had found the most wonderful place and wanted to tell us about it. Our curiosity was very high, since the doctors had given up on him and he was barely able to move when we last saw him.

Once again we made the trip to Los Angeles. He was just bouncing with vigor and excitement about the discovery of a most beautiful place where he had purchased some property. We were more interested in what God had done for him physically, and he said, “Yes, yes, God has healed me.” Then he rushed on, showing us brochures of “Pagosa in Colorado.” He said that he was going to move there but that none of his friends would go with him. Would we move there with him he wondered.

“Yes, we will,” said Peter. I was stunned! Just a simple, quiet statement. It was a good thing I was sitting down!

That was in May of 1977, and the next month we were on our way to Pagosa Springs, Colorado, to see what the housing situation was like and what the Lord’s directive was. Peter had been in the area a few years previously on a hunting trip and was somewhat familiar with it. The Lord had also given him a picture of living in an area similar to Pagosa.

We stayed at the Pagosa Lodge and were shown many pieces of property but few houses. We were thrilled with the beauty of the mountainous area, but we needed some place to live. As we were packing the car to go back to California, Peter noticed a little car next to us, which said “Thomason’s Stained Glass” on the door. Being prompted by the Holy Spirit, he rushed into the lodge and asked that the owners of the car be paged. He found Ann Thomason and her children having breakfast in the restaurant. He asked if she would like to see our work. She said she would just as soon as she finished her breakfast. Later she stated that she had never been in that restaurant for breakfast before, even though it was quite close to her home.

She was very much pleased with our work and asked if we would like to see the house she had just purchased. We thought, "Why not?" We all piled into the little car, and she brought us to see her huge log house on Lake Pagosa. We just marveled at it because it was the epitome of our dreams. The view across the lake to the Rocky Mountains was the most beautiful picture I had ever seen. It just took my breath away! Well, for some reason we exchanged names and addresses with this lady. She and her husband were schoolteachers in California, she told us, and planned to spend the summers and short vacations in their house on Lake Pagosa.

Arriving back in California, we put our house up for sale, believing that if God wanted us in Pagosa Springs, He would sell our house and arrange for a place there for us. It happened that the county assessor wanted our place badly but was having difficulty obtaining financing. He called Peter, very discouraged. With a great deal of authority, Peter told him exactly how to manage it. It worked! Everything was going along smoothly. Peter suggested that we contact the Thomasons to see if they might want to rent their house. The very day that the papers on our house were signed, we received a phone call from the Thomasons asking if we wanted to rent their home. We were thrilled, mostly with the way the Lord was working everything out. The rent was enormous, but our Dutch friend and a young couple going with us would help with the payments. As it worked out, they stayed with us for just a short time. The Lord miraculously provided the funds necessary to keep us in this lovely, healing place. Eventually, we were able to purchase this very house, but this is another story.

As I contemplate our lives, I am overwhelmed by the way God works. Over so many years He had intricately woven our lives together for His purpose. I remember feeling so utterly desolate for many years, but now, looking back, I know that God had His hand on my life always.

Peter will now continue our story.



CHAPTER XII NEW DOORS OPEN

*“Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit,”
saith the Lord of Hosts.
Zechariah 4:6*

Before I take you to Austin, a trip of some 800 miles from Pagosa Springs, I must tell you about an incident that has flashed through my mind. It occurred in 1962, when I was given an unusual opportunity by my employer to salvage a defunct computer system. My boss was Dr. John G. Carlson.

I remember the day John called me into his office. He said, “Peter, you are aware of all the efforts to automate our manufacturing information system. Everyone who has worked on it has quit, and we have a lot of expensive, unused equipment standing around. Make your recommendations.”

During the next few days I pondered the assignment. I had had very little experience with computers. As I walked through the production control department, I knew I could salvage much of what had been done and make it work. I just knew that I could! Enthusiasm and inspiration exploded in me, making me almost reckless in my plans for the system.

I presented my recommendations to my boss; but he listened with only lukewarm interest. “You’d better go back and justify your recommendations,” he said. After a half-hearted attempt to put more logic behind my enthusiasm and inspiration, I presented him with a revised system. There was little change in his demeanor. Several more times I was required to sort through my logic before he finally backed my proposal to upper management.

Several years after the system had become operational and had grown into the backbone of the company’s manufacturing control system, I asked John, “Why did you give me such a hard time at the beginning?”

“I wanted to make sure,” he said, “that you had the guts, perseverance, and conviction to stay with your recommendations until they were implemented.”

I spent almost eight years designing, improving, and perfecting a system that was born in a flash of enthusiasm and inspiration. I learned much about the capabilities of computers and how they can streamline the efficiency of large companies. But my greatest lesson was the knowledge I acquired about myself. I had been challenged to the limit and found out the kind of “stuff” I was made of. Every part of my being was challenged except my heart. The fact that my God-given ingenuity and tenacity made it easier to build deadly fire-control systems for atomic submarines did not enter my mind until a stranger remarked, “What a shame that your talents are not used for God.” Those words stuck!

As I look back on my career in the computer field, I can see the impact it had on shaping my personality. It made me more logical, more exacting, and more of a perfectionist. There was no room for error. To some extent, these qualities carried over into my personal life and relationships. I was most comfortable with those who spoke my language. Like an octopus, my work began to invade my private life. Potentially, every person who exalts his job above everything else faces such a dilemma.

The same substance in me that was once employed to design sophisticated computer systems is now deployed to find new solutions to help those living in states of confusion and fear. I have never lost sight for very long of my commitment to alleviate the terrible anguish of the mentally ill. Inspiration, enthusiasm, commitment, and now compassion have sustained me since my own hospitalization. I have been on my way to Austin from the moment I was discharged from Edgemont Hospital. I am half way there—only 800 miles and three and a half years to go!

Pagosa Springs, Colorado, is a small town of 2,000 (now closer to 10,000) people and is on the western slope of the Continental Divide. It is at an elevation of 7,000 feet and generally receives an abundance of snow during the winter. Its main industry is tourism. Many enjoy a brief respite here if they are able to divorce themselves from their hurried and frenzied lifestyle. Many come to visit the Hot Springs, the largest in the world according to the local chamber of commerce. The rugged peaks are breath taking. In the winter, thousands of ski enthusiasts ascend Wolf Creek Pass to enjoy their favorite sport. Lumbering, ranching, and construction are also important parts of the local economy. The day that hunting season is over in November, the community basically hibernates until the ski slopes open. After they close in early April, there is another brief lull in the local economy. Newcomers to the area who need to rely on the local economy to make their livelihood struggle very hard. Many do not survive a full year. The joke is that if you want to leave Pagosa Springs with a million, you have to come with two million.

I was confident that with the skills I had acquired, size and economy of a town did not matter. I felt that God could and would sustain us any place. If you are in a given situation or place in response to what you believe is God's perfect will for your life, you have that extra measure of strength to persevere. I had that extra measure of strength. I felt that through the tourists we could efficiently broadcast our skills and testimony in many different directions. And this is what began to happen.

When we moved into our leased, we immediately sign above the door. I installed could be seen day or night. We sign in the front yard for was a favorite route for real property in the development in development encompasses buyers are solicited from many radius.



house, which we originally mounted our "Crafts for Christ" a spotlight so that the sign also placed "The Hiding Place" passers-by to see. Our street estate agents who sold which we lived. The 18,000 acres, and prospective states within a thousand-mile

We first approached the local community with our desire to share the craft we had learned. The high school and churches were our most logical options. Both responded favorably and allowed us to teach. We taught the craft free of charge except for the cost of materials. We also looked for places to display the signs. Before long, a trickle of people began to come to our home to look at our display wall and to learn the craft. Invitations were extended to us to teach in Albuquerque, 200 miles south of Pagosa Springs. We made numerous trips there, and each time tried to improve our presentation. Encouragement came as we saw others adopt the craft and elaborate upon it with their own ideas.

We went through a great deal of struggle making the signs in Pagosa Springs because the raw materials and tools were much harder to obtain. We experienced the greatest problems in securing a good sandblasting service. We finally found one. Getting there meant traveling over a 10,500-foot pass in all kinds of weather. It was scary! California drivers have much to learn about driving in snow. We have made the trip safely across Wolf Creek Pass (remember the song?) for a number of years. In the process I have been cured of some unreasonable fears of mountain roads. One of the best cures for our fears is for God to put something on the other side of a mountain that we really want to reach. All these seemingly insignificant things helped to heal many different areas within my soul, fears very real to me but invisible to the untrained eye.

In 1978 we sold over \$10,000-worth of sandblasted inspirational signs, quite a step from our first five-dollar sale in October of 1976. Many who purchased our signs concurrently invited us to teach in their community, should we travel in their direction. We saw a string of invitations almost in a straight line, reaching all the way to Chattanooga, Tennessee. After confirming the invitations, we undertook our first major trip in July of 1978. We stayed in a few homes, but mostly in motels. It was an exhausting, expensive, but a very educational adventure. We had our first spontaneous opportunity to teach in a

state hospital at Ft. Supply, Oklahoma. To the best of our knowledge, the craft is still a part of its rehabilitation and therapy program.

From the sale of our home in California, we had twenty thousand dollars available to launch our new life and the Crafts for Christ ministry in Pagosa Springs. There were a few anxious moments as we watched our savings account dwindle through the printing of handbooks and newsletters, purchasing groceries, and paying our rent. I remember a dialogue with God concerning our income and expenses. I believe I heard the Lord say, "Peter, if you spend the money wisely that I have entrusted to you, you will have planted enough seeds for a harvest by the time you run out." And that is what has happened. In February 1980, we had exhausted all our resources, and only then did we find unexpected checks in our mailbox. The amounts have continued to grow to match current needs.

Since the time I read *Rees Howells Intercessor*, I have been challenged and stirred to trust God in every situation. It is much easier said than done. Only when our own resources are exhausted can the real training program begin.

We began to see a need for further revisions of the Crafts for Christ handbook because the supply of our second printing had dwindled. We had no more resources for such a printing but felt challenged to prepare everything for the printer that he needed. Then we called the printer, who sent a man to review the draft and requirements. He estimated the job to cost six thousand dollars and said that printing could begin as soon as payment was guaranteed. We had fifteen dollars to our name at the time, with no immediate prospects for additional funds. Suffice to say for the purpose of this account, we received the necessary six thousand dollars from a number of unexpected sources.

The book was completed and delivered to us at the end of July 1980. It was an excellent tool to convey not only the technique of sign making but also the underlying sentiments that gave birth to Crafts for Christ. The book was like a song with a pleasant melody. I had learned to give logic and feeling their proper place in my life. My aim was to write a textbook that was not only informative but also enjoyable to read. It can now be downloaded from: www.stretcherbearers.com . It's free!

I was convinced that God cannot bless our efforts until we have done our part. What that part is varies from person to person and project to project. I felt a great measure of relief when two thousand books were safely stored in the attic of our home; but this was the end of only one chapter. How could we get these books into the hands where they would accomplish the most good? We knew that those who came to our home for lessons would eventually purchase a portion of the books, but we also hoped for opportunities beyond that.

We never know when there will be a knock at our door. Probably more than half of those who visit us come unexpectedly, unannounced, and at the most peculiar times of day and night. We don't mind at all. Seldom has there been a conflict with our schedule or the number of sleeping accommodations available. One Sunday morning, about the middle of August 1980, a gray truck with a camper shell timidly pulled into our driveway. Rebekah and I were having a leisurely cup of coffee in bed when we heard the familiar noise of tires crunching the gravel. I looked through the curtain as the driver pondered if anyone might be home on a Sunday morning. The truck was already backing out as I rushed to the door and waved the visitors in. We finally convinced them that they were heartily welcome and that it was quite normal for us to linger in our robes in the morning. They looked about and admired our craft, then finally relaxed enough to accept a chair and a cup of coffee. How much of my past life I shared at this time, I can't remember, but I did something I usually don't do. I inquired about the profession of our visitors. When the man said that he was a psychologist and Director of Research at Texas Tech, I opened my heart and poured it out.

Jerry and Mary Bensberg have been very special friends from their very first visit to our home. Before they left, Jerry said, "I believe in you, Peter, and what you are doing. Maybe I can open some doors for you."

It is interesting how unexpected circumstances often help to rearrange our lives. We offered the Bensbergs the opportunity to learn how to make the signs, but they declined because of a tight schedule. We said, "Should you change your minds, please know that the invitation is always open."

The next day they called. "Our transmission went out," they reported, "and we will be stranded here for several days. May we come back?" When we talk about this incident today, Jerry says sheepishly, "The next time, I hope God does not have to use such an expensive way to get my attention."

About two weeks after the Bensbergs were at our home, we received the following letter from them. I was elated! We were one big step closer to Austin.

Dear Peter,

Here are rough drafts of letters being sent to Texas and Colorado. Hope they can generate some action. We got home safely Friday night. Best wishes to you and your family.

The Bensbergs

This is the letter that went to Austin:

August 26, 1980

Ms. Nancy Barker. Chief of Volunteer Services

Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation

Box 12668, Capitol Station

Austin, Texas 78711

Dear Nancy:

Perhaps I told you about the two-acre mountaintop I am buying in Pagosa Springs, Colorado. Mary and I had the opportunity to steal away last week to camp in this lovely setting and let the troubles of the world fade into the background. It was also our good luck to have the opportunity to meet a most interesting and intelligent gentleman by the name of Peter D. Laue. It is my belief that he has a number of skills, which could be used by the Department of M.H.M.R.

Peter was formerly an industrial engineer who apparently had a number of conflicts with his profession and life style, which led to his mental illness some eight years ago. During the course of his recovery, and attempts to set new goals and direction for his life, he became an expert in the craft of making signs, paintings, and plaques through the technique of sandblasting. He has found this craft most relaxing and meaningful to himself and feels that it has a therapeutic effect, which would be appropriate both for those with emotional problems and for the mentally retarded. Mary and I were impressed with the technique, particularly since it represented something that could be learned relatively quickly and would give us beautiful products with a minimum of cost and effort. We spent a delightful afternoon having him instruct us in the craft, and we now plan to develop our skills so that we can make gifts for friends and relatives.

There are several ways in which I think Mr. Laue could work with your department. First of all, this craft could be easily learned by your Volunteer Service Directors in the various state schools, hospitals, and M.H.M.R. centers. They, in turn, could teach the skill to volunteers who could work directly with the residents and patients. It would give the volunteers a vehicle to use as they are developing a relationship with the clients of the department. Because of the simplicity of the craft, it would be appropriate for many of your clients. Because it requires the ability to cut along defined lines, it would be for the upper-level retarded, primarily those in group home settings in the community.

Because of Mr. Laue's personal experience with mental illness, it would be appropriate to use him in the department's staff development program with new staff members. He could offer the personal side of going through his illness and explain what might have been of greater help to him during his hospitalization. As you well know, many of us professionals get so caught up in our jargon, our own

stresses and strains, that we forget about the turmoil and needs of those we are supposed to serve. I would think that he could help “humanize” the staff training program.

Finally, during the course of his recovery, he had a conversion experience, which established a strong belief in God and a need to serve his fellow citizens in a more meaningful way. This led him to leave his career in industrial engineering. You can tell from the name of his company and the nature of many of his signs that he is witnessing to his belief. I indicated to him that state agencies such as yours must be careful to separate Church and State, and that you could not pay him to come and give his own personal witness. However, I would think that he would have something to offer the chaplains of the state hospitals in relating his own personal experiences and the role of his conversion experience in helping him overcome his illness. Perhaps local church groups, which work closely with the state hospitals, might like to have him speak or conduct a workshop in this area.

My purpose in writing is to make you acquainted with him and his work. I am enclosing a copy of a handbook which he had produced and which he uses in training others in the craft of sandblasting. I realize that many of the suggested ways in which he could be of service go beyond your responsibilities in the Department. However, if you agree with my ideas, perhaps you could share this letter and the handbook with appropriate people. You or others are welcome to contact him directly at 965 Cloud Cap Avenue, Pagosa Springs, Colorado 81147. I hope that all is going well with you and that I will have a chance to visit with you before long.

Cordially,
Gerard J. Bensberg, Ph.D.
Director of Research

Exact dates escape me now. I believe it was the middle of January 1981 that we received a call from the Department of Mental Health and Retardation in Austin. They were not ready to give us the keys to the city but said in effect, “Should your travels bring you to Austin, we would be interested in looking at your program.” It so happened that we had invitations from Lubbock and Austin, Texas, Oklahoma, and Missouri, and were just then finalizing plans for a four-week trip. There were also some major hurdles facing us that made us wonder if the Lord was restraining us or whether the devil was trying to discourage us. For a while we were quite confused. I finally made the decision to go and said, “Lord, if this trip is not within your perfect will, hit us over the head with a two-by-four.” When everything started to fall into place like clockwork, I knew that the source of my indecision was not from God.

We received a most marvelous reception in Austin. Every place we went, the doors opened as if we had a set of invisible keys. Even an interview with the Internal Revenue Service had pleasant results. We had applied for a tax-exempt status for our Crafts for Christ but seemed to be getting nowhere. Our case was being processed in Austin! After a personal interview with the assigned caseworker, we erased all doubts that Crafts for Christ qualified. Within a few months we received our tax-exempt status.

Austin certainly is not the culmination of a life-long dream. It is the gateway to more fulfillment, greater responsibilities, and more joy. There are other doors that have opened since our visit to the Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation. I have not walked through all of them. Before I pursue a proffered course of action, I determine if it will complete or defeat my dream of “setting the captives free.” A great deal of unsolicited advice continues to be offered. Following all of it is impossible. I am glad I have a mind that can sift and choose. I enjoy making decisions again. I am on my way to becoming whole.

For God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and love and of a sound mind.

II Timothy 1:7

CHAPTER

XIII

HIGH ADVENTURE

How excellent is thy loving kindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings. Psalm 36:7

Our lives have been embroidered with a host of exciting stories since we have returned from Austin. One of the most exciting of these was the purchase of our home on Lake Pagosa. Initially we had signed a one-year lease with the owners, but prior to the end of that period they had decided to sell the house. The selling price was far beyond our financial capabilities, and so for a period of three months, we searched for another home, while at the same time prospective buyers were looking at our home.

As time went by the Lord seemed to impress me with the idea that we were to be the owners of the house, but I was without a clue as to how we were to proceed. One day Charles Callaway from Oklahoma City came to visit us. We quickly became friends and I felt free to share our needs about the house. We prayed together, and as he was leaving he made a casual comment on how we might secure the property. He said, "Why don't you make a contract of sale with the owners for an agreed number of years at the end of which you can become the owner of the house?" Those words "clicked." I had made a similar contract on a piece of property some years ago and knew how to proceed in such a direction. With a certain amount of trepidation I proceeded to draw up an agreement which essentially stated that the sale price would be \$100,000, that we would pay \$12,000 down and the balance at the end of a two-year period. The owners agreed to the terms. I breathed a sigh of relief when the papers were signed. I felt that somehow the money would become available when we needed it. I had the confidence that God was pleased with the decision we had made.

The two-year grace period went by very quickly. We continued our ministry of Crafts for Christ and counseling. We took many trips and taught many people how to make sandblasted signs for Jesus. Our financial position, however, did not improve. In fact, every dollar that we had in savings was used, and we had to learn how to depend on God for our day to day needs. We shared our pending financial need with a few people, and one man very benevolently gave us a post-dated check for \$49,000 to help pay off the mortgage. Others assured us that if things came down to the wire we could call them and they would help us. When it came close to the deadline, however, every form of help that had been offered, including the post-dated check, evaporated. The man who had given us the check had closed the account on which it was written and left town with no forwarding address!

What were we to do? There were ten weeks remaining before the balance of \$88,000 was due. I began to panic. One evening, when it was impossible for me to fall asleep, I got dressed and took a walk around our lake. I talked to Jesus about the seemingly impossible odds that we were facing. I made a commitment to walk and pray for the solution. I committed myself to walk one time around our lake for every one thousand dollars that we needed. This meant I would be covering a distance of about two hundred miles, since our lake is 2 & 1/2 miles in circumference.

Most of the time I walked at night under a clear sky with a multitude of stars overhead. The time of the year was November, and there was no snow on the ground as yet. The weather was brisk and the temperature always below freezing. These walks gave me an opportunity to search my heart. As I walked and talked to God, my attitude toward certain friends was laid bare. I had some very unkind thoughts towards those who I felt were in a position to help or had previously offered to help us, but had evaporated when the need was urgent. Finally I repented of my attitude and realized I was looking to men instead of God for the answer. This set me and my friends free.

Our home came into view over a little rise in the road about two hundred feet before I completed each walk. Before I saw the house I fantasized about a Brink's armored truck parked in our driveway bringing the needed funds. Brinks is a company that specializes in delivering large sums of money for banking institutions. I must confess that my imagination went rampant during this time. It was incredibly difficult to break the habit of looking for conventional man-made solutions. Every time the telephone rang or I opened our post office box, I was filled with expectancy. In retrospect I realize that God has much more unique ways of answering our prayers than we would possibly dream of, for His ways are past finding out. (Romans 11:33)

As I walked, I prayed for those who had built homes on the lake and asked God to bless them. I prayed for our children and for those who had come to our home for help and comfort. In the process, both my physical and emotional health improved. Instead of bringing my needs to friends, I unburdened myself to God. I was reminded of the words of Jesus, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28)

I remember that on my 66th time around the lake the Holy Spirit quickened to my spirit that the answer was on its way. He gave me no clue as to the nature of the answer. But unbeknown to me, a certain friend and realtor who lived on our lake was unable to sleep during this time. God was speaking to him concerning our need.

Finally, around the first of December I talked to Herman Riggs, a fellow Christian and top-notch realtor. This is Herman Riggs' response and an account of how our need was met:

"I felt it was utterly impossible to accomplish your desired objective. As I would lie down to sleep at night I would tell Jan (my wife) that there was no way to help. It was too late. Why didn't Peter come to me earlier? I just felt that there was no way we could help you. But I couldn't sleep. I had an insatiable burden and desire to assist you in any way I could. I felt I must explore every remote possibility that my mind could fathom, turn it over to the Lord and see what happens.

As you recall, you and I went to a savings and loan company and discussed with them the possibility of lending you the required amount. After waiting another eight to ten days we were rejected. Their comment was, "We aren't accepting any co-signed loans at this time and feel that there would be no way that the payments could be met on such a substantial loan. We wouldn't even have time to process the loan in the event that we were interested in making it."

At that time we decided to go further and apply to Mesa Verde Savings for a loan. The day we walked into our local office here in Pagosa Springs who happened to be there but the senior vice-president and the senior loan officer, whose home offices are located in Cortez (about 100 miles away.) We both know Who caused them to be there! At any rate, they were extremely receptive in assisting us and told us what would be necessary in order to apply for the loan. The same day I had two calls, one from Major General Jerry Curry from Washington, D. C., who agreed to help us in any way possible, the other from Jon Ker, an attorney in Durango, Colorado, who offered his full support and assistance.

Well, at this point, the ball was rolling, but there were still more hurdles to get over. One was to meet the deadline of December 31st or to get an extension of time without the property going into foreclosure so that you would not lose your \$12,000 equity. Well, the Lord had an answer for that also. We contacted Bill Thomason, the seller, and he told us that for an additional \$3,500 plus \$700 a month he would grant a 60-day extension. At this point we felt obliged to agree to this, because the Mesa Verde office had told us that without an extension they could not even begin to process our request. Needless to say, the extension was granted, and so now we were looking at February 28, 1982 as our deadline.

After several conversations and meetings at Mesa Verde, they had tentatively agreed to make the loan. Praise the Lord! They not only had agreed to advance the \$88,000, but in addition they

agreed to loan the \$3,500 for the extension to Mr. Thomason; and there was an additional \$900 that after all expenses were paid could be used on the first payment coming due. It even included an annual premium for the hazard insurance on the home for a year. How amazed we were to see things unfolding in such a miraculous way. With the prevailing market and with the young financial background of Crafts for Christ, it was truly a miracle even that our loan could be approved, let alone the lender agreeing to additional funds.

Another miracle along the way happened when Jan and I were visiting you. The appraiser sent by the bank knocked at the door. We had a long conversation with him and our appraisal came in approximately \$10,000 higher than was required by the lender.

In a joyous and very thankful mood we were approaching the day of closing escrow. The personnel at Mesa Verde Savings and Loan just could not do enough to try to please us. To make the closing as smooth as possible, the senior loan officer personally came to our office—another extraordinary event, as they almost never go to an outside office to conduct a closing. On the day of the closing we did not have the seller's signature on the deed. Mr. Thomason had moved, leaving no forwarding address, and all efforts to contact him had failed. Someone remembered that he had a trailer somewhere in Los Angeles County. Jon Ker, the attorney, decided to call a Los Angeles post office to try to locate him. Now, post offices do not give out addresses, but when Jon called who answered the phone but a personal friend of Mr. Thomason's. When he was told who was calling and why, he gave us the needed address! But he had no phone number.

The situation was very tense, as we needed to consummate the deal so that it could go on the computer before the end of the month, which was in 48 hours. Here we were with the lender having the money but the seller was not available to sign the deed. Jon and I knew that we had to go after the needed signature. Jon, being a pilot, agreed to fly us to Los Angeles. We felt that we could get the papers signed, fly back, record the deed and complete the closing within the 48 hours. (Rebekah's note: The Lord at this point gave me a word that they would be flying on angels' wings and He filled me with a wonderful sense of joy and complete peace!)

