

**THE DASH  
BETWEEN THE  
DATES**

**A Narrative of My First  
Seventy Years**

**Chris Alan Foreman**

ISBN: 978-1-7358280-2-2

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Published in the United States by Chris Foreman.

Printed in the United States.

First printing 2021

Cover design by Simon Peter Foreman

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## Dedication

This book is dedicated to my quartet of grandchildren, my target audience of four: Lorenzo, Gia, Zelig, and Zofia, all of whom may live into the twenty-second century and inhabit a world unimaginable to me. My blessing abides upon each of you.

*Chris A. Foreman*

Your Gwampa Chris  
December 24, 2019  
*Suddenly Seventy!*



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*Teach us, Lord, to number our days,  
that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.  
(from Psalm 90:12)*

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# MEDITATION

*Then shall be brought to pass the saying  
that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.*

*O death, where is thy sting?*

*O grave, where is thy victory?*

(I Corinthians 15:54-55)

On the last day of July, 2014, I drove across the San Mateo Bridge into Hayward. As I passed through the front gate of Holy Sepulcher Cemetery, a sculpture of Archangel Michael greeted me. With sword-hand outstretched, his concrete foot was crushing the snakehead of Satan. I drove down narrow roadways, turned past acres of headstones, parked in a far-corner lot, then walked to gravesite SLR3-45.

On the fourth anniversary of her fatal car crash, I once again considered two names chiseled into a marble slab. The name on the left belongs to my late wife: *Kim Hyun Deok Foreman, 1951–2010*. Her likeness, imbedded on a ceramic oval, smiles heavenward. The name on the right side is mine, *Chris Alan Foreman, 1949–*, the dash reminding me that this double-decker plot awaits its second occupant. At some yet-to-be-determined date, when my mortal remains are laid to rest under this patch of turf, a second oval will be cemented into place and a second death date will be duly etched.

Some may think me morose to contemplate my own demise. Not so. From antiquity, the church has instructed her children, “to keep death daily before your eyes.” To the extent I practice this, I become free to live realistically and love authentically. Contemplation of death serves as a corrective to my vanity: “this body will become food for worms.” It also provides a curative to my covetousness: “I can take nothing with me.”

As a follower of Christ, I recognize death not as a terminus but a transitus—a portal between this life and life-to-come, a journey from this world of shadows into the luminous presence of God. By fixing my gaze on death and looking beyond the grave, I anticipate the true goal of life—union with God.

By studying my gravestone, I also recognize life as a brief interlude between a birth date and a death date, with all of life’s passion and sorrow, delight and drama, compacted into a single horizontal stroke—the dash between the dates.

Beloved reader, what are you doing with your dash?



# INTRODUCTION

*The days of our years are threescore and ten;  
it is soon cut off and we fly away.*

(from Psalm 90:10)

*The Dash Between the Dates* is a chronological narrative of my life—set forth month-by-month, year-after-year, as events transpired. Across a span of seventy years, I present hundreds of episodes, incidents, and snapshots; musing upon life and wondering what it means in light of present knowledge.

My story is written in my own voice as viewed through my own eyes. I accept the role as biographer of my life but reject being its author. God alone is the author and finisher of all things. As the pages of my life unfolded before my eyes, I had little control over what occurred in the next minute, let alone the next day. At one moment in 2010, joy plummeted into grief at one spin of a steering wheel. Certainly, I am not the author of my own biography. If so, I would have written the script differently.

Likewise, I accept my role as central protagonist, but I reject being the hero of my saga. I see myself as the person in the poem, “Footprints in the Sand”. At times I complain that Christ has abandoned me along my arduous journey, later to discover that He had carried me in His arms when my own strength had failed. Only in retrospect, can I rightly interpret the single set of tracks. In that sense, this narrative also functions as an apologia, justifying God’s ways with men.

My chronicle is also polished remembrance and truth re-imagined. As a memoirist, I recount objective events through the distorted lens of subjective memory. Some parts of my story are magnified, others minimized, and still others slanted or omitted altogether. In one place, a single day fills an entire page while in another, a few paragraphs sketch an entire year. Such is the nature of memoir.

I offer a pre-emptive apology to any who read about themselves on these pages and feel slighted or misrepresented. Throughout the writing process, I strove to balance honesty and transparency with tact and kindness. I write as my own harshest critic.

Join me as I unpack thirty chapters of my life and bear witness to the record of Chris Alan Foreman—a son, brother, husband, friend, father, and grandfather—all by the grace of Almighty God.



# Chapter 1

## ROOTED

Before December 1949  
Europe & America

*From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit  
the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them  
and the exact places where they should live.*

(Acts 17:26)

### COSMIC ORIGINS

Every human soul enters a world in flux. Ancestors drift behind and descendants stream ahead. Based on information provided by the Population Reference Bureau, I have calculated my birth event to place about ninety-six billionth out of the one-hundred-eight billion souls who have ever inhabited planet earth. That reckoning places eighty-nine percent of humanity prior to me and eleven percent subsequent to me. With the number of newborns arriving at a rate of four per second, I may move down to the eighty-eighth percentile before my own soul is un-moored and I myself drift into history.

Can it be true that God has determined the times set for Chris Alan Foreman and the exact places where he should live? Did God Himself set 1949 as his birth year and place him in the state of Ohio as the fifth child of John and Jenny Foreman? I believe the answer is *yes*. Along with the psalmist, I affirm: “My frame was not hidden from You when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, Your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.”

I believe an all-knowing and all-powerful God could certainly decree my placement in space-time. I further believe that an all-loving Father would situate my soul in a time and place where my free will would be most likely to seek Him and to find Him. The means by which our sovereign Lord might accomplish this mind-boggling task far exceed my ability to comprehend.

How much time has elapsed from the act of creation to the present moment? How far back do my human roots reach? Archbishop James Ussher served as the primate of Ireland between 1625 and 1656. He developed a chronology of world history formulated from a literal reading of Hebrew scripture. His calculation produced a creation date of October 22, 4004 B.C. Of course, this date has near-zero acceptance today, even among the religious community. However, some Christian creationists continue to propose Genesis dates of eight thousand to one hundred thousand years ago.

In contrast, most enlightenment scientists proposed a universe both infinite and eternal, reflecting the view of Greek philosophers. Only in the last century have cosmologists overturned this ancient steady-state model in favor of an expanding cosmos with an absolute start point. The current consensus among scientists is that the universe burst into existence 13.8 billion years ago with a big bang. Before that instant, there was nothing—no matter, no energy, no space, no time. In fact, there was no *before*.

As human being number ninety-six billion, I am rooted in multiple ways. The atomic particles that compose my body trace back to the moment of creation. Indeed, I am stardust. The origin of my biology may go back to Adam if one is religiously minded or to primordial ooze if one is not. The Population Reference Bureau sets the arrival of modern Homo Sapiens at 50,000 B.C. or two thousand six hundred generations ago. All but the most recent of my ancestors are inscrutable to me; no faces, no names, no stories.

I do have a narrow window into my distant past. Based on a sample of spittle, *Ancestry.com* assessed my genome to be 99.1% European and 71.3% eastern European. I should have saved my spit. I could have guessed that outcome. The same source tells me my DNA displays 266 Neanderthal variants. I could have guessed my troglodyte component as well.

## GENEALOGY

I have observational knowledge of only four generations: that is, five siblings, two parents (with aunts and uncles), two grandfathers, one grandmother, and one great grandmother. Peering back into the mid-nineteenth century, my roots vanish in the chaotic mist of Eastern Europe. Shifting boundaries, mass displacements, two world wars, and an Atlantic crossing have conspired to obscure my DNA trail. All four of my grandparents were born in what is today called *Poland*, a nation that for one-hundred years had been divided between Germany, Austria, and Russia. My father's side was ethnically German while my mother's side was ethnically Polish.

Once my four grandparents arrived in the New World, they shed the ways of the Old, embracing a new language and culture. Over the decades, their ethnic names and Slavic spellings Americanized in the crucible of a great melting pot.

As a second-generation patriotic American, I never held stock in my human pedigree. I assumed my father's attitude of rugged individualism, "The president puts his pants on one leg at a time, just like everybody else." In my youth, I took little interest in my eastern-European roots. Being a *Polack* was a source of humor, not of esteem. (Question: How can you identify the bride at a Polish wedding? Answer: She's the one with the braided armpits). My sense of identity and value derived not from ancestry or ethnicity but from family and faith.

## PATERNAL GRANDPARENTS

My father's parents were Joseph Formanski and Frances Novak. He was born in Zelen, Austria, in 1881 and she in Kosten, Germany, in 1887. My German-speaking grandparents married in Recklinghausen, Germany, and emigrated via Bremen to Ellis Island on January 10, 1910. The ship manifest shows two adults and two children. Steve and Victoria were German born, while Frank and my father John were born in America. I have vivid memories of Grandpa Foreman who died in 1972, but none of Grandma Foreman who passed away twenty years earlier.

The story of their marriage has a tragic element and has passed down as follows: Frances had no intention to marry, wishing to become a Catholic nun. Her older sister had married Joseph but died in giving birth to their first child. As her dying wish, she made Frances promise to wed Joseph. Frances kept her vow and the couple married. The union between Francis and Joseph was fruitful but joyless. We don't know what became of Joseph's first child (my father's half-brother) but he did not emigrate to America.

Joseph never attended church remarking that as a child he had spent some years in a Catholic orphanage. He said he was angered by the clergy's hypocrisy and lack of love. He claimed many of the orphans were bastard children of the priests and nuns. Throughout his life, my grandfather shunned the Christian God, saying his god was nature.

