

THE SON OF A PIONEER

by

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## FOREWARD

It is now just 12 o'clock noon, July 13, 1974, my 95th birthday. This is also the beginning of the story of the experiences that have been mine as "the son of a pioneer."

I am writing this story with the desire that in some way I may be helpful to some young person who may find rough places as he travels life's road.

I found early in life that if one wants to be happy, one must also make someone else happy. So I have spent much of my life living for, and helping, others. The greatest philosopher of all time, Jesus Christ, put it this way, "As you would that men should do to you, do you also to them likewise." The most unhappy person is the one who lives for self, trying to get out of life all he can, regardless of others. Since my parents were Christians, the Bible had a large place in our home. From it, I found that there is a Power who never fails when one encounters rough places. Life is not something that must be endured, rather it is to be enjoyed. One poet wrote, "Life is not an empty dream; life is real."

I am writing this story just as I would tell it to you if I was sitting in your living room: in simple, plain language. I have to rely entirely on my memory to recount the events I will tell in this story. It is a true story.

## CHAPTER 1

### THE GREAT ADVENTURE

All four of my grandparents were members of a rather large group of immigrants who came from Holland under the leadership of a preacher to start a new life in a new country, a country where man was free. It was for them a great adventure, leaving all that they were accustomed to, friends, and some relatives, to go to a strange land, now knowing what might befall them. They were a brave people and the urge for freedom was strong in them. Their faith in God's protection gave them courage to look to the future.

They came to Iowa and settled in Marion County. This section was not developed and was heavily wooded, mostly with black walnut, oak and elm trees. It was during the summer that they arrived. The first thing to do was to build shelter. This they did by cutting down trees, using the logs to build with. However, some families did not have manpower enough to complete a house. These dug caves and fixed them up for living quarters. Lack of proper housing, as well as not having enough food, caused much suffering during the first winter. When spring arrived, houses were completed and food crops planted. From that time on, the colony prospered. A town was established named Pella. A Dutch church was started and also a school. Although these people Americanized themselves as best they could, the Dutch language prevailed and all the church services were held in Dutch. Only the school was taught in English. In spite of the newness of a strange country and in spite of the suffering they had endured, they did not lose their faith in God. They continued to hold fast to the spiritual aspect of life, and daily devotions were held in most families.

My mother was but a small baby when these people left Holland. My father was born after their arrival. My mother

was named Christina Cornelia. Among the colonists were two families I wish to mention. On my father's side were the Van Gorkoms. On my mother's side, the LeCocqs. Christina grew up and became an attractive young lady, while Isaac Van Gorkom became strong and able. He chose his trade to be that of a blacksmith. His standard was to do his very best at whatever he did. He soon gained the reputation of being a "good blacksmith."

Both Christina and Isaac attended the same church, so they saw much of each other which resulted in a marriage. They established their home in the town of Pella. These, then, were my parents. I was the third boy born. Frank was first, then Isaac. In all, there were four sons and two daughters in the family. When I was born, there was a question of what my name should be. My mother was named Christina Cornelia, so Christina was changed to Christian and Cornelia to Cornelious. So there I was, a brand new baby with a brand new name, which I still have.

I do not remember much of my early childhood except that we were living on a farm and there was a big red rooster that would chase me and peck at my bare legs. I also remember that one Sunday morning the house caught on fire and the neighbors had to come and help carry things out of the house. This gave me a fear of fire.

## CHAPTER 2

### A DARING ADVENTURE

I was about four years old when the pioneer spirit overcame my father to engage in another venture. News came that in South Dakota land could be had for just claiming it and making certain improvements on it. Here was an opportu-

nity to extend and make provision for a growing family. My father was not the only one in the community who looked at this as a great opportunity. The decision was made to go and my father filed a claim. Although South Dakota was rapidly being settled, there were still sections where the Sioux Indians were in possession by reason of living there. The section we had in question was one such place. It was designated as Douglas County and the Federal government was determined to open it to settlers. Consequently, the Indians were moved off and located on the Rosebud reservation, just across the Missouri River. Thus the land was made available for homesteading. A settler was entitled to a claim consisting of 160 acres and was required to live on it, so a house had to be built. Lumber was not easy to find, and very costly, so it was determined to get lumber at Pella. To save on freight cost, my father cut all the lumber to fit, ready to nail together, before it was sent, so we would not have to pay freight on the useless lumber.

Since there were a number of other families who came from Pella, it was understood that we would help each other. When a building required another man, there was always one available. My father built the house while my mother waited with us children in Pella. As soon as the house was livable, we were sent for. That was a great day for me because I had never ridden on a train. I can still remember the occasion. We got off the train at Armour which was the end of the railroad. There we were met by my father. We traveled 22 miles east to get to where we were going to live.

At this location, named Joubert, there was a country store, in which there was a post office, which was run by two brothers. My father located his blacksmith shop about the distance of a long block from our house. Most of the people that came into this section were farmers, so there was work for my dad as soon as he was ready to start. There was still much work to be done on the house and a barn to be

built, so we decided to start farming at once. Things were different then than they are now. There were, of course, no cars, no electric lights, no telephones, or any other present day conveniences that we enjoy. For light, we had kerosene lamps for inside use and lanterns for outside. There were no schools or churches when we first came. The county built one-room school buildings, one of which was only a short distance from our house, just about a year after we arrived. It was a great day for us when our teacher came and the school opened. The school term lasted for two months; the rest of the year we could forget what we learned.

There being no church, we had no Sunday School at first, but soon a young man and woman came and started one in one of the school buildings. We walked a mile to get there and were delighted with the opportunity.

The school buildings were also used one night a month for community purposes by the settlers for recreational gatherings. Usually during the first half, there was a spelling bee and a short recess; then in the last half, community affairs and recitation. People would come for many miles to these meetings in wagons, on horseback, or on anything that would get them to the meeting place. It was at one of these meetings that an attempt was made to kill me by a boy about my age.

At recess, the kids all went outside to play. The boy belonged to a wicked family which had moved to the community. At recess the boy was very rough, taking one of the girls by the arm, slinging her to the ground, and sitting on her with an open switchblade at her throat. I pulled him off and told him the danger of such an act. This made him very angry and he promised that he would get me. After the meeting closed, people were standing outside talking when my father called, "Let's go home." Just then, I felt a sharp pain in my back and I fell to the ground. Father ran over to me and

lifted me up on my feet, but the pain was too bad. This boy had planned to kill me by stabbing me in the back, but the knife had struck a vertebra and slid off to the side. The doctor said it would have killed me if it had gone straight in. Well, with all that, the older brother, a teenager, boasted that he would kill any of us, especially me, if he got the chance. I healed up and was soon able to walk the mile to Sunday School again, but my father went along carrying his shotgun. Some time later, the family moved away.

To be a pioneer takes courage. My father took a lot of abuse, but there was a limit to his endurance. My father was a brave man and was able to overcome hardships with great courage. It takes courage and faith in God to accomplish many things. Courage, undergirded by God is undefeatable, but there must be a worthy undertaking.

Have a purpose strong and firm,  
Having made it, never from it turn.  
Be brave, don't flinch, stand fast;  
You'll stand the victor at last.  
Of adversity have no dread or fear;  
Keep right on to success and victory steer.

As far as I can recollect, I had the impression that I should become a preacher. Our preacher wore a long black coat, all buttoned up, and his stuffy mannerism did not appeal to me. I wanted freedom. To be free has always been my desire. On the other hand, I was delighted to get before an audience to speak. That was the reason I always had something I had learned to give at these programs in the schoolhouse. When the program was finished, the chairman would ask if there was anyone who had something to give and I was always ready.

It was during that time that an Englishman and his wife moved into the house next to ours. When someone moved into the neighborhood, the settlers always welcomed them. I went to see them and found that they had nothing but he was planning to farm. The next day I got a horse and canvassed the

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area, asking for donations of grain. Some gave one or two sacks of wheat, others oats, and others corn. In the end, I had a considerable amount promised. The next day I went out with the wagon and collected all I had been promised. I had a big load when I drove on the new neighbor's place. The man came out to see what all the "commotion" was about. When I told him it was a welcome from the neighbors, tears came to his eyes. He tried to say something but could not say a word; so I said, "Let's unload. Where do you want it?" That experience did me more good than I can tell.

In those days, the field work was all done by horsepower. I am not certain of my age at the time, but I was probably about eleven and did my part of the plowing, etc. My father was very careful with his horses; so when I was ready to go out on the field, he cautioned me not to be too hard on the horses but give them a "blow," meaning, let them rest once in a while. I stopped at the edge of the field near a large rock to let the horses "blow" and got up on top of the rock. Being used to sermons in Dutch, I started to practice preaching. It was a good sermon but the horses did what I have seen many people in church do. They hung their heads and went fast to sleep in spite of all my eloquence. Then it came to me that I did not want to be a preacher. I wanted to be free. I saw a meadow lark up in the air, singing in his freedom. But suppose he had to wear a long black coat? Then he would no longer be free. NO!! I did not want to be a preacher, but the Lord said, "Yes," and He had a praying mother on His side. My mother was much in prayer for a preacher-son. I tried many different kinds of work, and although I did not fail or get discharged, something always happened to stop me. God's will and a praying mother will always win.