We took off in a light plane from Durango at approximately 5:30 in the afternoon. We knew there was a storm forecast, but the weather station had informed us that we were approximately two days ahead of it. We were in the air just before dark and on Denver radar. We started experiencing moderate turbulence and clouding. Another craft reported that they were having icing conditions just a few miles from us. We flew out of the clouds, looked around, saw some lights in the distance, and found the runway in a place called Kanab, Utah. As we were descending to land, I saw a mountain directly in front of us, about 100 feet away. I mentioned it to Jon, and he went up and over it and we landed safely. We tied the plane down, and wouldn't you know, the door to the airport, even though the lights were off was unlocked. They had seen us in the air and watched us land. They told us how dangerous and precarious the mountains were around us. Needless to say, we were very thankful in missing the mountain and being on the ground.

Meanwhile you had called Brian Burnett, young friend and co-worker in Crafts for Christ, who at that time was in Los Angeles, and asked him to find Mr. Thomason and have him call. As Brian related later, he started out in a pitch-black night in a driving thunderstorm with only a partial address. He could barely see the homes, much less the addresses. Finally he picked out one house saying, 'Lord, it's got to be this one or I give up. It was that one, and Mr. Thomason called you.

Jon called you, then got ahold of Mr. Thomason, who agreed to meet him at the Las Vegas, Nevada airport to sign the deed. But by then the snowstorm had hit and we couldn't fly out. So we had to rent a car and drive to Saint George, Utah, to an instrument flight service airport with AFR rating, charter a plane and fly to Las Vegas. After an hour of searching in a busy airport we finally and miraculously located Mr. Thomason, got the deed signed and flew back to Saint George in the

chartered plane. The weather was still inclement so we had to stay overnight there. The following morning, the 28th of February, we drove back to Kanab where our plane was waiting. En route we were in such a hurry, we were stopped by a highway patrolman, who was sure we were bank robbers! We arrived back in Kanab, took off in our plane and flew to Page, Arizona, landed for fuel, and then started for Pagosa Springs. We arrived there by noon. We carried the deed to the courthouse, recorded it and picked up the check from Mesa Verde. The mission was accomplished all within 48 hours!!!

How grateful we were for the Lord's protection. We were truly carried on angels' wings. Our special thanks go to all those people who prayed for us!"

The above concludes Herman Riggs' account.

When our friend Betty Slade heard about Herman and Jon's adventure, she commented, "It sounds like a script to a movie!" All I can say is, "Walking with God is a real adventure." I would not trade it for the stereotype life of earlier years. When we walk with Jesus and talk to Him about all the little and big details of our life, we walk in newness of life every day.

Maybe this is a good place to add the vision/dream for a new ministry called "AIRCRAFTS for CHRIST." Maybe these words will inspire someone to do what I have seen in my mind's eye. Maybe someone is already doing it; if so, we would love to meet that person. The first and only mission involving the use of a small single engine aircraft was in August of 1987. Our pilot was Joe Breen, who has flown the coop and left his earth suite behind. We flew to Texas in order to bring back a patient from the Terrell State Mental Hospital. It's quite a story! There will be other stories!



I look up into the sky and see the unharnessed potential of silvery wings sailing across windswept skies.

I look from the sky and see those silvery wings parked on airport aprons waiting to soar again, waiting to be challenged by a new dream that can fuel the engines and the hearts of men.

My heart leaps within me as I see the KING'S messengers and soldiers carried as if on angels' wings across the sky.

I see a reservoir of many dreams bridled by a wonderful, new purpose.
Men's toys have been translated into the KING'S tools, fueled by His purpose.

I see aircrafts for Christ
AIRCRAFTS for CHRIST is born.

CHAPTER

XIV

SONGS AND REFLECTIONS

Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord. Ephesians 5:19

For many years I have been walking a very fine line, and I probably still do and will continue to do so. When we walk along the edge of an abyss, we are often not aware of what we are doing until much later. During these times of grave danger, God must be carrying us and His Grace must be keeping us. I remember an incident that illustrates the delicate equilibrium of my heart and mind.

Shortly after I married Rebekah, my younger boy, John, gave me a small loquat tree. The seedling tree came from a larger tree growing in his yard and which I had pruned and picked many times. I planted the young tree very carefully where I could see it easily. I fertilized it, kept the weeds away, supported it with a stick, and even placed chicken wire around it to keep intruders out. I did all I could to encourage the seedling to grow into a big, healthy tree.

One day, to my great dismay and distress, I saw that the crown of the tree was broken off. How the break happened I do not know. I was terribly shaken and hoped that the tree would produce some other healthy shoots. It did, but about a year later, the same thing happened! Once again, I experienced deep emotional pain. The tree, however, recovered and became more bushy than tall.

About four years after I had planted the tree, my older boy, Peter, was old enough to drive. Both he and John came to visit me. I showed them the tree. At that moment I knew that if the tree should die, I would not be overcome by anguish and despair. Today I realize how unwholesome our affections for things, pets, and people can become. Should we lose them without being prepared, the grief and pain can devastate us.

From time to time, I take inventory to see if I have become dependent on others in an unwholesome way or have allowed others to lean too heavily on me. I do not want to collapse; neither do I want others to collapse, because our trust has been misplaced. When we develop unhealthy dependencies, we are sure to be disappointed. The only arms that never move and are always open and waiting are the everlasting arms of Jesus. I praise Him for keeping my little seedling alive long enough for me to learn this.

Of all the things I have needed to learn during these past twelve years, the most difficult has been to recognize the voice of God. I did not intend at the beginning of this account of emphasizing this aspect of my life. Most likely I have done so because I have been attacked in this area and find a need to explain and justify myself. Hopefully, my explanations may help others. Those who choose to walk with God often walk a lonely path.

It is often difficult to know when and with whom we are to share an experience, a vision, a dream, or a word of prophecy that we have heard. We have all become very cautious because it is so very painful to be ridiculed or misunderstood as we share what is sacred to us. It is wise to be cautious. We are not to share every personal revelation.

There may be some who read this account who have never had the experience of hearing a prophecy given. The experience is beautiful, especially meaningful when you know the words are specifically directed to you. How does a person know? It is difficult to explain. When it happens, you will know that you have been in the sovereign presence of the Most High God.

I would like to share with you a prophecy that was given at an assembly of believers. It was electrifying to Rebekah and me and many of the others present. This occurred during our

honeymoon, which we spent joyfully at a family Bible camp near Crestline, California. During the prophecy, a tape recorder happened to be on so that we are able to share the prophecy here word for word. Those who question this beautiful gift as an authentic expression of the heart of God will hopefully have all possible doubts erased.

PROPHECY

(Given through Mike Doyle on July 3, 1973 at Camp Seely)

Yea, this night haven't I even shown thee my ways,

Yea, haven't I even shown thee this night that unless those be agreed, how can they walk together.

Yea, many of my children have attempted to walk together, yet they are not agreed. But I am saying unto thee that I am going into every area of the life of my children; and yea, I am searching those areas out; and yea, I am searching deep into the hearts of men; and yea, I am building my body even this year.

Yea, even this year shall my body begin to rise in a way in which it has never risen before. And yea, it shall rise in power.

Yea, it shall rise in might.

Yea, it shall rise even in truth; for yea, I shall go about into even thy homes.

Yea, I shall go into thy church.

Yea, I shall go into thy worklife.

Yea, I shall go when thou art alone.

Yea, I shall go when thou art with thy family and yea, I shall change,

Yea, I shall alter,

Yea, I shall cause my Spirit to come upon thee.

Yea, thou shalt know that I am God.

Yea, thou shalt see the mighty face of God.

Yea, the hand of God shall lead thee. Only I say this unto my children, submit ye unto my Word.

Yea, submit even unto my Spirit, for it shall guide thee into all truth.

Yea, it shall show that which is true.

Yea, it shall cause thee to turn from thy error.

Yea, it shall cause thee to turn from rebellion and yea, thou shalt be obedient and pleasing unto me; yea, for those who will please me in everything they do; for I say unto thee my children—Yea, be submissive to my Spirit. Yea, to my Word: Yea, even unto those that I have placed among thee. For whether it be the government; yea, whether it be thy elders; whether it be thy husband; yea, whether it be to one another. Be submissive unto me; yea, be submissive as unto those around you. I have said in my Word, submit one to another in the fear of the Lord.

And yea, I shall be great upon thee. Yea, my hand shall lead thee unto great things, and thou shalt be a conqueror for me. For I shall lead thee and thou shall conquer the enemy, for he shall have no place to attack thee. For thy walls shall be built, and yea, he that keepeth his own spirit is as one who has mighty walls. And yea, thy walls shall be great, they shall not have cracks or holes; for as the enemy does go around your building, yea, your walls, he doth seek for cracks and he doth seek for holes. And yea, thou shall have no holes, and he shall go on hopeless, and thou shalt be a defeater of the enemy. And yea, thou shalt lift up the brokenhearted. Yea, thou shalt be a Repairer of the Breach in the walls, for thou shalt have no holes and thou shall be able to repair the breach because thou hast no holes.

But even as I have said unto thee before, and I say unto thee even this night, I shall say unto thee in the future, submit ye unto my Word. Let it set thee apart even unto me. Yea, let it sanctify thee,

even this night it shall be given thee if thou wilt be submissive to my Spirit, if thou shalt go where my Spirit goes. Yea, and you shall walk in the light of my Word and you shall know me, and shall know my face, and my hand shall be heavy upon you.

Thus saith the Lord even unto His children here this night.

There have been other occasions when God spoke to us, and they were perfectly timed to meet specific needs. On the same trip that took us to Austin in February of 1981, we also went to Tulsa, Oklahoma. We had the opportunity to attend a chapel service at the Oral Roberts University campus. Vicki Jamison was ministering to the student body during this service. God used her as an instrument of both prophecy and healing for my wife. Vicki first spoke in tongues and then interpreted her words. Her gifts are explained in the first book of Corinthians, chapters 12 and 14. These are the words that Rebekah received:

But this is the hour and this is the day,
This is the power and this is the way;
Say not I will not be used this particular day,

For you shall see that you are well on your way
To something that is new and fresh, it shall start,
And it shall go forth from here and it shall lodge deeply within your own heart.
You will not recognize yourself in a week or even two,
For your heart is being today totally renewed.
The Spirit of Truth does abide within,
But now He makes His glorious, wonderful way in which your life shall begin.
For that selfsame Spirit moves within you this hour,
To confirm with signs and wonders His own delivering power
So that you will say I have seen and I have touched and I have felt and I have known.
But my son and daughter, I will tell you a truth,
One that you shall know and you shall not know alone.
You shall also have healing hands, and the anointing of the Spirit of the Most High God shall flow
in and through you.
Even though you have not asked nor suspected it would be true,
You shall be used by God in a way that is wonderful and new.
REJOICE, REJOICE, for the Spirit says to you,
Life is coming into you in a way that is fresh and glorious and wonderful and new.
Open your hearts for He is walking in,
He is there and He is going to flow,
This is the day—NOW—you shall begin.

In the name of Jesus, just walk in it! Just walk in it! Just walk in it!

To acknowledge our support of the ministries involved, I have specifically stated where this prophecy was given and through whom. As I explained earlier, the Holy Spirit sometimes communes directly with our human spirit; at other times, the Holy Spirit uses an intermediary. Not long ago we received a letter with the following words of encouragement:

February 8, 1981
Peter and Rebekah:

My dear children—Yes, I have overflowed your cup. I have filled and overfilled my work in the cup of your lives. The flow of my Spirit shall continue to run over in your lives so that other cups may

also be filled. As my Spirit flows out of you, it shall flow into the hearts of many of my children who are holding out their cups in expectancy. Many are waiting for their filling, and I shall use you as a deep well of my living water. The water is sweetened to perfection by the sweetness of my Spirit in you. You are one cup—given for many.

Earlier I mentioned that songs have been very helpful, healing, and instructive for me. Very often I merely enjoy a song but do not know why. At times I ponder the words of a song for quite a while until its meaning finally becomes clear. I remember the song “Big Bad John.”

The lyrics of the song speak of a man, who stood six foot six and weighed 245 pounds. He was a drifter and it is told that with a crashing blow he sent “a Lou’siana fellow to the Promised Land.” In subsequent stanzas he is redeemed and is given a new name. He becomes like Samson in the Bible. He becomes like a giant oak tree. During a mine cave-in, he shores up the timbers with his huge frame. Everyone is saved except “Big Bad John.” A tombstone seals “that worthless pit;” and on the stone are written these words, “At the bottom of this pit lies a big, big man. BIG JOHN.”

“Big John, Big John” – Words and Music by Jimmy Dean

Ev’ry mornin’ at the mine you could see him arrive
He stood six foot six and weighed two forty five
Kinda broad at the shoulder and narrow at the hip
And everybody knew ya didn’t give no lip to Big
John.

(Big John, Big John) Big Bad John (Big John)

Nobody seemed to know where John called home
He just drifted into town and stayed all alone
He didn’t say much, kinda quiet and shy
And if you spoke at all, you just said “Hi” to
Big John.

Somebody said he came from New Orleans
Where he got in a fight over a Cajun Queen
And a crashin’ blow from a huge right hand
Sent a Loosiana fellow to the Promised Land
Big John

(Big John, Big John) Big Bad John (Big John)

Then came the day at the bottom of the mine
When a timber cracked and men started cryin’
Miners were prayin’ and hearts beat fast
And everybody thought that they’d breathed their
last-’cept John

Through the dust and the smoke of this man-made
hell

Walked a giant of a man that the miners knew well
Grabbed a saggin’ timber, gave out with a groan
And like a giant oak tree he just stood there alone-
Big John

(Big John, Big John) Big Bad John (Big John)

And with all of his strength he gave a mighty shove
Then a miner yelled out “There’s a light up above!”
And twenty men scrambled from a would-be grave
Now there’s only one left down there to save
Big John

With jacks and timbers they started back down
Then came that rumble way down in the ground
And then smoke and gas belched out of that mine
Everybody knew it was the end of the line for
Big John

(Big John, Big John) Big Bad John (Big John)

Now they never reopened that worthless pit
They just placed a marble stand in front of it
These few words are written on that stand
At the bottom of this mine lies a BIG BIG man
Big John

(Big John, Big John) Big Bad John (Big John)

Only recently did I fathom my fondness for “Big Bad John.” I love to help. My wife once said, “You are happiest when you have a roomful of persons needing help.” She was very close to being right. In fact, when a situation is considered hopeless, when others have tried and failed, it is then that I am challenged and motivated to the limit. Within bounds, there is nothing wrong with this kind of zeal. Those who were single-minded in the pursuit of their goal have made many noble accomplishments; but there are also many recorded and unrecorded shipwrecks. After a period of great activity and accomplishment, one finds it easy to slip into a time of depression and despondency.

In my professional career in the computer field, I was challenged by the fact that others had tried and failed. For six years I worked with a zeal that bordered on a state of frenzy. The tendency is to abuse oneself during such a period and become totally spent, both physically and emotionally. I was guilty of doing that. Like “Big John,” when the job was done, I caved in. I was bankrupt.

If we do not learn from our mistakes, the cycle repeats itself. After we recuperate and get our bearings, we throw ourselves into some other project with the same zeal. My subsequent challenge was to raise our hyperactive son, whose prognosis was bleak. Already at the age of seven he had produced an array of angry and confused individuals who had tried to help him.

After working with him for eight years, I was totally worn out and had no strength left to direct or correct his life. However, by the Grace of God, the downward spiral of his life was eventually reversed. We were able to channel his hyperactive personality into many constructive activities. This time I did not collapse, because there were other meaningful and interesting projects that had captured my attention.

For a large part of my life I had an unreasonable need to excel for all the wrong reasons. I, with the emphasis on “I”, wanted to be “Big John.” I wanted to be the deliverer who would lead the people out of our modern-day Egypt. I wanted “to set the captives free.” It took a long time to set aside what I would call my “savior syndrome.” I needed to wake up and recognize that I am called to be His helper, that Jesus is the “giant oak tree, that Jesus is the “man scorned and covered with scars,” that it is His Spirit in me that is “willing to march into hell for a heavenly cause.”

I still enjoy “Big Bad John,” “The Impossible Dream,” and similar songs that can challenge and stir one’s innermost being, but they no longer take me into a world of unproductive fantasies. Maybe I have learned my lesson. No tombstone needs to commemorate my passing from this world, but in the world to come, I would love to be greeted with these words.

“Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

Matthew 25:21

Songs can give us enlightening clues about our own personalities. When they deeply affect us, we should take time to ponder their meanings. The following lines offer much for reflection:

THE IMPOSSIBLE DREAM¹

(The Quest)

To dream the impossible dream,
To fight the unbeatable foe,
To bear with unbearable sorrow,
To run where the brave dare not go.

To right the unrightable wrong,
To love pure and chaste from afar,
To try when your arms are too weary,
To reach the unreachable star!

This is my quest, to follow that star,
No matter how hopeless, no matter how far;
To fight for the right, without question or
pause,

To be willing to march into hell for a
heavenly cause!

And I know if I’ll only be true,
To this glorious quest,
That my heart will lie peaceful and calm
When I’m laid to my rest,

And the world will be better for this;
That one man, scorned and covered with
scars,
Still strove with his last ounce of courage,
To reach the unreachable stars.

Another song that I want to leave with all who like music and weddings is called, "The Camel Train." It must have been inspired by the angels of heaven. The first time Rebekah and I heard the song, we thought that it had been written especially for us; and thinking that it might have been especially written with Peter and Rebekah in mind was another clue that heaven was smiling upon our marriage. Right or wrong, we interpreted the words in our favor. Many have already used the song as part of their wedding ceremony. This practice may become tradition for those who seek a marriage relationship ordained by God. These are the lyrics to the song:

The Camel Train

Words and Music by F. M. Lehman

'Twas a day in early springtime, by an ancient wayside well,
Eleazar paused to rest his camel train;
He had found a bride for Isaac e'er the ev'ning shadows fell,
And his weary journey had not been in vain.
So he took the fair Rebekah, decked in jewels rich and rare,
Back to Abraham and Sarah far away;
Where Rebekah loved her Isaac and he loved Rebekah fair—
Oh, it must have been a happy wedding day!

So the blessed Holy Spirit from the Father God above,
Has come down to earth to find a worthy bride;
For our Isaac over yonder has prepared His tents of love,
For He wants His fair Rebekah by His side.
We have left our kinfolks gladly, we have bid the world good-bye,
We are going to that land beyond the sea;
We shall soon behold our Isaac in our home beyond the sky—
What a happy, happy wedding that will be!

We are on our camel journey to the land beyond the sea,
Where our Isaac waits to meet his happy Bride;
What a holy consummation! what a glorious jubilee,
When we see the fair Rebekah by His side.
That will be a joyful meeting when the camel train comes in,
When Rebekah leaves her camel by the way;
When we close our weary journey 'midst the joyful noise and din—
That will surely be a happy wedding day.

CHORUS

Oh, get ready! — the evening shadows fall!
Don't you hear the Eleazar call?
For there is going to be a wedding;
Our joy will soon begin—
In the ev'ning— when the camel train comes in.

Music with notes – see next two pages!

THE CAMEL TRAIN

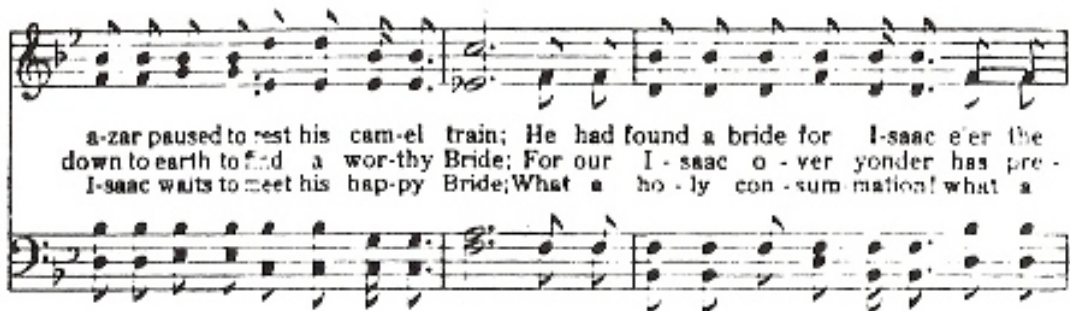
Words and Music by F.M. Lehman

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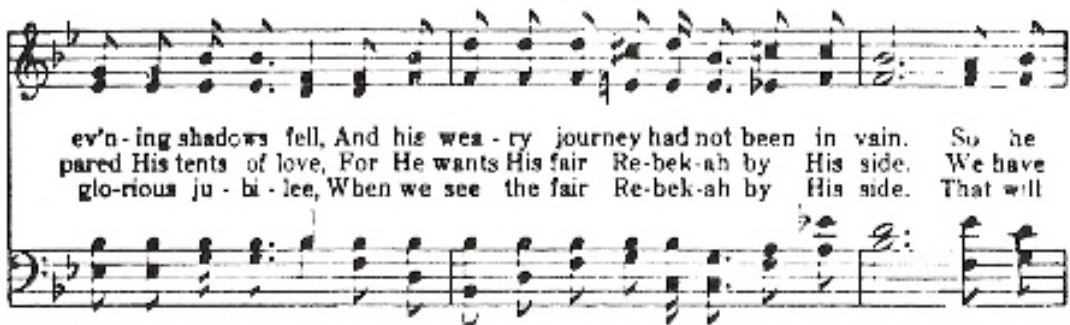
F. M. Lehman



1. 'Twas a day in ear - ly springtime, by an an - cient way - side well, E - le -
2. So the blessed Ho - ly Spir - it from the Fath - er - God a - bove Has come
3. We are on our cam - el jour - ney to the land be - yond the sea, Where our



a - zar paused to rest his cam - el train; He had found a bride for I - saac e'er the
down to earth to find a wor - thy Bride; For our I - saac o - ver yonder has pre -
I - saac wants to meet his hap - py Bride; What a ho - ly con - sum mation! what a

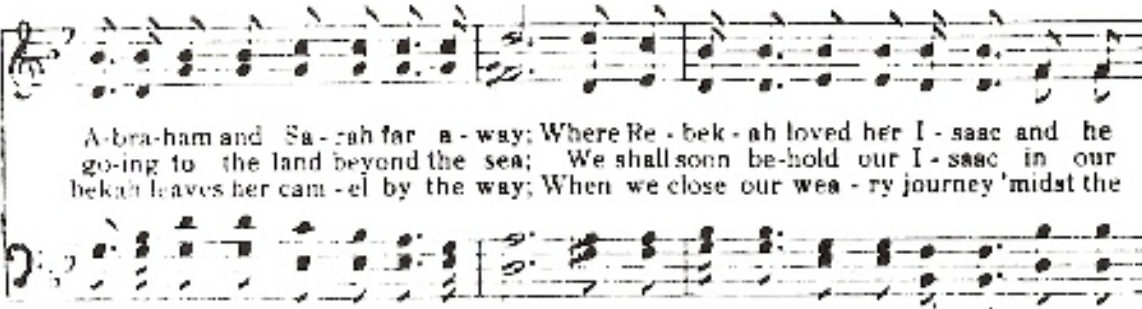


ev'n - ing shadows fell, And his wea - ry journey had not been in vain. So he
pared His tents of love, For He wants His fair Re - bek - ah by His side. We have
glo - rious ju - bi - lee, When we see the fair Re - bek - ah by His side. That will

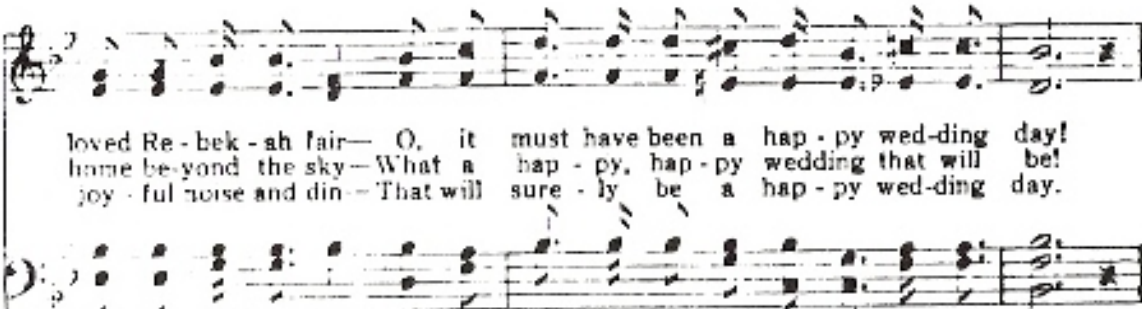


took the fair Re - bek - ah, decked in jew - els rich and rare, Back to
left our kin - folks glad - ly, we have bid the world good - bye, We are
be a joy - ful meet - ing when the cam - el train comes in, When Re -

The Camel Train. Concluded.