Joseph served a few years in the Austrian army. We have a portrait of him in cloak, plume, and spiked helmet. He disliked his time in uniform and part of his motive for emigrating to America was to avoid being a casualty in a future German war he was sure would come. After leaving military service, Joe Formanski became a coal miner in Silesia and took up that trade once he settled in Ohio. He once said that the big difference between European and American mines was that in Germany, a miner had to dig coal on his belly, but in America, a man could stand upright. Even as a child, I saw the metaphorical significance of that statement.

## MATERNAL GRANDPARENTS

My mother's parentage is more complicated. Maryana Koba was born in Koba, Poland, in 1899. She emigrated to America in 1907 along with her parents, Vincent (born in 1862) and Rose (born in 1868). Mary spent a short time in an orphanage while her father spent jail time for bootlegging. At age sixteen, she married Frank Ciencyk, and soon after bore my mother, Genevieve. But even before my mother was born, her father died. In 1916 my grandmother re-married to Joseph Dydek who was born in Poland nineteen years earlier. Four more children were born to Mary, but the two girls died early. I have fond memories of my two uncles, Stutz and Joe. My mother says she never looked upon herself as a step daughter or step sister. She was just one of the Dydek clan.

Memories of my Grandma Dydek are fleeting. She died of cancer in 1954, which devastated my mother since they were close friends and only seventeen years apart. My Grandpa Dydek lived into his eighties. I have a 1975 photo of this crusty old man holding my new-born son. Although I retain memories of three grandparents, I was never close to any of them.

## FATHER

My father was born on September 19, 1914, in Bellaire, Ohio. His birth took place one month into the Great European War. He was the youngest of four children. After John was born, his mother had surgery on the veins in her legs and lived as a semi-invalid for the rest of her years. From that point on, separate beds served as her method of birth control.

John was raised in a cold and tense atmosphere. His father loved children and stayed on the porch after returning from the mines to play with his offspring. Frances kept a spotless house and her kids learned to stay outside. John was devoted to both of his parents, but felt somewhat guilty about destroying his mother's health through his birth. Although not church going, John did acquire the rudiments of Christian faith in public school. He spoke of learning the twenty-third Psalm and related how he had whispered it to himself once as he walked through spooky Indian mounds.

The earliest documents show his surname to be *Formanski*. The manner by which his name morphed into *Foreman* is uncertain. The best guess is as follows: The marriage between my grandparents was difficult. Frances sought to leave Joseph and return to Germany with her four children. We have a photograph of Steve, Victoria, Frank, and John posing in new clothes. We also have a passport photo of John. In 1919, Frances returned to Recklinghausen, but her home was not as she had left it ten years earlier. The Great War had devastated her city. Reluctantly, she returned to her husband in Ohio. We speculate the name *Formanski* was transformed into *Foreman* when Frances applied for American passports.

We have an early newspaper clipping of Johnny Formanski sitting at the feet of Jenny Dydek while posing for a fourth-grade portrait. They attended school side by side and knew each other through most of their school years. John did not do well in academics, but excelled in sports. He played football and might have garnered a track scholarship to Ohio State University, but by 1933 times were tough and money was tight.

This is a letter John wrote on July 4, 1933. In it my dad addresses his parents, his three siblings, and his girlfriend. The words paint a better picture of this eighteen-year-old man than I could compose.

Hello, everybody. How is everything out there? I hope you're feeling fine. That is just how I feel. We left Chicago Saturday night because everything looks bad. Louis worked for the World's Fair and has \$160.00 worth of checks but can't cash any of them. Tony is working and she don't get paid regular either so we decided to keep on going. We stopped at Wilma's place but she wasn't home then we took a look through Lincoln Park and went down to the station. We caught a train there about 1:00 a.m. and here we are in Cheyenne, Wyoming. How is that for time?

Well, we expect to stay here till tomorrow, then keep on going. We expect to be in Los Angeles in about three or four days, that is if we don't get a job on a ranch before we get there. We met a couple of fellows that said you get \$40.00 a month and board so if we can hit, we'll stay for a while.

Well, mother, here I am away in the West and eating regular, feeling good. Well, just now I am sitting with a couple, talking with dirty hands and face, but we'll soon find a place to clean up and rustle up some food. I don't think I'll be home as soon as I thought, but you don't have to worry about that. If you sent that letter to me in Chicago, Louis will send it to Los Angeles and it will be waiting there for me.

Well, Dad, here I am way out in the woolly west. Never had any trouble at all and when we hit Los Angeles we're going to stay for a while and try to find a job. They say it ain't so hard out there if you really want to work.

Well, Frank, are you still working in the glass house? I hope you found a better job so when I come back, I might get a lend of the car you're going to buy. How is Vic and Andy getting along? Still working every day? Well, tell them I said hello. Is Steve a Daddy yet? Tell him I'll try to bring home a nickel if I can. Tell Steve and Mary I said hello and hope them lots of luck. You better tell Jenny I said hello or she might get mad at me. Well, so long till I get a chance to write. Your loving son, John.

John never found his dream job in California. He once told me he “peed in the Pacific” then slowly worked his way back to Ohio to work as a day laborer. He eventually found a position in the Ohio coal mines and married Jenny in 1935.

## MOTHER

My mother Genevieve Maria was born on December 30, 1915 in McMechen, West Virginia, and was baptized into the Roman Catholic Church on January 8, 1916. She was the daughter of Mary Koba and Jack Ciencyzyk, a father who never saw her face. The story goes that Jack emerged from a hot coal mine, drank a few cold beers, passed out, and never woke up. This one-quarter of my grandparentage is untraceable to me.

As a seventeen-year-old widow with a newborn daughter, Mary quickly wed Joseph Dydek on February 29, 1916. Although never formally adopted, Genevieve assumed her step father’s surname. Jenny—as she was known—grew up in this immigrant Polish family. She once recounted how she was squatting in an outhouse as a child while reading a Polish language newspaper. That astounded her in distant retrospect, because in her adult years she could read no Polish at all.

By all accounts, this was a loving close-knit family. My mother’s Grandma Koby along with aunts and uncles were a joyful part of her early life. Jenny was a big sister to Stanley who was born in 1917 and Joseph, born in 1923. Helen (1919 to 1944) and Josephine (1921-1922) survive in a few photographs. A boy named Johnny began to hang around the Dydek house. He enjoyed Jenny’s warm Polish home more than the Teutonic coldness of his own.

My sisters tell the story of one romantic date when Johnny left Jenny’s house after dark. His walk across the pasture was in pitch blackness and my dad tripped over a cow. It was a good thing my father was a star sprinter, because the cow chased him until he managed to leap over a fence. My mom laughed and stored that scene in memory, recalling it when her soul needed cheering.

While John excelled in sports at Bellaire High School, Jenny succeeded in academics. She was proficient in secretarial shorthand. We have an exchange of personal letters between my mom and dad partially coded in shorthand. Fortunately, my sister Eileen was able to translate the mushy comments.

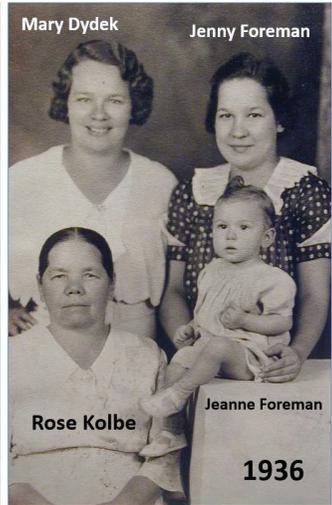
After graduating from high school in 1933, Jenny joined family members to work at the giant Imperial Glass Company located along the banks of the Ohio River. She held that job while John was on the hobo out west. We speculate it was that tearful separation and passionate reunion which convinced the lovers to marry.



Josef Foremanski  
Circa 1900



John & Genevieve  
Foreman ~ 1935



Mary Dydek Jenny Foreman  
Rose Kolbe Jeanne Foreman  
1936

## ROOTS IN OHIO

Mom and dad married on January 15, 1935. We have a portrait of the wedding party. Besides John and Jenny, we recognize my Uncle Stutz at sixteen years old and Uncle Frank at twenty-four. The remainder are unknown.

My parents struggled during these years of the great depression. They lived in upstairs apartments and cracker-box homes. Jeanne Louise was born on June 27, 1935, and Charlotte Anne came along on November 16, 1937. Both girls were baptized into the Catholic Church and Aunt Anne became their godmother.

My father was finally able to establish his own home in 1940. The address was Box 87, Route 4, Bellaire, Ohio. Jeanne relates how this house came together. There was labor strife at the time and coal miners were striking for months at a stretch. About a dozen idle workers and friends pitched in to pour concrete, frame walls, and tack on roof. My dad became a lifelong handyman after picking up skills by erecting his own home. Both Jeanne and Charlotte have fond memories of this two-bedroom square home and delight in naming streets and neighbors.

In the early 1940s, Jeanne recalls waiting on the front step as dad walked home from work covered in coal dust. She would run across a baseball field to greet him dashing along a road paved with a coal waste called *red dog*. Dad would always kneel to her level, open his lunch pail, and present her with a *prize*—a wildflower or shiny stone that he would pick up along the way. These were her happiest days she says.

Jeanne remembers two songs Grandma Dydek taught her when she was a child. These my grandmother herself learned while a young girl living in a Methodist orphanage. Jeanne could sing the songs and do the motions.

In a cottage in the woods, little man by the window stood, saw a rabbit hopping by, knocking at his door. Help me, help me, help me, he cried, or the hunter will shoot me dead. Come inside and stay with me. Happy we will be.

Three little mice sat down to spin. Pussy came by and she looked in. What are you doing my little friends? We're making fine coats for gentlemen. May I come in and bite off your threads? Oh, no, dear pussy you'll bite off our heads! Oh, no, I won't. I'll help you spin. That may be so, but you can't come in.