My father had set a policy for us. Our work on the farm was our obligation, but any money we earned outside the farm was our own so every penny was carefully saved. I wanted a

cowboy saddle. It was my job to break young horses for riding. In that way I learned to ride bucking horses. A cowboy saddle was finally bought with the money I had so carefully earned and saved.

### CHAPTER 3

#### ANOTHER MOVE

For some reason, which is not clear to me now, we moved from Joubert to Harrison, a new town about nine miles away. The place my folks bought was a mile from the town. Father established his shop at the edge of town. The farmwork was left up to my two older brothers and myself.

In our home, we all felt that the establishment belonged to everyone and that which was good for the establishment was good for everyone. We each had our own responsibility.

By this time Harrison had two churches, both Dutch. All services were held in Dutch because the community was mostly settled by Dutch people. The town had a two-story building for a schoolhouse and two teachers. The grade of a student was determined according to the reader he was in. A child was not admitted earlier than six years of age. He started with the Primer, a book of mostly pictures and the simplest words. From thereon, it was the First Reader and so on until the Fifth Reader. When the student had completed the Fifth Reader, he was through with grammar school. There was no graduation. He was just finished. There was no high school to prepare for college, but here and there, there were what were called academies. These took the place of high school to prepare students for college. The few colleges there were also had what was called an "academic" department in which the student could prepare to go into higher college courses.

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Not all decided to go to college but instead just chose some line of work to engage in. One who had finished the grammar school could apply for a permit to teach in a grammar school. He was not given a certificate to teach without further preparation, so many chose just to accept the permit.

At this time, I was between fourteen and fifteen years old and a farmer who we knew came to our house and asked to hire me on his farm. His partner had gone away and someone was needed to take his place. The man felt I would do. Both my father and my mother objected, but I wanted to go and the man was insistent. Finally my folks gave in with one condition, that I stay with it for the full five months agreed upon. My wages were \$15.00 per month plus room and board. My room was in the attic over the kitchen, reached by a ladder, which had to be hoisted to the ceiling and fastened there during the day. At the head of the ladder was a square hole; so when my bedtime came, the ladder was let down and I went up. My bed was a sack the size of a mattress filled with straw. It was laid on the boards. It had no springs. I went to sleep smelling all the smells of the kitchen stove and had heat from it as well. Of the meals I had no complaints, for farmers always have good meals.

I was up at four a.m. doing chores, milking the cows, etc., and by sun-up I had eaten breakfast and was out in the field. In the evening, we remained in the field until sunset, then did all the chores, had supper at nine, and then I went up through my hole to bed. This was repeated six days a week. Once in a while I took a Sunday off to go home to see my folks if I chose to walk the two and a half miles to do it. Well, I stuck it out, but there was never a happier person than I when the day finally came to go home for good. However, I had the satisfaction of knowing that I had done all the work that a man had done before I came. I was a man at fifteen years of age.

## CHAPTER 4

## EAGLE COMES INTO MY LIFE

Eagle was not a bird but was the most affectionate and beautiful little horse I have ever had anything to do with.

Although the Indians had been moved onto the reservation, they were permitted to leave for the purpose of making a trip. Since there were no trees on the plains, the Indians would go out and cut the trees that grew along the river, trim them, and bring them to the settlement where the farmers were glad to buy these "poles" from them. Usually there were from three to five Indian families in wagons which came along and they also brought a few horses. Eagle was one of these horses which a man in town bought for \$5.00. After he had him, however, he did not want him; so I bought him for the same price. Eagle was a small stallion, proud and beautiful. As soon as he got to know me, he showed his affection and enjoyed being fondled. With my cowboy saddle, Eagle made a fine showing.

I remained on the farm for a while longer. Then when I was sixteen or seventeen, the Spanish-American War broke out. We read of "Teddy" Roosevelt recruiting a troop of cavalry to go to Cuba. I wanted to enlist, but Uncle Sam said that no one could enlist under the age of eighteen without their parents' permission. My folks would not listen to my pleading, however. I talked about "Teddy" so much that I soon adopted the nickname, of which I was very proud. I lost considerable interest in the farm. I drank in any news that came our way about the war. As for me, news about "Teddy" was of the greatest interest. When the news came that we had won the war, I was overjoyed.

I had finally finished the Fifth Reader at school. I looked forward to going to college, but there was no money unless I could get a job to help out. That year a new,

small denominational college was going to open in Huron, South Dakota which was about 75 miles from us. The college was to have an academic department. That was just right for me. Again, it is not clear to me how it happened, but a man who was to be the president of the college heard that I wanted to come so he came to talk to me. It was agreed that I would get the job of janitor in the dormitory to pay for my room and board.

I went at the appointed time when the college was to open for registration and was the first student on campus. The college was a Christian school, so all the teachers were Christians. Each school day there was chapel service which every student was required to attend. Classes began at 9 a.m. and closed at 4 p.m. I started my janitor work as soon as I could change my clothes after classes were dismissed. Dinner was at six in the dormitory. I tried to be finished with my work by dinner time. After dinner I did my studying then was up again at 5 a.m. to do the dusting before classtime.

I have told you that I enjoyed public speaking. It was at college that I found a place to do it. A debating club was started, open to any student who wished to join. I joined, and the first topic to be debated was "Shall the United States annex the Philippines?" This was a very hot subject at the time. I was on the affirmative side. I had never debated before, and although I believed in what I was debating, I realized I needed some help in getting some good arguments to prove my view. I had met the State General Attorney at church some time before, so I decided to go to him to get some pointers. Being such a green country boy, I was not aware that there were certain formalities needed to see a man in such a high office. In the office I was met by a young lady who asked what I wanted. I told her I wanted to see the Attorney General. She left me standing there but soon came back and said I could go in. The General remembered me and soon made me feel at ease. He gave me some very

good points for he was also in favor of the annexation. Finally the night came for the debate. The Attorney General was there with his wife. We won. After the debate was over, he came forward and introduced his wife to me and they both congratulated me. That was a great night for me. After that I debated every time I had the opportunity to do so.

At this time I was a believer, but I had not committed my life to the Lord. I still did not want to be a preacher, but without realizing it, I was preparing myself for it. I had selected a course in public speaking. Also at that time, a young man came to the college to work with young men on Sunday afternoons. After one service, he asked for an expression in regard to committing the life to Christ. I held up my hand. On Monday, he came to my room and helped me make that commitment. It made a great difference in my life, but I did not change my thinking about not becoming a preacher. However, I was interested in seeing others commit their lives to Christ also. I joined the Christian Endeavor group in the church I was attending. In my own home town the church had nothing for the young people; so when I went home for the summer, I immediately got busy organizing a Christian Endeavor group there. This was much to the delight of the young people, who until then had had no part in the work of the church.

When fall came it was time to go back to college, and since I would be away most of the time, it was deemed best to sell Eagle. I missed my little friend. But because of lack of funds, I did not go back to college after all. The editor of the local weekly paper asked me to come in and help in printing the paper. So I became a printer which was very interesting.

I took a delight in organizing something. I liked brass band music, so I talked to some of the fellows about having a band but there was no one who could play an instrument. Finally we had enough fellows. Each selected the instrument

he wanted and we had a band. We practiced, and before long we played, making sounds that might resemble music. So Harrison had a band, but no band leader. Then one of the members read an ad in the paper of a band leader who wanted such a position. His doctor had advised his wife to go to a different climate, such as South Dakota. Their present location was Wisconsin. We got in touch with him and he came with what was supposed to be a sick wife. We were delighted with him. He had been with us for about a month and we had made good progress when someone brought us bad news. A sheriff from Wisconsin had come and arrested him for running away with another man's wife. That was a hard setback for the band, but we kept practicing.

I worked on the local paper for about two years and then decided to go to Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa. To help pay my way I secured a job in a print shop, working after classes and on Saturdays. However my program was interrupted by my coming down with the measles. I had a room in a private home. The people of the house were very kind to me and took good care of me. In due time I was allowed to go out and take up where I had left off. I was given back my job in the printing shop and I made up the work I had missed in my classes.

The print shop was owned by an ordained preacher. He was out much of the time, leaving the shop in charge of a lady who was also a printer. I worked at whatever needed to be done, so I was in all the different departments of the shop.

When school closed for the summer vacation, I was given full time work. Mr. Jones was the owner. One day when he was away, the foreman he had hired did not come to work. In the afternoon when Mr. Jones was there, the foreman finally showed up and Mr. Jones got very angry. The foreman was drunk. Mr. Jones told him to get out as fast as he could and never come back. Then he turned to me and said, "You're the

foreman. Take over." I was very astonished at the promotion but was determined to make good of it. I worked very hard that summer. After Mr. Jones had gone over the books later on, he said that the shop had turned out more jobs at that time than it ever had before during that time of year.

## CHAPTER 5

### A NEW ADVENTURE

I took time out to visit my folks in South Dakota. It was a very pleasant vacation, but I was soon restless, and in a couple of weeks I went back to Mr. Jones. Upon my return, he had a proposition for me. In his traveling, he would sometimes buy a weekly newspaper and resell it for a profit or have someone run it for him. He had just bought the Murray Advocate. Murray was a small town out some miles from Des Moines, Iowa. He offered to sell the paper to me. After some negotiating, a deal was made and I became the owner and editor of the Murray Advocate. I was the youngest newspaper editor in the state of Iowa. I retained the young man who was in the shop as typesetter. It was my job to get out and gather the news, copy the ads to be printed, listen to a lot of gossip, and do whatever else was needed. Of course there were editorials to write, which sometimes got me into trouble.