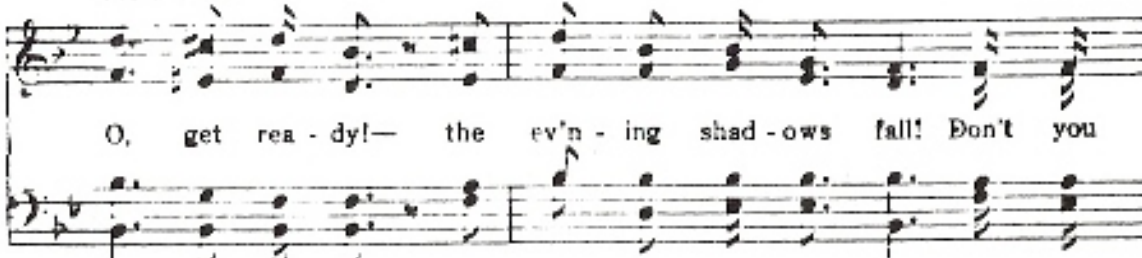


A-bra-ham and Sa-rah far a-way; Where Re-bek-ah loved her I-saac and he
go-ing to the land beyond the sea; We shall soon be-hold our I-saac in our
bekah leaves her cam-el by the way; When we close our wea-ry journey 'midst the

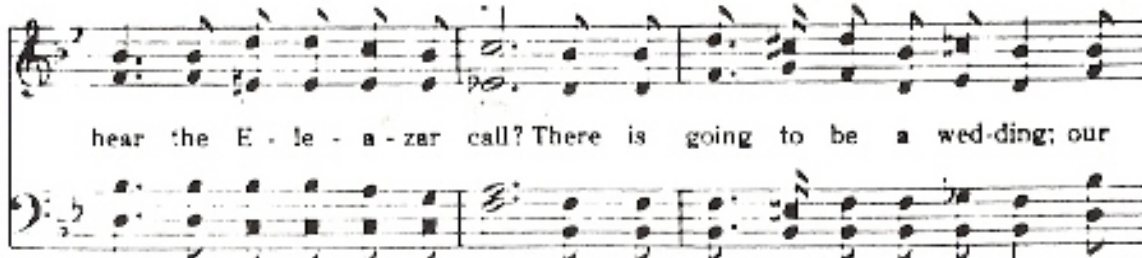


loved Re-bek-ah fair— O, it must have been a hap-py wed-ding day!
home be-yond the sky—What a hap-py, hap-py wedding that will be!
joy-ful noise and din— That will sure-ly be a hap-py wed-ding day.

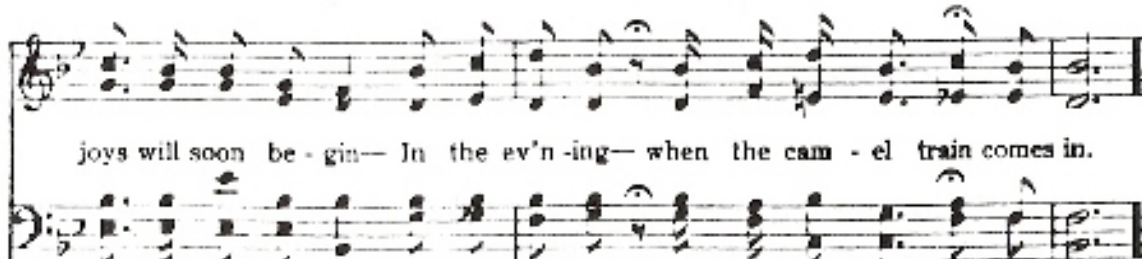
CHOURS.



O, get rea-dy!— the ev'n-ing shad-ows fall! Don't you



hear the E-le-a-zar call? There is going to be a wed-ding; our



joys will soon be-gin— In the ev'n-ing— when the cam-el train comes in.

CHAPTER XV THOUGHTS AND REFLECTIONS

“For My thoughts are not Your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways,” saith the Lord. Isaiah 56:8

On a more solemn note is the subject of reincarnation. I promised to return to this subject and share my current thoughts. I do not know the origin of the idea that we continue to be born again and again in earthly bodies until perfected. The belief has caused great confusion, driven many insane, and caused others to postpone indefinitely a commitment to Jesus. Reincarnation and karma have similar patterns of thought. Those who believe in karma maintain that only the offender can make restitution for his bad behavior. It may take numerous lifetimes to balance the scales and achieve perfection. This philosophy was in existence for many centuries prior to the birth of Christ and has many followers today.

Satan has used reincarnation to torment countless souls. Those who embrace the concept as true can enter into fantasies that make themselves kings one moment and murderers the next; Mary one moment and Mary Magdalene the next. They may project these images onto others and thereby exalt or destroy them. They may embrace a life of chastity to compensate the imagined previous life of a harlot. Reincarnation opens the door to a world of delusion, possibly quite harmless at first, but potentially as risky as any drug. Reincarnation is as real a danger as marijuana, heroin, or LSD, and just as treacherous, for it takes us into a world of fantasy from which escape is difficult. I know one person who could not accept the death of his mother and has projected her identity into one of his children. I would ask those who have allowed their minds to dwell in this world of fantasy to look upon it as dangerous and discard it.

God can renew our minds and sanctify our imaginations only as we are willing to put aside unwholesome habits and ideas. Reincarnation and karma are a contradiction to the age of Grace proclaimed by Jesus Christ two thousand years ago. This Grace as I perceive it in my own heart is God's unmerited favor toward me. He is quick to forgive if I am willing to admit my sins with a broken heart and a contrite spirit. This unconditional forgiveness started the age of Grace. It has separated me from a system of thought and the belief that I can be my own redeemer or anyone else's redeemer. Since I have admitted my own inability to help myself, to remove my own grave clothes such sayings as, "I must redeem myself," or "God helps those who help themselves," have a very hollow ring. These sayings are half-truths. They offer no hope for those who have come to the end of their rope including the thief on the cross. I know that my God also helps those who cannot help themselves.

We can leave a lifetime of dead-end pursuits and the treadmill of endless lifetimes behind us the moment we say "Yes" to Jesus; for it is written:

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16

Then the righteousness of Jesus becomes our cloak and our protection (Isaiah 61:10). Pride and the need to prove ourselves acceptable (Ephesians 2:8-9) is replaced by gratitude for the One who set us free (John 8:36).

I walked on the edge of disaster for many years because I believed in reincarnation and allowed some very sick fantasies to play with my mind. It is totally by the Grace of God that I looked at these fantasies only with my imagination and never acted them out. I have put aside my preoccupation with the occult, along with reincarnation, horoscopes and even such seemingly harmless toys as fortune

cookies. I have received some very strong rebukes from the Lord concerning these topics. Preoccupation and a curiosity in these areas are no less than spiritual adultery.

Discarding these toys was not easy, for they had obtained a subtle hold on my life. Both my life and my home were full of trinkets I had to throw out. The Book of Deuteronomy has some clear instructions concerning these matters.

No Israeli may practice black magic, or call on the evil spirits for aid or be a fortune teller, be a serpent charmer, medium, or wizard or call forth the spirits of the dead. Anyone doing these things is an object of horror and disgust to the Lord, and it is because the nations do these things that the Lord your God will displace them. (Deuteronomy 18:11) TLB – The Living Bible

I emphasize the above points because I am vitally interested in a mind that is sound and a soul that is whole. The reasons for the sickness of our souls may range all the way from broken laws of nutrition to broken spiritual laws.

I have continued to ponder the vision I had just prior to being hospitalized in February of 1970. I have wrestled in particular with the thought that my brother, whom I dearly love, was shown to me as the reincarnation of Judas Iscariot. I no longer accept this as the correct interpretation of the vision. One day I will write a separate epistle about the vision and post it on our web site: www.stretcherbearers.com.

For now, let me remind you that reincarnation is no longer a part of my belief system. It is easy for me to identify with different historical figures of the past and I do; but I am definitely not one of them. I am certain, though, that Satan is a real spiritual entity and will continue to use reincarnation to deceive many. They are always trying to find some backdoor into heaven and into the presence of God. Without realizing what I was doing, I pleaded with God to make room for Judas Iscariot in heaven.

Over the past twelve years I have met a number of zealous, but misguided individuals who have been duped like I was. I am particularly reminded of a man who advocated that we should all pray for Judas Iscariot. For a while I listened attentively to this man's doctrine until I was shown these words of Jesus:

While I was with them in the world I kept them in Thy name; those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture may be fulfilled. (John 17:12)

I'm sure that there are others who are still pleading the cause of the son of perdition. The novelist Nikos Kazantzakis has discredited the words of Jesus in several of his novels. Particularly nefarious is this paragraph from his book "*Saint Francis*," in which he elevates Lucifer and ranks him above all other angels. In this novel, Brother Leo, the close and constant companion of St. Francis, describes his friend with these words:

"I know things about you, therefore, that no other person knows. You committed many more sins than people imagine; you performed many more miracles than people believe. In order to mount to heaven, you used the floor of the Inferno to give you your momentum. 'The further down you gain your momentum,' you often used to tell me, 'the higher you shall be able to reach.' The militant Christian's greatest worth is not his virtue, but his struggle to transform into virtue the impudence, dishonor, unfaithfulness, and malice within him. One day Lucifer will be the most glorious archangel standing next to God; not Michael, Gabriel, or Raphael but Lucifer, after he has finally transubstantiated his terrible darkness into light!"

Anyone who is familiar with God's Word will know that any petition on behalf of Satan contradicts the Scripture and is a waste of time and energy:

Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down.

They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.

Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short. Revelation 12:10-12 (NIV) See also Rev. 20:10

When Jesus died on the cross and was resurrected, Lucifer was defeated. Those who continue to pray for Lucifer are pleading a lost cause. May these words set many free to redirect their focus on Jesus Who saved us, rather than on Satan who betrayed us.

There are today many who believe themselves to be Jesus Christ. A psychiatrist put two patients, both of whom believed they were Jesus Christ, in the same room. He hoped this would bring them to their senses. It didn't work. Each one thought the other one was an imposter. There are many who believe they know the identity of the anti-Christ. There are many who believe themselves to be one of the witnesses spoken of in the eleventh chapter of Revelation. These are unproductive fantasies that may lead to destructive and bizarre behavior. This type of fantasy has long been known by Israeli psychiatrists and has been given the name "The Jerusalem Syndrome." Between 600 to 800 pilgrims each year require hospitalization. I am quoting from the book "The Children of God" by Raymond Robert Fisher, pages 209-211.

It is wise not to allow our imaginations to dwell in such unproductive regions. It is written: "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." (II Corinthians 10:5)

Reincarnation may be another escape mechanism for the dualities in our personalities. What we are unable to face, we project into another life or person, similar to the way we see ourselves in various disguises in dreams. Everyone, more or less, has a dual nature. It is simply the contest between good and evil, between the conscious and the unresolved issues we have tried to bury in the subconscious. When we are pressed hard enough by the circumstances of this life, we are forced to come to grips with the hidden nature within us. Psychiatrists refer to the duality in our natures as "schizophrenia." A more descriptive and realistic name for schizophrenia would be "the civil war of the soul." Only Jesus can bring peace to this conflict and unify our splintered nature! The Apostle Paul refers to this war in a very descriptive way when he writes:

"For the good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me."(Romans 7:19-20)

In many people this war is underground and is felt by others only as a menacing volcano threatening to erupt. In some it erupts with almost predictable regularity.

When the volcano erupts, it spews hot lava and rocks in all directions, destroying or scorching innocent and unsuspecting bystanders. This description fits those who have unsuccessfully tried to seal the mouth of the volcano through self-effort. As a young man of twenty, I came face to face for the first time with the duality of my personality and unsuccessfully tried to harness the violence within me. I did not know Jesus Christ at the time. I tried to do it myself! Those who would like to understand this inner conflict better are urged to read Dr. Paul Tournier's book *The Healing of Persons*.

I have wondered for many years why there is such a strong division among Christians concerning the person and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. I have written down my thoughts, tried to defend them, and crossed them out over and over again. When a subject is so controversial that it divides people and placing them in opposing camps, there must be a powerful underlying reason. I became

hypersensitive in this area because of the attempt to institutionalize me for manifesting the gifts of the Holy Spirit. For a long time, I was unable to enter a church in which there was hostility towards those who had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Such unbelief creates great anguish within me and others, I am sure.

I have learned that many theological seminaries in their doctrinal statements deny the gift of speaking in tongues as a valid twentieth-century gift of God. Some are even so brazen as to prohibit it. They maintain that with the advent of the printed Word and our ability to translate it into all languages, the need for this supernatural gift has been made obsolete. Some groups are even more outspoken concerning the person and gifts of the Holy Spirit. They maintain that the gifts are a manifestation of the demonic realm.

What explanation can then be offered for this division and controversy in the Body of Christ? Here are some points to ponder. Jesus said, "Tarry ye in Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). This power is akin to a light bulb of great intensity and brightness. It shines in two directions, searching our own souls for hidden sin, but invariably also shining its light upon those around us. Darkness does not want to be exposed. The gift of the Holy Spirit allows us to discern and understand the hidden needs and motives both in ourselves and in others and gives us the power and authority over all manner of darkness. It, therefore, should not surprise us when some feel threatened in the presence of those who can discern their secret thoughts.

It has been my experience that those who have set aside their prejudices concerning the gifts of the Holy Spirit and prayed, "Jesus, I desire to receive every good gift that you have for me," have sooner or later received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, any form of prejudice makes us ineligible to receive this baptism, which endues us with power and authority from God. Those who will search the Scriptures without prejudice on this matter will be greatly blessed.

I have to conclude that the gift of speaking in tongues is not the only evidence that a Believer has been endowed with power and authority from God. This is my personal understanding of the Scripture. I hope this will liberate those who have earnestly desired this gift but whom God has chosen to give other gifts at this time.

In the process of becoming acquainted with the supernatural dimension of the spirit realm, it is certainly possible that we may go astray or be led astray. The spirit realm is like a vast ocean or wilderness in which we must never let go of the hand of Jesus. Sometimes we are thrust into this wilderness by an unfortunate experience or a foolish experiment with drugs. We can completely lose our bearings and enter into a totally different reality. This can produce in us a twisted and warped sense of right and wrong. We can become incredibly clever in justifying that what we do is right, even beneficial. I remember someone remarking, "I can't witness for Jesus until I have had a joint (marijuana)." Many are so compelled by their addictions, that they have forfeited any sense of right and wrong, moral and immoral, legal and illegal.

One close friend, a truly kind and compassionate man, justifies his use of marijuana on the basis that it is a herb which God has grown. He refers to the book of Genesis to explain his point of view:

And God said, "Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed, to you it shall be for meat."
Genesis 1:29

Strange as it may seem, this same friend explained to me that the use of marijuana had the general effect of undermining all restraints imposed by authority and helped a person to understand the mysteries of life. There appears to be a breakdown in the logical, structured thinking of the user. In the absence of authority, the dividing line between right and wrong can be arbitrarily shifted. We all struggle with authority. It appears that many addicts have a totally blurred conscience. As I continued

to listen to my friend's viewpoints on the subject of marijuana, these Scripture verses were brought to my mind:

And the Lord commanded the man saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Genesis 2:16-17

And then I continued to read the full account of what happened when Adam and Eve disobeyed God. (Genesis, chapter 3). I saw the subtle deception of Satan throughout the ages. Each age, each country and each culture has its own unique and mysterious *marijuana plant* as explained by N. Taylor's book, *Flight from Reality*. We can even find references in our folklore and fairy tales. To me it would seem that any form of mind-expanding drug or herb whether synthetically compounded or naturally grown, is akin to eating of the *forbidden fruit*. It opens our mind to counterfeit and deceiving spirits, which restlessly roam this world, hoping to influence and control the unwary.

How can anyone possibly escape from a lifelong indoctrination of confusing statements, beliefs, and values? I remember my own struggles. Shortly after I was discharged from Edgemont Hospital, I was challenged within my soul to surrender everything that I had learned. There needed to be room for something different and new. This was one of the hardest decisions I was ever asked to make. I had been brainwashed all my growing-up years with these words: "Get a good education. No one will ever be able to take it away from you." That's a lie. When handed that hard-fought-for degree, it does not come with any guarantees. An education can easily become obsolete and often does. You can also lose your mind and everything you have learned will be worthless. Ask anyone five years out of college whether or not they would take the same classes if given a choice.

I must have struggled for a week or more. Finally I said, "Lord Jesus, I am willing to give up everything I worked so hard for, but especially my college degree. I am totally confused about what is worthwhile to keep and what is not." From that moment on, I was teachable again. Whether young or old, we seem to have a problem with too much clutter in our lives, not only in our closets, but also in our minds.

One day a little boy came on his tricycle to watch me polish my car. I asked him, "Do you know Jesus?" When he said, "No," I told him about Jesus and asked, "Would you like to have Jesus live in your heart?" He answered, "There is no room left in my heart. Santa Claus, Bugs Bunny, and all my toys live in my heart." And off he went! About twenty minutes later, he returned. After watching me awhile he said, "I have moved my toys over, and now I have room for Jesus." Many times since then I have thought, "and a little child shall lead them," (Isaiah 11:6).

Dorothea Lynde Dix has been called the "Angel of the Madhouse." She is quoted as "probably the most distinguished, and certainly the most forgotten woman America has produced in 300 years." Her life is an example and inspiration for those who are concerned with the plight of those labeled as mentally ill. May many light their torch from her example. I have! No longer is my diagnosis a sentence, but a challenge to "set the captives free." My pain has been translated into purpose.

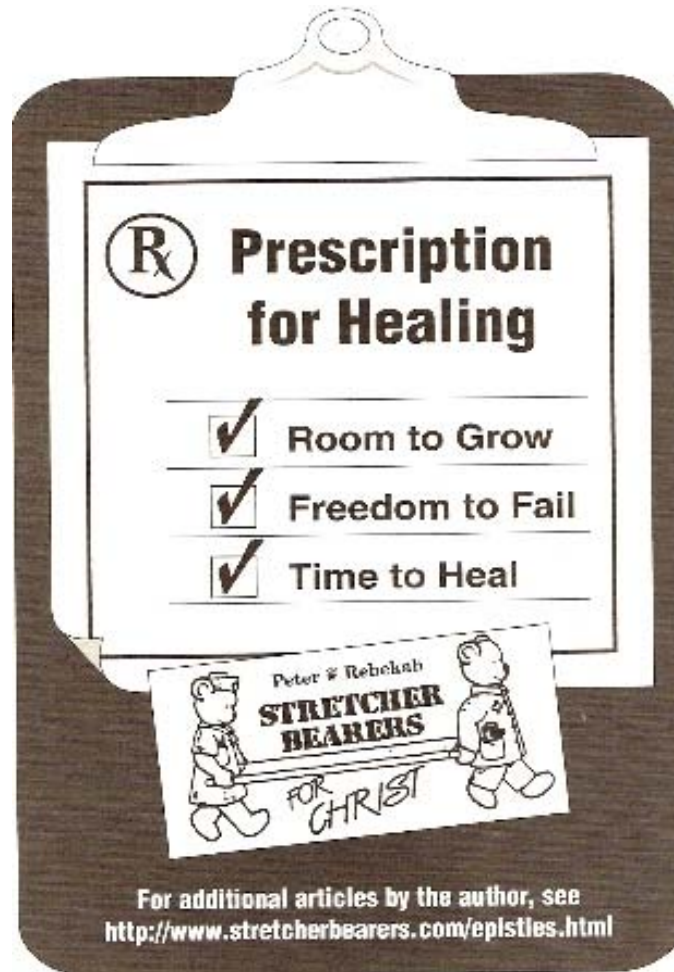
May you have the same miracle from God. I love you, dear Phyllis, and I need your love. I pray for you, and I need your prayers. Please write to me. Let us band together and "be willing to march into hell for a heavenly cause."

Many have already walked into hell for a heavenly cause. Some of these accounts have been printed, many have not. I do hope that in time more people will have the courage to share their experiences, and that we will be able to network with one another. This can effect a basic change in our attitudes and an understanding of those who are currently diagnosed and treated as mentally ill.

MENTAL PATIENTS GIVEN RIGHT TO REFUSE DRUGS

"Consent decree stems from 1978 suit against state hospitals, involves use of tranquilizers."

If you would like to continue your reading in this area, I suggest the recently published book *Torn for the Healing*, by C. Brandon Rimmer (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Jeremy Books, 1981). It is the story of a pediatrician who had an unusual encounter with Jesus, and who was treated in an unusual and painful manner. The story will shock and challenge you. It will fill your eyes with tears. It will be an inspiration for those who need help and also want to help others. Never lose hope—God is still in control. The pain and rejection you have suffered will become your credentials to compassionately touch hurting souls.



CHAPTER XVI LETTERS BETWEEN FRIENDS

*Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay
down his life for his friends.
John 15:13*

A personal letter is often the most delicate expression of a person's heart. We can tell a friend what we cannot tell anyone else. The opportunity to write about our failures, our anguish, hopes and dreams can heal our troubled souls and set us free. This is especially true when we sense the gentleness and the unconditional love of Jesus in our friend.

Over the years I have always had such a friend—a rare gift and a special grace. This gentle and forgiving person is my mother. From her shoebox filled with my letters to her, I have selected a few that were engraved upon her heart in a special way. As I re-read these letters, I can see that my search for sanity has stretched across many years of my life. The first two letters date back to my tour of duty in the army, almost thirty years ago. The others are more recent letters. As you will be able to note, my search for sanity has been and still is in process.

I also have a shoebox filled with letters from my mother. I will share one of these with you and can thereby introduce my special friend to you. The letter was written in the sunset hours of "Mutti's" life—as I often called my mother. It is the endearing word for mother in German. The letters that date back to 1953 were written while I was serving a two-year tour of duty in the United States Army.

Zweibruecken, Germany
July 29, 1953

My dear Mother, my dear Father, and my dear Brother,

Only we humans draw boundaries and make differences. But in God there exists no boundary. There is no such thing as this is "Germany," and that is "France," or "This is home, and across the river there is a strange land." Our notions that one city is nicer than the next will make us suffer at one time or another and also divide us. We must build the city of peace in our hearts. That will be our greatest and most sure source of happiness. I felt this morning that no matter if bullets will fly and the earth will shake beneath our feet, that the city of peace will be unshaken. The philosophers say that knowledge is brought forth from the inside. That city of peace which will spread across the world can only be built from the inside to the outside. All other types of cities will eventually crumble to pieces.

At the moment I am at a processing camp in Zweibruecken. This morning I was again anxiously, wondering where I might be sent and just what I would be doing soon. The *little voice* inside once more reminded me silently, "You have your orders already. Serve God wherever you may be." Human orders are so unsteady. They change so quickly, but God's orders hold true for all eternity. I received the military orders a little later. I will be stationed near Nuerenberg. But even human orders have their source in God. And if we have learned to hear His voice, we will be able to hear it in all voices. I do not know yet when I will have the chance to see our relatives here. I am waiting and trying to wait patiently for the day God sees fitting. I am so close to them and yet as far away as you are. I passed through Bremen with the train; I was a few miles from Ruth. We also passed through Worms. Life is such an interesting drama. The *little voice* reminds me again and again to be patient. As surely as day follows night, so will we be brought back again to those we love. But only when we love all, will we be together with everyone always.

The lunch hour has slipped in-between this sentence and the previous one. But something else has slipped in-between that is more wonderful than the lunch hour. Joy from God has slipped into my heart. I have talked to a friend about what I have written. And I have gotten an inkling of the joy which exists in knowing these things with your heart.

There is no such thing as German, French or American soil. It is all God's soil. There is no real ruler or president of any land. God is the only One who may be called King. The earth is God's kingdom, and rich and poor alike are His children and servants. I am just now looking out of the window into His beautiful Kingdom. In the valley below a peaceful town has grown out of the earth. The red-tiled roofs separate the village from the surrounding meadows, fields and forest. The hills remind me of the calm waves of the ocean. The land seems to be so well cared for and heavily laden with fruit. I have the feeling that many people here are working in close unity with God. Although there are army camps in the area, the city of peace is slowly and silently growing in the hearts of men.

The other day the *little voice* whispered something to me. It was about saints. Saints are the most wonderful people, who live on earth. But you know how I think saints feel? Saints consider themselves greater sinners than any other class of people. Once they have felt God's greatness, they become aware of their own littleness. How can we ever think of raising our voice, when we are just a little wave dancing on the great ocean? If every blade of grass would raise its voice like we humans do, we would have quite some noise on the earth.

On the day the train brought us from Bremerhaven to Zweibruecken, I was looking at newly planted apple trees. Those people that plant trees that will only bear fruit after a few years have quite a bit of faith already. Farmers have quite a bit of faith. They trust in the rain, the sun, the soil and the seed. The merchants who trade in stores have not much faith usually. Many keep a close watch over their riches. They lend away their wealth when there is some gain in sight. Those that have great faith do good deeds for others with never a thought of gain in mind. They know the law. They know that God and eternity and eternal life is real.

I have so much room again since I started a new page that I will tell you a little story. It is the story of the cake that was made holy. In Germany German men and women do the kitchen chores in the American camps. It gives me great joy to speak to the workers. I have the feeling that they are all my brothers, mothers, sisters and fathers. I do not feel strange talking to anyone. They all have so much less than I do in material ways. I shared a little of my great bounty with one of the mothers working in the kitchen. She felt such joy just because of the little I had done that she wanted to do something for me. She offered to bring me anything my heart would desire. Finally I settled for a cake. It turned out to be a Topf Kuchen (Bundt Cake) baked with the true love of a mother. When I came to the cafeteria the following morning, a cake had been created for me. The lady gave me the cake with all her love. She gave me more than I had ever given. She showed me a picture of her mother and little daughter. I think she told me that she had lost two boys, but yet her face was calm and her eyes were filled with love. When we parted, I knew that another eternal bridge was built. With the cake in my hand and happiness in my heart, I returned to my barracks.