Charlotte recalls contracting a childhood illness then called *Saint Vitas Dance*. This debilitating condition caused her limbs to spasm. At times she could not walk and Jeanne had to pull her to school in a wagon. Dad took her to a chiropractor in Wheeling, West Virginia, and after a time all symptoms disappeared.

My father, two uncles, and two grandfathers labored in local coal mines. During the late 1930s and early 1940s they carpooled to various mines in eastern Ohio, the panhandle of West Virginia, and western Pennsylvania. Sometimes they would stay for weeks in tiny company towns. The subterranean jobs were dirty, dangerous, ill-paid, and subject to labor shutdowns. In 1944, my dad was hired at the Lorain Coal and Dock Company. He eventually led his own crew of ten. As *Foreman Foreman* he was authorized to hire his own sixty-four-year-old father for three months. That was just long enough to qualify the old man for social security. My father spoke of that deed with pride.

My dad was a hard-working man who enjoyed card playing with his brothers. His carousing days crashed to an end one evening when my mother tagged along to one of his sessions. As a cohort of twenty-somethings, the young people were whooping it up. My Aunt Anne was the instigator having gained experience while a tavern waitress. She kept the liquor flowing, stuck cigarettes into the mouths of non-smoking women, and encouraged hapless men to make fools of themselves. At one point she maneuvered a single woman to sit on my dad's lap. The whole group burst out laughing.

During the car ride home, my mother couldn't stop crying and my dad didn't stop apologizing. Little Jeanne sat in the back seat cowering. After a few days of male contrition and female silence, my dad pledged never again to carouse with that crowd. And he never did. After that event, my dad spent most of his evenings with his family.

Economic hard times came to an end when the United States declared war on the empire of Japan on December 8, 1941. My uncles Stanley and Joseph joined the army air corps and piloted aircraft over Germany. My Uncle Andy served on the home front as an army trainer. My dad was reticent to speak of his wartime experience. He explained that at twenty-eight years old and with two children in grade school, he was never conscripted. Plus, his job in the coal mine was considered strategic. When pressed why he never volunteered for military service, his response was, "My priorities were always at home."

The home front was not without action for my parents. John Joseph (Jack) was born on March 15, 1943, and Eileen Marie followed on May 5, 1945. We have a demobilization photograph of my mother's extended family standing on a hillside in West Bellaire. My great grandparents, Vincent and Rose, sit as centerpiece. Charlotte and Jeanne stand beside their uniformed uncles. Dad is seated with Jack on his lap and mom sits next to him with infant Eileen tucked under one arm. After ten years of depression and five years of war, it was time to celebrate.

My mother was an avid reader. Her favorite genre was cowboy romance. She joined a book-of-the-month club and for years the colorful novels of Zane Gray arrived through the mail. She passed on her shelf collection of thirty-odd books to her oldest daughter.

My parent's journey of faith is reconstructed through Jeanne and Charlotte. The Foreman family was Roman Catholic by heritage. Dad and mom were married in a Catholic church and the first four children were baptized into the Church. Their faith was nominal and they seldom attended mass.

One evening, my dad answered a knock at the door to greet a Catholic priest from the local parish. He informed my dad that the Foreman family was listed on the church roll and he dropped by to collect money for the new parish school. My dad informed the cleric that Jeanne and Charlotte attended a public school. The priest nodded, but insisted as a registered Catholic he was still obliged to support the parish school. My dad muttered something and closed the door to the priest—and also to the Catholic Church.

It appears the two girls provided impetus toward a Protestant reformation. In 1944, Jeanne came home from school with a note. One of her teachers was offering a release-time Bible class. Attendance was voluntary and sessions were held during the lunch hour. My dad gave permission and for a year Jeanne and Charlotte learned stories from the Bible and the plan of salvation. Jeanne says it was at that time she accepted Jesus as her savior.

In 1945, the girls were taking piano lessons. During the summer, their instructor asked if they could accompany her to a Methodist vacation Bible school. Again, my dad agreed. However, after a week, their participation abruptly stopped. Jeanne had brought home a note, a pledge for each girl to sign stating that they would not drink alcoholic beverages. It wasn't that my dad favored liquor consumption by his kids, but he bristled at the thought of some church official asking his little girls to sign an abstinence pledge.

After that event, my mom and dad began visiting neighborhood churches. They stopped at several locations before settling on the First Christian Church of Bellaire. My dad was welcomed by several of his high school buddies and felt at home. Mom was embraced by a friendly group of women. My older sisters joined the choir. Jeanne

remembers walking in a purple robe from the back of the church to the front singing “Holy, Holy, Holy.” A few months later, my father, mother, three sisters and brother, walked down the aisle to join. The church was small and Jeanne remarked with the addition of six members it was like a mini-revival.

It was a huge decision for my dad and mom to separate from the Catholic Church. Some of the warmth of Polish kin began to cool. Not imbibing in alcohol added awkwardness to family gatherings.

According to my sisters, the last few years of the 1940s were idyllic. The family was situated in a comfortable home and my dad held a prestigious job. In fact, foreman Foreman won a gold watch. On the reverse side of the Gruen Curvex wrist watch was engraved, “The Presidents Safety Production Award. Stanley Mine. John F. Foreman. The Lorain Coal and Dock Company. 1948.”

In that same year, my mother nurtured four children: Jeanne starting in Bellaire High School, Charlotte in sixth grade, and Jack in kindergarten. The whole family worshipped together at the First Christian Church. However, when I came onto the scene at the tail-end of the decade, the idyllic situation began to change.



## Chapter 2

# GROUNDING

December 1949 to March 1954  
Bellaire, Ohio & Whiting, Indiana

*And this shall be a sign unto you;  
Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes.*  
(Luke 2:12)

### BELLAIRE, OHIO

I entered the flux of humanity at 5:05 p.m. on December 24, 1949, the fifth child born to John and Jenny Foreman. My birth certificate notes my weight at nine pounds and one ounce. After spending one night at Bellaire Hospital, my mother was anxious to return home for the holidays. On Christmas morning, she wrapped me in swaddling clothes and placed me under the living room tree. Deceptive angels and stars danced above my head. Mom explained to four children that Chris was a special Christmas gift to the family. My sister Eileen is purported to have remarked, “What? Another brother? I already have one of those. I wanted a dog”.

My parents considered a few names for their second son, but my Christmas Eve advent cinched the deal in favor of *Chris*. My father deliberately chose not to name me *Christopher* after the tainted Catholic saint. One of his buddies joked, “Since everyone else is calling the baby *Chris*, I’ll even things out and call him *Topher*”. This moniker persisted for a while especially spoken by Jack and Eileen. Of course, any knowledge of my earliest days comes second hand to me.

I was alive for eight days during the decade of the forties. I have always looked upon myself as somewhat older and wiser than contemporaries who were born in the decade of the 1950s. That odd notion persists until this day. I tell youngsters I was born in the first half of the last century in the previous millennium.

I always felt a special affection for my home ground. I remember Eileen telling me this riddle years later, “What’s round on each end and high in the middle?” OHIO! Mom and dad used to croon the old song “Beautiful Ohio”. I knew I was a buckeye.

In the year of my birth, the conflagration of World War Two continued to spark global hot spots. A scan of contemporary events sets my historical context. During my birth year, the Berlin blockade brought the USA and the USSR to the brink of war; Mao Tsi-tung proclaimed the People's Republic of China; and India gained independence from Britain. Then, six months after my birth, an uneasy truce on the Korean peninsula exploded into war. The entire world was undergoing seismic change.

America had emerged from war as an economic powerhouse. Millions of men had returned home after demobilization and optimistic couples were migrating from city and farm into suburbia. It was a time to make babies. American children born in this era (1946 to 1964) were termed the *baby boom generation*.

I boomed in Bellaire for only thirteen months. During this time, my parents faithfully brought me to church. I have a certificate of nursery enrollment from the Christian Church in Bellaire, Ohio, dated January 6, 1950. My mother also cut and saved the accompanying notice from the church program announcing my arrival. I was grounded in the Faith even at fifteen days old.

## 1950

I count Ohio as my first state of visitation since it marked the location of my nativity. According to my record keeping West Virginia was my second state. The city of Wheeling was situated just across the Ohio River and served as the commercial hub of the region. I have a picture of me in diapers with the notation: Kiddieland Studios, 2710 Forbes Street, Pittsburgh, PA. Therefore, Pennsylvania must have been my third state.

About the time I was born, coal mines were shutting down across eastern Ohio. Employment prospects looked bleak for my father. Word came that his company was about to shutter and dad began looking for a job outside the mining industry. This is his severance letter dated May 10, 1950.

To whom it may concern: John F. Foreman has been employed by the Lorain Coal and Dock Company for a period of six years. Six months as a laborer and timberman, two and a half years as a Unit Foreman, and three years as a Shift Foreman. All this work in a mechanical mine. He has proved himself to be dependable, ambitious, honest, and a good workman and supervisor. His job has been discontinued through no fault of his own. I do not hesitate to recommend him.

My dad's situation wasn't as bleak as it might seem. In 1946 my mother's parents had migrated to Whiting, Indiana, to work at the bustling Standard Oil refinery. Grandma Dydek encouraged my father to seek out a job in the oil industry. My Uncle Frank and Aunt Anne had migrated to an apartment in nearby Chicago.

My folks made a few long drives to investigate the job market and dad was promised a millwright position at Standard Oil of Indiana. It still took six months more to relocate.

The move away from Bellaire was difficult. Our roots were deep. Both parents had family in the Ohio hills and friends going back to childhood. Charlotte was ensconced in school and involved with classmates. Jeanne especially was upset about moving away from Bellaire. With tears she pleaded with dad, “But I want to finish High School”. She explained she was trying out for the junior cheer team and it would just *kill her* if she made the team and then had to move away.