Murray had no drinking place, but the drug store made a petition for a permit to sell liquor. There was considerable opposition, including some from the Advocate. Things got hotter and hotter. One evening as I was walking down the street, one of the "toughs," who wanted liquor to be sold, pulled a gun on me with the threat that he was going to shoot me. Just then another man came along and took the gun away and told the fellow to stop the foolishness. In the end, the liquor permit was not granted due to a petition

against it.

I enjoyed the paper business and received compliments from my friends, but after I was in it for some time, I figured out the whole situation and came to the conclusion that there was not an inviting future in the business. There was not enough business in the town to bring a reasonable income. I decided to sell the paper, so I was free again.

In considering my next move, I decided to go to Dallas, Texas. Upon arrival there I took a room in the Y.M.C.A.. The next morning I met a man who introduced himself as Dr. Horton. Dr. Horton proved to be a fine Christian gentleman. At the time, he was holding street meetings and invited me to be with him. I was glad for the opportunity. In walking together he made a remark which somewhat startled me. He said, "You should be in the Lord's work full-time." I was to hear those words again, but I did not know it. I thought I was having my own way at that time, but there was a certain mother praying for her son which I did not know about. In the end, I could not compete with God and a praying mother. God won!

#### My Mother

In memory I see that bowed form so dear  
 As she, in faith, drew to God so near,  
 To the Lord she loved so well.  
 Her love for Him she would ever tell.  
 They were not idle words she said,  
 For by faith to God's throne was led.  
 It was for me, on bended knee, she plead  
 That in His way I might be led.  
 According to her faith, it was done;  
 So in joy, she praised God's blessed Son.  
 Then one day He took her out of this world of sin  
 To see His face forever and be with Him.  
 Oh! To see that bowed form again on her knee  
 As she asked God's care and love for me.  
 It seems I can hear her His praises sing,  
 Glory hallelujah to her Lord and King.  
 Someday He will call me to that home so fair,  
 Then with her His glory I will share.

It was summertime when I arrived in Dallas and it was very hot. I went about to find a job, but it so happened that there were no openings of any kind. Then I met a man who was connected with a large publishing house. He was trying to get six men together who would go out to try to sell their publications. I became one of them. We would go to a town, divide it into sections, and start selling door to door. After the first week we were back in town, and the record of each man was gone over, for they were trying to get a group of salesmen who would really work. Besides the head man, I was chosen, and the two of us worked together. We could select any section of the state we wanted. I decided to go north into Oklahoma. I stopped at Ardmore. However, in a few days I began to feel sick and was told to go farther north to Oklahoma City. I took the advice and soon felt well again.

Oklahoma City was a booming city and I decided to quit my job and get back into printing again, for I did not like the road. But I soon found that they had all the printers they needed. There was quite a delay in my finding another job during which time I got rather short of money, therefore missing many meals. I believe the delay was the Lord trying to show me I did not know how to run my own business. After some time, I got a job in the largest print shop in the city. My job was that of press foreman. After the typesetters had set up the type, made up the form and read the proof, I was to get it on the presses, get the stock ready, and see that it was properly printed. I had four presses. Each press had a feeder which needed hand-feeding. From the presses the printed pages went to the bindery department which was located right next to the press department. I had a good time working there. There also was a rubber stamp and notary seal department. I often helped there, so I learned the business well. As the printing business increased, management decided the stamp business took too much time and decided to sell it.

A buyer came and promised to buy if they would furnish someone to do the work. They asked me if I would take it on. The deal was made and I was into something else.

Oklahoma City was booming which was very much to my liking and I took my place in the church I attended. The pastor liked the way I worked and proposed that I be employed as an assistant to him. He was so certain that the board would approve that he put me to work right away. Of course I had given up my other work then, but when the board met, two of the members were so against it that the idea dropped. The pastor was so discouraged that he resigned. I was now detached, and having a desire to go to California, this was a good time to do so. I bought a railroad ticket to San Diego. It was the latter part of December when I arrived; in fact, it was the last day of the year, a Saturday. Sunday morning I went out and found a church I wanted to attend. What a change! This church was blessed with quite a large group of young people my age. What was even more surprising was that these young people had made arrangements to have an outdoor picnic on Monday! A picnic in the outdoors in winter?! When I had left Oklahoma, it was cold, snowy and icy.

This group of young people constituted the young people's class in Sunday School. The teacher was a young lady school teacher. She had complete control over the group for she was loved by all. I got into the activity of the group at once. I also secured a job in a small printing shop which at that time a man was running all alone. I made it a two-man shop which he was very glad of. I was well pleased with my set-up with the young people at the church and with the printing. I enjoyed it tremendously.

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## CHAPTER 6

## I MEET DR. HORTON AGAIN

The young people of the different churches of San Diego got together and made plans for a city-wide evangelistic campaign. It was to be a two-week campaign. A Dr. Hadden was invited to be the preacher. Dr. Hadden was associated with Dr. Horton in planning to start a Bible institute in Los Angeles. The campaign was drawing large crowds and God was blessing it. Dr. Horton came down to San Diego on Saturday to be at the meetings' close on Sunday. It was then that I again met Dr. Horton. Although it was several years before when I had met him in Dallas, he still remembered me and after a few words of greeting, he said, "You should be in the Lord's work full-time." This hit me so hard that I was stunned. A strange feeling came over me and then I said, "I will." The strange feeling I had was replaced by one of jubilation and relief. We talked things over and he concurred with me that I should acquire more preparation. He told me about the plan to open the Bible Institute in the fall and that he would be more than happy to enroll me as a student.

Now I had an aim in life. I was not only a Christian, I was a committed Christian. The climax of love is commitment. This gives much joy. The Bible has much to say about the joy of the Christian.

My plan was laid out. I was to continue as I was, looking forward to attending the Los Angeles Bible Institute in the fall. I was content. I was busy with the work of the young people in the church I was attending.

Those were the days of the Anti-Saloon League fight against the liquor business. I had become acquainted with the man heading the movement in the San Diego area and he asked me to take an assignment. East of San Diego, in the

hills, there was an amusement park. It had an auto race track and a place where liquor was sold which was unlawful. To get by the law, however, it was called a club and only members could buy there. But all it took to become a member was to have your name on a list. On a certain Sunday, the noted auto race driver, Barnie Oldfield, would be there to make a record run. I was to go and buy some liquor there to be used in court against the club. I asked one of the young men to go with me. We joined the club and we were warmly welcomed by several members. I bought a pint of whisky and we went out for a row on the lake. Barnie Oldfield broke his own record by driving his car at sixty miles per hour! That was a world record and it was on the front page of the newspapers all over the country.

Right here, I want to go back to my boyhood days when I left Harrison. I had never seen a drunk person for there was no drinking place in the county. Then one day someone made an old house into a saloon and moved it into town. One afternoon on my way home from school, just as I was even with the door of that saloon, out came a man, stooped over, a full beard dripping with slobber, as well as the front of his clothes. He stopped right in front of me and looked at me. I was so horrified that I got away from there as fast as I could and vowed never to use alcoholic drink. That experience created in me a hatred for that which made a man whom God had created in His image look like what I had just seen. I hate to think that it is legal to drink alcoholic beverages today, that it has become a way of life to many people, and that young people are becoming alcoholics by the thousands. Twice in my life I have been threatened for opposing the establishment of a drinking place.

To go on with my story . . . Of course, I had missed Sunday School that morning because of being at the park, but I got back in time to be at the evening church service. When

Miss Delphie, the young people's teacher, saw me, she asked where I had been in the morning. Miss Delphie was a strict Sunday observer and when I told her the story, she almost fainted. When I showed her the bottle of whisky, she was horrified. To finish the story, the owner of the club was convicted to jail. I left the pint of whisky in court.

## CHAPTER 7

### I FINALLY BECOME A PREACHER

While waiting in San Diego to go to the Los Angeles Bible School, I received a letter from Dr. Horton informing me that it was impossible to open the school that fall because the facilities they had planned on using were not available after all. Since it would be another year's delay, he felt I should go to Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, which I decided to do. It was about this time that I met a young man who lived in New Jersey and was on his way home. He was earning his way by selling advertising gadgets to business concerns. He asked me to join him since I was going back east also. We came up the coast, but there was a business slump at that time; so when I got to Sacramento, I decided to stop there for the winter and get a job of some kind. I went to a real estate office and asked if they knew of anyone who needed a man to work. They told me they knew of a man who was looking for a worker and that he would come back before he left town. I waited. Shortly, he came back and we made a deal that I would go along with him. The job was doing farmwork. It was not the most pleasant situation. They were not Christian people; half their words were swear words. I shocked them by saying that I did not work on Sundays for I wanted to go to church. That was something new to them. I found a church within walking distance and found it to be full

of very nice people. In talking with the members, the owner of a lumber yard said that he would like me to come and work for him, which I did. I did not want to go back east on account of cold weather, for I did not want to spend money buying new clothes. I worked there until about March and then went to Chicago. I enrolled the next day after I arrived there. After I paid for a week's board and room and bought a few books, I had less than three dollars left. I did not worry about it for I knew the Lord would see me through. The next Sunday afternoon I went with a group of students to a prison to tell the story of Jesus and salvation. On the way out, one of the students learned that I was a printer. He told me that he had charge of a small print shop and needed someone to help him; so I did, and there was my income. For my room and board I helped with the dishwashing. There were about 250 eating in the dining room, so there were lots of dishes and a number of dishwashers.