Next to my bed there was La Lou's bed. He is a new brother, yet I feel that I have known him for a long time. He was sitting on his bed when I came in with the cake. I wanted to share with him the cake. He did not want any cake. Suddenly I grew eager to give him the whole cake. I remembered that a few days ago he had his twenty-fourth birthday. I said, "La Lou, I want you to have this cake; it is your birthday cake." I had told him the story of its birth. He received the gift. It was the only visible gift he had received. The cake built a strong bond between us. But in the end he kept only half the cake. He took half the cake to France. I sneaked a little note into the cake package. Remember, Mother, like the notes you slipped into my lunch bag? I did this because I remembered the joy that your notes brought me. I wrote the note on the card, which you sent me. The card has a little verse on it that starts like this, "Give me good digestion, Lord, and something to digest." It seems to me now

that I saved the card especially for my brother La Lou. On paper the story has come to an end, but in spirit it will continue to live on.

I imagine that the new address I have now I will keep for a while. May God bless you all

Your boy,

Peter

Nuerenberg. Germany
September 15, 1953

My dear Mother and my dear Brother,

I will sit down and write you a little more about what has gone on in my life. I need to fill in some of the loopholes. It is a little harder to put my thoughts on paper with a typewriter than by longhand, but I will try my best. I can only tell you a little in a letter about what has gone through my mind during the last few weeks. What I have experienced will fill many pages maybe one day.

Through my thirst for truth and my eating habits I had become very sensitive to good and pure things, but also to dark and evil forces. I really don't like to say evil forces. I would rather say, to the two poles of life. How much I was imagining and how much was real, I could not tell apart anymore during the last few weeks. Forces, for example, which can make a drunkard out of a person, were raging in me. Oh, it is so hard to put these experiences on paper. These forces grew so strong that I was becoming afraid of them. But still I wanted to experience them in myself in order to know what goes on in other people. I had also told myself that I was as bad as the worst criminal, because my eyes were desiring a pear on someone else's tree. I could not walk with pleasure through the fields anymore, because my eyes constantly desired the fruit I saw on different trees. My stomach could be full, but still, I would so desire what did not belong to me that eyes began to hurt whenever I opened them to look at something.

I was imagining that people were thinking something bad about me. My whole being was seized by great depression which I could not shake off. I would have to wait till it would pass in some mysterious way. The depression came more and more frequently. Only seldom did I experience spiritual renewal. I was at the mercy of these alternating forces. My stomach felt as if it were tied in knots. Often I craved for some chocolate, but I always said no. Some people told me that I should stop worrying, others told me to go to the movies. I had told no one what was going on inside of me. Each day this *voice* inside of me became more real and persistent; and I could not ignore it. If it had told me to run away from the army, I would have done it. I became physically very exhausted. It was hard for me to walk up the steps. I felt like lying down for a long time. I thought I needed a rest. There was no joy for me in living. Almost all my concentration and memory had disappeared. I made many mistakes in the easiest work and was very slow. I had a difficult time keeping myself awake. I had lost interest in life. It had become too difficult, and I did not see how I could manage much longer. I did not feel like doing anything anymore. That *voice* inside had exhausted me.

Then one day I felt that if I continued to listen to *the voice*, I would not live much longer or would become insane. Therefore I began to do just the opposite of the things *the voice* told me to do. I made myself read a book, although I fell asleep almost every few lines. I tried to become interested in the story on the screen. I went to the carnival. I made myself run up the stairs even though I was tired. I made myself smile even though I did not feel like smiling at all. I bought myself chocolate. I had a craving for something sweet, so I bought myself a pound of grape sugar. I had eaten that in a few days.

Slowly the life force and the desire to live returned. There has also come a change in my being. I have begun to use reason and feeling, instead of just feeling. I do not give away my last penny like I

used to do before. Previously I gave away money merely because I was asked. The boys then often used it to go to the show or drink beer. I lost seventeen dollars during my first few weeks in the army. I was really going all out to give myself away. I was acting almost entirely on feelings.

For a long time I thought that it was wrong to use reason. I wanted to be led by God altogether. That was all right for a couple of months, but then some wrong forces sneaked in. I was afraid that some forces would awaken in me over which I had no control. Suddenly I became aware of great explosive forces within me. Now I am not surprised anymore that men like Hitler or Saint Francis of Assisi lived. Tremendous powers are in us. If we learn how to channel them, they will accomplish much good, if not, they will destroy others and us. It has been a great schooling. I am and we all are continually going to school.

I did not want to tell you how I was feeling, how little interest I had in life, because I did not want to worry you, dear Mother. You are the best thing I have in the world. I do not want to cause you any grief. I am still thinking about God and my desire is to know the truth. More than anything else I want to do the right thing. God knows my heart. He won't mind that I read a *Donald Duck* funny book.

You have said that from a distance you see everything a little different. I also see things differently from here. Our family makes so much ado about food. We are influenced so easily and so completely by new diets. We are not very stable in our views. I hope that Hellmut's friend will not only marry a girl only because of her unique diet. I wish he would not marry yet. It would be much better if he would wait, maybe until he is out of the army. We should ask the advice of other people who are standing on the sideline and are not involved.

Whatever you write, dear Mother, I am going to think about. I have done quite a bit of thinking, observing myself and inquiring if I shall or shall not eat meat. I have decided to eat it again. I do not have any mental opposition anymore. I do not know for how long I will eat it. I am going to see what effects it has. I have the feeling that no meat in our diet makes us more sensitive.

May I wish you a good night and pleasant dreams. We are going forward.
May God bless you,
Your Peter

Pagosa Springs, Colorado
Sunday August 10, 1980
Dear Mutti,

This is probably the most important letter that I have written you in the last ten years. You asked me over the phone last Wednesday morning, "Is there any hope for my situation?" Those words have continued to echo in my mind.

There are conservatively one million recovered alcoholics in this world. Their condition was as hopeless and deadly as yours is, even though your struggle is not with alcohol. They are living a productive and victorious lives, *continuously* reaching out to others who have come to the end of their rope. Each alcoholic who stops drinking is a ray of hope for someone else. For your sake and my sake, I am re-reading what is generally referred to as "*The Big Book*" or *Alcoholics Anonymous*. My edition of the book was printed in 1976 at which time there were 1,450,000 copies in print. I want you to get a copy of the book as soon as possible and read it very carefully.

Many of us are addicted, and even though our addiction may not be as obvious as the addiction of the alcoholic, it is just as deadly. There is the addiction of nicotine, of promiscuous sex, of a driving ambition, of opium or drugs whether prescription or otherwise. I believe that you know your own type of addiction. It has been a curse and a bondage in your life for many, many years. Love is often blind, and in some ways, I have contributed to your enslavement by sharing my own prescription drugs with you.

If I were to smoke a single cigarette, within three days I would smoke at least twenty cigarettes. You are like me, but your addiction is prescription drugs—painkillers and nerve pills. These drugs are as devastating to your mind as alcohol is to the alcoholic. They cause you now to have unreasonable fears, nightmares and many other unpredictable reactions like constipation. For many people, prescription mind-altering drugs and painkillers are like playing Russian roulette.

When you seek the help of a doctor, you are basically looking for someone who will continue to sanction your addiction. The doctor gives you what you want, because he knows that it would be extremely difficult for you to cope without the drugs. The doctor, however, is really not helping you.

You might remember that I worked for two months in the fall of 1970 on the drug rehabilitation ward of Olive View Hospital in Sylmar, California. During this time I observed that it was more difficult for patients to withdraw from barbiturates than from opium and heroin.

It is not too late for you to be set free. God will help you if you are willing to admit to yourself that you are enslaved by prescription drugs and that you need help. You have to decide that it is worth the battle, and in my mind there is no doubt. Our Lord will set you free if you call upon Him honestly and earnestly. He is big enough and will always be big enough to give each person complete victory, when that person admits his own inability to help himself.

Secondly, you must throw away *every* pill you have. Your hiding pills away is no different than the alcoholic hiding his booze.

Thirdly, your withdrawal symptoms may be painful and even dangerous at times. Your body can be detoxified much more safely in a hospital. I am not sure how long this might take, possibly two to three weeks.

Fourth, just like the AA people (*Alcoholics Anonymous*) are taught to share their victory with others, be willing to reach out, reach out and reach out again. Our continued health and prosperity is ours to keep only as long as we share it with others. This is a cure for preoccupation with self—a most deadly disease. Get your typewriter fixed and share every bit of progress with someone. Give all the credit for every bit of improvement to God and all those wonderful people He has sent to your aid.

You might ask, “But why so much pain, Lord?” I have struggled for an answer for a long time. Quite unexpectedly I was shown one of the keys to this difficult question.

I was watching an adventure movie entitled, *Sasquatch* about seven men on horseback who survive in an unexplored wilderness. One of the horses in the party strayed from the path and sunk into a quagmire. All efforts of the remaining six horses and riders to free the horse failed. Totally exhausted, the trapped horse was ready to give up. The keeper of the horse made one final effort to extricate his mount. He beat his horse. In order to get away from the pain, the horse surged and leaped to freedom. The owner or keeper explained that to attempt to save the horse should be our top priority. If it had had to be mercifully killed, he explained, the balance of the horses would have had to carry the extra load.

There are so many places where we can apply this story. I explained to a friend that as he continued to use tranquilizers and pain killing drugs, he was in fact turning off the fire alarm system and extinguishing the resources within to leap to freedom. The Holy Spirit came over me in waves of insight as I contemplated what I had been shown. There is a place for pain, but God’s preference is to gently lead us by His Holy Spirit.

I allowed my thoughts some further freedom to dwell on the subject of pain, whether it be physical or emotional. I have come to the conclusion that pain can also alert us to an attack by some intruder. No general would consider tranquilizing his troops before sending them into battle. But this is what we do when we consistently respond to pain or depression with some type of a drug. We develop an illusion of well being and safety that will eventually result in total disaster. We extinguish the fighting spirit

within us and any keen perception of who the real enemy might be. Once we have decided to medicate ourselves with either alcohol or drugs of any kind, we stop looking for the real cause of our problem.

Severe pain or overwhelming emotions causes us to grasp at straws for support. Invariably we pull those down who are nearest and dearest to us. If our automatic response to pain has become the corner drugstore, we deny ourselves the unlimited resources of Jesus Christ. Those who respond to overwhelming emotions with aggression and panic can hurt an innocent bystander. The other end of the spectrum is suicide. There is help available, but only as we surrender our whole life on a daily basis to the Son of God.

It takes a while to break old habit patterns. Don't let the devil deceive you concerning the battle that is before you. No one is ever too old, and it is never too late. Don't let yourself be intimidated.

And just think of the tremendous hope you will inspire in others as you throw off your addiction with the help of Jesus and His heavenly hosts. As you know, this is far more a spiritual battle than a physical or mental one. It is written, "for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." (Ephesians 6:12). So, dear Mutti, "put on the whole armor of God" as it is explained in verses 13 through 18 of the same chapter.

The Holy Spirit has made your spirit alive. There is no age factor in the world of the spirit; and the words "too late" are an invention of the devil. Fight as long as there is breath within you. You can do it! Paul says, "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me." (Philippians 4:13). So can you, so can anyone who believes these words.

May the God of Israel, Jesus Christ of Nazareth, seal these words to your heart.

Much love as always,

Peter

Sunday, March 21, 1982

4 A.M.

My dear Peter,

The setting on the stage of my life is at present the same one as yesterday. It's quiet in the house; it's still dark outside. Papa might be sleeping. The door to his bedroom is closed. At least I know that he has no discomfort, no pains when he is lying in his bed. For that I am grateful. He might even be meditating now. He might be saying, "Testing, testing, one, two three, Holy Spirit come to me." Praise the Lord. He might just be thinking it. I told him that that was my last thought yesterday. I just said these words over and over again while I was wiping up the bathroom floor, wet from a dripping faucet. I had made up that little verse which was dictated to me from an *Unknown Source*.

The saying was like a strap I could hold onto as if riding and standing in a crowded bus. I didn't want to fall. My little verse made me feel like holding on. You know that as well as I do. You know that too. Do you spell "too" in the previous sentence with one or two o's? I am forgetting how to spell many words and haven't what it takes to look them up in the dictionary. Sorry.

I want to turn the clock back now to when I made up my mind to talk to you via the typewriter, instead of staying in bed just twisting and turning. I couldn't stop thinking. "Why not instead get out of bed and tell you what I thought!" That would certainly be more beneficial. I thought of your letter pertaining to the medication I take. You wrote that it was one of the hardest letters to write. I believe it, because I can remember what it was all about.

In the evening last night I read about the man who wanted to die in dignity. It was in a *Guideposts* magazine, a magazine which had been on my bookshelf since many years. It was about life after death, “*Eternity Can Begin Now*” by John L. Sherrill. I would also like to die in dignity. I copied the following from the magazine:

“I never really had come to grips with the question, was Jesus of Nazareth in fact, God? ‘You might ask what difference it makes,’ said Catherine Marshall.’ It spells the difference between life and death, John. The Bible tells us that when we believe in Christ, we no longer have to die, but have everlasting life.”

The story naturally continues and it is extremely fascinating what happened and how this man changed. I can almost drown in the amounts of literature that has come my way during my lifetime on this subject.

I have pain on three levels—spiritual, emotional and physical. It is the result of taking an excessive amount of pills and many operations. Since a month or so I stopped taking all pills except for an herb laxative. I, too, want to die in dignity. I want the Good Lord to say: “Well done Josephine” when I arrive.

I am getting so side-tracked, it just isn’t funny. In thinking of your book and last manuscript, the thought flashed through my mind to write to *Guideposts*. I could tell them how you use your gift for the Lord so that others might “believe.” It’s a big assignment. I think that it would be a terrific opportunity for you to spread your wings. There is so much I want to tell you before I leave. That is the reason I write you so often and also talk to you by phone. I want to spread my wings of LOVE also. I LOVE YOU SO MUCH.

What an opportunity to spread your gift from the Lord if *Guideposts*’ editors would read your manuscript. You could send a plaque along for them. The Holy Spirit is with you and will be your guide. I am the go-between.

It’s hard to think when I am as tired as I am now. The movie of my mind is running faster than I want it to. I have so much to tell you. It really started last night. It was about 9:30 when I picked up your manuscript. First I picked up your long letter. It was a beautiful inspiration for me. You answered several of my questions in it. I feel that the Holy Spirit dictated every word you wrote. I just have to think of what you wrote and again I feel the Holy Spirit. Praise the Lord.

I am getting very nervous now. I can see that the ribbon on my machine is on strike, and I will not be able to continue writing soon. I have not even told you about the main reason for writing. It pertains to your manuscript.

You will soon see a different type of script. I am using my other machine, the little Smith-Corona that Hellmut so lovingly gave me while we were living in Los Angeles.

I have my desk covered with little papers on which I scribbled my thoughts while reading the manuscript. I wanted to catch and remember what I thought as I went along reading. Often I cannot read my own handwriting any more. I would be sorry if that would be the case when I want to copy these little thoughts from the papers I used. I didn’t want you to miss out, not even one of my thoughts. I kept on reading and reading and reading. At first I read your letter under the green plastic binder, then the preface—the letter to Phyllis—and then I read the prophecy and everything that followed. It was 1:30 A.M. Sunday when I was finished reading. I started on Saturday at 9:30 P.M. I not only read, but also tried to capture my thoughts on paper for you. I was really very busy and forgot all about myself.

As time went by I got very tired and very cold. My fingers felt like icicles. Finally I went to bed as I was, fully dressed including a warm sweater plus a heating pad. I slept until 3:15 A.M. My wish and effort to stay in bed some more were useless. I spent about 45 minutes walking back and forth

between the kitchen and the bedroom. I snacked on rye crisp, prunes and drank some tea. Nothing tasted right.

It's now ten minutes after six and I have drawn the curtain. Daylight is coming in. I finally will start to copy from the little notations. Regarding your manuscript:

1. It is a spiritual magnet. Once you start to read, you cannot stop. You cannot let go of the book.
2. It is a spiritual alarm clock.
3. It is a new perfume. You use a few drops, and it's suddenly your favorite brand. It is the perfume you want to buy all the time.
4. It has a contagious spiritual power.
5. It is like lightning. Like lightning, like a tornado it will travel through the world. It will be printed in many languages.
6. It will be one of the best sellers, read and bought by millions. What this book has done for me it will do to all who reach out for it.

It is not the natural love of a mother for her child who writes you this way. It is the feeling of my spirit that prompts me to talk to you about the manuscript this way. The Holy Spirit within you wrote it. I feel this so strong in my spirit. I told you before that I could not stop reading once I started. When I came to the end, I opened the manuscript at random. Again I was fascinated and kept on reading. But finally I had to stop. I was getting too tired and cold.

I now have a question. Is this manuscript to be published as a separate book? I think that the first book, which pertains to your life and spiritual development, should be published with the manuscript. Don't you think so? How could this be done? It would involve a great big expense, but what is money? Nothing, nothing at all. Real spiritual growth, the birth of a soul, the awakening of a soul, that is everything.

Once upon a time I remember giving you a check for \$25.00 quite on impulse. I think it happened at the United California Bank, where I had made a deposit. You lived in Escondido at the time. I said, "Peter, this check is for the YOU in you." I really could not put my fingers on what I meant with these words except, that I loved the Spirit in you.

There are many dear people in this world, but they are still sleeping. Many go through life this way. Well, I was like most people, but today I am starting to LIVE. I am ALIVE. I am waking up in a different world. I have become aware of beautiful and mysterious things in my life. I think I have spoken about some of these to you. Remember our little trips to Captain Dooley's Soup Kitchen? At times it was as if the Holy Spirit was around you and me. Remember our trips to the launderette in Poway? Remember our get-togethers in the Colony Kitchen? Ever so often did you sprinkle a few drops of rare "perfume" over me. I left you different than when I met you to go on these little trips.

I just marvel each time I receive anything from you. You make everything so attractive, neat and beautiful. It touches my heart each time. With each letter you write I feel a few drops of this "perfume" coming my way. I also want to make my letters look neat and tidy. That is quite impossible now, but I am learning. I am waking up, praying and meditating. New hope is born within me.

Sometimes the waves around me are very high. Then the cross is harder to carry. I also sometimes have to cry; but instead of feeling sorry for myself, I now try to live with new hopes. I pray for the Holy Spirit to touch me, for Jesus' hand to touch me, for the Lord to touch Papa and me. For this I pray night and day. If I can't feel His presence, I can always say: "Testing, testing, one, two, three, Holy Spirit come to me." Praise the Lord.

I wish Dr. Rayner could get a copy of the manuscript together with a plaque we want him to have. I expect a letter from him soon telling us the verse he wants. Oh, how I wish our dear Papa could hold the manuscript in his hands and read it for himself. It just wasn't part of God's plan for him. I will read

it to him. This will be hard for me because I have difficulty with my breathing. I will read a little at a time and hope I can finish it before the train leaves.

At times I feel as if I was the little girl that had been asleep for 100 years. Remember the fairy tale? No handsome prince woke me up, but you did, dear Peter, already years ago. There is a special bond between us.

I remember when you visited me in the hospital many years ago. It was during the war in Germany. You were still a little boy. I see you vividly in the entrance to the hospital room. You were wearing a little, frayed overcoat. Your neck was bandaged because your glands were swollen. You wanted to make me happy and brought me a present. It was a little bit of soap. Another time you brought a little bit of tea. Things were hard to get. I was always touched when I felt this love you carried in your heart.

The sun is shining brightly this morning. It is 7:30 and I haven't said "good morning" to Papa yet. When we close our bedroom doors, each of us knows that it's a sign that we don't wish to be disturbed. We might be sleeping; we might be doing something. The noise of typing, though, Papa can hear. He knows that I want to keep on typing.

You know what I would like to do now? To call you up and read this letter over the phone. I would so much like to know how you felt as you read it. I'm so anxious to know while I'm still here. I might, I might not call.

Just please answer that part in my letter about the one or two books. I can't quite understand what you are going to do, intend to do or would like to do. I do think that the two belong together. Don't you? Of course the manuscript is in a way entirely different. The first book is interesting and very fascinating, but the manuscript is a real treasure house of jewels.

In the end you say, "Please write to me. Let us band together and be willing to march into hell for a heavenly cause." I am writing you. My hell is the hours of pain in all areas. I feel that heaven is the final destination to which you hold one of the keys. Right? Right.

I will now finally stop typing. It's almost 8:00 o'clock.

God Bless You

Deine (your)

Mutti (Endearing word for Mother in German)

Pagosa Springs, Colorado

June 4, 1982

Dear Papa and Mutti,

We have been back a week, but as yet have not been able to get back to a routine. The mail, especially, seems to be the most difficult part to get to. I am placing the book *Come Away My Beloved* by Frances Roberts in the mail for Virgil and Barbara. I know that she does not own a copy. Since you refer to it so frequently in your letters, she should have the book that I purchased at the same time you bought your copy.

I think that you will be very happy to know that the sign "*God Has Everything Under Control*" is in very good hands with Monique. Monique has a very real and beautiful relationship with Jesus. She is unhappy about Hellmut's problem. Monique and I went into another room while I was with her and on our knees asked Jesus to set Hellmut free. So you can rest in peace. It will be so. Hellmut is being set free.

It is right for Hellmut to create sandblasted signs which come from his personal relationship with Jesus. Brian Burnett, his mother, Hellmut, Susan and I prayed over the roll of sandblast stencil tape he purchased. We asked Jesus that the tape be used only for healing and liberating signs.

I am very happy to know, dear Mutti, that you are much more able to let God work in a variety of new ways and according to His timetable. In no way am I burdened by the volume or content of your letters to me. I see so much healing. Probably before long you will be able to bless others by your insights and enthusiasm. I know that you would have much to give to Hal Norman, one of my very special friends.

Dr. Roper's heart attack does not really surprise me. His desire to help others yet to be so helpless in many situations must be hard for any doctor. Maybe the sandblasted dove of peace together with the most beautiful card you can find would add to his healing.

Two days ago we drove to Chromo to pray for a man about my age who had cancer. Forty- one people assembled to pray. The presence of God was very real. I was allowed to experience His healing power flowing through me for 24 hours prior to the prayer meeting. The man was able to discharge 22 pounds of water shortly after we prayed. He could eat a good meal and take a long walk. There is no greater joy than to be His instrument.

Many years ago I had a dream or vision, I cannot remember which. In it I saw you ushered into heaven with a beautiful white robe and escorted by a host of angels. I saw the same for Josephine in Los Angeles. What a beautiful gathering this will be. I have cherished these pictures and have kept them hidden in my heart for a long time.

It is a special grace for you to see Hellmut in the role of "Brother Lawrence" who wrote *"The Practice of the Presence of God"* several centuries ago. This is also very healing for Hellmut. Sometimes we only get the smallest glimpse of a person's redeemed soul. We are to hold onto that glimpse and to share it only with those who will upgrade and support it. This principle also holds true in other areas. That most delicate preference we have for music, art and books should be shared only with those whose hearts are inclined in the same direction.

PTL, once again we have paid our mortgage when due. Three days before it was due we received payment for an *eagle plaque* (Isaiah 40:31); and a man who came for counseling left a check for 125 dollars.

Next Thursday we will be teaching at a Christian camp some 75 miles from here. About 25 teenagers will be learning how to make sandblasted signs.

We do keep busy, but we are not burdened.

God bless you,

Much love, Peter and Rebekah

P.S. We recently read the book *ANGELS ON ASSIGNMENT* by Charles and Frances Hunter as told by Roland Buck. We were truly blessed.

Pagosa Springs, Colorado
Tuesday, September 7, 1982

Dear Mutti,

It's two hours after you called. I feel a great deal of precision in your voice. I feel that great desire on your part that your last act may be the most important, that the last melody you play may be the most beautiful and the most meaningful.

To give up the piano so that the manuscript can be published is probably your most delicate decision. Only you can decide. The only words of wisdom I can add, "What we voluntarily release is of more value than what is taken from us." I remember how I struggled in my vision that I had about you. You were holding onto two things – your diamond ring and your piano. You have given up your diamond ring; now the struggle is concerning the piano. I had agonized with you about this many years ago. I can assure you that you will be set completely free.

I really believe that you will experience a great peace when this final battle is over. Then you will be able to look behind the veil of many mysteries. You will be given supernatural strength, protection and wisdom. Then these words of Jesus will be clothed for you in total reality:

"Lo, I am with you always"

I am also mailing a letter to Barbara today. I will let her know that your battles are currently very intense and that you love her.

Thank you for calling me this morning. It was a very important call. I will be battling with you. So many captives will be set free through your battle and victory!!!

Much love,
Peter

The below letter was written after my father died in the Fall of 1982. It was written after "The Wood Blossom" was published.

Pagosa Springs, Colorado
1984

Dear Mother:

Each time you cry out for help and you search heaven and earth for a way out, you provide me with a great challenge. My desire to help you and not just pamper you in the midst of your despair drives me to pray and to sift and to ponder each thought and word. What can I give you that would inspire and challenge you to finish your race with dignity? Many races are lost so very near the end. May that not happen to you.