Jeanne tells me how amazed she was at dad’s response. He said, “Jeannie, if you do make the cheer squad, we won’t move to Indiana. I can get a job anywhere”. Jeanne didn’t become a cheer leader at Bellaire High School which caused sadness, but she did learn how much her father treasured her.

My mother held a different view about relocating. Yes, it would be difficult to leave the only town she ever knew, but she would be moving close to her mother whom she dearly loved. That would provide a fountain of joy. As for Jack and Eileen, they were young and were up for any adventure.



During the summer of 1950, Jeanne, Charlotte, and Eileen, spent a few months with Grandma Dydek anticipating their migration. There is a wonderful story about a hamster getting loose during a train ride. After a final semester in Bellaire, all seven of us packed up a trailer, pointed the 1946 Hudson westward, and drove four-hundred seventy miles to our new hometown in Indiana.

## WHITING, INDIANA

My parents moved in with my mom's parents for a season. From February 1, 1951, until the end of June, seven people co-occupied space with Grandpa and Grandma Dydek. I am told it was crowded, joyful, and miserable all at the same time.

Four of the children enrolled at George Rogers Clark School at the midterm—Jeanne in tenth grade, Charlotte in eighth, Jack in second, and Eileen in kindergarten. Jeanne reports feeling out of place in her new school. Her classes were academically easier than in Bellaire but some of the kids made fun of her *hillbilly* accent. Eventually she made friends, and on October 9, 1951, she made a lifelong special friend by the name of Donald John Zeleznik.

Within the broadcast beam of Chicago-land, television became our great distractor. Bellaire had been too remote for decent reception, but with four channels of daylong broadcasting, my cramped family became mesmerized by the flickering tube. The 1950s would become the golden age of TV. With such tremendous cultural and informational influence emanating from Chicago, we felt more like citizens of Illinois than of Indiana. Mayor Richard Daley became my personal mayor.

My folks began looking for real estate the moment we arrived in Whiting. The tight quarters with in-laws made this an imperative for dad. He ran into problems getting a loan from Walter Schrage at the First Bank of Whiting so had to borrow outside money to close the deal. Jeanne kept a diary for 1951 and located the day we entered our new premises. It was June 30, 1951. On that same day, she records, mom announced to the family she was expecting a baby. Jeanne's response was, "What? I'm sixteen years old! How can mom be having a baby?"

My parents were thrilled with their new property. 1750 Lake Avenue included a two-bedroom brick home with a basement, attic, front and back porch. The corner lot encompassed a detached rental unit with garage and sat at an intersection of maple-lined streets. Clark School was just one block away. I think the sale price was about \$9,000 with the rental unit covering most of the monthly mortgage. My dad was earning about thirteen dollars a day at the time.

Our mailing address was Whiting, Indiana, but our actual location was the Robertsdale neighborhood of Hammond. As a cultural extension of Whiting, we resided in the extreme northwest corner of the state, about one mile east of the Illinois border and one mile south of the Lake Michigan shore. Our cross-road to Lake Avenue was 118<sup>th</sup> Street, meaning we lived one-hundred eighteen blocks south of downtown Chicago.

Hoosiers in other parts of Indiana referred to this northwest corner of the state as *da region* because of its proximity to mobster-famed Chicago. In fact, our clocks were set to the central time zone of Illinois and not the eastern time zone of majority Indiana.

Whiting-Robertsdale was hemmed in by heavy industry—oil refineries, steel mills, and processing plants. Not without reason was our region referred to as the *armpit of the state*. The saying went that a north wind brought a stench of alewife from Lake Michigan, a west wind the musky odor of corn product, and a southeast wind stinky sulfur from Standard Oil. Occasionally the Lever Brothers detergent plant would blow a strong soapy smell our way. I remember my dad sniffing the air, “So what? That’s the smell of money.”

Distant flares of escaping gas shone across the night horizon and shrill whistles marked the shift change at midnight. Once an Ohio visitor arrived at our house in late winter. She asked my mom why piles of coal were lining the streets. Mom sheepishly responded that sometimes the snow turns black.

A top priority after finding a house was finding a local church. Since my folks attended a Christian Church in Bellaire, it was an easy decision to join the First Church of Christ of Whiting on Central Avenue. I sat in these wooden pews for my first eighteen years of life. Within the walls of this brick building, Jeanne, Charlotte, and Eileen were married; and Frank and I were baptized. This would become my *third home* after my residence on Lake Avenue and Clark School on Davis.

Most of Robertsdale consisted of reclaimed marshland, surrounded by shallow lakes. One section of housing, near Wolf Lake, was called the *Water Gardens*. Every few years, the area would flood and our family would drive down to see residents paddle to their front doors in canoes. In the empty fields surrounding our house, children would dig holes in the sandy soil. Inevitably they would strike water at three feet and the hole would collapse. Until my adult years, I figured that if a person really wanted water, all he would have to do is dig a few feet into the ground and *voilà!*

Our region was also noted for train traffic. All the rail lines from the east coast to Chicago—going and coming—passed by our southern tip of Lake Michigan. Mill trains pulled in coal and iron while the refineries shipped out petroleum product. The rails rumbled day and night without pause. It was not uncommon for an automobile to wait thirty minutes while an engine towing a hundred boxcars pulled forward and then backed up. Sometimes we counted each car to counter frustration.

In the fifties, Whiting was a white ethnic enclave. Some people were long standing residents, but most industrial workers were of first- or second-generation Slavic ancestry—mostly Poles, Slovaks, and Croats. Six Catholic churches flourished in this compact area of fifteen-thousand souls. Growing up, I never met a person with black or brown skin. Whiting was in fact a *sundown town*, meaning no negroes were permitted within city limits after dark. I remember the remark “the first word in Whiting is white.”

Uncle Frank lived just across the state line in Chicago. My father and mother visited him and Aunt Anne on occasion. Counting Indiana as my fourth state, Illinois must come in at number five.

## FRANK

The first piece of new furniture for the new house was a Philco 16-inch round television. During the long summer of her pregnancy, mom relieved stress by stretching out on the sofa and watching Jack Brickhouse announce Cubs baseball on WGN-TV. The season ended about the same time as mom's pregnancy. The Cubs fell to last place, while the Yankees once again won the World Series.

Frank James Foreman was born on September 13, 1951, at Saint Margaret's Hospital in Hammond, Indiana. He was named after my uncle who was childless. We spoke of Frank as being the one Hoosier in the midst of five Buckeyes. At twenty-one months my junior, he became my playmate and best friend. We employed the buddy system throughout life, looking after each other. Frank and I always got along, playing together quietly without fuss or rivalry.

A 1952 photograph of six kids shows us in our front yard lined up in perfect digression. Jeanne on the right, a head taller than Charlotte, then down to Jack, Eileen, Chris, and finally baby Frank sitting in a stroller. Cookie-the-dog stands in front and an empty lot called Pearl Field stretches in the background.

I wrote about this family of six in a poem called *I Wonder*:

I wonder at the wonder of two parents with six kids all jammed into one  
1946 Hudson.

How did we all fit?

I wonder at the wonder of two parents with six kids managing one meager  
bathroom.

How did we all keep clean?

I wonder at the wonder of six kids all going to school, from first grade to  
twelfth.

How were we all clothed?

I wonder at the wonder of two parents with six kids eating together every  
dinner meal.

How was everyone fed?

I wonder at the wonder of two parents with six kids filling one pew at Sunday  
church.

How did we all arrive on time?

I wonder at the wonder of two parents ...

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## FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Memories of my first four years are imprecise and uncertain. Do I remember the true event, a re-telling of the event, or just an antique photo? It's challenging to distinguish substance from shadow.

I remember sleeping in a large bed with mom, dad, and baby Frank. My little brother would sometimes repose in a floor-level dresser drawer like Sweet Pea. With sleeping space at a premium, I think I shared a room with my parents until my fourth birthday.

In the summer of 1953, The Dydeks were expanding their across-town home. I remember piles of sand and waving to Don Zeleznik working on the roof. Jeanne expanded my snippet of memory. She tells me that Grampa Dydek refused to pay Don for the work he had completed. He claimed that back in 1940, when dad's Bellaire house was under construction, he had worked for free. Don needed the cash, because he was enrolling at Western Michigan University for the Fall semester. Grandma Dydek got so angry at grandpa that she moved out of the house and worked for a time as a hotel maid. She cleaned rooms until she could pay back the full amount of her stingy husband's debt.

There is a story—possibly apocryphal—concerning my Grandma Dydek during the time when she worked as a hotel maid. The manager once paid her with a gold ring and expensive watch. He told her the items had belonged to Jim Thorpe, the famous Olympian, who was too poor to pay his bill in cash.

I remember sitting in a booster chair around our dinner table when plaster and dusty cotton began falling on my head. Jeanne yelped as her leg poked through a gash in the ceiling. I was wonderstruck. My dad rushed upstairs to pull my sister from her predicament. Our unfinished attic would undergo periodic upgrades over the next ten years, until it finally functioned a semi-habitable living space.

I remember a few moments of Halloween, 1953. Mom took Frank and me to knock on grandma's door. We were both dressed as cowboys. Grandma gushed over Frankie's two-year-old cuteness, but ignored me. When she noticed my tears, she walked out the door and bent over to give me a hug. I can't remember much about my grandmother, her face, her voice, or her home. I could never forget her love.

I see photos of Christmas, 1953, and remember playing with those exact toys. I pedaled that army jeep and I cranked that string to lift the elevator shaft. I retain the muscle memory. Holidays were always special in our house. New Year's Day was banging pots; Easter was dress up for church; July fourth was parades and fireworks; Halloween was costumes; Thanksgiving was excess food; and Christmas was gift-giving.