I enjoyed being with the group of students who went on the street in the evenings to hold street meetings. We had some unusual experiences. At one meeting there was a saloon at all four corners. Quite a large crowd gathered, including men and women who usually hung around the bars. After the testimonies by some of the students and the salvation message by the leader, as the invitation was being given, one of the street girls came forward weeping, saying she wanted to be saved. That infuriated the tough gang, and they tried to pull her back but she would not yield. Then one of the tough guys came up and hit our leader in the mouth so hard with his fist that blood squirted out. When the tough crowd saw what was done, they left. There were several other interesting happenings at our street meetings.

The Bible Institute did not take a summer vacation but continued right through the year, so I was there all summer. In the fall, I decided to visit my folks in South Dakota, at Harrison. It is needless to say that my people as well as my

former friends were very delighted to see me. I was invited to speak in one of the churches at the evening service. After singing several songs with the congregation, I was introduced by the pastor. I had just started to speak when it started to thunder and people became very restless, some even leaving the building. I knew the folks wanted to get home before the storm, so I closed my speech.

I had a good visit and then decided to go to Oklahoma City again. Why I went there, I can give no reason. I just felt it was the thing to do. After I got there, I went through the usual procedure of getting a room, finding a place to eat and getting a job. Again it was in a print shop. On Sunday I found a church which I joined, as usual, and identified with the young people's activities. During the past years I had acquired some knowledge of singing. The pastor of the church learned that the little church he had first pastored after coming out of the seminary had been without a pastor for some time. He wanted to go there and hold an evangelistic meeting and asked me to come along and lead the singing. I was glad to do so. The place was Caddo, towards the southeastern part of Oklahoma. The meetings were announced and people came. The preacher preached and I led the song service. I also sang a hymn as a solo a few times.

In those days it was quite a habit for the girls, if the songleader was a male and single, to vie for his particular favor. I was just such a victim, but I was not for the grabbing. A few evenings before the close of the meetings, the preacher asked me to go to our room since he wanted to talk to some church people. When he came in sometime later, he announced that the church had voted me a unanimous call to be their pastor. Such a thing had not entered my mind. The preacher asked me if I would accept. It was so unexpected that I did not know what to say, but I told him I would have to have time to consider it. I had not been ordained, and the offer came so suddenly. I lay awake a long time that

night reviewing things in my past. "Was God in this? Was this the reason I had come to Oklahoma City? Was God opening a way for me to do what He wanted me to do?" I had to acknowledge that it was God's doing to get me into the ministry; and when I got home the next day, I told the preacher that I would accept. He immediately asked his church to call for ordination. Following is a copy of it:

#### CERTIFICATE OF ORDINATION

This is to certify that brother C. C. Van Gorkom was ordained to the work of the Gospel Ministry by prayer and laying on of hands of the Eldership on the 25th day of January, 1910.

He was called to ordination by the Immanuel Baptist Church of Oklahoma City, of which he was a member, which church had ample opportunity to become acquainted with his piety and ministerial gifts.

The Ordination Council was composed of the following brethren: Carter Helm Jones, Moderator; N. A. McKinney; G. M. Harrell; A. A. Williamson; Rev. Creet More; James C. Burckle; and Evert L. Rawlings, Secretary.

After a deliberate and thorough examination of the candidate, they cordially recommended him for ordination. Our beloved brother, bearer of this paper, has therefore the entire approbation of the Ordaining Council in being set apart to preach the Gospel and administer the Ordinances of Christ.

Evert Rawlings, Moderator  
H. C. Acuff, Church Clerk

So there I was, a preacher and a pastor of a church. The "I" who did not want to become a preacher was swept into it by irresistible power. I made arrangements to go to Caddo at once. It was a small place and had once been a rough place. As a town, it was declining, for a large company from the east had established a new town a few miles away on the railroad. This town was peopled by those who should have rightfully belonged to Caddo. My first concern was to get the church established since it had been without a pastor for a long time. The meetings we had held made the people realize

that there was a church, but there was much to do to make it a working church.

I had a room in a private residence and took my meals at the hotel. I had no car and had to do my visitation work on foot which made it slower to get around. One difficulty in regard to my meals was that the cook did not go by the clock but by the sun! It was spring when I came to Caddo, and as the days grew longer and the sun set later, I got my meals later. But the time for the evening service did not change with the sun so that after a while I had to go to church without dinner. However, more people became interested in the church. The great disadvantage was that no new people came into the community.

The following winter, sickness among the people caused many deaths and I was called on to conduct funeral services nearly every day. On some days there were two funerals to conduct. In one family, the mother and then one of the daughters died. A few days later a son died. That left the father and a daughter. At the funeral of the son, the remaining daughter became very upset. When the casket was let down into the grave, she jumped down, screaming, and tried to get into the grave. It took two strong men to hold her. I was very emotionally upset but managed to control myself as I talked to them.

When summer came, things cleared up. The people of the church were very kind to me which helped a lot. Sometime during the summer, someone brought word that there was a church in a small town nearby that had had no pastor for quite a while. They asked me if I would come over and give a sermon. I could not ignore such a plea. I made arrangements to go for one Sunday afternoon. I had to leave Caddo on Saturday night because that was when the train went. I had to sleep in a hotel. The next day I went to the church. There were a lot of people cleaning the inside of the church. They had all the windows open and the dust came out as if it

was smoke. Just about the time for the service to start, a man came up and asked for the "Parson." I stepped up to him and introduced myself. He was much excited and said he was on the way to the cemetery for a funeral service and I was supposed to lead the service. I told him the people were gathering for a preaching service and that I would make it as short as possible and then go to the cemetery. He told me that would be all right, for it would be quite a spell before they got there for he had ridden ahead of them. So I preached a Gospel message with prayer, etc. then dismissed the meeting. One of the members said he would take me to the cemetery in his buggy. In the church I had told them of eternal life. There at the grave I spoke about the end of the physical life and the possibility of having an endless life with Christ in heaven. Within my heart I wept with the loved ones as the body was lowered into the ground. During this short graveside service I had told them of the love of God, how He sent Jesus to die on the cross "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." I told them that Jesus was waiting to have them receive Him so that they might have eternal life. After the service, a number of the men started filling the grave while I talked to the others. I gave them what words of comfort I could and then headed for home.

The people of Caddo were friendly and a few seemed to be in earnest to see the Lord's work prosper. They were ready to work but some felt the church was a place to come to only if they felt like it. When I convinced them as much as I could, I resigned after a fond farewell. I went to the church headquarters in Des Moines, Iowa to see about a church that was pastorless at the time. After I had introduced myself to the receptionist, I was admitted into the office. The manager was glad to see me. He had just received a request from a small church in a small town. The members of this church were a fine group of people, faithful and loyal

to their pastor. He made arrangements for me to be with them the next Sunday to preach as a candidate for a call. I was on hand the next Sunday and preached evangelistic sermons, both in the morning and evening. Monday morning I went back to Des Moines to await the outcome which I received a few weeks later. The church gave me a unanimous call to become pastor. I wrote a letter of acceptance saying that I expected to be with them on the following Sunday. This all was fast work.

It is not my plan to report all my activities in detail of every church I served as pastor but rather some experiences of interest. I have no record of how long I served at this church, but I had a pleasant relationship with the people and the membership was quite unhappy one Sunday morning when I announced my resignation. My reason for resigning was that I realized <sup>I needed</sup> more preparation to be a good pastor. The two pastorates I had served had shown me where I was lacking. I decided to take at least a year in a seminary. I chose a school in Kansas City. This was a busy, but a fun, year. Not only did I learn from the textbooks and the teachers but also from the students, many of whom had, like myself, some pastoral experience. In talking with them, I learned of their weaknesses and their successes. I also had the opportunity to conduct a week of evangelistic meetings in a small country church. This added to my experience in preaching. Although I did not earn a degree, I gained knowledge which was valuable in my work later. It also gave me an opportunity to meet prominent people in church circles. From them I learned much.

After leaving school, I came to California and went to the Berkeley State Church Office and learned that pastors were needed in Oregon. So my next step was at the Church Office in Portland, Oregon. There I was told that there was a new church in Cottage Grove where a pastor was needed. They arranged with that church for me to be with them to

preach the following Sunday. The result was that they called me to be their pastor.

It was a new church which was organized by an eighty-year-old pastor. The small group, relying on the Lord, had proceeded and built a church house. It was usable although not finished. The old pastor felt he was too old to carry on; besides, he was very hard of hearing which made it difficult to carry on as a pastor. Therefore it was upon his own request that the church look for another pastor, and he was very helpful to me after I took over.

## CHAPTER 8

### A NEW EXPERIENCE

On my first Sunday as pastor at Cottage Grove I noticed, after I had started my message, a lady with four young people come in. The choice seats, the back seats, being occupied, they were seated quite well to the front. Meeting them after the service, they explained why they were so late. They had been misdirected by someone. This was their first Sunday in Cottage Grove. They proved to be very nice people and were helpful in whatever area they could be. In working together, we formed a close friendship. This was especially so concerning the oldest daughter. At that time there were no cars, so all walked. The family passed the place where I had my room and board, so it was a natural thing to walk to church together. Grace, the oldest daughter, and I often had some church work to talk over as we walked. Our friendship developed into that mysterious part of man which can only come from God--Love, for "God is love."