You have given me
you have given me life.
steps when I was little.
right from wrong. You
when I could not
pleaded with God for
and He answered your

Now that you are old
to leave, now that every
day can become an
desire one more gift
see you finish the race



to see your faith in your God and my God strong and vibrantly alive. I desire to see you bring all your problems and all your pain to the Only One who has all the answers. I desire to see victory in the midst of pain, confusion and fear. There is no greater legacy that you could bequeath upon your sons and daughters than to show us through your own example that Jesus is the only one worthy of your complete trust.

many things. Above all,
You have steadied my
You have taught me
have believed in me
believe in myself. You
my life when I was ill;
prayers.

and your train is about
step is painful and a
eternity, I, your son,
from you. I desire to
with courage. I desire

I beseech you, grant us the gift of seeing Jesus in you—His nature, His gentleness, His courage, His forgiveness. Money is spent, fame is soon forgotten, but your victory will be an inspiration to your son and his sons. Grant us the gift of your victory. It is written and it is true:

“I am sure that God who began a good work within you will keep right on helping you grow in grace until His task within you is finally finished on that day when Jesus Christ returns.” Philippians 1:6

Let no one rob you or your children of this precious promise. Together with Christ Jesus alive in you, you can finish the race with dignity, and inspire us through your example, to finish ours.

Your Son



CHAPTER XVII MISFITS AND OUTCASTS

Let brotherly love continue. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Hebrews 13:1-2

The Holy Spirit is just now reminding me of several people who played a significant part in our lives, but especially in the life of this storyteller. I would like you to meet these people who cycled between heaven and hell most of their lives. I want to bring these special people to your attention because they need an advocate. I continue to weep and war for people who are wrestling with any kind of a mental illness; however, I no longer see myself as their savior or rescuer. And seeing myself as their savior was a part of my own illness and delusion. I am willing to pray for them, counsel them, and befriend them; but I do so very carefully now. I do not permit them to hang onto me or make myself as readily available as I used to. I point them to Jesus and tell them to hang on to Him. I also asked myself, "Is there someone better qualified than I am to pour oil on the turbulent images and voices that play havoc with their lives?"

When the fury of their emotions explodes as invariably will and does, we need to be at a safe distance. Inviting someone to live with you who cycles between heaven and hell is like pitching your tent on the side of a volcano. And I used to do that. I used to give these people our 800 phone number and gave them permission to call any time and all the time. I had what is called, "A Savior Syndrome." It is a common problem – a very, very common problem that has taken many to a premature grave.

My heart continues to bleed for those whose minds are tormented with voices that are flattering one moment and furious the next. I have continued to search for strategies that work. I have summed up what I have learned to date and published it under the title: "The Purple Pamphlet." It can be read and downloaded via this internet link: www.schizophreniadefeated.com

I will now let my epistle about B___, speak for itself. It was published in our Spring 1994 "Stretcher Bearers for Christ newsletter." B___ was a part of our lives for 25 years. Towards the end of our friendship, we learned to love B___ and others like her – "carefully." She died of breast cancer. She refused medical treatment and used aspirin to help ease the physical pain toward the end of her life. We never found out if she died on the streets or if a compassionate soul invited her into their home towards the end of her life. Over the 25 years that we knew B___, many gave her shelter including ourselves; however within a short time she wore out her welcome. She was in her fifties when she died.

ANGEL OF THE STREET OR?

This story was titled "Especially for Fathers" and how his identity was revealed to me. The story could also have been titled "The Angel of the Street or?" I will let the reader decide which title is most appropriate.

On Monday morning October 11 of last year (1993) I drove to Durango to pick up B___ at the bus station. I had not seen B___ for a long time and hardly recognized her at first. She had been "doing the streets" for many years, the vernacular of those who have no home, and possibly even prefer the life-style of gypsies. Her body was bloated by poor diet and poor hygiene; her face betrayed the scars of abuse. The once pretty face was now only a part of a memory. A pair of tennis shoes, frayed shorts, a meager top and sweatshirt was the extent of her wardrobe and belongings. A small coin purse contained the remainder of her Social Security disability check, the extent of her earthly wealth. There was alcohol on her breath even though it was still early in the morning. When we saw one another there was an awkward moment of silence before we embraced.

When we first met B__, T__ was still a part of her life - her little girl of five or six. She seldom and reluctantly spoke about her husband who was in prison. In fact, it was a long time before she told me her last name. That was seventeen years ago when we still lived in California.

I had met B__ while counseling at one of the churches we attended. I always encouraged her and prayed for her. I always saw her as a person with great inner beauty, potential and integrity. I always sensed that God had a unique and important calling for B__. I believed that her tormented mind and emotions would be healed and then the glory of God would be revealed through her and all would marvel at His beauty in her. That was seventeen years ago; and I still believe that what I saw is true and will come to pass for all to see.

Ever since I met B__ she has struggled with thoughts of suicide. In fact, it is a miracle she has not succeeded. Fear, anger, confusion, deception and every conceivable abuse of her body have added many extra years to a woman who should still be in the prime of her life. I must admit that at times my love for her grew threadbare; but by the grace of God it has stayed intact and I pray that it always will.

B__ tells everyone she meets about Jesus. She is very bold that way. She cries over those facing eternity without their Lord and Savior and easily parts with her last penny to help someone who is needy - even if their need is a pack of cigarettes. The sandblasted sign on our display wall she liked the best reads: **“Once, long ago, my Lord took a weathered piece of wood and on that piece of wood He wrote a love song in blood.”** I tell you these things that you might also love B__ and cradle her in your prayers without condoning her vices.

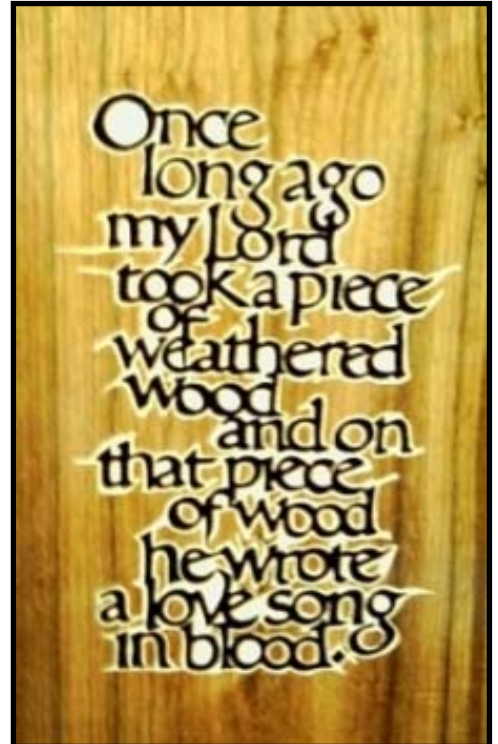
It was not easy to have B__ as a guest in our home for two weeks. The spirits molesting her continuously prodded her towards suicide. The intent of suicide was a part of many of her conversations with us. Daily she wanted to return to California to commit the act there. Almost every night she would slam cabinet doors for hours in a futile attempt to drive away the demons that she could both hear and see, demons that continuously taunted her. No one in the house was able to get much sleep. Nothing we tried made the slightest impression on the tormenting spirits that were bent on destroying B__. This went on for ten days before peace was restored to our home.

The spirits that were bent on destroying B__ were also bent on destroying us. Although I am not able to hear or see them as B__ does, fear, anger, confusion and exhaustion have convulsed my being on numerous occasions and have tried to drive me to the brink of extinction or insanity. However, whenever I am at the point of losing my balance, I run to my prayer meadow near our house for answers and relief. There I have previously engaged the powers of darkness in spiritual combat. I had come to that point once again while B__ was here and fled to that private place during the middle of the night

A small slice of the moon illuminated accustomed pathways. As soon as I stepped into the arena of total aloneness, I cried out to God for help. Help came quickly. First I was reminded of and shown the beauty and preciousness of B__’s soul; and that the battle was not between B__ and us, but against spiritual powers of darkness that were bent on destroying her body and soul. Then I was given a short refresher course in spiritual warfare: (1) **The battle is the Lord’s!** (2) **The victory is the Lord’s!** (3) **The glory is the Lord’s!** (4) **Thank Me (the Lord) for the victory before you see it accomplished!**

I hurled these statements of truth at the powers of darkness; and as I did, the doom and gloom of failure, fear, anger, confusion and exhaustion dissipated into nothingness. I returned home and went to sleep with a confidence and peace that passes all human understanding.

B__ slept soundly that night for the first time in ten days. There was no more banging of cabinet doors. The next morning she asked me if she could stay a little longer. For the rest of her stay B__ focused on the words, **“Thank you Jesus for the victory.”** Whenever the enemy now attacks my own mind concerning B__, I get back on track so to speak by thanking Jesus for her healing. It’s the very best remedy I have found so far. But the story is not over and the best part is yet to come.



I took B__ back to the bus station in Durango on October 26. Before she boarded the bus, we visited with one another for a few minutes. Her final words and my final words startled me. She said, "Peter, I see Satan standing over there tormenting me with thoughts of suicide, telling me that I was stupid for expecting to be healed, that the whole trip was a waste." I felt I needed to counter those words and replied, "B__, when you see Satan and he attacks your mind with death and destruction, tell him that Jesus and me are praying for you."

No sooner had I spoken those words, the Holy Spirit gently corrected me. "No, Peter," He said, "Not Jesus and me, but Jesus *in* me." And as I pondered those words in my heart, I received an unexpected healing. Many things came into focus. New clarity came into my thoughts; and new life came into my emotions. It was as if I had been seeing life through a camera, but was never able to focus the lens correctly. I never saw a clear, sharp picture. I always saw a split image through the lens. There was Jesus and there was me. Sometimes we were very close, at other times far apart; but we were never *one*. Then suddenly the words of the apostle Paul from the book of Colossians became my personal revelation, "Christ *in* me, the hope of glory," - not "Christ and me, but "Christ *in* me." Indeed, I have received a great gift; for now we are "*one*." I see only one image through the lens of my camera. The Gospels are now more alive than ever before. Its pages are like a personal experience, a personal adventure.

But there is more, much more . . . As I drove back to Pagosa Springs, about an hour's drive, the words, "Jesus *in* me," kept washing through my soul. It seemed as if I was being given a new heart, a Father's heart. And indeed, that is what happened. Let me tell you how I know.

A week later our son Dan called. We had not heard from Dan for a long time. We did not know where he was or what he was doing. We only had the premonition that he was lost in the jungle of a big city. When he left home ten years earlier at age nineteen, he vowed he would never come back. This broke his Mother's heart but did not hurt my feelings. I had none. My heart had become cold and non-caring towards Dan. But the moment I heard his voice I loved him, a strange and wonderful and new emotion. "Jesus *in* me" loved Dan. I was no longer a "Prodigal Father." There now was room in my heart for Dan, lots of room!! I saw Dan as I saw B__, precious and beautiful in the sight of God. I had been healed at the bus station. I could love again. The father could welcome home his lost son, a son who had only the clothes on his back to his name.

I said, "Dan, God has changed my heart. I love you. You are welcome to come home. You don't have to cow down to me; I love you." Two days later I picked Dan up at the bus station. I did not recognize him at first. Our embrace was not awkward. Anger, bitterness, disappointment, betrayal - all those deadly thoughts and emotions stayed at the bus station. The healing between father and son is one of the greatest miracles. Thank you, Jesus. I acknowledge You Lord, Savior and Miracle Worker before all men.

B__ called while I was writing this story. I believe with all my heart that the Glory of God will be revealed through her and that many "street people" will find their way back to their "Father's House" because of Jesus *in* B__, the Hope of Glory. I love you B__; I love you Dan. I dedicate this story to you and all those who are as yet afar off. The world is sweeping you and others like you into dumpsters as if you were worthless souls. May your pain, your agony, your confusion write a story through my pen that will touch hearts and set the captives free.

And now we have come to the end of the story of "The Prodigal Father." More epistles might follow.

Serving Jesus as Stretcher Bearer,
Peter D. Laue

God and Man at Table Are Sat Down

Words and Music by Rev. Robert J. Stamps



1. O, wel-come all ye no - ble saints of old, _____ as
 2. El - ders, mar - tyr's, all are fall - ing down; _____
 3. Who is this who spreads the vic - t'ry feast? _____
 4. Beg - gars, lame, and har - lots al - so here; _____ re -
 5. Wor - ship in the pres - ence of the Lord, _____ with
 6. When at last this earth shall pass a - way, _____ when



now be - fore your ver - y eyes un - fold _____ the won - ders all so
 proph - ets, pa - tri - archs are gath - 'ring 'round, _____ what an - gels longed to
 Who is this who makes our war - ring; cease? _____ Je - sus, Ris - en
 pen - tant pub - li - cans are draw - ing near; _____ way - ward sons come
 joy - ful songs and hearts in one ac - cord, _____ and let our Host at
 Je - sus and His bride are one to stay, _____ the feast of love is



long a - go fore - told. _____ God and man at ta - ble are sat down. _____
 see now man has found. _____ God and man at ta - ble are sat down. _____
 Sa - vior, Prince of Peace. _____ God and man at ta - ble are sat down. _____
 home with - out a fear. _____ God and man at ta - ble are sat down. _____
 ta - ble be a - dored. _____ God and man at ta - ble are sat down. _____
 just be - gun that day. _____ God and man at ta - ble are sat down. _____



God and man at ta - ble are sat down. _____ God and man at ta - ble are sat down. _____

The Book of Matthew

Chapter 22:1-14

Jesus told several other stories to show what the Kingdom of Heaven is like. "For instance," He said, "it can be illustrated by the story of the king who prepared a great wedding dinner for his son. Many guests were invited, and when the banquet was ready he sent messengers to notify everyone that it was time to come. But all refused! So he sent other servants to tell them, 'Everything is ready and the roast is in the oven. Hurry!'

"But the guests he had invited merely laughed and went on about their business, one to his farm, another to his store; others beat up his messengers and treated them shamefully, even killing some of them.

"Then the angry king sent out his army and destroyed the murderers and burned their city. And he said to his servants, 'The wedding feast is ready, and the guests I invited aren't worthy of the honor. Now go out to the street corners and invite everyone you see.'

"So the servants did, and brought in all they could find, good and bad alike; and the banquet hall was filled with guests. But when the king came in to meet the guests he noticed a man who wasn't wearing the wedding robe provided for him.

"Friend,' he asked, 'how does it happen that you are here without a wedding robe?' And the man had no reply.

"Then the king said to his aides, 'Bind him hand and foot and throw him out into the outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.' For many are called, but few are chosen."

SIX YEARS LATER

Dear M__,

For many years, we reached out to your sister as if she were an angel of light sent from heaven. For many years, we affectionately called her "The Angel of the Street." We applauded her, encouraged her, served her to the very best of our ability and invited her to come and stay with us numerous times. At one point, we invited both local and out-of-town friends to come and celebrate her deliverance from the powers of darkness. We had many guests on that occasion, but the "honored guest" did not show up. It was a very disappointing and humiliating experience. You might remember that your mother bought the plane ticket for her. We had made arrangements to have someone pick her up at the airport. We had arranged for a time of great fellowship and good food. I was poised to write her victory story. Instead, I am compelled to write this letter.

For many years, I pampered your sister and told her that I would serve as her personal secretary. Many times I rushed to the post office with cards, letters, books, music and teaching tapes, gifts, and surprises. We paid part of a judgment against her for disappearing from an apartment without paying the rent that she owed. One time I allowed her to charge a portion of her motel expenses to our Visa card to keep her off the streets. For a number of years, we maintained an 800 telephone number so that she could call us anytime at our expense when she was in distress. We reached out to her with unconditional love and acceptance; but unwittingly, we spared the rod and spoiled the child.

We know that you and your sister's daughter, who has her own family now, have also reached out to her. I thank you for being so very caring. God will reward you. You have done everything possible to help this very lost and confused soul find her place in the world and in the family of God. But as we have all learned the hard way, she allowed herself to be pampered, but never corrected. She attracted all the wrong people, including the father of her child, who is serving a life sentence. You did all you could so that she would become a responsible individual and a blessing instead of a burden to her family and to society. The very fabric of our society is tattered and torn because more and more fallen angels like your sister are calling streets, parks, mental institutions, and prisons their home. All of us in some way have contributed to this tragedy.

As I review all that has happened during the past 25 years, I now see that I have unwittingly contributed to her delinquent behavior. I see no fruit, healing, victory, or deliverance. I see only rebellion, anger, and pride. Instead of faith, I see wishful thinking and unhealthy fantasy. Yes, your sister got rid of some debilitating and expensive habits, but the intrinsic problems remained and have thus far not budged as far as I can see. Maybe

our reward is that we are learning how the invisible and tyrannical powers of Satan control lives and, in turn, exhaust the lives of others who try to help them. I am glad that you and I agree that her problems cannot be remedied by an arsenal of medication, but only by the hand of almighty God. Two of your siblings are now “living proof” that medication and shock treatment have hurt a lot more than they have helped.

I was deceived by your sister’s pathetic street life. I was deceived and seduced by her many flattering words and prayers. I was seduced by flattery that attempted to elevate her and me to a place of spiritual prominence. I was manipulated by repeated threats of suicide. She would say, “Peter, you are my only hope, my only rope.” She would hang on to me instead of Jesus for dear life. Shame on me, for I allowed it. My wife saw through this charade immediately but could not gain my attention without arousing unholy anger that was lurking in my own heart. I had to find out the hard way that I was being seduced by flattery and an unhealthy need to be needed. My wife is to be commended for not interfering, even though she knew my efforts would be fruitless. She stepped aside, knowing that I would have to learn some important lessons the hard way.

Here are the intrinsic problems as I see them today. I first searched for clues in my own backyard. Your sister would never have been able to become a part of our lives if I had been a healthier, a wiser, a more courageous, and a more secure individual. For many years, I was unable to confront anyone; and whenever I did try, my techniques were ineffective and wimpy. To tell you the truth, I was actually afraid of confronting your sister. It seemed that Satan, or one of his high-ranking cohorts, was either blocking or twisting my words and efforts to set her free. My being kind, gentle, and accommodating placated the savage, hidden beast in her, but did not help her one iota. For years I confronted Satan without the authority of Christ being in me. I confronted him in my own strength and wisdom. Only after I realized that only the Lord and the Lord in me could defeat Satan did I see the light at the end of a long, dark tunnel. I had such a desperate need to be the hero in the story! That posture made me vulnerable to the deceptions and fury of Satan. There is only one Lord, one Hero, and one Savior. His name is Jesus, and Satan knows that. (Jude 9, II Chronicles 2:15)

To be able to understand how Satan has manipulated your sister and me, I have turned to the Word of God. There are a number of verses that now help me to understand the problem. Romans 12:3 warns, “For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, **not to think of himself more highly than he ought to.**” As long as I have known your sister, she has seen herself as a mover and shaker with great spiritual significance, yet refused to accept the role of a servant. As you know, she is always waiting for some big TV evangelist to discover her virtues and healing gifts. She believes that every jet in the sky is bringing her prince. She manipulates others and begs for favors, even though she is quite capable of working. She rails against those who don’t “Amen” her lifestyle or spirituality, including the churches in her area. Anyone who disagrees with her becomes her immediate enemy. She controls and intimidates others with her anger and seduces the unwary with her “street-wise” behavior. The welfare system and a variety of helps organizations have helped her to survive, but never to succeed.

It was a verse from the book of Hebrews that woke me up. It is written, “If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.” (Hebrews 12:7–8). Yes, without correction we are bastards and bitchy!

I have never in my life heard such blasphemous words and railing accusations as when I tried to correct your sister. Even the gentlest suggestions caused her to explode into a tirade of ugly words. And I am old enough to be her father. The accusations she brought against others who contradicted her in any way were equally vehement. She saw demons in everyone who opposed her, including her own daughter and son-in-law. She conversed with demons only she could see or hear. I cannot tell you how often she accused God, although she seemed to have no problem speaking and using the name of Jesus and praying for people to be saved. That’s what I would call an oxymoron. I am reminded of words from the book of Revelation, chapter 12, verses 9 and 10: “And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world. He was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, ‘Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ, **for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.**’” Yes, Satan and his fallen angels no longer have God’s ear. They have been cast out of heaven. I suddenly realized that I had been pleading with God for 25 years to allow one of those fallen angels to have a place in heaven. I must remind myself and the Church of Jesus’ words:

“Beware of false teachers who come disguised as harmless sheep, but are wolves and will tear you apart. You can detect them by the way they act, just as you can detect a tree by its fruit. You need never confuse grapevines with thorn bushes or figs with thistles.

“Different kinds of fruit trees can quickly be identified by examining their fruit. A variety that produces delicious fruit never produces an inedible kind. And a tree producing an inedible kind can’t produce what is good. So the trees having inedible fruit are chopped down and thrown on the fire. Yes, the way to identify a tree or person is by the kind of fruit produced.

“Not all who sound religious are godly people. They may refer to me as ‘Lord, Lord, we told others about You and used your name to cast out demons and to do many other great miracles.’ But I will reply, ‘You have never been mine. Go away, for your deeds are evil.’” (Matthew 7:21–23)

Your sister is no longer welcome in our home. My wife and I refuse to be manipulated, bashed, or exploited by anyone who wears a backpack filled with unclean and hidden hitchhikers. Flatteries, guilt routines, intimidation—none of these approaches will open the gate to our hearts any longer. Yes, your sister is still “The Angel of the Street,” but she is no longer the kind of angel we care to have around or recommend to others. Is there any hope for your sister or others like her? Yes, there is! The psalmist says, “The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.” (Psalm 34:18)

The only way some of us learn is the hard way. I have learned the hard way. I may be a slow learner, but I am a thorough learner. It is my calling and duty now to trumpet what I have learned into as many lives as I have strength and breath to do so. I do not believe it will take another 25 years before I recognize whether an angel is trying to help me or seduce me. Thirty minutes should be ample. By the way, another name for Satan is “that great deceiver.” If there ever was a con artist, it is he. Many have enrolled in his school. Many have graduated from his school. Many have been recruited by him and don’t even realize it. He was cast out of heaven, but he is surely having a heyday on earth. I believe his days are numbered, and he knows it. There is not enough Prozac and not enough alcohol in the world to calm the fears of impending doom for those who are not right with God. I am so glad we agree on that point.

Here is a brief example of how that great deceiver works amongst us today.

1. Satan sows fear, anxiety, and panic into our hearts—many unsuspecting hearts.
2. The medical profession has convinced us that fear, anxiety, frenzy, depression, rage, etc. are the result of a chemical imbalance in our bodies and can be successfully treated with medication. This may be true, but often does not identify the real culprit, the root cause.
3. A drug company develops Prozac or some other drug to calm our nerves or “stabilize” our thoughts and emotions.
4. We ignore the “gift of desperation” and allow ourselves to be medicated. We see our distress as a sickness rather than an intruder and enemy. We start taking some drug and thereby disable the internal “fire alarm” instead of addressing the real problem. We feel better and stop looking for the underlying causes of our fears, anxiety, depression, anger, rage, lust, or whatever.
5. Now we are trapped and remain trapped in a vicious cycle of dependency on stimulants or depressants with a variety of names, but all are very expensive, and some come with debilitating and permanent side effects. The spider has caught another fly and sucks the very life out of the paralyzed fly. Let’s not blame the drug companies. It’s Satan who must be exposed. When treatment with Prozac and similar substances becomes the legitimate and socially acceptable form of treatment, Satan has found another “cash cow.” He never kills it; he milks it to death. A “cash cow” may be as innocent looking as a little white pill, a coke, a bottle of beer, a cigarette, TV, or it may be as vile as pornography. Whose “cash cow” might you be?
6. We are once more serving those “Egyptian taskmasters.” Their whips are fueled by an unquenchable thirst for power and profits. The scenery is different; but the scenario is the same. We have become slaves and don’t even realize it.

Is Satan real? You bet he is. He always operates under a cloak of anonymity and in sanctimonious ways. Appearing as an angel of light is one of his favorite tricks. Deception and flattery are his stock in trade. Deception and flattery are his stock in trade. Is God real? You bet He is. God can and will protect us if we call upon the name of **Jesus**; but we must also learn to protect ourselves and **always** remain on guard. Satan’s bag of tricks is filled with flattery, fear, vanity,

peer pressure, depression, suicide, rage, deception, and rebellion against authority. Deception, flattery, and rebellion against authority are his trump cards. Don't play poker with Satan. If you believe in heaven and would like to camp there forever, don't invite such unclean, evil spirits to hitchhike in your backpack. If you have, trash those imposters, freeloaders, and thieves. Do it now! Tomorrow it will be much harder!

Don't squander God's life, joy, peace, and love within you. And don't let Satan steal them from you. We must wear **ALL** the armor of God (Ephesians 6:11–18) and exchange our wimpy, self-seeking, and self-gratifying old nature for that of a fearless warrior and crusader. I am writing these words for your protection and as a warning to those who may eventually read them. I have asked Jesus to help me identify all doors in my own life that need to be shut, and which I cannot shut by myself. My relationship with your sister was one of those doors.

I also see your sister today as one of those foolish, irresponsible virgins, who will not keep her lamp full of oil and will not keep her wick trimmed. She continues to beg, borrow, and steal oil from others. Many adults continue to drink from the breasts of others, even when they are grown. We must neither initiate nor allow these sick dependencies to continue. If we do, it is our own fault. I see these people as spiritual, emotional, and financial parasites. Like leaches or ticks, they attach themselves to another living organism and suck the lifeblood out of them. Are we the spider, the fly, both, or neither in the poem that follows? The Lord and no one else must be our shepherd, provider, and source. Both His rod and His staff are to comfort us. (Psalm 23)

God's instructions are, "Don't get ready; stay ready." Jesus will appear when we least expect Him, just as He promised. The foolish virgins will be left in the dark. The parable in the book of Matthew, chapter 25, verses 1 through 13, tells the story in Jesus' own words.