I can remember popular songs of the era. *St. George and the Dragonet* by Stan Freberg was unleashed on the public in September of 1953. We must have played that disk dozens of times because sixty years later, upon first re-hearing, I was able to recite every punch line. My family loved parody. The low-brow humor of

Homer and Jethro reverberated through my life: “It bruised her somewhat and hurt her otherwise, but I’m glad it did not bruise her elsewhere.”

I remember bouncing off walls and hopping on beds to 78-rpm records like *Der Fuehrer’s Face* by Spike Jones and *Too Fat Polka* by Arthur Godfrey. This endless treasure of wacky recordings was a legacy of my brother Jack. Communal laughter filled our lives.

The earliest prayers I remember are these three: “I see the moon and the moon sees me. God bless the moon and God bless me.” At bedtime I prayed, “Now I lay me down to sleep. I pray the Lord my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take” and before a meal, “God is great. God is good. Thank You for this food. Amen.”

My personality traits began to show at an early age. While Frank and I slept in the same bed with mom and dad, I remember mom explaining, “Frank is a cuddle-bug, but Chris is a lone wolf”.

My big sisters enjoyed dressing me up and watching me perform. There’s a picture of me decked out in a ballerina dress complete with coned sparkly hat. Eileen tells of me entertaining Charlotte’s friends. My sister would stand me on a tabletop, I would bat my eyelashes, wag my finger, and belt out this Polka hit.

Just because you think you’re so pretty; just because you think you’re so hot;  
just because you think you got something that nobody else has got. You  
cause me to spend all my money. You laugh and call me old Santa Claus.  
Well, I’m telling you baby, I’m through with you. Because—Just because.

I remember the night-time sounds of my working-class neighborhood as I drifted into sleep. Years later I wrote about “Distant Trains Whistling through the Dark”.

Lonely sounds, dimly piercing the night’s summer air  
—only through stillness at all are they there.  
Before childhood dreams, the distant trains sang far away songs.

Far away songs through the quiet of night  
Comfort the darkness of childhood’s fright,  
Lullabied to sleep by distant songs of far-away trains  
whistling through the dark.

## Chapter 3

# NURTURED

March 1954 to June 1960  
Whiting, Indiana

*Train up a child in the way he should go:  
and when he is old, he will not depart from it.*  
(Proverbs 22:6)

Childhood served as an apprenticeship to life. I experienced unconditional love, felt genuine security, and learned to trust those adults whom God had placed in my path. I received the rudiments of the Christian faith of my parents both naturally and supernaturally.

### 1954

My first substantial memory occurred when I was four years and two months old. My sister Jeanne was going to marry Don! It was a very big deal. I remember the excitement and preparation, the out-of-town guests and fancy clothes, the dancing and celebration. My father had purchased a thirty-five-millimeter movie camera just for the occasion.

At a rehearsal a few days prior to the wedding, Jeanne told me I was going to be the ring bearer. That was so cool. There would be a circus ring and I could be the *bear*. I mentally practiced my bear growl. I also learned the word “cummerbund”. That was the silly black cloth they wrapped around my tummy and fastened behind my back. The grown-ups gushed at me decked in my mini-tux.

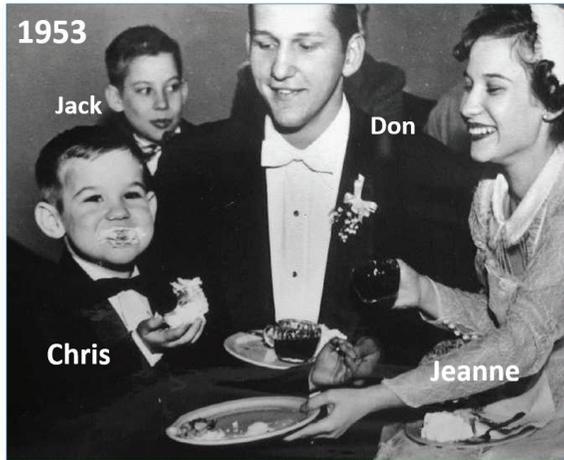
The church ceremony was an adult affair that I didn’t understand. I obeyed my elders as they directed me to walk, stand, and hold out a cushion. Afterward, dad said I didn’t “fidget too much”, which I took to be a complement. Then it was time to dash downstairs for refreshments. There is a picture of me, face smeared with wedding cake, the beautiful bride looking on.

As the celebrating continued, I did begin to fidget. I was a big boy and knew how to use the toilet. However, I couldn’t figure how to unfasten the obstinate cummerbund.

I was too embarrassed to ask an adult. They were all too busy anyway. And so, for the last time in my life, I wet my pants. With tears streaming, I ran to mom, who took me by the arm and made things right again—just as she always did.

The evening reception was strange, even to the eyes of a four-year old. The celebration was held in the dingy basement of our home where the giant furnace, clothes washer, and bogeyman resided. Clutter was packed in the coal room while thirty people jammed into the subterranean space. Couples danced to polka tunes while at the same time ducking asbestos-wrapped furnace pipes. A foot-pumped player piano provided some of the dance music. It was a day to remember. And I did.

After they married, Don changed his last name from Zeleznik to Zelen. He said he was tired of college professors unable to pronounce his Russian surname. Jeanne was a Zeleznik for only a few months.



The remainder of 1954 remains shrouded. My first niece, Debra Jean Zelen, arrived in September. Jeanne relates the sweet sorrow. On the day after Debbie's birth, she carried her newborn to a different ward in the same hospital. My Grandma Dydek was bedbound dying of cancer. Grandma held her great granddaughter only on this single occasion. Jeanne tucked Debbie under her arm and coached her to tell the visiting nurse it was her own baby. I can't recall my niece's birth or my grandmother's death.

I vaguely remember Jeanne, Don, and little Debbie moving into our house. They occupied mom and dad's room for a year, while my parents relocated to the second bedroom. In later decades it became a sport to figure out where Charlotte, Jack, Eileen, Chris, and Frank slept in 1954.

I do remember children's TV shows that were popular in my fourth year of life, but it's impossible to tell if the memory is from that year or later. There was

*Howdy Doody; Kukla, Fran, and Olli; and Romper Room.* In truth, there were so many shows broadcast and I watched so many hours, that recounting every local show, cartoon favorite, and movie short would be daunting.

## 1955

My unbroken train of memory begins chugging in 1955 when mom walked me to Clark School in order to register me for kindergarten. Because I was December born, I began school in January not September like most other kids. My mid-term status aligned my school year with the calendar year.

Miss Bond was my first teacher. As I look back at the twenty-one faces in my kindergarten photo, I can name one-third, guess one-third, while one-third remains unrecognized. Eric, Laurie, Karen, and Don would be my classmates for the next thirteen and a half years. In kindergarten I remember playing with blocks, counting to one hundred, and reciting the alphabet. I got into trouble once for pushing Eric off the sliding board.

Kindergarten also included a nap time. I remember struggling to lie still and bringing my blanket home for mom to wash. Miss Florence Bond commented on my pink report card: "Chris shows dramatic ability and does well in expressing ideas in drawing, but he fails to listen and continues to dramatize when the play is over." The more things change, the more they stay the same.

Dad was continually involved in building projects. In 1955 he bricked in the wooden back porch and converted a kitchen pantry into bunk-beds for Jack and Eileen. I was scolded for playing in the construction zone. In August of that year, the Standard Oil refinery caught fire. The blaze raged for days. I remember my family sitting as spectators at the Clark School bleachers gazing across George Lake at the distant inferno.

About that time there was a train derailment along the Lake Michigan shoreline. I remember a man bursting into our home saying various products were strewn along the railroad tracks. Dad rushed the family to the site and I helped recover about fifty bottles of women's hair permanent. The ammonia smell was overwhelming. Dad said, "Watch out for the broken glass." For the next several years, my mother invited ladies into the house as she set their hair while listening to their troubles.

Charlotte traveled to Alaska after high school, visiting our uncles Joe and Stutz who served in the Air Force. I remember the celebration when my second sister returned. She brought back all kinds of exotic treasures. I remember the plastic key chains with *real Alaskan gold dust* embedded inside. The Eskimo yo-yos consisted of two fur-covered balls at opposite ends of a rope. We held the rope in the middle and tried to make the balls circle in opposite directions. She

also brought back a polar bear skin. What ever happened to that rug? But the best thing Charlotte brought back was herself. I missed my big sister.

Cookie was the little black dog that moved with us from Ohio. As I remember, the rotund canine seemed eternally old and dyspeptic. I think my parents bought the pet for Jack, but dad ended up the reluctant care giver. I don't remember ever playing with Cookie or walking her. I'm sad to say she was more of a nuisance than companion. As a result, I never acquired an affection for dogs—that is, until much later in life.

Frank and I were raised on television. That flickering screen was our world and we indulged unsupervised. All the way through grade school we sat more hours in front of the tube than on reading or doing school work. On October 3, 1955, the Micky Mouse Club debuted. I was hooked. I wore the mouse ears to bed and played the vinyl recordings continually: “Who's the leader of the club that's made for you and me? M-I-C-K-E-Y M-O-U-S-E.”

Our toy of choice became two-inch Disney figurines we dubbed *Little Friends*. Frank and I loved these globs of colored plastic and would play make-believe for hours imagining Donald Duck, Goofy, and the seven dwarfs, in endless adventures. We used blocks and tinker toys to build our play-scape. Frank's favorite dwarf was Sleepy and mine was Bashful. Perhaps our preferences provide insight into our dispositions.