While there, the town decided to have a Fourth of July celebration with a parade led by the band. The band was short a cornet player. Someone informed the band leader

that I played the cornet, and so I was asked to join the band which I gladly did. The parade was a big success, but come the next morning, I received a phone call. It was from a lady from the church and I certainly was put in my place-- "...the disgrace of our pastor marching down the street tooting a horn" and so on and so on. Most of the members of the band were not Christians. I thought the Lord had given me a great place to witness to these fellows. For whenever and wherever there is an opportunity to witness to the unsaved, I cannot hold back because of the notions of certain other people. Finally the old lady got reconciled with me and there were no more interruptions in my instrument playing.

When the time came that I felt my work with this church was finished, I received a call from a church at Wheatland, a small town near Sacramento, California. Before I left, Grace and I agreed upon a wedding date which was to be as soon as I was settled in my new pastorate. Grace had decided she was ready to share in the Lord's work with me. The wedding was to be performed by the old pastor of Cottage Grove in Grace's home. This pleased the pastor very much. After the wedding, we had an informal reception and the "goodbyes" were said and we left for the train depot to take the first train home to Wheatland.

## CHAPTER 9

### AN EMBARRASSMENT

In the northern part of California, there is a resort named Mt. Shasta. There the train stopped long enough for passengers to get off to meet people, and also to exchange passengers. There was always a large crowd of people at the station when the train came in. Among the crowd when we arrived were some people from Wheatland who knew me. When

Grace and I got off, they rushed over to see us. That was fine, but I was in trouble, for I had to introduce Grace as my new wife and I forgot my name, Van Gorkom. The friends stood looking at me, along with Grace, and finally the friends and I just blurted out together, "My wife!" This was followed by congratulations and good-hearted jokes. The train whistled and we got on and went to our new home.

Grace's father had bought a hat for her. He was not up to the fashion of the day, however. The hat was a large creation with a very wide brim which flopped up and down when she walked and she hated it very much. The fashion at that time was something that resembled a bird's nest with ribbons, etc. hanging down, so I promised Grace we would get her a new one. When we did, it looked very stunning on her.

This was the beginning of a joy I had never experienced. It also was not what "I" was going to do anymore, but what "we" were going to do. Just before the wedding day, I had told Grace of my idea of the man and wife relationship: There would be no boss in our home, but it would be "we" and "us." I am well aware that the Bible states that the husband should be the head of the wife, but it does not say that he is to be a domineering boss. I knew, a man who would not even allow his wife to buy herself a dress. When there is a boss in the home, there usually is an unhappy marriage; and if there are children, they will suffer and their lives will show it later.

The people of the Wheatland church gave us a very warm welcome and Grace adjusted at once to her new situation. She became the favorite, and that was where I had to make the adjustment, for up until then I, as the pastor, had been the favorite. That was hard on the ego, but here again love exerted itself; so instead of being offended, I felt happy that she was well received. If one will open his heart to the Holy Spirit, all will be well.

Grace was a great help. She played the piano well and

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she sang beautifully. When we attended church gatherings and conventions, she was often asked to sing. She usually selected an old hymn and sang new life into it. She was especially adept with children and was often asked to address conventions on children's work.

## CHAPTER 10

### ANOTHER MOVE

I was asked to respond to a call from a small church in Malaga about five miles from Fresno by the Director of Missions for Northern California. We talked it over and decided to respond. Looking back, however, I think it was a mistake. The members of the church were grape growers. Many of the vineyards were dead. The alkali was coming in rapidly and killing the vines. Being located just adjacent to Fresno, this land was being bought up cheaply by speculators. That did not leave much to build a church with, for those who stayed had enough money to support a car so would drive to church to Fresno. We did the best we could for a few years. It was there we had a new experience. Our first child was born, a boy.

Sometime after we were married, Grace's father died so her mother stayed with us and took over as nurse for the first few months. Much is being said against mothers-in-law. My mother-in-law was a lovely Christian lady, and after this we had her in our home many times. She was always welcome.

After a couple of years at Malaga, we decided it would be more profitable to leave. Just at that time, a call came from Delano to become interim pastor of a church in the making. A group of people had established a church organization and the denominational director was directing the building of

the church house. A pastor had been selected, but he could not take over for a while. In connection with the church work, I was to be the editor of a weekly local newspaper. The editor had died leaving a young man to do the mechanical part. The editor's wife knew nothing of the business, not even how to write out a check. Knowing the printing business, I fitted in quite well.

This arrangement lasted less than two years. The church building was finished, the elected pastor took over, and arrangements for the continuation of the paper being made, we decided not to stay in Delano. This was a good time to visit Grace's family at Cottage Grove. When we got there, we found that their church was pastorless. Since there were many members still there who were there when I first pastored, they elected me to be pastor again. We took over at once. The church had a parsonage which eliminated the need to look for a house. Our relationship with the church was very cordial and our situation was very pleasant.

One day I received a request to conduct a funeral service about twelve miles into the woods. Instructions were given me to take the train, there being neither cars nor roads, and to get off at the first stop. There I would be met by someone who would take me to the place of service. The place where the train stopped was a box-like affair, about eight feet by eight feet, and open on the track side. I was met by someone with a horse-drawn vehicle. The road was very muddy and full of chuckholes. After about four miles, we arrived at a house which stood on posts about three feet high. There was no funeral director. One of the men took over. This man and woman had managed it all. It was an old lady who had died. She was a Christian and had asked before she died that a minister preach the service. Neighbors from all through the woods crowded around. The man who had taken charge was the lady's son. He did a good job.

After the service, the people piled into their horse-drawn conveyances. When all were loaded, the man in charge came to me and said there was no place for me to ride to the cemetery which was three miles away, so would I mind sitting on the coffin? There I was, sitting on the coffin containing the remains of this dear old lady, she herself being with her Lord Whom she loved. I went back to the place where I got off the train and soon it came and I got home.

My policy has been to participate in community betterment. Cottage Grove had no library. The nearest one was located at Eugene, thirty miles away over unpaved roads. I got in touch with the County Commissioner on the matter of establishing a branch library. After much delay, the county complied with the request and the library was established, much to the delight of the people.

The work at the church was going along very well. All indications pointed to a long stay, but it did not work out that way. Grace had asthma and her affliction came upon her. She coughed very much and had spells of difficult breathing. This situation was very discouraging; but when I mentioned to Grace that it might be wise to move to some other location which seemed to be better for her, she protested and would not listen. She was a brave woman and said she would fight it through. Finally, after many sleepless nights of coughing and hard breathing, she agreed to move. Several times before, we had stopped at Merced and her breathing had been free, so we tentatively decided on Merced.

## CHAPTER 11

## A NEW DEPARTURE

The church convention employed a preacher, Reverend Sims, to work at rehabilitating churches which were run down or which had no pastor. Rev. Sims was a large man with a big voice. He would go to such a church, find some of the members, and announce meetings to begin, giving the day and the hour. He was also a carpenter and a cement worker; so during the day, he would work on improving the church building or call on the people and tell them about the meetings. He was also a good song leader. When the meeting time came, he would announce a hymn and start singing even if there was no one else there.

The convention also printed a monthly newspaper. News about Rev. Sims' work was reported in it. The newspaper came to us while we were in Cottage Grove, stating that Rev. Sims was in Nebraska and that fifty pastors were needed in the state. There were that many churches without pastors! At the same time, it was reported that there were fifty pastors of that denomination trying to find churches in California. When Grace and I read about the need in Nebraska, after prayerful consideration, we decided to go where the need was great. With so many preachers in California, all churches could be taken care of along the coast. I resigned at Cottage Grove, and after a reasonable time for the church to make the adjustment, we went to Nebraska. We both felt that we had done the right thing.

As my custom was in coming to a new state, I went to the State Church Office and introduced myself to a man I had never met but of whom I had heard--the State Mission Director. I told him our story, and he told us of just the right place for us--Lewiston, Nebraska. It was strictly a country church with no other church nearby. I found a small apartment in Lincoln to stay in until we got settled. From the office,

arrangements were made with the church that I would be with them the next Sunday. I was there at the appointed time and preached an evangelistic message. The church called a business meeting and voted to call me to be their pastor. We accepted and moved there at once. We found a fine group of people who gave us a warm reception.

There was no town where we lived, as such, just a general store run by two brothers, a school which needed overhauling badly, and the church with a parsonage. One of the brothers who owned the store belonged to the church and was the Sunday School Superintendent. We found the attendance at the services to be very good and there was good harmony among the congregation. It was not long until we were considered part of the community.

I had grown up on a farm and in a farming community, so this life was not a new experience for me. As for Grace, she was raised in a town, but she adjusted quite well. She was somewhat confused regarding measurements. When she wanted to buy potatoes, she was told they cost so much per peck. She came home without any potatoes for she did not know how much a peck was. We sat down and went over some of those things together.

The school was in a deplorable condition. It was an old brick building with two stories. Scattered over the playground were six unpainted shacks. These were the "classrooms" which were added as new children came to the community.