Once more, I would like to acknowledge the role of a good woman in a man's life. She does not have a need to shine. Her only need is to serve her God and be loved, appreciated, and respected by her husband. I want to acknowledge those unsung heroes who stand by the side of their husbands through thick and thin, like my wife, Rebekah. Thank you, Lord, for giving some of us stubborn men such steadfast, loving, and forgiving wives. We really don't deserve them. Your heart speaks profusely through their love and steadfast commitment to You and to us.

Jesus, the Lamb of God, was betrayed and crucified. Should we expect any less? (Galatians 2:20) Jesus, the Lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed (Revelation 5:5). Should we expect any less? Jesus came to exchange our cruel and stony hearts for His merciful and bold heart. **WOW!** Have you apprehended this wonderful gift—the Lion and the Lamb, the full stature of the Son of God? (Ephesians 4:13). Please consider these words and this gift for yourself.

In the name of His Majesty, my Lord and Editor,

Peter





The Spider and the Fly

By Mary Howitt 1799 – 1888



“Will you walk into my parlor?” said the spider
to the fly;

“This the prettiest little parlor that ever you did
spy.

The way into my parlor is up a winding stair,
And I have many pretty things to show when
you are there.”

“O no, no, said the little fly, “to ask me is in
vain,
For who goes up your winding stair can ne’er
come down again.”

“I’m sure you must be weary, dear, with
soaring up so high;
Will you rest upon my little bed?” said the
spider to the fly.

“There are pretty curtains drawn around, the
sheets are fine and thin,
And if you like to rest awhile, I’ll snugly tuck
you in.”

“O no, no,” said the little fly, “for I’ve often
heard it said,
They *never, never wake* again, who sleep upon
your bed.”

Said the cunning spider to the fly, “Dear friend,
what shall I do,
To prove the warm affection I’ve always felt for
you?

I have within my pantry good store of all that’s
nice;
I’m sure you’re very welcome; will you please
to take a slice?”

“O no, no,” said the little fly, “kind sir, that
cannot be;
I’ve heard what’s in your pantry, and I do not
wish to see.”

“Sweet creature!” said the spider, “you’re witty
and you’re wise,
How handsome are your gauzy wings, how
brilliant are your eyes.”

I have a little looking-glass upon my parlor
shelf.

If you’ll step in one moment, dear, you shall
behold yourself.”

“I thank you, gentle sir,” she said, “for what
you’re pleased to say,
And bidding you good-morning *now*, I’ll call
another day.”

The spider turned him round about, and went
into his den,
For well he knew the silly fly would soon be
back again:

So he wove a subtle web, in a little corner sly,
And set his table ready to dine upon the fly.
Then he came out to his door again, and
merrily did sing,

“Come hither, hither, pretty fly, with the pearl
and silver wing:
Your robes are green and purple; there’s a
crest upon your head;
Your eyes are like the diamond bright, but mine
are dull as lead.”

Alas, alas: how very soon this silly little fly,
Hearing his wily flattering words, came slowly
flitting by.

With buzzing wings she hung aloft, then near
and nearer drew,
Thinking only of her brilliant eyes, and green
and purple hue;

Thinking only of her crested head – *poor
foolish thing!*
At last,

Up jumped the cunning spider, and fiercely
held her fast.

He dragged her up his winding stair, into his
dismal den,
Within his little parlor; but she ne’er came out
again!

And now, dear little children, who may this
story read,
To idle, silly, flattering words, I pray you ne’er
give heed;
Unto an evil counselor close heart, and ear,
and eye,
And take a lesson from this tale of the Spider
and the Fly.

BARBARA

Barbara was a part of our lives for 20 years beginning in 1981. She was a ward of the State of Missouri and was never able to visit us. Our friendship was primarily by correspondence since Barbara was deaf. When I asked if she would like me to pray for her hearing she wrote, "No, I prefer the world of silence." She called occasionally via an operator who translated her words. She was mentally ill; nevertheless it was a delight to correspond with her as you will be able to glean from her letters to me. The correspondence was voluminous and gave me deep insights into the thought-life of someone diagnosed with schizophrenia. Barbara had business cards made for herself. She called herself, "**The Angel of the Impossible.**" She was a very beautiful angel. I am introducing Barbara via two of the many letters she sent to us. I copied them for her and dressed them up with graphics. She made copies and distributed them amongst the people living in the same care home with her. Over the years she was shifted between various homes. For a number of years she was able to live alone in a trailer under the supervision of the Department of Mental Health. This was the best season of her life.

Barbara smoked, a vice that eventually contributed to her early death when she was in her mid-fifties. She begged me on numerous occasions to help her shake the habit. She asked me to write a prayer for her that she could recite daily. I did. I made a sandblasted sign to help her focus on her decision to quit. But she was chained to her habit to the point that I became increasingly frustrated. I finally stopped praying for her, because the subject of smoking had become divisive. I love being Barbara's advocate and sharing with you not only two of her letters but also the prayer. The prayer is our combined gift, Barbara's and mine for everyone who is addicted to cigarettes and wants to quit.

Friday morning October 2, 1998 - 4:30 am (the death of Jesus)

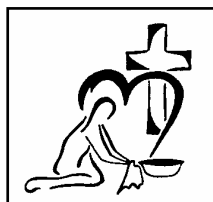
Dear Peter & Rebekah,

Hi, dear saints in the Lord! My prayers have been answered. Yesterday or the other day, I was in great agony of spirit. I felt trapped, alone and desperate. I had a visitor. This visitor gave me the words of Jesus. He said to me: "I love you forever. In my kingdom you shall reign with me."

You know the picture of the "Rock" I sent you, the one that is sitting on top of my microwave oven? Well, the words, "The LORD IS MY ROCK AND MY SALVATION." One night I was sitting at the kitchen table. I had a most holy experience. The word "**LORD**" in the rock became very holy to me. "The LORD is my ROCK, and my SALVATION."

I saw the holiness and glory of the LORD. And it lasted for several hours. I felt the need to pray and commune with the LORD. I humbled myself and sought the face of the LORD. I am weeping as I write these words.

What I was experiencing was the verse, all unrighteousness." My spiritual life was But, as I prayed and sought the face of the sins I had committed since 1973, since I was for each sin. I felt the unconditional love of words of this visitor, that I gave God all I had, loved the LORD so much. I knew at last that I



"He is just and faithful to cleanse us from dead. I was dead in sins and trespasses. LORD, He showed me each of the different saved. I repented and asked His forgiveness JESUS. I was so grateful to God for the my life, my trust money - every thing. I could trust Him.

The LORD is holy. I worship Him with these words, "Holy, Holy, Holy LORD of HOSTS." It's the only way I know how to worship Him. And, Peter, I want to thank you for your friendship - for sharing your life with me and others. I love your wife, Rebekah, so much. I know I will reign with Him **forever** in heaven. I need never doubt Him again.

Holy, Holy, Holy LORD God of Hosts. He is real. He is holy. And He loves us. I had never before experienced the Holiness of the LORD. And I believe with all my heart that Princess Diane and Mother Teresa are with Him. And, also Jessica Savitch, the TV anchor woman. I love JESUS so much.

The Rock was transformed. It became most holy. Peter. In the State Hospital, I saw the burning bush outside the window. And the word "HELL" on the psychiatric nurse's desk.

I bought the rock when I moved here. And I lived here three years before this Rock became most holy. I could not understand why my life was "so dead." The LORD honored my faith and trust. "Without faith it is impossible to please Him." For 25 years I clung to Him. I knew I had sinned most grievously against the LORD. I was like King Nebuchadnezzar. I was insane.

The LORD told me I was cured, that I had finally acknowledged the love and holiness of the LORD. Never again will I sin against the LORD. Forgive me, JESUS. I saw shrinks for 25 years. I am well. I am whole. I believe this with my whole heart. The LORD is holy. Hallelujah!!! PRAISE THE LORD!

This rock will forever remind me of the love and mercy of the LORD. He means business. "For God is a consuming fire." (Hebrews). I know now that the LORD God had a plan for my life.

My parents were virgins when they married. I was a harlot. That's the truth. I will never marry. I will serve the LORD GOD the rest of my life. Everything I have is His. I have found my place in the sun. And I am happy and content. I do not lack anything. I am rich in JESUS. JESUS is coming back for His people. "The Son of Man will come in the clouds with great power and glory." "Watch and pray."

Right now I feel the presence of the LORD. He is most holy.

For 25 years, Peter, Satan used me. He used me. He whipped me around. Satan is the father of lies, a **murderer**. Satan hates the LORD. He knows he is doomed.

JESUS IS LORD!!!

Today I was at the clubhouse (the Mineral Area CPRC program for the mentally ill). Theresa, who is a Catholic, saw me, and most humbly asked me if she could come to my trailer and clean it for me. She had sensed the change in my life.

Peter, I love you in the LORD. He is holy.

I have my Rock, my Altar in my home. And a spare bedroom. The spare bedroom has paintings from my mother and grandmother. It is a sanctuary, a most holy place. It does not have anything Satan could use. It is simply a quiet place.

Many people have helped me with my new home. The LORD says, "Give me the blind who see, and the deaf who hear." PRAISE THE LORD!!! He is holy!!!

Peter, if you feel led to, send B__ this letter. I love B__. I have loved B__ ever since you sent me a letter she wrote you.

As long as I have my Rock, and my Catholic family Bible, the King James Version Bible, and the Living Bible, I will be OK.

The LORD uses the despised people of the world. I am deaf, incompetent, mentally ill; but I love the LORD. The LORD will use me. I am now cleansed. The LORD loves me. And He has a plan for my life. I am well.

And the LORD GOD has confirmed this. I have seen men who go by my window and acknowledge my presence. I have seen insects, birds, and animal wildlife. The world is alive with the love of the LORD. The men who deliver my "meds" treat me with respect.

You are right, Peter. God works in secret. I love your letters and observations, also.

I do not know how I will get your book, "The Wood Blossom," into print again.

This visitor who gave me the words of the LORD - his name is David Richardson. He used to be my old neighbor; and I used to fellowship with him. He asked me for food, cigarettes and money. And I gave them to him. The LORD will use him mightily in His Kingdom. I am honored to know him. He is presently separated from his wife and lives on the other side of town.

The sign you made for me "Pray Without Ceasing" is most holy.

The LORD made me see it in a new light. And also the ceramic "Ten Commandments" (two tablets) also is most holy. Don Purvis, a hard-of-hearing born-again Christian, gave it to me.

I lead a simple life. I do not go out very much. I feed the stray cats. One night I was sitting outside in the evening when it was dark with my porch light on. A stray cat eagerly approached the cat food and ate some of it. The cat thanked me for the food, rubbing his head against the corner of the trailer porch, showing love and affection for me. It did not come near me. And it left me.

I am most grateful to the LORD GOD for His mercy and love and forgiveness. My old counselor, Kathie, is going to Europe from October 2 to October 15. She has promised me she will send a postcard from Lourdes, France, and a real rosary from Lourdes. I will say the rosary once a week as my "thank you" to the LORD for my most excellent Catholic upbringing. They say a Catholic education is the best.

I praise Him for the freedom and flexibility of the routine I now enjoy. I lived at New Horizon RCF II for six long years. The ten years I spent with Mom have gloriously prepared me for my new life. I have lived here for three years now. I am a success in God's eyes.

Dennise, my old neighbor, now has one foot in my trailer and one foot in her sister Lynn's trailer. She is homeless and operates out of my trailer. We deeply love each other and have a great deal of respect for each other.

Thank you, Peter, for opening your heart to me. I have learned much from you.

I have been writing this letter since 4:30 this morning. It is now 7 am. A new day is dawning. And I eagerly welcome it. It looks like it will be a beautiful day.

**PRAISE THE LORD!
HE IS HOLY**



Much love, Barbara

Saturday (4:30 am) October 3, 1998

Dear Peter & Rebekah,

I cannot stop writing. The LORD revealed to me that I had been demon possessed. This came about from all my sexual sins. Doesn't the Bible say, "How can light have fellowship with the dark?" It warns godly men and women against marrying unbelievers. Because I was demon possessed, I was extremely dangerous. You may have sensed this in your spirit or had a difficulty with some of my letters. Thank you, Peter, for your godly love and compassion. You responded to my deepest need.

David Richardson helped me see this. God used him in my life.

You know, Peter and Rebekah, that God reveals Himself to babes? I could not stop re-reading the last letter I wrote last night. The presence of the LORD was very strong. The LORD has performed a glorious miracle. The LORD was my exorcist. He knew I could not get help from anyone. The LORD cast out the demons from me. I do not know how many demons dwelt in me. I do not wish to know. But I feel the LORD GOD has given me a message to give to the world.

Sex sins are dangerous. The sex drive is a fire. I just cannot think of the words I wish to use. "The sex drive is a dangerous fire." How well do I know this.

When I was a little girl, I was at my grandparents' house, visiting with my parents. I was an only child. Well, I found an article in the Reader's Digest. It was titled, "The Case for Chastity." I liked the article and copied it on my grandfather's old typewriter.

A shrink I saw reported on my case that "I had religious and sexual ideas." I was hurt by this, for I had trusted this shrink. "Vain is the help of man." AMEN! AMEN!

I can't believe this; yet I can (about my being demon possessed). I trust the LORD. He told me the truth. It is so sobering. The world needs this message. You know all about the fanfare of President Clinton's affair.

This is extremely delicate ground. The Bible is full of people who committed sexual sins. PRAISE THE LORD! The Bible - Gosh, Peter and Rebekah. David Richardson has a sister in the deliverance ministry. I have read books on deliverance. So many words, on and on. I loved Catherine Marshall's books.

When I moved into a nursing home in Birch Tree, Missouri, I bought a book, a novel about Mary Magdalene (before I moved.) The LORD was protecting me and prevented me from reading it. I became crazy because I could not handle old people's problems and deep needs. They sucked the life out of me, the little trust and faith I had in the LORD. I had to get out of there. But the head nurse I had befriended suggested I go back to Farmington for re-evaluation.

So, I did this. PRAISE THE LORD! **Nothing** is impossible with God!!! **Nothing**. He is sovereign. People think that God is hard to please. Not so. I love the LORD with all my heart. He can do anything.

One day while living with my mother in Mountain View, Missouri, I read a book, *Pigs in the Parlor* by Frank and Ida Mae Hammond. It dealt with the subject of deliverance. I was extremely upset after I read the book. I asked the LORD to send an adult to our door at exactly 6 am to confirm the fact that I was schizophrenic. The LORD sent the newspaper delivery man at exactly 6 am!!! We hardly had any adult company.

I had terrible problems; but the LORD sustained me. He sent encouragement from time to time. If it were not for the LORD, I would have disgraced and saddened my family with suicide.

Peter, I read the book, *The Exorcist*, by William Peter Blatty. I'm not sure of the complete name??? I became crazy after I read the book. The fear was great.

I just can't believe this. Me demon possessed??? It does make sense, though. Experience proves this. The LORD does not lie. Oh, how I love the LORD!. PRAISE THE LORD!!!

I have been delivered by a mighty miracle of the LORD. I am free. But I have to live with the consequences. I feel I will always need medication; and I feel I will always have the need to smoke. But praise the LORD! The LORD came to me when I needed Him. The LORD is holy. "The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom."

The Bible says, "Do not give pearls to swine." This letter is most sacred, a letter from the heart. Please guard this letter in the safest place possible. The LORD means business. The LORD works in secret.

Satan is the prince of this world. JESUS said, "The prince of this world is coming, but he has nothing in Me."

Satan is incredibly cunning. We are no match for him. Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Satan uses fear as a weapon. "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of love, of power and a sound mind."

JESUS IS LORD! It is nearly 6 am. The LORD just gave me the verse "Guard your heart and your lips."

Forgive me, Peter, if I have hurt you. I know I have deeply hurt you. Remember you told me in one of your letters that "something in you broke" when you were making the sign, "Pray Without Ceasing" for me? I humbly ask your forgiveness. JESUS said, "Forgive 7 times 7." Is that right, Peter?

"Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord." Praise the LORD! I am shaking my head in wonder. Holy, Holy, Holy LORD GOD of Hosts. PRAISE THE LORD!

Much love, Barbara

HE IS HOLY



PRAISE
WITHOUT CEASING



A Smoker's Prayer

Dear Father-God, Creator of heaven and earth, Author of light, goodness, mercy and justice. I come to You exhausted, defeated and full of pain. I am a prisoner of my own foolishness, selfishness and disobedience to Your precious Word.

Father, I have defiled my body which is the temple of Your Holy Spirit. I am now wearing the grave clothes of death woven by my own hands one cigarette, one pack, one carton at a time. I have exchanged my beauty for ashes, my health for sickness, my freedom for chains.

Father, I have tried to quit habit. I have tried to do and each time I have have fallen deeper and addiction. I have not only so lovingly created for me, cloud of filth for others to unpaid to satisfy this another cigarette. Your has been drowned out by addiction. Self and self-the throne of my life while weeping for freedom.



and throw off this filthy this in my own strength failed. And each time I deeper into the pit of my violated my own body You but have also created a breathe. Debts have gone endless craving for sweet, gentle, loving voice the clamoring voice of my indulgence have been on my imprisoned soul is

Father, I have rationalized for years that smoking was a trivial sin and would not separate us. How wrong I was. How I have deceived myself. Your Word says that "The wages of sin is death". There are no trivial sins. I have had to learn the hard way that "The wages of sin is death" and that any sin does separate us from You. And Father, by my example I have led many others down the road to death and destruction. Do not lay these many children of my foul habit to my account, but be merciful to them and me.

Father, have mercy upon me. Your Word says that Your mercy is greater than Your judgment. Send Your laborers, Your ministering angels and Your Holy Spirit to unwrap the grave clothes of my addiction. Lazarus could not loosen his own grave clothes and neither can I. I need Your help to live and be free.

I confess my sin, my selfishness and disobedience to You now. I ask You to forgive me and to heal me. I bring my petitions to Your Throne of Grace in the name of Your Son Jesus. You have said that the Blood of Your Son Jesus cleanses us from all unrighteousness. And that if we confess our sins, You will cleanse us. Father, cleanse me, heal me, set me free from this filthy, selfish habit; and I will praise Your name forever with these lips and lungs that have served Satan and self.

Father, I thank You for hearing my prayer and setting me free.

Amen

Angel of Mercy Joe Breen – Friend and Pilot

We met Joe Breen in 1986. Joe is pictured on the left. Skip Anderson – friend and log home builder is pictured on the right. Joe had landed at Stevens Air Field in a small rented plane. The airport is just a little over a mile from our house. What drew him to Pagosa Springs we cannot remember. Only as the years went by were we certain that we were meant to meet. Our friendship was a part of God’s design. I love making Joe a part of the tapestry of “To Hell and Back.” Hell for Joe had many aspects and seasons. One of these was living under a bridge and being homeless.



Joe was the pilot that God used to fly me to the Terrell State Mental hospital in 1987 as mentioned in chapter XIII. Joe’s burning desire was to be used as a pilot to fly missions of mercy. He earned his living selling cars; but flying was his passion and mercy describes his heart. He was good at selling cars and worked hard and long hours, but he was never all that fond of his job. He was a very generous man and often parted with his last penny. Some of his hard-earned money was sent in our direction. His life was cut short because of complications connected with alcohol. Alcohol was his way of camouflaging deep-seated hurts that he rarely shared with anyone.

During the last six months of his life Joe called me nearly every day from Texarkana. I cannot recall the specifics of our conversation but know that it always centered on Jesus Christ. There was not a time when we did not sense the presence of the Holy Spirit in our midst when we talked with one another. Time seemed to stand still whenever we visited. I remember pacing back and forth in our living room when we talked. It was a happy time and I could never sit still for long.

Joe died in the home of a widow who loved him and treated him like her own son. This widow had read the article in the Texarkana Gazette that chronicled Joe’s odyssey from working a steady job to being homeless and living under a bridge. I am sharing the article here so that you will meet my friend Joe and love him like the widow who gave him shelter. Maybe one day you will invite someone into your home who lives under a bridge. It might be another Joe and an angel of mercy in disguise. I also hope that someone will read these words who has a passion for flying and take up where Joe failed to get “off the ground.” Joe will be looking down from heaven, smiling, and saying, “Thank You.”

Rebekah just reminded me of words that Joe repeatedly spoke to us, and I am sure, also to others. He used to say, “**Just be nice!**”

Story from the Texarkana Gazette – November 24, 1994 – page 17 A

Joe Breen once had a family, a home and a job. Those are all gone now, and Joe Breen is just one of many who are ...

Homeless in the two Texarkanas

By Fran Preseley of the Gazette Staff

Last Christmas Eve Joe Breen stood in the freezing rain along an Idaho highway trying to thumb a ride to somewhere, anywhere. Hope was as distant as the Texas home he lost months before in a flood.

Tucked shivering against his body and under his thin jacket was Joshua, his Yorkshire terrier. Braced against the wind and sleet, Breen fought back the despair. “God, I don’t know what to do,” he prayed.

Nearly a year later, he is no nearer an answer or an address. Now he lives in a small tent near Interstate 30 in Texarkana. It is improvement.

He spent most of the summer calling an overpass home, sleeping on a 3-1/2-foot-wide ledge just below the roadway.

“You haven’t lived until wheeler’s horn under a bridge at 3. Though he is not happy about his without humor. In lighter under the bridge the Taj Mahal. In reality is more painful.

“I rolled off the shelf and foot drop,” Breen said, ruefully,

“I’m not sleeping worth a exhausted. Sometimes I’m so tired

Breen slept in full view of bridge, and he said sometimes to scare him.

Since coming her from Idaho, Breen has lived in vacant lots, under the bridge and now in a tent. Local shelters might take him in, but they wouldn’t take his companion. “It was a problem finding shelter in Texarkana with Joshua,” Breen said. “If they wouldn’t take Joshua, I wouldn’t stay there.”

Joshua is gone now, apparently stolen. Breen continues to have a difficult time improving his circumstances.

It is a hard to find work without an address or telephone to provide a perspective employer.

“What would I tell them?” Breen asked. “General Deliver, I-30?”

Breen left Idaho last winter because he couldn’t find work there. But his journey started long before a van pulled over and carried him south to Arkansas. Until last year, Breen always had a roof over his head.

He grew up in Fort Worth, Texas, living in foster homes because his own parents abused him. He was a fairly typical working, married, tax-paying citizen before his world began to crumble around him.

First, the company he worked for as a car salesman filed bankruptcy and let him go. Then the barbecue business he had on the side failed. Finally, his wife left him.

“It crushed me when she left,” he said. “I still love her.”

Breen took Joshua, some money he had saved, and left Fort Worth to start over in another location. He bought a little house near the Brazos River outside a small town. Two months later, the Brazos River flooded and destroyed his property. He lost everything he had.

“Josh and me hitchhiked to Idaho trying to find a town to start over again,” Breen said.

But it was not to be. His next stop was Conway, Arkansas, and then Breen hopped a railroad car to Texarkana earlier this year.

Here, Breen learned many survival skills. He found out the hard way that red ants and mosquitoes find you fast if you sleep in an open field. “I man big red ants,” he said. “I can pull my shirt up right now and show you bites all over the skin.”

So he moved under the overpass where ants and mosquitoes aren’t quite so plentiful. Most recently he was given a tent, and now calls it home

Though he may be homeless, Breen has a daily routine. Each morning he walks to any one of the several nearby stores and does what is necessary to persevere.

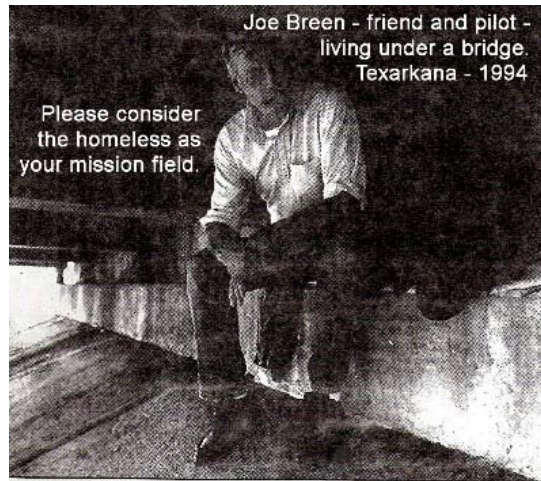
“I have to hustle just to get money enough for basic needs,” he said.

Sometimes he carries a signs “Flood Victim. Homeless and Hungry.”

The sign caught the attention of the Rev. Preston Wilcox and his wife Linda. They remembered times when they had been homeless, too.

They began dipping into their own pocket to help Breen. They gave him the blanket he now sleeps on.

Sometimes Mrs. Wilcox will cook a meal for him in the small apartment where the Wicoxes and their children live.



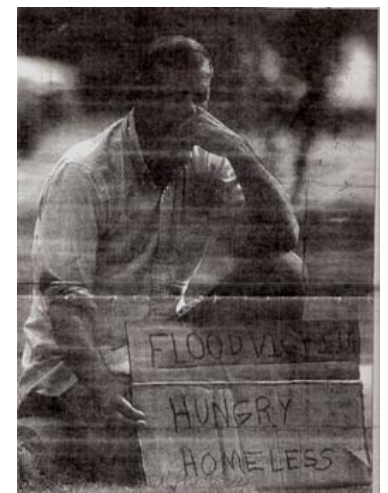
you’ve heard a big 18-a.m,” he says.

circumstances, he is not moments, he called his home a more somber mood, the

hit the pavement below—a 3-last summer.

durn. I’m physically I can’t even sleep.”

travelers who drove under the truckers deliberately honked



AT 49, a wiry man with touches of gray in his hair, Breen appreciates these small pleasures but can't forget the larger displeasures.