A big event was the *twenty dollars-worth of toys day*. Some of mom's Ohio friends worked at the Marx Toy Factory. When they visited, they brought boxes and boxes of plastic toys. I remember mom saying, “With little friends Chris and Frank could baby-sit themselves for hours.” Frank and I were content as long as we held a toy between our fingers and a bite of salami between our teeth. We didn't box up our toys until Boy Scout days. Make-believe lasted a long time.

## 1956

My first-grade teacher was Miss Zeller. I learned how to read using *Fun with Dick and Jane*. The covers of these readers still provoke my soul to nostalgia: “Oh, look! See Sally. See Sally jump up and down.” The storyline of Dick, Jane, Sally, Spot, Puff, and Tim filled my literary world. I also remember addition, subtraction, singing, crafts, and story time. I was a bit dyslexic but I was able to keep up with school work. Dad and mom seemed content that I was average in scholarship, effort and conduct. Average equaled good enough. I was always perfect in attendance.

Don and Jeanne Zelen moved into a house on Calumet Avenue not too far from our place. They were a continuing presence in my life over my first fifteen

years. Little Debbie was so cute. Jeanne taught her to recite her address in case she got lost: “1624 Calumet Avenue.”

My family took bi-yearly trips to Bellaire to visit relatives. Mom would prepare salami sandwiches and dad would pack the pee bottle for me and Frank. There would be few stops along this eight-hour trek. Dad always drove the Hudson and mom sat next to him. Jack, Eileen, and I sat in the backseat. Frank made a nest of blankets under the large back window. Dad would point out sites along the route. I remember McCullough’s Leap and the *house we pass three times* as ritual landmarks. Dad would simmer when our speed slowed to a crawl behind a line of trucks. He loved to return to his home state and boasted about the wonderful Ohio rest stops.

Once we arrived in Bellaire, adults talked, laughed, and played cards. Frank and I existed in our own bubble. We would greet our elders when called upon then retreat to our play things. Grandpa Foreman was seventy-five in 1956, and my aunts, uncles, and cousins were too grown up to connect with kids. But Frank and I were satisfied to be in our own world and participate in adult activities only when requested. The proverb still held currency: “Children should be seen and not heard.” I do remember my Aunt Mary once asking about my coonskin cap and me explaining about Davy Crockett, whom I knew to be the “king of the wild frontier.”

On one trip to Bellaire, dad extended the drive eastward. We stopped off as tourists at Niagara Falls, Gettysburg, and Washington, D.C. Then we made our way back to Indiana. An old photo shows mom and dad in front of the Capitol Building with Jack, Eileen, Chris, and Frank in the foreground. Each of us four has a melting ice cream cone in hand. On this road trip, I added three states to my total visited: New York, Maryland, and Virginia; plus, the District of Columbia. Now I was up to nine states.

Frank and I were alike in many ways. However, we certainly contrasted in height. My little brother was *vertically challenged* throughout most of his childhood and youth. There is a boy scout photo in which I stand about five-foot-ten and Frank is a good one foot shorter. Mom used to add droplets of iodine into his breakfast milk to encourage a growth spurt.

Nonetheless, on one return trip from Ohio, little Frankie proved to be the hero of the family. Upon facing the front door, dad could not find his house key. He looked throughout the messy Hudson, but to no avail. My dad jiggled every outside access and finally discovered the bathroom window could be pried open to a gap of ten inches. First, he tried to push me through the opening. No way! Then he spied his youngest son. “Frank, I think this is a job especially for you.” My nimble little brother wiggled his way through, then unlocked the front door. Dad lifted him to his shoulders and we all cheered his accomplishment.

Flowers and Charlotte will always go together. In first grade I learned the song “I know a pussy willow”. Charlotte helped me pluck these tokens of Spring, carry them home, and put them in vases. She pointed out the lilies of the valley that grew up and down the alleyway during the month of May. Our favorite tradition was the annual trip to Eggers Grove to seek out the first violets of Spring. Charlotte would load us in the car and drive us across the state line. She would shout with glee whenever she spotted a clump of violets.

In the springtime, front lawns became super-saturated with rainwater. Hundreds of earthworms would squirm above the soil and wiggle onto the sidewalks. Along the route to Clark school, most little girls would step around the worms and many little boys would stomp on them. I chose to scoot them back to the grass with the toe of my little shoe.

Our church sponsored a summer picnic at Forsyth Park. I remember being overheated and overstuffed. Dads played softball while moms gabbed and looked after children. I remember vividly a foot race for six-year-olds. My dad shouted, “Ready, set, go!”. He then side-galloped down third base to call the winner. He was so disappointed I had tied for first place. He asked why I was deliberately lagging.

I introduced him to my new best buddy and explained that I wanted the two of us to cross the finish line together. Dad was at a loss for words.

I remember Jack used to chase me and Frank around the house. Once when we were goofing around in the basement. I raced up the stairs, glancing over my shoulder. Jack wasn't there. I was almost upstairs. I laughed to myself thinking that I had given my big brother the slip!

Suddenly I fell on my face. I couldn't guess that Jack could stand under the open staircase, reach up and grab my ankles from below. It was traumatic. I cried and cried. For years as I ran up the stairs, I would look downward to make sure that Jack wasn't lurking with hands sticking through the second to the top step.

I was beginning to know some of our neighbors on Lake Avenue. Mary Ann Kokot was Eileen's schoolmate and lived to our right. Her two older brothers kept a hunting dog named Duke that would scare me sometimes. Joey Pishkur, a hyperactive kid, lived on the far side of them. Across 118<sup>th</sup> Street lived old lady Smeric. She spoke Slovak and would yell at us in unknown tongues when we retrieved a ball from her back yard. Across the back alley stood First Baptist Church. The artificial hill that rose to its foundation was our only rise in elevation. We would sled down the hillside in snowy weather. Finally, mean Mr. Kruel lived kitty-corner from us. He would send a policeman to our door whenever he caught Cookie making a deposit on his front lawn. The cast of characters and encounters could fill pages.

I remember mom and dad ushering the family off to the First Church of Christ every Sunday of the year. Dad would put on his suit and tie; mom would underlie her fancy dress with a girdle; and each of us kids would put on our Sunday best. Jack was always the problem. Dad would shout to motivate him into the car. I would go to a children's service and sit with my buddies. My longtime friend, Jacky Wetnight, was my favorite. My father became an elder and the church became a second home.

I cannot remember a time when I was not a Christian. As the twig was bent, so grew the tree. I acquired the gift of faith by singing and gesturing to Sunday school songs. The nursery was my theological seedbed. First, I learned about the love of Jesus.

“Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so,  
Little ones to him belong. They are weak, but He is strong.  
Yes, Jesus loves me. The Bible tells me so.”

“Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world,  
Red and yellow, black and white, they are precious in His sight.  
Jesus loves the little children of the world.”

I learned the primacy of scripture, Sola Scriptura.

“The B-I-B-L-E, yes that's the book for me.  
I stand alone on the Word of God, the B-I-B-L-E.”

I learned the need for salvation.

“Behold, behold, I stand at the door and knock, knock, knock.  
If anyone hears my voice, I will open-open-open the door. I will come in.”

I learned about Christian joy through standing, sitting, pointing, and clapping.

“I'm in right, outright, upright, downright happy all the time!  
Since Jesus Christ came in and cleansed my heart from sin,  
I'm in right, outright, upright, downright happy all the time!”

I also learned about eternal security.

“Safe am I, safe am I, in the hollow of his hand.  
Sheltered o'er, sheltered o'er, with His love forevermore.  
No ill can harm me, no foe alarm me, for He lives both day and night.  
Safe am I, safe am I, in the hollow of His hand.”

Finally, I learned the wisdom of self-control by pointing to body parts.

“Be careful little feet where you go.  
For the Father up above is looking down in love,  
So be careful little feet where you go.”

I continue to be careful about where my little feet go, what my eyes see, what my tongue says, and what my hands do. I was glad I lived in the hollow of His hand.

## 1957

In the first half of second grade, Miss Fisher was my teacher. Like many primary school teachers of her era, she was born around 1900 and educated around 1920. She was a black-dressed, old-fashioned spinster, dedicated to her calling, but perhaps burned out. I remember continuing with *Dick and Jane*, but expanding to other children’s books. She read to us every day. I could identify with the adventuresome *Boxcar Children*. We began to learn other subjects. Geography and history became my favorites.

Miss Parker was a first-year teacher for the second half of second grade. Her big thing was American Indians. We put on war paint (finger paint), made necklaces (dyed macaroni), donned a native vest (fringed paper bag) and sang pow-wow songs. I can still do the gestures; the muscle memory persists. She introduced us to a publication called *My Weekly Reader*.

I also learned to recite the poem: “I never saw a purple cow. I never hope to see one. But I can tell you anyhow; I’d rather see than be one”. I never knew what the words meant, but it was fun to say.

Dad and mom often took us on weekend outings. I remember going to Deer Forest in Illinois to feed animals. I put a penny in a dispenser, cranked the lever, and a small amount of feed flowed into my little hands. I also remember a longer visit to Wisconsin Dells for water rides and a picnic. Wisconsin was my tenth state visited.

Frank and I had some vague rules about how far we could stray from home. One day Frank, Jacky, and I stretched those rules by wandering three far blocks away, next to the busy Indianapolis Boulevard. While playing in a vacant lot, Frank tumbled and got a nasty gash on his knee. He howled at the sight of so much blood. Jacky and I got him home as best we could. Mom had to break herself away from a cluster of ladies to deal with her wounded and wailing boy.

My best friends were Jacky Wetnight and Jimmy Francis. Both boys lived on my block. The Wetnights were part of my church life and Jacky was the fifth of six kids like me. From my earliest days to eighth grade, we were best buddies. Then he moved away to Munster. Jimmy Francis enrolled at Clark school in second grade and our friendship continues to this day.