The school board was not elected by public ballot, but instead, a meeting would be called and all those interested would come to participate in voting. One of the members had been on the board for many years. He was the clerk of the board, the only one who was paid a salary. During our second year there, it was time for another school board election, which was held in the schoolhouse.

I had been looking at the school situation and had

decided there should be a change. When a grammar school student graduated and wanted to go to high school, he had to go to a town called Beatrice which was quite a long way away. He would have to stay there five days a week. Parents were not happy with this situation, but no one seemed to know what to do about it.

The matter of more room came up again and another little room was proposed. Since these meetings were very informal, the election of the board members was held before finishing the building problem. The meeting started as usual, but before the election, I moved that the clerk's salary be reduced to twelve dollars a year instead of twenty-five. Now we'll call the clerk "Mr. Joe." Mr. Joe became very angry when the proposal passed. He arose and said he was handing in his resignation to take effect at once! It was accepted and I was elected to take his place. Then the question of the room came up again. I asked for the floor and outlined a solution. This was it: 1) Form a Unified School District, 2) Build a two-story building large enough to house both grammar and high school with the grammar school on the bottom floor and the high school above, and 3) Acquire land enough for future expansion. My proposal was adopted with much enthusiasm and the people started at once to make plans. It was the talk of the community. The plan was carried out. On a good location a nice, two-story brick building was built. It brought new life to the community. Parents of high school age children were pleased that their children were able to remain at home while in high school.

Our work with the church was progressing well, but we made a mistake . . .

## CHAPTER 12

## WE RECEIVE A CALLER

We had been at this place a little more than two years when the church director called on us. He was well pleased with the progress we had made in our work. Grace prepared a good lunch for us, and while we were eating he told us the purpose of his visit. He told us the board was pleased with what we had accomplished and that they wanted to find us a better place. We told him we were happy where we were. We had a long discussion. I reminded him that we had been there less than three years and had just a good beginning. But unfortunately this man had the reputation of always getting his own way, and he lived up to it with us. No matter what argument I presented, he came back with an answer. Finally Grace asked him to excuse us. In another room, she said I might as well give in for he would get his way in the end anyway. So, with some more reasoning, I told him we would make the change, but it turned out to be a big mistake.

The new set-up was a place called Merna, located in the central part of Nebraska. Merna was a small town. The main church was located in the town with smaller branch churches out in the country. I was to preach in one that was ten miles from town on Sunday mornings, then at another one in the afternoon in the opposite direction from town, and again in town in the evening. So I had three services every Sunday, all in different places. I had bought a used Model T Ford, and without it I could not have carried on my work.

So it was with a heavy heart that we left Lewiston, and the people could not understand since there was such a beautiful spirit of harmony in the church. I explained the situation as best I could. We started packing at once and were soon ready to leave. It was a sad goodbye for we felt we were leaving warm friends. We piled in our Ford and were off, feeling we were doing the wrong thing. The church at

Merna had a parsonage so we did not have to house-hunt.

The people of the church received us kindly and rendered all the help they could to see us settled. Taking care of our family, now consisting of three children, was not easy. There was compensation, for the people were very kind. At one of the out-stations in the summer they arranged for an afternoon pot-luck dinner. After dinner, while we were being entertained inside, they filled the Ford full of all sorts of food and other things. They were wholehearted, simple people, real friends.

After we had been there for some time, I was sick one week. On Saturday, Grace asked me what we should do for the services. I was too sick to be out. I told her to look in a certain drawer of my desk and get some sermon outlines, pick one, go over it, and make it her own. After the morning service, several of the members came in to see me. One said that it was the best sermon he had heard for a long time.

Our stay at Merna was interrupted by Grace's asthmatic condition which had worsened. There were nights that I had to be with her all night trying to give her some relief. So after prayerful consideration, it was decided to go back to California.

I resigned as pastor of the three churches, packed up, and we went on our way to Sacramento. After we got settled in an apartment, I contacted the State Church Office. They put me in touch with a church at Orosi, about forty-five miles southeast of Fresno. This resulted in a call by this church. Here also was a parsonage so we did not have to go house-hunting. Soon we were settled. The church had been without a pastor for some time and there was a condition existing of which I had not been informed. The last three pastors had each stayed only one year because the church was in such an inharmonious condition. They had all left in

despair. This condition came to light at the first business meeting we held. A certain proposition, which had not been discussed at the previous meeting, had not been concluded. This same question came up again and became open for discussion. The first one to speak was one of the deacons. His remarks were perfectly in order. Then a man stood up and his talk was an unkind and personal attack on the brother who had just spoken. When he sat down, I told the congregation that we were not ready for a business meeting since it was the Lord's business, and that we should do some more praying. Then I asked the one who had spoken last to get up and pray. He slumped down in his seat and said, "Pray yourself." So I prayed, asking the Lord to forgive the unkindness and to instill a spirit of brotherly love. The meeting then continued quietly, the proposition was passed, the unkind man left, and all seemed to be happy. From then on we did not have any more discord, and there was a spirit of progress. The auditorium was filled each Sunday and folks were converted. The Sunday School outgrew its room so an addition was built on. To our delight, Grace's asthma did not bother her. There was good unity prevailing.

The church granted us two weeks' vacation. We chose the month of August that year. All was ready, and we left on Monday morning for Cottage Grove where Grace's mother and brother were still living. All went well and we had a good time and were back in due time. Then the shock came. In the mail was a letter from the choir leader who was also a deacon. In the letter, he suggested that I had better consider my future with the church. That meant terminating my pastorate. There had been no friction between us that I could detect. Neither Grace nor I could think of anything that was wrong. I called for a deacons' meeting after the morning service on the first Sunday we were back. I read the letter to them and it was a surprise for all, except the letter writer. Here I made a mistake, for I said that I could not continue

with a feeling of opposition and handed in my resignation. It came to us later that this deacon had a preacher friend who needed a church. I felt later that I had been too hasty. However, just at that time, the church at Lakeport had become pastorless and I received an invitation from them to come as a candidate. That resulted in a call to become their pastor. We moved there and settled in the parsonage. After we were there for a year or so, Grace's affliction came upon her again. The longer we stayed, the more severe and more frequent were her attacks. It was hard on all of us to move so often but I could not endure to see Grace suffer so much. Grace protested, but I told her that I could do something to make a living and we would not give up Christian work. I could honor the Lord as a layman. So it was another goodbye to good friends. We moved to Merced, found a house, and moved in.

As was our custom, we attended a church of our choice the first Sunday we were there. At the church, I met a man who was in the insurance business who was looking for someone to help him. Monday morning I went to his office. He was largely interested in health and accident insurance. Up in the mountains, east of the town, there were large lumber operations and there were many accidents. He recommended that I go up there and work among the men since he had gotten concession to do so. The time I had with the men was limited to when they were in camp. I had my meals with them and slept in the bunkhouse.

This arrangement was not to my liking for it was a rough life to live. After some time, one of the real estate men asked me to come work in his office. This was a better deal for I could be home with my family.

Our sojourn in Merced lasted less than two years. The Missionary-at-Large for Northern California knew me and called upon us. He said it was decided to get me back into

the pastorate. There was a chance to save two churches. The pastors from both had become discouraged and had quit. He had gone to both and had called what members were willing to come together and talk things over. One of the churches flatly refused at first, but he told them he had someone who would help them so they finally agreed to try again. The other church was willing and ready to start. Arrangements were made for the two to work together under one pastor. The two churches were twenty miles apart, so I was to preach in the mornings at Caruthers and in the evenings at Lemoore. We lived in Lemoore because they had a parsonage available.

## CHAPTER 13

### SUCCESS!

I was really surprised at the number of people in the Caruthers church the first Sunday I preached. This was encouraging for me and for the people who had said that they would try again. Sometimes we look at a task from the human point of view without taking God into consideration. Then, of course, we will fail.

After the service, I drove back to Lemoore and held a service in the evening. There, also, the people did well. Grace and I soon learned to love the people of both churches. Each week more people came and both churches grew in attendance and enthusiasm. We had midweek prayer meetings on Wednesdays at Lemoore and on Thursdays at Caruthers. I would remain in Caruthers on Thursday nights and spend Fridays calling in the community. I found people who formerly attended the church but had not come back. I showed them how wrong they were, according to the Bible. Some responded and were happy after they had come for a few Sundays. We soon had a good-

sized Sunday School as well as a growing congregation. Some suggested that we should build an addition to the building.

At Lemoore, the growth was not as fast but very good. I also did a good deal of calling there, but as a whole, the people were not as responsive. In spite of that, however, there was a steady increase.

The growth of these two churches was remarkable. In six months, from the time that I started as pastor, the combined Board of Deacons and Trustees at Caruthers called a meeting of the membership without my knowing it. They voted to formally call me as their pastor and to have us move into their parsonage which had been rented to others until then. The church would also pay me a reasonable salary. I was much surprised and asked what the Lemoore church would do since they had not made the progress that Caruthers had. Their suggestion was to encourage the Lemoore church to do the same. When I informed the Lemoore church, they were somewhat astonished but soon said they would take the step. The church had grown enough so that they could have their own pastor, which they did, without waiting. So in six months both churches had a full-time pastor of their own.