"They cooked me a hot breakfast this morning," Breen said, "But I'm just exhausted. I stay exhausted. Right now I'm out of razor blades and shaving cream, and I need a fingernail clipper. I've got an earache and a toothache."

Sitting in the small office of the Wilcoxes' Texarkan church, Breen looks into the future with tired blue eyes. Despite his troubles, Breen is grateful for the help he has gotten in Texarkana.

"Texarkan people are the lovinest people I have ever met," he says.

He has gotten aid from Stephen Cain at the Friendship Center and members of Walnut Street Church of Christ gave him money to renew his driver's license. The Wilcoxes and others offer their friendship, a little money and food from time to time, he says. Even the police have helped.

"But if someone gives me extra food, I can't take it to eat later on," he says. "The ants and other bugs get to it first."

Breen wants a chance to make his own living. But to do that, he needs a roof over his head, a job and transportation. Breen is find out that it is difficult to get that second chance from where he is; it is hard to help yourself without a home.

"People look at me and think I'm a deadbeat, but I have never been on the streets before last year. There ar guys on the street and that is all they want to do.

"I believe the Lord wants me to work, and I *want* to work," he said. "But I don't know how to get off the streets unless somebody helps me."

Portrait of a Heart

Steven Halberstadt needs to have a voice and Steven Halberstadt needs an advocate. And since there are many "Stevens" in the world, many advocates are needed. Steven was the epitome of an "angry man" who hid a very tender heart. He survived by intimidating anyone and everyone who crossed his will or said "no" to him. And he nearly succeeded in adding our names to the list of casualties that littered his life's journey. He found his way to our door all the way from Florida after reading "The Wood Blossom." Shortly after arriving he said, "I am making one final desperate attempt to find the door out of the hell where I have lived most of my life.

He left three weeks later with answers and hope. We are still in touch with one another. He earned a portion of his livelihood as an artist and sign maker after he left our home. Several years later he found a woman who was willing to look past his gruff exterior and love the beautiful Jesus in him. Here is the story as published in our Spring 1989 Stretcher Bearers for Christ newsletter.

Steven

There was a knock at our front door. We went to open it and there stood a man who filled the doorway both physically and also emotionally. He was packaged in a way that our whole household was intimidated by what it saw and felt. We believe that what he owned was all packed in his car, and it wasn't very much.

Steven, the man at the door, had called three months earlier from Florida. He had read our autobiography and felt that we might be the people to help him with a lot of confusion. And since he was a sign maker, he felt that he might also be able to help us. We had almost forgotten about him when we opened the door and there was Steven.

We hosted Steven with all the love, wisdom, and patience that was in us. Long ago we had made the commitment to extend hospitality to strangers. However, our nerves were soon rubbed raw and our patience worn thin by his aggressive and pushy personality. He reminded us of a pushy salesman who might say, “Buy or I’ll shoot!” Nevertheless, there was a part to Steven that would cause my heart to melt. Expressions of love and tenderness would come out so spontaneously and when least expected! We resolved to persevere with this relationship even though many times we were all pushed to the very limit. The weeks went by and it did not seem as if we were able to help Steven.

One morning I woke up very early, about 4:00 a.m. My heart was pounding, my mind confused. Fear and anger whipped through me and Steven became the target of all my ugly emotions. I had thought that these emotions had long been crucified, but apparently they were only dormant and waiting for their opportunity to erupt and ruthlessly destroy a soul.

From time to time in the past I had wrestled with similar strong emotions, especially in the middle of the night. My only workable and walk in a secluded scream and pray until all my extinguished by fatigue, and and revelations from the living

I got dressed and marched along accustomed God of Israel, Jesus, unless and tame my unruly and stretch Your hand across the undone, and the labors of a drain.”

Then suddenly, quite poise came over my whole soul became like a calm sea above me. And in my mind’s had created since he had come the portrait of his heart. I saw down, I saw a tiny open hand waves, I saw one large

clenched fist reach up opposing the outstretched hand of Jesus.

Suddenly I saw the conflict in Steven’s heart; and my own heart was filled with much compassion for that tiny open hand reaching up to Jesus. There was clarity of mind that I did not have moments earlier. I realized that flesh and blood were not my or Steven’s enemy, but that I was wrestling against principalities and power of evil that were opposing God with clenched fists using Steven as their instrument. More than likely Steven was unaware or helpless and was not sure what was happening in him or through him.

For the next two hours until the sun came over the horizon, I wrestled and battled against these powers of evil, mostly by praying out loud in the Spirit, my most effective prayer posture in times of great need. As the sun rose, the battle was over. The giants of fear, anger and confusion had been conquered and a tender, sheltering love for Steven was born into my heart. I knew that the Steven of yesterday could not intimidate me anymore.

The next day and the day after, Steven and I had some long conversations. He said to me, “Peter, you never have to be afraid of me or anyone like me again because you have the Father’s heart.” Suddenly, as Steven spoke these words, the Holy Spirit came upon me and these words from 1 John 4:18 became “rhema” (personal and alive) to me:

“PERFECT LOVE CASTS OUT FEAR.”

What a perfect gift you have left with me, Steven. You pushed me to the end of my limit so that together we had to reach up for the hand of Jesus.



solution had been to get dressed meadow. Here I would cry and boiling emotions were generally followed by insight God of Israel.

hurried to my meadow. As I pathways, I cried out, “Living You come upon me right now unholy emotions, unless you raging sea of my mind, I will be lifetime will surely go down the

suddenly, a great peace and being. The turbulence in my reflecting the moon and stars eye I saw a sign which Steven to stay with us. I see it today as the hand of Jesus reaching reaching up through turbulent clenched fist and one smaller

When he drove away a few days later he said, "Peter, when you see my face again it will be different. The mask of anger and violence will no longer be there."

Ten months have passed since Steven left. Last November he wrote and expressed a strong desire to live in or near Pagosa Springs, to learn more of God's ways and to help raise up a Crafts for Christ Center. With his permission we are printing this story and the below letter. If anyone would like to respond, help, encourage or comment to us or to Steven, you may write to him in care of this address.

Thank you for your prayers, all your encouragement and your many gifts, which make it possible for us to open the front door to those who knock.

Do please come and see for yourselves what the living God of Israel is doing in this place. The "Upper Room" is waiting to accommodate God's weary pilgrims.

Serving Jesus as Stretcher Bearer, Peter D. Laue

A LETTER FROM STEVEN

11-23-1989

Dearest Beloved Brother and Sister:

I was overjoyed to receive your care package...and that it was. The timing was the Lord's and although I expected a check in the mail, your package was much more valuable.

The suffering and pain that my heart has undertaken this last year has been exceedingly abundant, so much so that I have prayed for death, wished for it and hoped for it. All to no avail. How could my joyless life, my emptiness, my travail have any purpose? Why did I have to suffer so that my praise turned to ashes and bitterness in my mouth, my love to deep sorrow and cursing the day of my birth, my faith and trust to fall apart like a jug dropped upon a rock, totally useless?

Just last week I examined myself and decided that I was like the worm, despised of men, unloved, a failure at all I attempted, good for nothing, incapable of love, compassion, caring. My heart cried out, "Why me? I give up. I am not going on; I'm not looking for any more jobs. I am not going to try anymore. I don't care what happens to me. It just doesn't matter anymore. I give up."

Then God spoke:

"Now I can use you. All that's left in you is Me. Your ideas, your strength, your wisdom is like ashes, useless in My plan for you life. Your ideas will fail. Your strength has run out. Your wisdom!!!

"Now clothe yourself with Jesus Christ. Use My ideas, My strength, My wisdom, My Word. Rest in Me. I will lead you. I will open the doors. I will provide. I will make a way where there is no way. I love you; will you love Me? Trust Me, only trust and see what I the Lord can do. All will be amazed and glorify Me because of what I do through you."

The time has not come yet, but I know and the Spirit of God bears witness that in His appointed hour I shall return to Pagosa Springs, and God shall raise up a craft center...a place of healing, and He shall call from the nations many that hurt, and they shall be comforted, they shall receive compassion, they shall receive healing in their spirits, souls and bodies. It will not be a long, long time, but not in the next few weeks or months either. When my wounds have healed enough, when my heart has found joy in Him

I covet your prayers.

Love, Steven

After reviewing my own life and the lives of the four people in this chapter I have come to the conclusion that schizophrenia is a totally misleading diagnosis for myself and those for whom I am called to be an advocate. I have become aware of the endless and pernicious war that tries to trap

our souls. Restless and disincarnate souls and fallen angels – demons that have aligned themselves with Lucifer and that have never and will never find peace through Jesus Christ are **always** looking for new bodies or hosts through which they can manifest themselves. Their purpose and goal is to dominate, influence, and seduce. We have all heard and repeated the slogan, “Misery seeks company.” In other words there is a power struggle for dominion. It begins in the mind and we call it “schizophrenia.” The power struggle for dominion has existed from time immemorial. Wars between nations and economic wars between corporate giants are other manifestations of the power struggle. We do not call it a power struggle; we call it “competition,” “ethnic cleansing,” etc. Competition is the name of the snake that will eventually bite and devour its competition. And there will be many innocent victims who will be become jobless and homeless. It’s no different than the turf wars that exist between ruthless gangs. It’s the game of “Monopoly” applauded by so called “High Achievers.”

Our degenerate human nature and unholy ambitions drive us to be “top dog” by devouring the underdog. Success is being defined as rich, powerful, famous and being worshipped. This takes place in every field of endeavor – in political, economic and religious arenas – yes, and usually at the expense of others. The rules of engagement are cruel and ruthless. Man-made laws have not and will never be able to bridle the demons that drive the engines of senseless wars, crimes, and cruel competitive and deceiving practices. Without apology or further explanation, I call them what they are – demons—demons of anger, rage, greed, pride, lust, jealousy, addiction, fear, etc. Jesus demonstrated his power and authority over this unseen world when he delivered the demoniac from legions of demons. You may want to read the story in the Book of Luke, chapter 8, verses 26 to 39.

I am fully convinced that if we do not acknowledge and understand the dynamics of the unseen world of the spirit realm, we will be of no help to the so called “schizophrenic.” We will be placating demons with drugs, alcohol, platitudes, and formulas that are totally ineffective and only of temporary benefit. I agree and align myself with the Word of God that our souls will never find peace unless that peace is through Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and my Commander-in-Chief. I am also fully convinced that the Day of Judgment, at which time we will have to give an account of our lives, is closer at hand than anyone realizes. I am not writing these words to scare anyone, but to warn you. Rebekah said, “Peter, God had to jerk you out of the hell and delusions that you were trapped in.” Thank you, Rebekah. You were absolutely correct! I want to jerk you out of hell with these words.

I am writing these words and this book not only for those who have been disenfranchised by society, but also to awaken those who are asleep in their pleasantly decorated homes and apartments with their own personal medicine, liquor, and entertainment cabinets stocked full of goodies. These words are my gift to everyone who has been deceived and betrayed by Satan, the archenemy of our souls.

Don’t buy the lie any longer that you are mentally ill or that your son, daughter or friend is mentally ill. It is Satan and his host of demons that are battling for another precious soul. We are at war. We must learn to recognize the real enemy. We must learn to use the weapons of warfare as provided in the Word of God. Sitting on couches, watching TV, playing cute games, swallowing more pills, and going on cruises does not win wars or fill the vacuum in our souls. We must call upon the name of Jesus while there is breath in our bodies. **There is no power in any other name.** Jesus is the only one who has the power and authority to open our eyes and bring us back from the hell we are trapped in. He did it for me and wants to do the same for everyone. He gave us His Word and His grace is sufficient. The words I am writing and the thoughts I am expressing come to you from a loving and a caring God through Peter, the Lord’s Scribe and Storyteller.

I could never have written or spoken these same words with finality and authority some thirty, twenty, ten or even five years ago. I can write these words and am writing these words today because I have experienced both heaven and hell and know many others who have as well. Until we know that the realm of the spirit is as real as the physical realm, we will look for the cause and solution to sickness, disease, including mental illnesses in all the wrong places. Keeping the body alive for a few extra years at great expense is not what counts and has little merit. Keeping our appointment at the Throne

of God is what matters. Yes, hell is a very real place and I don't wish my worst enemy to wind up in hell.

There are some who have allowed the enemy of their souls easy access to their bodies, minds and emotions because they have violated God's commandments on a regular basis and have scorned His Word of love, mercy, and correction. No one likes the word "sin." But the truth is that we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God. And I mean – **all!** And we must all, I mean, **all**, humble ourselves, repent and ask for forgiveness. Jesus won't cut us any slack unless we do! It is the Blood of Jesus that cleanses us and the **name of JESUS that is our VICTORY** – nothing and no one else! Compulsively washing our hands or compulsively doing anything is not the answer to cleanliness, holiness, or victory.



GOD has raised Jesus up to the heights of heaven and given Him a Name which is above every other name, that at the Name of JESUS every knee shall bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue shall confess that JESUS CHRIST is LORD, to the glory of GOD, the Father.

Philippians 2:10-11

CHAPTER XVIII A LETTER TO THE CHURCHES

DON'T FENCE IN THE LAMB OF GOD OR THE LION OF JUDAH WITH YOUR TRADITIONS

I must pen this letter while the events are still fresh in my mind, so that my experience at the recent Holy Spirit Conference can also become a vehicle of freedom for others.

My wife Rebekah and I have attended at least one Holy Spirit Conference every year for the past six years. Our trips to your city had become a highlight for us each year. In fact, we had dubbed your city as the "vacation capital of the world" because of the wonderful people we know there and your church. I always experienced the gentle and generous presence of the Holy Spirit in your midst and could easily receive the love of your people and also return it.

For my wife Rebekah nothing had changed. But for me, everything was different this year. My soul was in total bondage in the church; I could neither receive nor give of myself to others. Everything was a formality for me and any response to the sleepy, bored and even critical. I those who ministered in the pulpit. conference, but none of them the past, I would linger after each strangers, but this time I could lot. The highlight of the year was Guilt and condemnation for the looked around wondering if there under a similar cloud of



One evening the thought of church so totally overwhelmed me that I could not go. Instead, I went to the house of friends where a group of Believers were getting together for fellowship and prayer. I felt safe and accepted. We viewed the video "It's Friday, but Sunday's a-Comin'" by Anthony Campolo, and later had some refreshments. I asked for prayer. Everyone gathered around me and touched me and sang the song, "Come Holy Spirit, fall afresh on Peter;" and He did. Little by little the cloud of oppression, the vise grip of condemnation, the confusion about where I now fit in the Body of Christ, lifted. Healing came to my frayed nerves and exhausted body. I slept soundly for the first time in many a night. In fact, the next morning I was looking forward to the conference; but I never made it.

We pulled into the church parking lot and parked the car. As we got out of the car, a friend made a beeline for us. We embraced and I knew in my heart that there were words to be exchanged between us. Rebekah knew that it was to be a private matter between us men and went into the church.

My friend poured out his heart. He had been going through the same nightmares that I had experienced. He could no longer give or receive in church, at least not in the particular church he and his wife had been attending for many years. A critical and angry attitude was beginning to rob him of all joy of attending. He felt guilty and condemned for the way he felt. What was wrong?

There was a red pickup truck parked next to our car; and we used it as an altar rail. We prayed fervently in the Spirit. The oppression and confusion lifted and insight came. Joy spread across his countenance. We had stood in the broiling sun for almost two hours; but it seemed like only minutes. My bald head did not even get sunburned.

What did we learn? What was revealed to us? We have been fencing in Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God or Jesus Christ, the Lion of Judah, or both. Church for some of us is now in a parking lot, at a gas station island, in a canoe, in a barn with bales of hay as seats, in homes, next to a drinking fountain, or at a favorite restaurant while we are enjoying a meal together

We have been taught, filled, saturated and equipped for many years! When the fullness of Christ - the Lion of Judah and the Lamb of God - have matured within our hearts, we cannot be and we must not be corralled. We must now go where the Spirit bids us go. We must go where we can be poured out and serve. We must be given the freedom to go, the freedom to grow, the freedom to fail, and the time to heal when we do

fail. The church will serve us best by encouraging us to explore the uniqueness of our calling. It must be willing to recognize each person's compelling to seek and find our "High Calling" in Christ Jesus. In fact, we are to be encouraged by the church to try our spiritual wings. We must be liberated from trite and hackneyed phrases that drive us to church by applying guilt and condemnation. When we are ready to graduate, the church must celebrate that another saint has been equipped and encourage us to seek our unique identity in the Body of Christ. This identity is like a hidden treasure and must be discovered by every saint for himself.

I have had numerous occasions to share this letter, both in person and in print. However, I waited eight years before making these words public through the *Stretcher Bearers for Christ* newsletters and twenty years before including it in this

these words expressed the Heart of frustrated soul. Some audiences embraced the words in this letter, opposed them. I know the great joy eagerly awaiting the next word; but in speaking in an atmosphere of occasion, hostility. I am sure that the mood of the people and is and respond to the many diverse there is always that temptation to applauded.



manuscript. I wanted to be sure God and not merely my own and individuals have joyfully while others have vehemently of speaking to an audience that is I also know the frustration and pain bored, polite silence—and on every shepherd is painfully aware of frustrated by his inability to sense individual needs. But I also know preach only those things that are

Since numbers still seem to be a criterion of effectiveness in many places, it is probably difficult to see a church either as a school from which we are to graduate, boot camp, or a hospital from which we need to be discharged. I will therefore challenge those who believe success and size are synonymous, to consider the Word of God in this matter by reviewing chapter 24 in the second Book of Samuel. I would like to warn and admonish every shepherd to guard himself against the temptation of defining his effectiveness by the size of his congregation or size of his budget. King David and his whole nation were severely chastised by God for counting the number of able-bodied men under his jurisdiction

The Holy Spirit is indeed present in your church, but at the moment He is not present for me. By remaining a part of the congregation without having the ability to give or receive, I cloud the atmosphere for both pastors and members. My place of service is somewhere else and for the sake of my soul and sanity, I must find it. I ask the church to graciously release me and others like me so that we can discover our unique place in the Body of Christ. This indeed may thin the congregation of the church for a while, but those who are left will make a more cohesive, vibrant and responsive group. Please do not restrain those who are ready to depart.

I have had occasion to share my experience with others since my return from the conference, and find that I am touching a very sensitive nerve and need in the Body of Christ. Tears of release and great jubilation follow as I share this account. It is time to encourage our people to graduate. It is time to discharge those who have been healed and trained, and to let them go. May God use this letter to bring freedom to many.

I realize that this letter may be an inspiration to some and an obstacle to others. If it is an inspiration, we would love to hear from you. As you share this letter, you will meet others who feel fenced in or fenced out. Our feeling of isolation will come to an abrupt end as we meet those with a kindred spirit.

I have recently met Jesus in attire with which I can truly identify. I urge you to meet Him or introduce Him to your friends through the story of "JOSHUA." It is the story of Jesus appearing amongst us in modern-day attire and how we might respond to Him and He to us. "JOSHUA" is written by Joseph F. Girzone and is published by Collier Books. It was made into a movie and is available via www.joshuathemovie.com

Jesus has choreographed a unique dance for each of us. Some dance floors are just too small or too crowded for some of us. I am no longer fenced in. I am now dancing with Jesus amongst the churches all the churches.



CHAPTER XIX AN UNEXPECTED TURN

*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they
are the sons of God. Romans 8:14*

I write this postscript, dear Phyllis, with a certain amount of sadness. Earlier in my letter I had given you a glowing report of the beauty of Pagosa Springs. I had invited you to our log cabin castle to be refreshed here and to drink in the splendor of these mountains.

We have lived in this beautiful setting for over five years. We were blessed here with many friendships. We could share our vision of Crafts for Christ with many visitors; and our children could grow up in a clean, wholesome environment. No problem seemed to be or was insurmountable. We were confident that God was with us and that we were where He wanted us to be.

As I sit here penning these last words, spring is returning for the sixth time. The ducks are patrolling the lake once more and a cute beaver is eyeing our last remaining young aspen tree. Things seem quite unchanged over previous years, and yet there is a difference, at least for us. The cloud of God's anointing has moved. Our mortgage payments have become a burden rather than a test of faith and a challenge. The mystery, the magic and the splendor of the log cabin castle is gone. The castle has become a house. We have no desire to stay here.

When the cloud of God's anointing lifted from the tabernacle in the wilderness and moved, the Israelites knew that it was time to fold their tents and follow the cloud:

“And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the Children of Israel went onward in all their journeys.” Exodus 40:36

In like manner, we believe that God's purpose for our lives has been accomplished in Pagosa Springs for now, and that He will lead us by his Spirit to another pasture and a new adventure somewhere else. We would rather live in a tent anywhere and be under the shadow of His wings (Psalm 91) than live in the most beautiful log cabin castle. No roof can give us or anyone else adequate shelter unless we are also under the cloud covering of God's anointing. Where we go next and how we were led there will probably be the first chapter of my next book. The Lord has given us a glimpse of something new and beautiful awaiting us through the words of this prophecy:

PROPHECY GIVEN TO PETER LAUE THROUGH BARBARA LOTT OF “FAITH, HOPE AND CHARITY, INC.” ON MARCH 29, 1983 AT PAGOSA SPRINGS, COLORADO

Peter, the Lord would say unto you, My son, it has seemed like an eternity, saith the Lord, but my time is right and the Lord is never late. The Lord is never late. And that that Satan has intended to do to destroy you, the Lord your God has intended to make you strong. So look up unto the Lord and trust the Lord, for He hath redeemed you, He hath redeemed you, He hath redeemed you; yea, even those things that have happened in your life, saith the Lord.

And Peter, very shortly, very soon, you cannot imagine what God has going on. All this time God has been working in your behalf and has been opening some doors that you know not of. And I see that very soon some doors are going to be opened. And God has given something to you, I know not whether it is a gift or some kind of talent or what. God has given something to you, Peter, that God is going to use through you for His glory, and He was purifying you and He is purifying you more and more and will continue to, that that which comes out of you will in fact be life. That will be life.

Alleluia! The enemy is defeated. Alleluia! Praise God! Glory! Amen! You cannot imagine what God has in store for you.

When God has a word like that for someone, He always gives me a vision. As I speak I am speaking that vision He has given me. It was like strong, iron doors that Satan has been trying to keep shut, and I saw the hand of God mightily reach down and just open them and say, "Peter, walk through. That door that I have opened man cannot close, nor can your enemy," saith the Lord. Amen! Amen! Amen! Praise God! Praise God! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Twenty-Five Years Later!

In 1983 I wrote that the anointing had moved and a move to a new location was imminent. We did not move!!! Rebekah and I are still living in our beautiful log cabin castle on Lake Pagosa. In fact, we have enlarged our home and have added a beautiful guest apartment, which we call "The Upper Room." It comprises a thousand square feet of love and luxury where weary travelers can sit in the "Rocking Chair of God's Heart." It was fear, confusion, depression and exhaustion that caused me, Peter, to misinterpret what God had in mind or was trying to tell me. God gently chided us through the words of a friend. His words challenged us to persevere. In essence, our friend Buster said,

"I have read your account and was mightily encouraged by the way you trusted God; but when I came to the last chapter of your book, I was greatly saddened. Suddenly it seemed that your God was not big enough to help you with your large mortgage payment."

God was chiding us in the most gentle way possible. Both Rebekah and I felt like crawling under the rug. We immediately burnt the "For Sale" sign and have kept on keeping on. We have learned many hard and valuable lessons about trusting God. Today, our log cabin castle is debt free. That indeed is a miracle. The mortgage was paid 17 years ahead of schedule. We invite you to read about the many miraculous events that have shaped our lives by turning to our web site and browsing through the stories that we have posted: www.stretcherbearers.com

I am still perplexed about the prophecy given by Barbara Lott. I am not able to identify any event that would validate the prophecy. I am a little more guarded in the way I interpret any prophecy today. The Bible tells us that there are lying prophets and that we must be on guard. The dark cloud of doom and gloom lifted about three months after this evangelist/teacher was in Pagosa Springs. Fresh courage and faith to shoulder the mortgage payments came about a year later. Only one person had looked at our home while it was for sale. That person did not try to buy it; he tried to steal it. Shame on those who try to take advantage of those who are down and almost "out."

TWENTY YEARS LATER!

November 6, 2003

Dear Peter & Rebekah,

There was a big used book sale near where I am staying. On the second day they had a great deal – fill up a paper grocery bag for \$4.00. Well, I did fill up that bag, and one of the books I got was *The Wood Blossom*. A couple weeks after getting the books, I was glancing at my shelf full of books & felt drawn to pick up your book. (I knew it looked interesting when I first saw it. I am a sensitive person.) When I picked up the book, I felt The Holy Spirit. I knew I had to start reading it the next day. I can

see why I felt Him when I picked up the book. You got Him! And He's got you! Yesterday, I thought – hey, I wonder if I can find them on the internet! And there you are! I feel very fortunate to have found you and to be able to write to you.