Jim and his family were Baptists and for a few summers, I attended Vacation Bible School with my classmate. I don't remember much about what the old guy taught. What sticks with me is his genuine affection toward his charges and how he embodied God's love.

God's love was also at work in our house. I did not recognize it at the time and it often embarrassed me. Dad gave amateur haircuts to strangers and mom rolled women's hair in curlers. All kinds of odd people filtered into our living room. First came visitors from Ohio, mostly young people who needed temporary housing and counsel. Then came a bevy of troubled women often in tears and in need of comfort. My mom would pat their hands and listen to their woes. My parents were living out their faith and passing it on to me: "that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; being rooted and grounded in love."

Our dog, Cookie, began to have seizures and one day mom took her on a one-way ride to the vet. It was a sad day for Eileen. Still my parents thought pets would be good for Frank and me. We had two hamsters for a while. I was delighted to see them devour dandelion stems then appalled to see them do the same with their offspring. Dad constructed a really neat wooden cage, but the rodents gnawed through the bottom and escaped into the wild.

We kept dime-store turtles for a year or so. Mine was called *Hotrod* and Frank's *Pokey*. We would race them down a three-foot wooden track. We were inattentive in our play and often the little turtles escaped in the house. I remember one day looking around for Hotrod. Eileen joined in. As she conducted her search, one of the bedroom doors wouldn't open wide. She gave the door a shove—*crunch*. She discovered the reason for the door jam and graciously provided a jewel case in which we buried my crushed turtle. Jimmy Francis helped me prepare the sarcophagus with glass jewels and fancy paper. With great pomp, we buried Hotrod behind the house near the garbage cans.

Eileen also kept a pet. Tweetie Pie was her yellow and green parakeet. She would feed the bird by putting a treat between her lips and then kissing the colorful face. I remember Eileen playing her accordion and Tweetie flitting about shoulder to shoulder.

The seventh year of life is an enchanted age. Alice of Wonderland was seven when she walked through the Looking Glass. Childlike imagination combines with an emerging practical sense to create a magical world. I wrote a story about my wonderland of 1957.

As I walked down the alley behind my house, something caught my eye. It was an umbrella poking up from a garbage can. I plucked it from the trash and studied it. I saw the broken spokes and torn fabric and knew it wouldn't be a prize I could show to mom.

But I thought, "this could be a cool sword." So, I waved it over my head and smacked the metal can. I succeeded in making clangs, but the umbrella was too unwieldy for a sword.

"Maybe it's a walking stick." I put the point into the gravel and strutted past a few backyards, but that didn't work either. The umbrella fell open. I stepped on the black fabric and nearly tripped.

I was about to stuff my prize into another trashcan when I noticed the umbrella knob in my hand. Wow! It sparkled like a diamond—and a big diamond too, about the size of my seven-year-old fist. I was too grownup to believe it was really a diamond. My big sister Charlotte had just got a diamond ring from her boyfriend. He said it cost hundreds and it was only the size of a BB pellet.

I twisted the diamond top, but couldn't separate it from the umbrella stalk. I walked into the basement and found Jack reading a Mad Magazine. My big brother looked up. "What you got there?"

"I found this in a garbage can."

"Hey, can't you see it's broken," he laughed.

"I know, but look at the diamond on the end."

Jack snatched the umbrella from my hand. "That's not a diamond, just cut glass."

"I know, but it's still pretty neat. I want to keep it but I can't pull it off."

These words were taken as a challenge by Jack, a freshman in high school. He strained and twisted, but the knob wouldn't budge. Then he went to dad's work bench, grabbed a pair of vise grips and unscrewed the top diamond. "Right tool for the right job," he mumbled. I recognized my father's voice. "This looks nice. I think I'll keep it". Jack stuffed the diamond in his pocket and raised the booklet hiding his eyes.

With one burst of lung power, I screamed, whined, and snorted.

Jack lowered the Mad Magazine revealing a grin. "Just teasing," and he tossed the treasure to me.

I carried my prize upstairs, washed it in the bathroom basin, shined it with toilet paper, and walked out the front door. I waved the diamond over my head as I strutted around the block. That's when I discovered its magical powers. Whenever I held it in the sun, the diamond made rainbows! I couldn't believe how it worked. I covered it with my hands and the rainbows went away. Then I held it in the sunshine and the rainbows reappeared.

I showed the diamond to Jacky who was sitting on his front stairs. He tried it a few times and was amazed. I showed it to snooty Linda who was walking back from the corner store.

"I know," she said with a sneer. "My mom's got one of those hanging in front of her kitchen window."

Once I took the diamond to school for show and tell, but since there was no sunshine in the classroom there was no rainbow. Miss Fisher called my prize a *prism*. I sometimes wrapped it in paper to hide around the house as pirate treasure. I remember when mom helped to attach a string to it so it would dangle in my bedroom window.

As a teenager, I had a science project on prisms. I looked for my glass ball in all my closets and around the basement, but couldn't find it. Did I hide my treasure too well to never find it again? I couldn't remember. I sighed as I recalled the enchantment of childhood, a time when common objects could reveal hidden magic. It proved impossible to reclaim that lost wonder again.

## 1958

My third-grade teacher was the fabulous Mrs. Chambers. How much did I like her? Well, from that point forward, my ambition was to become a school teacher just like her. She knew how to speak to us kids as grown up, yet relate to us as children, never condescending always kind. She was my Disney's Snow White and I was one of her seven dwarfs—*Bashful* by name. She would read to us, encourage us, and send notes home to mom about my accomplishments. More than anyone, she saw potential in me that no one else saw.

This third-grade class partook in a daily ritual. With twenty-five students, there were five desks across the front set in five rows. The person in the front desk was the designated leader. After the morning pledge of allegiance and announcements, the lead student would walk down each column to assign every youngster a *hygiene score*. This was never my strong point. The four questions asked every morning were: 1. Did you brush your teeth? 2. Did you comb your hair? 3. Did you go to bed at eight o'clock? and 4. Are You carrying a handkerchief? I always answered

“yes” to all of them. Sometimes I ran my finger across my teeth and my hand across my hair so as not to make a bold-faced lie.

One morning I was in a panic. I had forgotten to carry my hanky. I knew Susan sat in the front chair and would actually ask kids to produce their hanky. What to do? I remember sitting in my small wooden desk when Susan approached. She gave me an inquisitive eye after asking, “Did you bring a hanky?” But I had been practicing. I reached deep into my front pocket, tugged the white pocket liner to the surface, and displayed the tip. I grinned as she marked me four of four.

About that same time, my mother began to work at Clark school. She was termed a *janitress*, and worked a split shift—two hours before school and two hours after school. She said she needed to do this because my dad’s salary was not enough to keep the family fed and clothed. I remember the times I stayed after school to help her bang chalk erasers and empty waste paper baskets. I believe she worked at the school for about five years.

One of the perks of mom’s job was her claim to discarded school items. At the end of every school year, she would bring home a huge bag of unclaimed pencils, notebooks and small toys. This booty recovered from lost and found provided a June Christmas.

The oddest thing mom ever brought home was a human skull. She recovered it from a waste basket in the biology lab. She presented it to me and Frank as an educational item. However, we used the head bone as a prop and made *skull island* for our little friends. Someone must have told mom a human skull was an inappropriate plaything and soon it vanished from our sandbox.

Several years later, I thumbed through the Clark School year book. The caption under one photo read, “Here is the biology teacher posing next to Mr. Bones”. I was not surprised to see the skeletal display without its head.

In 1958 a new family moved into our back apartment. They were the Buchmans from Orange, Texas. The father, Chester, migrated north to construct the Interstate highways. Jessica looked after three daughters—Linda, Lorene, and Janette. The family constituted a long-term project for mom and dad. Some neighbors referred to the Buchmans as *white trash*. The three girls seemed to be in constant trouble with the law or with boys. Jessica became one of the troubled women who consumed my mother’s time.

In the summer of 1958, my parents invited the Buchman family on a car expedition around the perimeter of Lake Michigan. Dad had read about the grand opening of the longest bridge in the world and figured driving across the

Straits of Mackinaw would make for a fine vacation. Michigan was the eleventh state I visited. I do remember the three Great Lakes, but more I remember my parent's effort to patiently work with the Buchman family. They never succeeded. Chester and Jessica got divorced, the girls got pregnant, and in 1963 they all returned south.

At twenty-one years old, my sister Charlotte appeared as a movie star to me, always flitting, flirting, and wearing a fancy dress and red lipstick. In my early years, Char would bend me backward in her arms and plant a giant red kiss mark on my cheek. A parade of male suiters walked through our front door to escort Charlotte on dates. I was surprised when she accepted an engagement ring from Jim Walker. He was not my favorite of the bunch.

Charlotte tells this story: She had decided to break up with Jim while he was stationed in the Marine Corps at Pearl Harbor. She wrote him a *dear john* letter and dropped it into the nearby mailbox. When she stepped back into the house, she told our parents what she had done. They were aghast, saying that was no way to treat a man in uniform. They insisted she return to the box, wait for the mailman to arrive, and retrieve her letter. And for better or worse, she did.

A major event was Frank getting his tonsils removed. At first, I was thankful it wasn't me. But on the day my brother returned from the hospital, mom served him bowl after bowl of chocolate ice cream. He got it and I didn't! I supposed her action served two purposes. First to make him feel special after his ordeal, and second, to help relieve the pain of the operation. Still, I remember my jealousy.

Newton Minnow famously described American television as a *vast waste land* and for most kids growing up in the 1950s his description is apt. I calculate my TV habit to be three hours per day with a steady diet of Bugs Bunny, Superman, Beanie & Cecil, and Garfield Goose. I knew all the shows in TV Guide and could lip-sync every commercial. My TV-scape is too vast to enumerate every show. If you were to ask a typical baby boomer to narrate their childhood, most would include a recitation of favorite kiddie shows.