This victory was a great joy to us, but there were disappointments to come. In about two years Grace again suffered from her affliction and it seemed that as the years mounted, the ailment seemed to be much stronger and she suffered much. About this time, we met a preacher who had been a pastor in Arizona. He informed us that he had seen asthma sufferers carried in there who in a short time became well. We had heard that people would go to Arizona for their health and so we saw hope for Grace. I resigned as pastor of the Caruthers' church and made arrangements to leave for Arizona as soon as we could. It was a sad parting from the fine friends, but we went looking forward to fine comfort for Grace.

After we got to Arizona, we were very much encouraged for Grace could breathe freely. I did not look for a church to become pastor of for there were more preachers than churches there, and we wanted to see how Grace would get along before we settled there. I made connections with a real estate office. That business was much over-done, but from it we had some income. Then one afternoon I received a shock. As I came home from work, I found Grace fighting for breath. The asthma had come upon her while she was trying to take care of one of the children who was ill. All through Grace's affliction I had tried to be strong, hoping each time we made a move that it would be well with her. With mixed emotions I took over, put the child on the couch and made him comfortable, and then tried to ease Grace the best I could. During the night we had a very distressing time. I announced to Grace that we would return to California, to Delano. The time we were there earlier, she had had no asthma. We put our baggage and children in the car and started on the way back to Delano. I tried to appear lighthearted and cheerful for I did not want to have a depressed feeling as we traveled along, but inwardly there was a heavy heart. The question that came to my mind was, "Am I out of God's will?"

#### CHAPTER 14

#### I ATTEND A DANCE

The trip back to California was uneventful and, upon arriving, the first thing to do was to find a place to live. Unoccupied houses were few, but we finally found one which would do until we could find something better. The next thing was to get something to do to earn some money, for our finances were at a low stage. There was a new church being built and since I knew the man in charge, I got the job of

painting it. But before I could do enough painting to collect some money, my purse went completely flat. So on the morning of the next day I talked to the Lord about it, for He says He will take care of all our needs. A little later in the day I went to the Post Office and there was a letter from my youngest brother with enough money in it to stock up for several days. My brother knew nothing of the financial condition we were in, but the Lord did.

When the church job was finished, the people had learned about me and made many kind remarks about my work. They asked me to come to see them for they also had some painting to be done. So one after another, the jobs turned up. I prided myself in doing good work at a fair price. Thus I built up a good reputation. But the best of all was that Grace had no trouble with her asthma.

We attended the church of our choice and offered our services. My wife was especially adept with children so she fit right into the children's work. After some time in Delano, we bought a house which needed some repairing, all of which I could do myself. In addition to housepainting, I painted cars which brought added income. We were greatly pleased that Grace was free from asthma. Both of us enjoyed our connection with the church and we made many good friends, not only with people in the church, but with others as well.

Having done some sign painting before, I also advertised this service. I received contracts from other towns. This extra work brought extra income, but it also stretched my working hours. At times I worked at two jobs at once. In the summertime I would be on the job by four a.m. on contract jobs, then home for a bite of breakfast, and then back to the job until late in the evening. One time I spent eight hours on the job during the day and then in the evening painted large letters (three feet tall) on the front of a building. I worked until nine o'clock.

We were at Delano for five years when the Missionary Director came and said he had a church that needed me. It was all run down and the people were discouraged, but there was a good opportunity to build it up. Although I was working hard and doing well, it was brought to my attention that I was not in full-time work for the Lord. So finally after talking it over, Grace and I agreed to make the change.

It was not easy to make this decision. Grace was free from asthma and we were living in our own house; and although we were not getting rich, we were living comfortably. But we realized we were being selfish.

Arrangements were made and I was called to become pastor of the church at Shafter, a town about eighteen miles northwest of Bakersfield. I do not recall the amount of salary I was to have, but I do remember that the former pastor had worked as a barber to make some extra money and I was expected to paint to do the same. We moved after I had cleared things up at Delano and went again into the unknown. In faith we believed we were in God's will. The congregation was a small one and I realized that I would need to do some painting which I soon did. I finished my first painting job with the people well pleased, both at my workmanship and at my price. Soon I had all the painting that I had time for.

I realized that to build up the church, there was much to do. I had to get out and call on the people as well as to study my messages if the ministry was to be effective. I made it a point to say something while preaching that would make people talk about my messages. The congregation soon began to increase in numbers. The people became more interested in the church and eventually in their own relationships with the Lord. I am of the persuasion that the Bible is the true Word of God and that the Father gave His Son, Jesus Christ, to save men from their sin. This is what I preached and brought it to bear upon the young as well as the mature.

I held up before them the satisfaction there is in knowing Christ as their Saviour. More young people were coming to church, and as soon as I judged any ready to be used in the service, I gave them a part, even asking some to lead in prayer during the morning service instead of praying myself. The young people's meetings were held before the evening services and were well attended. They were of much interest and were good training for the Lord's work.

We were in close touch with the high school there, two of our own children being in attendance. One day I received an invitation to a school dance. The invitation came from the president of the dancing club who was from a non-church-going family. He thought to play a joke on me knowing that I was not in sympathy with school dances. It was just before Christmas and was announced as a Christmas dance. The invitation came by mail and I sent my acceptance by mail with the condition that I would be given time to say a few words of Scripture and a prayer and that I would ask the president to stand during the prayer. This made quite a stir among the dancing crowd but they could do nothing about it. I had been invited in writing and had accepted in writing. Our oldest daughter came home, reporting the excitement it had made. It had even been decided to call the dance off, but the principal told them it had gone on too far and that they had to go on with it as planned. The dance was to be held in the women's clubhouse. That year, Christmas came on Sunday so the dance was held the Saturday night before. I went to the principal and told him that I looked to him for making sure that I was not embarrassed. He was in sympathy with me and secretly enjoyed the whole affair for he did not favor the dancing in school either. He told me that he would see to it and that all would be well. The evening came and I was on hand. The orchestra was tuning up when the principal stepped forward and asked for silence. He announced my presence and stated that I had something to say and told all to

find seats. I stepped forward and said that the Bible was the most wonderful book ever written. It had something for every situation, and it had something which fit this occasion. Then I read Philippians 4:8--"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." I did not refer to any acts specifically. I made a few remarks about the Bible verse I had read, especially the purity of thought. I referred to the holiness of God. I made my talk short and they listened intently. Then, to keep my word, but so as not to embarrass the president, I had the whole group stand for prayer. Then I wished them a "Merry Christmas," told them that our church service was at 11 a.m., and that I would be very happy for them to come; then I said, "Good night."

I was told that the dance was not as lively as usual and that there were no more dances at the school as long as the present principal was there.

There was a teacher in the high school who came to our church. He was the music teacher and was a great help in the church. He was our song leader and also the leader of the young people. He was a personal friend of Dr. Irwin Moon of Moddy Bible Institute, and it was through him that I met Dr. Moon. It was at our invitation that Dr. Moon came to Shafter for one of his electronic lectures which was greatly appreciated by the community.

## CHAPTER 15

## "CHOOSING THE LARGER LIFE"

During our stay in Shafter I was invited to preach the baccalaureate sermon each year for four years. The service was held in the opera house, that being the largest hall in town. I greatly enjoyed these occasions for there was usually an audience of about 1500 people. I still remember one of the subjects and texts I used. The texts were Deuteronomy 30:19 and Luke 20:38. "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore, choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." "For He is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto Him." The subject was: "Choosing the Larger Life." Here is a quotation from it.

Physical life is ever with us and impressing itself upon us by forces which we do not understand and cannot divinely interpret, nor can they be denied. This is the world of life outside of us. But there is a different world or power; it is the world or power within. It is the world of reason, sensibility, will, and is an invisible, silent world which, if adhered to, is the "Larger Life." This Larger Life is controlled by an irresistible Power and is Divinely directed. Therefore the Larger Life must not be the victim of outside forces which, like a canoe upon a stormy sea, is driven by wind and wave, but rather like the great oceanliner overcoming wind and wave because it has power within itself. So the Larger Life, the God-directed life, must not be defeated by the outside forces. The Larger Life may be a life of victory because God is not a God of the dead but of the living, for "all live unto Him." Thus, choosing the Larger Life, your position is not like the Roman gladiator entering the arena and crying to Caesar saying, 'We who are about to die, salute you,' . . . Your life should rather say, 'Oh world, we who are alive in the God Who is the God of the living come to you with the living Word, proclaiming life rather than death.' So we send you forth in the power of the Larger Life into the world that needs you.

The years spent in Shafter were pleasant as well as profitable. We had a good number of young people we could depend on for almost anything they were needed for. But then there came a time when I realized that my usefulness had come to an end. In smaller places where the population is stable and there is no influx of people, a disinterest often develops. If the pastor is wise, he will realize this and search for a new calling. This is what happened at Shafter.

During those years, Grace had no trouble with asthma which was a great comfort to both of us. But the time came to ask, "Where shall we go and what shall we do?" As usual, I had become well acquainted with the editor of the local newspaper. He told me of a newspaper deal in Le Grand, a small town a few miles away from Merced. The paper was for sale and he recommended the deal highly. I went to see about it and bought it on a pay-as-you-go basis, and we moved there. I had rented a house so we had a place to live. Here I was again, the "editor." Each week I wrote a column on the Sunday School lesson for the next Sunday. I received many comments on that. The pastor of one of the churches said he used it in teaching his adult Sunday School class. However, after becoming better acquainted with the situation, I realized that things had been misrepresented to me, so I turned the newspaper back over to the former owners and decided to return to Shafter. Since I had done considerable painting there, we decided to go back and make painting my business. We felt that it would be well for Grace as it was before. As soon as the people knew I was back, painting jobs came in, but this time Grace was afflicted with asthma.