There is much that inspires in your book. You describe things so that it's as if the words came right out of my mouth. Your process of learning how to not be taken over by sensitivity to others – that is me. It's been a long process of God causing my mind to become wiser and my learning to have proper guards up (chapter V). You also speak of songs. I don't think I've ever even told anyone, but the Holy Spirit will play a song over and over in my head until I pay attention and get the message. It's a wonderful thing. He will use both Christian and secular songs to give me messages. I can relate to the sensitivity that you describe when someone is suspicious of you and playing detective (I'm referring to chapter IV). Your phrase "mercilessly kicked around" – I can relate to that. I can relate to experiencing legalistic people and all the trouble that causes. I've also seen how people use signs and fleeces to interpret God's Will, and I learned long ago that Satan can be the author of "signs". I also can relate to listening carefully for God's Will and having signs from Him in miraculous and subtle ways, in both small and big areas of our lives. And what you say about fasting – I am severely hypoglycemic. It would shock me when leaders would tell their church to fast. I'd get confused and feel guilty... I just ignore it now (for the most part).

I could go on with many things I can relate to in your book. And there are many precious gems you've said, too – guidelines and such that can help me become wiser and make my life better. Thank you for writing the book. And I thank God that I found it at that book sale.

I have "survived" this life so far...but it's been tough. I've been afflicted with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and Environmental Illness and all that goes with those for 20 years.

Because I am sensitive, I have done my best to treat people in a loving fashion. A lot of people just love to be around me because they know they are being loved.

I am doing everything I know to be obedient to God, and to allow for any pruning, and to get better physically and grow up emotionally. I am reading a lot and listening to tapes & applying myself and just plain ol' working hard. I have a neat person talking to me in a counseling fashion via e-mail, and I get a call every few weeks from a woman who represents a ministry where they deal with a lot of people with my specific illnesses and see people healed and delivered. This is all good.

I am wondering, though, if you would pray and see if you get a specific word of knowledge, a word of wisdom for me or even a specific word of encouragement for me. Because I have read nearly all your book, I know that I can trust enough to ask this and be guaranteed a God-born response.

I am not someone who can give to your ministry, though. I have no money and no health to work (at this time). Everything I get comes from other people – the food I eat...I am in a state of need. I feel desperate for God and a better life. I feel desperate to get away from my Mom's dumping on me or others. I want to feel better physically. Thank you for my letter.

I hope that it is okay that I am asking something of you, and I sure hope that God is blessing you. I do like to hear about other people having good lives.

Thanks again, and God Bless You!

Delight J

Peter responds to the letter from "Delight J"
Pagosa Springs, Colorado
November 8, 2003

Dear Delight J,

You certainly made my day with your letter. I will pass it on to a special friend who helped us print the first 500 copies of *The Wood Blossom*. This special lady read the manuscript back in 1982 and said, "This book must be published. If you cannot find a publisher, I will sell \$2000 worth of stock to help you put the first edition into print. And that is what happened. We printed another 1000 copies after that. All of them are either sold or given away. But since requests keep coming in for copies of the book, I have scanned the book and now have it in my computer to share via e-mail. There is no charge if you would like a copy. Since you were so personally moved by the story, Jesus may want to use you to share the story with others with your own personal introduction and testimony. That would delight our souls - both Rebekah's and mine.

It's been 20 years since the book was published and the last chapter was written. Lots of wonderful things have happened since then and we may have to write a sequel to the book. Many things were hard but necessary to improve on what Jesus has done in us thus far.

We never moved from our log cabin castle on Lake Pagosa. In fact, we added a beautiful guest apartment called "The Upper Room." It is filled with love and luxury. It was completed 16 years ago and has had many, many guests from near and far. Many have touched the hem of Jesus' garment in The Upper Room. I will include a letter from one of the guests and also a prayer that was written specifically for anyone who might want to come and experience the presence of Jesus.

I can also tell you that the terror and torment of living on the edge financially is now a thing of the past. Once I realized that I had made a god and priority of paying the mortgage and was able to repent, the terror gradually faded away. I was able to say to Jesus, "Your presence is more valuable to me than your presents. I desire your presence above paying the mortgage and being debt free." I also said, "Lord, whatever it takes to make a man of faith and courage out of your son and servant Peter, I give you the permission to do; and I promise I won't grumble any more." That's what He was waiting to hear from me.

We continued to make the monthly mortgage payments for another five years and then God provided the rest of the money to pay off the mortgage 17 years ahead of schedule. We have been debt free for the past four years. We have no credit card or car payments. Until a month ago we were driving a 1986 Chevrolet Caprice with 200,000 miles on it. Three people recently offered to purchase the car because it looks and drives like a brand new car.

A friend has put a beautiful 1998 Cadillac De Ville in our garage for \$1.00. It is pristine, in showroom condition. In fact, Rebekah just drove out of the driveway to go on a 1000 mile trip. Neither one of us are youngsters physically, but we are not afraid to do what many would consider unusual and dangerous. When the Holy Spirit tells us to go out on a limb where the ripe fruit is growing, we seldom hesitate for long.

For Peter, going out on a limb generally means giving birth to a new, exotic and expensive idea. Yesterday I committed myself to a \$6000 printing bill. Rebekah says that I have printer's ink for blood. We have put five of her paintings into print over the past six years. We have also printed at least 20 newsletters since 1979. You can see Rebekah's paintings on our web site. Now we are having a journal printed that allows people to write their hearts and heartaches into the hands of Jesus. The cover of the journal is a painting by Joann Reed. You have probably seen her painting on our web site (www.stretcherbearers.com). If you would like me to send you the specifications for the journal, I can easily do that.

Yes, I have struggled and battled and struggled to come to this plateau of joy and victory. Today my cup is so full of JOY, if I don't pour some of that JOY into another cup, I will explode. Can you not tell by the momentum of this letter? Rebekah and I have walked together now for 30 years. She has been like a gyroscope in my life, pouring calmness into my soul when I am in danger of making foolish decisions. We love, respect and appreciate one another, but we don't hang onto or worship each other, not anymore! We hang onto and worship Jesus.

I have a couple of prayers I enjoy praying. One of these sums up my journey in Jesus: "LORD, let my life be YOUR glorious contradiction to the world's definition of normal." There is another prayer that I have put at the end of one my epistles. In fact, let me just copy the conclusion to the epistle:

*It takes **courage** to let the "Real Me" show and **wisdom** to know when not to. Jesus—or Yeshua, if you know the Lord Jesus by that name—is the author of both. I speak and write these words not only to you, but also as a reminder to myself. As I do, they become more and more a part of who I am. The best way I can be a blessing to you is to let the "Real Me" show. I challenge you to do likewise. It's an essential step towards sanity. To be a blessing to those near and dear to us, we must be so well and so real, that we are contagious in a good way. It's **never** too early or too late to become real. Be prepared for a battle if you accept the challenge!*

"Lord, help me to be so well, real, and courageous, that I am contagious in a good way."

In your letter you asked me to share with you anything that might be helpful. Well, I have tried to do that. I have tried to embroider my reply with those things that will give you hope and joy and challenge you to go out on a limb.

I am excited. Lot's of wonderful things can now take place because you found a copy of *The Wood Blossom* at a fire sale. Jesus will close doors that you cannot close by yourself and open new doors that you could not open by yourself. You will be able to ignore the past and embrace the future with hope. But remember, you need to be violently determined not to rehearse your hurts. I began to heal when I asked Jesus to show me what I was to learn from the disasters in my life. He answered my prayers. I am healing. I have stopped dialoguing with my painful past and imagined enemies.

Thank you for letting Jesus fill your cup via Peter and Rebekah's cups.

Peter & Rebekah



EPILOGUE

THE FENCEPOST

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. 2 Corinthians 5:17

One balmy spring evening Peter and Rebekah took a leisurely stroll down the road and across the meadow near their home. With them was Suzie, their son's golden retriever, heavily laden with pups due to be born the next week. Their destination was a small hill with a fence running across it; and as it came into view Peter started to get very excited. It was a very old fence line, made of cedar posts that were gray with age and leaning in every direction. A portion was torn down to make way for a dirt road, with a small pile of posts lying beside it. With a gleam in his eye, Peter made his way to the pile. He examined each piece carefully with the practiced eye of a man familiar with wood and the inherent qualities that are often lost to the casual observer. "This one is good, and this one too", he murmured, picking up several pieces and laying them down again. He shouldered one, decided it was too heavy, and exchanged it for another, lighter piece. Happily he set off for home, carrying his treasure with joy and pride. Suzie ambled contentedly along, slowly trotting after birds and smelling all the good scents of spring in the carpet of new grass.

As they walked along Peter started to reminisce as to the life and times of the post he was carrying, wondering what tree it had come from, who had cut it down and when, and what sights it had seen and experienced during its long life. He pondered its feelings as it was cut to size and placed in the ground, wire being strung between it and its brothers to fence in the cattle that were brought to the meadow every summer to graze. He thought of the beautiful sunrises it had enjoyed as it faced east to the Rocky Mountains and also of the sunsets as they played across the face of the mountains, setting them afire with gold and rose and mauve. He knew it could relate times of being buried under many feet of snow by winter storms as they swept across the sky from the mountains and of watching lightning play around the meadow during summer thunderstorms. And still it stood strong.

He wondered how it felt when workmen came again, this time with huge bulldozers, crudely pulling up the post and many of its brothers to make way for the road that was to bring homes to the secluded meadow. As it lay there, tossed aside, did it wonder if this was the end of its usefulness? Would it just stay there indefinitely to sink slowly back into the ground from whence it came, or would it be gathered for firewood to heat one of the homes soon to be built? What would it say as it was riding along on Peter's shoulder, then stacked in the garage? Did it have any inkling of the new life that would soon be coming?

Under the contemplative gaze of Peter over the next few days it felt that something new was happening. When it was gathered up along with several of its brothers and taken to a woodshop, fear came as it saw the pieces of electrical equipment and then felt the sharp edge of the saw as it was cut in different lengths, then trimmed on two sides. It knew that this, indeed, was the end; it was dying and soon would be no more. After the big cuts the sanding came; over and over again the abrasive surface of the sander was run across the cut sides, wearing them down until they resembled satin as smooth as any queen's gown.

Now the beauty of its colors, the pattern of its grain, and the sweet aroma that had been hidden for so long was revealed. It wondered what would happen next as Peter ran his fingers over the smooth surface, admiring its beauty, holding up first one pattern with God's Word on it, then another, to the side with the largest cut, contemplating what words would best fit its personality. It heard the prayer of Peter's heart as he talked to Jesus, asking Him the purpose for which He had made that particular piece of wood, and marveled at the possibility of new life.

The decision made, Peter gently applied some sandblast stencil tape to one side of the wood. He transferred the Scripture pattern to the tape and started the cutting process with a sharp X-Acto knife, going around the outside of the letters. Although the knife bit very little into the wood, it felt as if it were being crucified and torn into shreds, crying out in pain. After a few minutes the excess tape was pulled away, leaving only the tape that formed the precious Words that were to be its new purpose for being.

Again it was stacked in the garage along with its kindred, who also were covered with tape that proclaimed the Word of God. After a while they were gathered up, put in the car, and carried across the mountain to another workshop. One by one the pieces were taken into the shop where great noises and clouds of dust were issuing forth. The post was finally taken in, set on a rack and a huge hose was pointed at it. The roaring began and as the sand hit it and began to eat away at its surface it groaned in agony. "The pain is too much to bear, I will surely be completely done away with", it cried as it felt the sand biting deeper and deeper into its innermost being. Suddenly the noise stopped and all was still. Peter gently blew the dust away and saw deeply into the heart of the post where the beautiful sunset colors of gold, lavender and burgundy were now revealed in three dimensions instead of one.

The post was again placed in the car, taken back across the mountains, laid out on the worktable in the garage, and the tape was removed, revealing the letters that now stood out in bold relief. Again it was sanded, then covered with a soothing stain and a clear lacquer, listening to the music in the background praising God and glorifying the One Who does all things well. It heard, as it was being clothed with the beautiful shades of stain, blessings being offered up to the Lord for making such beauty as was being observed in it, and praises for the Word that it was now proclaiming—"LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS". In the polished surface He Who has loved us from the beginning looked down and saw, not only His Word, but also His glorious reflection. As the post rested, exhausted but happy, it seemed that it heard, in the quiet recesses of its being, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant".

Rebekah



LEGACY FROM A LOVELY LADY GIVEN TO HER ADOPTED SON

(Excerpt from "Mission: Success!" by Og Mandino)



God, I thank You for this day.

I know I have not accomplished as yet all You expect of me, and if that is your reason for bathing me in the fresh dew of another dawn, I am most grateful.

I am prepared, at last, to make You proud of me.

I will forget yesterday, with all its trials and tribulations, aggravations and setbacks, anger and frustrations. The past is already a dream from which I can neither retrieve a single word nor erase any foolish deeds.

I will resolve, however, that if I have injured anyone yesterday through my thoughtlessness, I will not let this day's sun set before I make amends, and nothing I do today will be of greater importance.

I will not fret the future. My success and happiness does not depend on straining to see what lurks dimly on the horizon but to do, this day, what lies clearly at hand.

I will treasure this day, for it is all I have. I know that its rushing hours cannot be accumulated or stored, like precious grain, for future use.

I will live as all good actors do when they are onstage – only in the moment. I cannot perform at my best today by regretting my previous act's mistakes or worrying about the scene to come.

I will embrace today's difficult tasks, take off my coat, and make dust in the world. I will remember that the busier I am, the less harm I am apt to suffer, the tastier will be my food, the sweeter my sleep, and the better satisfied I will be with my place in the world.

I will free myself today from slavery to the clock and calendar. Although I will plan this day in order to conserve my steps and energy, I will begin to measure my life in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not seasons; in feelings, not figures on a dial.

I will remain aware of how little it takes to make this a happy day. Never will I pursue happiness, because it is not a goal, just a by-product, and there is no happiness in having or in getting, only in giving.

I will run from no danger I might encounter today, because I am certain that nothing will happen to me that I am not equipped to handle with your help. Just as any gem is polished by friction, I am certain to become more valuable through this day's adversities, and if you close one door, you always open another for me.

I will live this day as if it were Christmas. I will be a giver of gifts and deliver to my enemies the gift of

forgiveness; my opponents, tolerance; my friends, a smile; my children, a good example, and every gift will be wrapped with unconditional love.

I will waste not even a precious second today in anger or hate or jealousy or selfishness. I know that the seeds I sow I will harvest, because every action, good or bad, is always followed by an equal reaction. I will plant only good seeds this day.

I will treat today as a priceless violin. One may draw harmony from it and another, discord, yet no one will blame the instrument. Life is the same, and if I play it correctly, it will give forth beauty, but if I play it ignorantly, it will produce ugliness.

I will condition myself to look on every problem I encounter today as no more than a pebble in my shoe. I remember the pain, so harsh I could hardly walk, and recall my surprise when I removed my shoe and found only a grain of sand. I will work convinced that nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm. To do anything today that is truly worth doing, I must not stand back shivering and thinking of the cold and danger, but jump in with gusto and scramble through as well as I can.

I will face the world with goals set for this day, but they will be attainable ones, not the vague, impossible variety declared by those who make a career of failure. I realize that You always try me with a little, first, to see what I would do with a lot.

I will never hide my talents. If I am silent, I will fall back. If I walk away from any challenge today, my self-esteem will be forever scarred, and if I cease to

grow, even a little, I will become smaller. I reject the stationary position because it is always the beginning of the end.

I will keep a smile on my face and in my heart even when it hurts today. I know that the world is a looking glass and gives back to me the reflection of my own soul. Now I understand the secret of correcting the attitude of others and that is to correct my own.

I will turn away from any temptation today that might cause me to break my word or lose my self-respect. I am positive that the only thing I possess more valuable than my life is my honor.

I will work this day with all my strength, content in the knowledge that life does not consist of wallowing in the past or peering anxiously at the future. It is appalling to contemplate the great number of painful steps by which one arrives at a truth so old, so obvious, and so frequently expressed. Whatever it offers, little or much, my life is now.

I will pause whenever I am feeling sorry for myself today, and remember that this is the only day I have and I must play it to the fullest. What my part may signify in the great whole, I may not recognize, but I am here to play it and now is the time.

I will count this day a separate life.

I will remember that those who have fewest regrets are those who take each moment as it comes for all that it is worth.

This is my day!

These are my seeds.

Thank You, God, for this precious garden of time.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter 1

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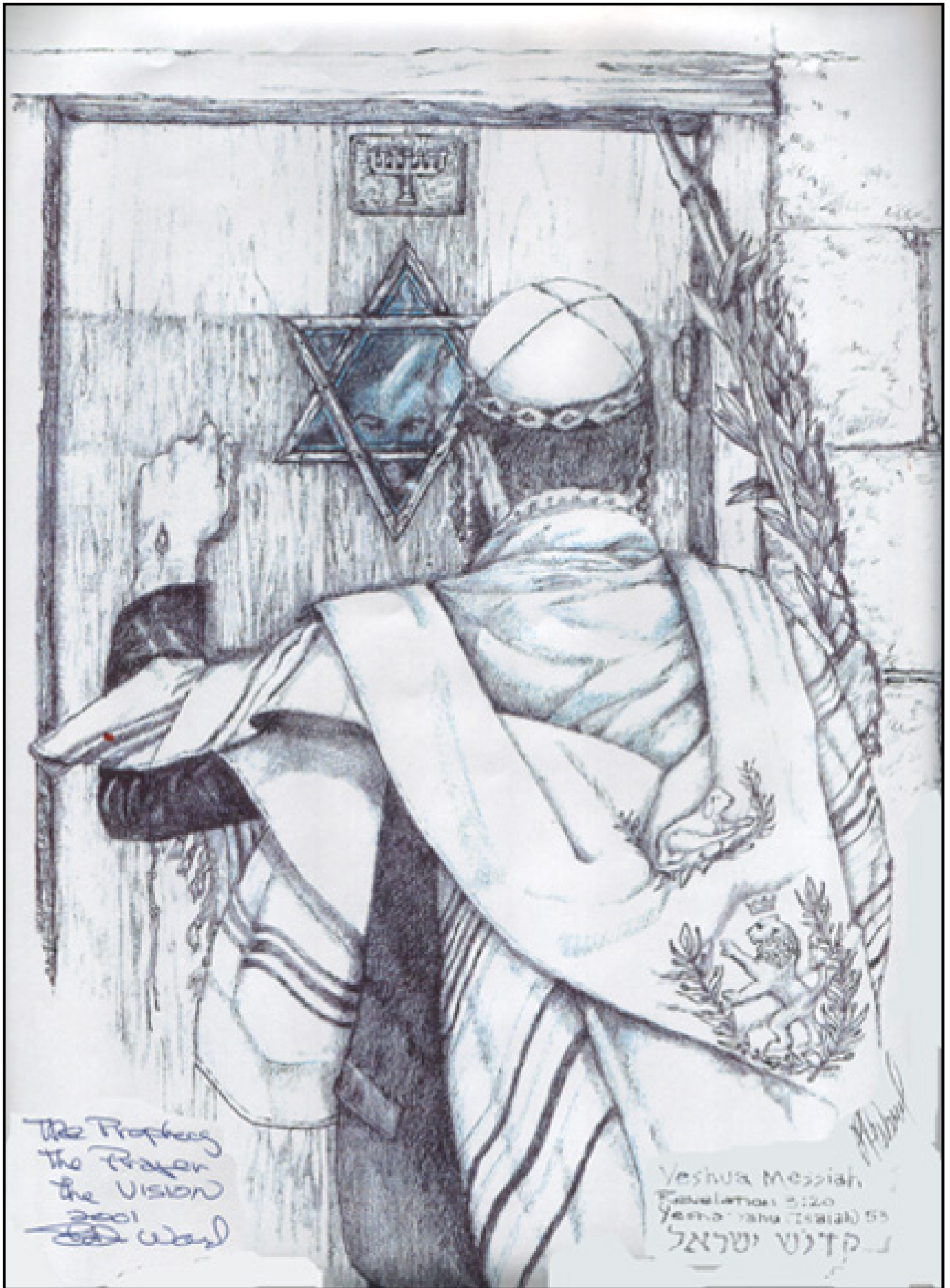
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The Prayer
The Vision
2001
The Word

Yeshua Messiah
Revelation 5:20
Yeshua Meshiah
קדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל



My Precious Sons and Daughters – I have a Place for You

The world and its ways have attempted to kill you from the beginning of your life.
Satan has tried to destroy you and eliminate the work
that I have intended for you to do.

I have called you to be My testimony to the world.
I have called you to be an example of My Saving Grace.
I love you.

You need to know that those who have harmed you were helpless pawns
and under Satan's dominion.

They were agents to hinder your real calling in life.
Now, I will use what was intended for evil, to destroy that same evil.

You need to know that your or their actions
have not made you or them unclean in My sight.
As you turn your heart and affections completely to Me,
I see you as holy and blameless.

I see you as My virgin bride, spotless and pure.
I desire you to be with Me forever,
which is possible because of the victorious and cleansing work of
My Son Jesus,
"The Carpenter from Nazareth."

You are beautiful and valuable to Me. I love you.

Your Heavenly Father

(continued from back cover)

Why is God raising up the voice of another John the Baptist on behalf of the mentally ill? I tell you why. Man can educate the head; but only God can educate the heart. And who is God? That question has spawned wars from time immemorial. Until that question is settled once and for “all,” conflicts in us – diagnosed as mental illness – and between us, are inevitable.

This storyteller will not waste your time or his time with platitudes. Healing for this scribe and storyteller did not begin and could not begin until it was established in his heart that **JESUS IS GOD**. The moment that Jesus became this scribe’s God, all the other gods that tried to rule his life were dethroned. In one form or another we are all sick and will stay that way unless we know that there is only one God, that his name is **JESUS**; and that we are to be conformed to His image. That is our destiny and high calling.

Our personal revelation that **JESUS IS GOD** can be equated to D-Day when Allied Forces landed on the beaches of Normandy during World War II. The war was not over on that day; but there was that paradigm shift. On that day victory became a forgone conclusion. **Someone** stronger than the enemy had established a beachhead. And in like manner, the moment that **JESUS** enthrones our hearts, all other gods must bow down to **HIM**. At that moment the war is by no means over, yet it is won. The outward manifestations of that war are often diagnosed as various forms of mental illnesses. There are casualties in every war. Suicide and murder are two hideous outcroppings of this war. Depression is a close second.

In a little while, this writer will vanish into obscurity. It is up to those who receive a copy of these words and a copy of his testimony to pass on the torch. Those who have a heart for warring against the enemy of our soul, those who have a heart for those trapped in the valley of the shadow of death; those who want to see the real enemy exposed and put behind bars; those who want to see our laws and attitudes change, are challenged to duplicate these words and or scribe your own “**TO HELL AND BACK**” story.

In 1992 this storyteller sat in front of a camera for nearly six hours and shared his life. The recording chronicles Peter’s search and battle for sanity. His keen desire was and still is that one day he might be invited to visit everyone locked up in any kind of a prison – whether imaginary or real. The only way that can happen is if you invite him. He would love to tell you his story. The recording is now available on “You Tube” in ten 30 minute increments. Enter: “Peter Laue” in your computer search engine and click on “videos” to find them. You can also find them by entering this address in your search engine:
<http://www.stretcherbearers.com/YouTube.html>



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YOU ARE INVITED TO COME ALONGSIDE THIS SCRIBE AND HIS HANDMAIDEN REBEKAH AND TRANSLATE YOUR PERSONAL PAIN & COMPASSION INTO TREASURES!

Peter, the storyteller, continues to be compelled to open his treasure chest of stories to an audience that has a heart for others. And who are those “others?” They are the ones the psalmist David refers to as being in “the valley of the shadow of death.” The world calls them ill, hopeless, hungry, lonely, orphaned and behind bars, both real and imagined. This writer wants to focus on one particular group – those labeled or diagnosed as “mentally ill.”

It is this writer’s desire, his calling and his purpose in life, to change and challenge the climate for a group of people who are misunderstood, misdiagnosed, and often mistreated because of ignorance and a lack of kindness. Our social conscience must be stirred so that we will never view or treat these people as second class or demented citizens. Before slavery was abolished in America, England and other countries, the social conscience of a nation, its laws and its attitudes had to be altered. John Newton is well known as an activist who was able to indirectly influence the English Parliament that eventually outlawed slavery. Years later America followed suite, but not before a bloody civil war was fought. Other nations are still lagging behind and either openly or silently condones slavery in its many disguises.

The social laws need to other areas. The “misfits” in society and treated is one treatment of the been bizarre, can be described Dorothea Lynde forerunner for the have been and Years ago she



conscience and change in many manner that the have been viewed of these. The mentally ill has cruel and at best as “experimental.” Dix was a mentally ill. There will be others. was

commemorated on a one cent stamp. She has been referred to as “The Forgotten Angel of the Madhouse.” Her example has challenged others to become crusaders, including this writer.

As long as this storyteller has breath within him, he shall carry the torch on behalf of what this world calls “misfits” and “outcasts.” This storyteller was not a slave trader like John Newton, the author of the well-known hymn “Amazing Grace;” but he has walked through the valley of the shadow of death and met many of his counterparts – those who are still lingering in that valley. Our world closets these people away from the mainstream of society as if they were not important, not valuable, or do not exist. Yes, we may keep them breathing through our social welfare programs, but only barely. Since they no longer have a voice, we must be their voice.

Our universities educate the head and grant prestigious degrees to those who go through rigorous training programs. This writer applauds their commitment but questions their ability to bring permanent healing to the afflicted. What is wrong? Universities are only able to educate the head. It takes challenging and often painful life-experiences to educate the heart.

(Continued on inside back cover)