One day we decided to go to the coast. I had read in a Fresno paper something about Campbell, near San Jose, and we decided on a trip. Breathing was hard for Grace, but as soon as we got over the coastal range, her breath came freely. We got to San Jose at the noon hour and stopped in a park in

east San Jose and had lunch which Grace had prepared. All the time Grace was saying that breathing was so easy; so it was decided that Campbell would be our home. I went to the first real estate office I saw and inquired about renting a house. He had just one, an old house, about a mile and a half from town. We looked it over and decided it would do, to start with. We went back to Shafter, packed up, rented a truck, and got settled.

The real estate man from whom we rented the house had some painting to be done and gave me the job. That was the beginning of our activities in Campbell.

The first Sunday we were there we went to church in town, but the sermon we heard was not to our liking. During the following week I was told of a church in San Jose that we would probably like. I was delighted to find that the pastor was one whom I had met from time to time at church conventions. He had a place for me in the church at once, which was also true for Grace. She just fit in the children's work, and that made her happy. I soon was busy painting and we bought a house in Campbell. The house stood on a large lot which gave me ground for a garden and Grace for flowers, which she loved very much. As time went on, both of us became very involved in the church work.

One of the members of the church belonged to the Gideon Association and invited me to join, which I did. I became very involved and enjoyed it very much. From my youth up I had admired the Gideon of the Bible because he was brave and did things in spite of the seemingly impossible. He was faithful to God. As a boy, when my mother read to us the story about Gideon, it thrilled me so much that I wanted to be just like him.

During World War II there were many calls for houses, and I had a large lot that could be divided into two lots. Lumber could not be had, however, so I bought two small

buildings, 24' x 12', from a housemover and had them moved onto the lot, placing them fifteen feet apart. Then I built in between so we had a room 15' x 24' for a living room. It made a five-room house. I did all the work myself except the finishing plumbing and some of the electrical work. I sold this house to our oldest son.

## CHAPTER 16

### DEEP SORROW

During the summer of 1952 I built another house, a five-room stucco. On this one, I did almost all of the work myself intending, when finished, that we would live in it and sell the old house. However Grace again had considerable trouble with asthma and became sickly; and in spite of what the doctor did, she became weaker. Our oldest daughter, who was now married and had a home in Lafayette, took her to live with them for a while because she had a doctor who she thought might help her. In spite of all that was done for Grace, she became weaker still and in April of 1953 she went to be with the Lord. This was the saddest day of my life; and at the funeral, when the coffin was closed, I felt as if I was all alone in the world. Then it came to me that she was with Christ, and He had the right to take her. Later, I wrote the following:

### GOD'S WAY

I do not know now why God will allow  
Things that pain, things to which I must bow;  
His ways with me I cannot understand,  
But I know He leads me gently with His hand.

I do not know why things that trouble me,  
When the way seems dark and I cannot see;  
Why God will this allow, I do not understand,  
But I know, in love, He leads me with His hand.

I do not know why He will a loved one take,  
When nights are long, in loneliness I lie awake,  
Why this should be, I cannot understand,  
But I know He cares, and leads me with His hand.

I know someday He'll call for me, with Him to be;  
Darkness cleared, doubts removed, I'll clearly see.  
Then I'll know His way and I can fully understand  
While He leads me with His nail-pierced hand.

Being convinced that it was God's way, even if I did not understand, I determined to continue with my work. Building appealed to me, so I decided to build another house. I drew the plans, bought the lot, got a building loan, and started building. I did all the work, including the electrical work, except the finishing plumbing which was done by a plumber.

After the house was finished, I was asked to be the Minister of Visitation at the church. I had also been elected to be on the Board of Deacons. It was at this time that a church was started in Milpitas, but the pastor was called into the military service. The church soon dwindled to three families. They came to our church and asked us if we would adopt them as a branch. The Board agreed, and I was appointed to be their pastor. So I had two jobs very much to my liking. This was at the beginning of January that year. My first Sunday in the Milpitas church was not encouraging. Several Sunday evenings I preached to only two or three people. Then there was a marked increase each Sunday, both in the morning and evening services. To begin with, there were only fourteen or fifteen, but the increase was quite rapid, and by summer some of the leaders asked me to be their full-time pastor. I told them they could have a full-time pastor any time they wanted but that I could not be considered, for I had other work to do. At this time, the Sunday School had over one hundred, and the congregation on Sunday mornings also had over one hundred. The junior church and young people's meetings were going quite well and growing rapidly also. The membership was very enthusiastic, so they called

a pastor who took over the last of December that year. That same Sunday I went to what at that time was called Evergreen, a district located east of San Jose, but belonging to San Jose. There was a little Sunday School there which was conducted by members of the large church in town to which I belonged. They were meeting in a small building called the Youth Center. People who knew me invited me to come out there and start preaching services, which I did. Soon they asked for evening services too. That I also did. We continued this way for several months until I felt that we should organize a church. A meeting was called for that purpose. Those who wanted a church in that locality were present, and a church organization was voted into existence with twelve members. After some time, it was called the United Baptist Church which now is among the ten fastest growing churches in the United States. At present, they have a multi-million dollar building in East San Jose and are drawing large congregations.

When the church in East San Jose was established and I was called to be their pastor, I resigned from the staff as Minister of Visitation so that I might give full time to the newly formed church. For two years I spent five days a week going from house to house asking people to accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour and to come to the church. When the new church asked me to be their pastor, I accepted on the condition that when they had property of their own and a building to meet in, I would resign. An acre and one half was bought without a building. At this time, the Missionary Board in the downtown church formulated a plan to help young churches. The plan was that if a church had land but was not able to build, it would be loaned a sectional temporary building until it could build its own. The sections of the temporary building would be moved to the land and bolted together. I made a request for such a building and it was granted. Thus I had fulfilled my part of the bargain, so I resigned. The

church called another pastor and grew into a large, lively church, the United Baptist Church of San Jose.

## CHAPTER 17

### A NEW COMPANION

At this stage, I want to go back in my story. During my work as Visitation Minister, I met a lady when I was out calling one day who was very friendly and invited me in. She was a widow and seemed much interested in the church. She told me a lot about herself and invited me to come again. For over three years I had been living alone, and the loneliness was unbearable. I did much thinking and decided that if this lady was what she seemed to be, she might be a good companion since she was also interested in church work. I did go back to her house, and the result was that in November 1956 we were married. She insisted that we live in her house so I sold the house I built.

After resigning from the pastorate of the United Baptist Church, I engaged in making office desks and bookcases. All through my life I have made things. I watched cabinetmakers to learn how. My desks looked as good as those in the store and were stronger and better made. For the finish, I bought the best I could buy. I would make eight or ten different sizes and styles, put an ad in the paper, and in a short time they would be sold.

For some time Grace (for my second wife's name was the same as my first) was not well, and in August, while we were talking, she had a stroke. I cared for her, but after a while she needed more care than I could give her. I tried to get a woman to come into our home to care for her, but no one wanted the job; so it was decided to put her in a nursing

home. I went to see her every day. She became weaker day by day until she left this world in August 1968. Then I was alone again. This ended my desk-making. The property where we had made our home went into the hands of others, and I found a small place in San Jose to live. There was no room there for a garden, and I had nothing to do which made the loneliness more intense.

I have said nothing of my children. If I had included them in the story, it would have been too lengthy; but I feel this would not be complete unless I mention them. We had four boys and two girls, all born by my first Grace. They are all married and have children. I have twenty-two grandchildren and quite a number of great-grandchildren. I am very thankful for my children and the comfort they have given to me. All but one live in California and all make it as comfortable and pleasant as possible for me. My youngest son, Bob, and Joan, his wife, are the only ones living in San Jose; and when I was living in that small place, they made it pleasant for me by sometimes inviting me to dinner. Only the Lord knows how much good those occasions were for me. I do not single them out as if the others would not have done the same, but the others all lived at a distance.

Bob and Joan had just bought an acre and a half of land near Morgan Hill with a house on it and suggested that I buy a house trailer and move onto their place, realizing that the place that I had was not the best for me. I took advantage of their suggestion. That was in the fall of 1969. This arrangement has proven to be quite a blessing to me. Having enough ground, we have a large vegetable garden in which I spend my time in the summer, producing all the vegetables the family and I need.

There is much that I am thankful for. Every birthday is remembered by Bob and Joan, with the other children arranging a party for me, to which all who live within a

reasonable distance come, including some of the grandchildren, some living between sixty and seventy miles away. These occasions make me feel very humble and thankful to my Lord.

There is much unrest these days. Even young people who ought to, in the vigor of their lives, realize the greatness of living, complain that there is nothing to live for. The fact is, there is much to live for if one will consider others and their needs. The only satisfying life is living the greater life, the life which has been committed to Christ. With a God-directed life, there need be no complaint that there is nothing to live for.

#### APPENDIX

It is now April 3, 1975. This is the end of my story. It is a true story. If there are any discrepancies, it is due to a lapse in memory. In spite of my age, I am again starting to work in the garden for I am still living where I was when I started to write--in the trailer by Bob and Joan. Farewell.