It's hard to explain, but 1950s television was like video gaming and social media rolled into one package. All the kids watched the same set of programs. Often, I would discuss favorite shows, like Zorro, with my school mates. We guys would act out the slapstick of Moe, Larry, and Curley. Adults were clueless, while

we giggled and horse-played. There were a few oases in the wasteland. Once, I amazed Mrs. Chambers by spelling E-N-C-Y-C-L-O-P-E-D-I-A. I didn't tell her it was Jiminy Cricket who taught me the word.

My family was faithful in church attendance and in 1958 the First Church of Christ voted on its mother of the year. During an evening celebration the aluminum-foil crown was placed on the head of my mother. Church ladies cheered and handed her a bouquet. It came as no surprise when a month later my dad was voted father of the year. The newspaper clipping shows the two of them, arm in arm, surrounded by church members, and grinning at the camera.

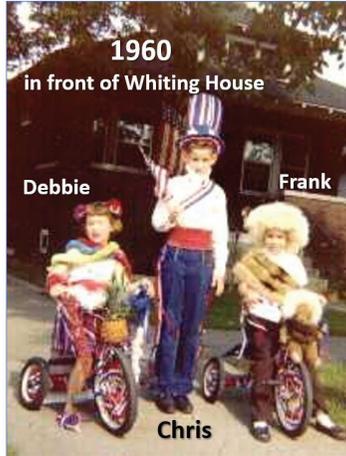
My second niece, Susan Jane, was born in August 1958. I remember visiting the hospital to see Jeanne and her new baby. However, it was after hours. So, when we returned to the parking lot, Jeanne flung open her third-floor window, shouted to us, and held up Susie so we could all take our first gander.

I associate Susie's birth with hula hoops. It was about that time we were singing, "Hula hoop, hula hoop, everyone's playing with the hula hoop". Eileen and Mary Ann were expert. I could do only three spins before the hoop dropped to my ankles.

Charlotte married James Matthew Walker in November. Mister Thickens presided, Jeanne was bridesmaid, Debbie flower girl, and Frank ringbearer. I don't remember much about the wedding, except after Charlotte left our home, some of the joy departed with her.

Frank and I were not only into Disney toys, but also plastic dinosaurs. Dad knew what was at the top of my wish list for Christmas 1958. He had to know. I had scissored out the picture of a dinosaur set from the Sears catalogue and taped it strategically to the refrigerator.

A week before Christmas, I began snooping around the house. I looked in closets and under beds. Finally, I found the Sears box of dinosaurs in the basement under some blankets. At first, I was overjoyed. But what could I do? If I told Frank, he'd squeal to mom and I'd get scolded. But it was so hard to keep such a big secret without exploding. On Christmas morning I pretended to be excited. After this experience, I concluded it was better not to know about surprises in advance.



## 1959

If Mrs. Chambers was Snow White to me, my fourth-grade teacher, Miss Benny, was the Wicked Witch—the teacher with a poison apple. I nearly failed fourth grade, and my accomplice in misbehavior, Jim Francis did fail. He was put back one semester and we were no longer classmates. To be fair, I can't blame Miss Benny. I was disruptive, unfocused, and shoddy in my schoolwork.

I remember a grade-school punishment for misbehavior was the relocation of your desk to a corner where you sat staring at the wall. That happened to me once. After my penalty week, Miss Benny said I could scoot my desk and join the class again. I was honest. I replied that I preferred the solitude of the corner. My introverted personality—later identified as INTJ—was already established.

My parents were permissive toward Frank and me. We were never rebellious, did okay in school, so they left us to our own devices. Our table manners were atrocious. We seldom combed our hair or brushed our teeth.

I can still remember a dreaded date. I held a note from our local dentist, Dr. Vukovich, dated February 24, 1959. That was the day when I would have to walk into his office, sit in his waiting room, and submit to the extraction of a decayed molar. I remember the sight, sound, feel, taste, and smell. I remember walking home, turning my gaze away from pedestrians I met. With Novocain pumped into my gums, I thought my jaw was hideously swollen. When I looked in the mirror at home, I was shocked to see my familiar nine-year-old face.

In 1959 Jack and Eileen were both teenagers, deep into popular music. They bought dozens of 45s such as: *Poison Ivy*; *Go Jimmy Go*; *Sixteen Candles*; *Mack the Knife*; and *La Bomba*. Our transistor radios were always tuned to WLS-AM from Chicago. Eileen collected the *Silver Dollar Survey* listing the top forty songs. Rock and Roll seeped into my brain and never drained out.

Jack was also buying comedy 33 rpm albums by the likes of Jonathan Winters and Andy Griffith. When I wasn't watching television, I heard the tunes and laughed to the humor. How could we possibly find time for homework?

My summers were wide open—about eighty days of unsupervised, unstructured, feral time. Both Jacky and Jimmy preferred our home to their own, so they hung out at the Foremans watching TV and playing around the house. A hundred steps away and across the alley lay a vacant lot we dubbed *Brown Field*. This quarter acre of dirt and weeds was our stomping ground. We dug holes, threw rocks at cans, and catapulted objects high into the sky. It was also a haven for bugs and toads.

One summer day we discovered that Brown Field was losing its toad population. We attempted to replenish the stock by visiting a distant field we dubbed *Toad Field*. Four of us filled up a red wagon with the little creatures. We had to be careful, because we heard if a toad peed on you, you could get warts. We pulled our livestock down several blocks to Brown Field. One kid would pull while three hand-lifted escaping toads back into the wagon. We offloaded most of our cargo, but it was to no avail. The next day all the toads in Brown Field had vanished.

On July 4, 1959, the stars of Alaska and Hawaii were added to the American flag. Eileen came up with a brilliant idea for the Whiting Independence Day parade competition. She dressed me as Uncle Sam to march in the center. Frankie rode a tricycle to my left dressed as an Eskimo and Debbie rode to my right arrayed as little Miss Hawaii. We were awarded second place and won ten dollars. My dad was also marching in this parade as scoutmaster of Troop 103. Jack was one of his reluctant scouts and dad was doing what he could to keep my sixteen-year-old brother in step.

During this same month, I received word that my first nephew—James Alan Walker—had been born in far-off Anaheim, California. Soon after, Big Jim Walker completed his four years in the Marine Corps and returned with my sister to Whiting. Jim, Charlotte, and their curly-headed son settled into an upstairs apartment on Brown Avenue, about ten blocks from our house.

During that summer there was a plague of mosquitoes and city workers ran trucks down our streets spewing thick billows of DDT. Frankie, Jacky, Jimmy, and I trailed behind these trucks on our bikes inhaling fumes and pretending we were pilots in a cloud bank. The frustrated driver would hop out on occasion, shake his fist, and yell at us stupid kids. We fell back a while, then followed again. It's a wonder we ever survived childhood.

I also played with liquid mercury. Once dad brought home a baby jar half-filled with quicksilver. It became a toy, like my slinky. I'd pour out a puddle on the kitchen table, separate it into beads, then push the beads back into a glob. I would squeeze silver dimes and quarters with the substance, bringing them to a high luster. After a few days, the coins turned dull. I even took the stuff to school for show and tell. The toxic element was no big deal at the time.

On hot days Eileen would walk with Frank and me to Wolf Lake. It was about twenty minutes one way. The sand scorched and the fudgesicles cost seven cents each. We played and splashed for hours. On one walk my fourteen-year-old sister asked me if I knew the longest word in the dictionary. She said it was "antidisestablishmentarianism". I said, "Oh, yeah? How about 'Eeny-meeny-tipsy-teeny, apple-jack john sweeny, hokey pokey dominoky, out goes Y-O-U in the middle of the deep dark blue sea with a dishrag wrapped around your knee'?"

Eileen was incredulous and said "that's not a word"! She patiently explained to me the difference between syllables and words. I played dumb. I knew it wasn't a word, but it certainly flustered my sister.

On another walk home, Eileen picked a handful of stickers next to Wolf Lake. She carried them nearly home and threw them onto the lawn of Mr. Kruel across the street from us. She said it was revenge because Mr. Kruel had always been so cruel to our dog Cookie.

Jack got a motor scooter when he turned sixteen. It was kind of a misbegotten military motorcycle. The color was called *maroon*. (That was the first time I heard the word.) It had a big square open box in the front and a push horn that went "UU GAH". I was so proud when Jack rode me around the block. I would duck down inside the box and then pop up fast to wave at my amazed friends. Sometimes Frank would be in the box with me and sometimes Jim Francis. "UU GAH" became a special signal between Jim and me.

In the Autumn kids at school began to talk about baseball. I didn't know about the sport but since it was a topic of childhood conversation, I was pulled along as a fan. The talk was thick because the Chicago White Sox had won the American League pennant. Like all my boy peers, I followed and discussed every game. Alas, the LA Dodgers won the World Series, but in the process, I became a baseball aficionado.

Whiting had a rhythm of seasons: baby birds and blossoms in the Spring; mowing lawns and lake swimming in the Summer; and raking leaves and back to school in the Autumn. Nothing marked the change of season as definitively as the first snow of winter.

Burdened by homework drudgery, I stare out my window between arithmetic problems. Almost done, almost dark, almost time for bed, I see artful frost etching corners of the glass. Lost in subtraction, pencil on lined paper, I glance up from my dreary task.

Swirling in the street lamp, dancing through the air, winter's first burst of snow invites me out to play. Slamming the textbook and bumping the table, I erupt from my wooden chair. Grabbing my coat and flush with excitement, I shout "Oh boy! Oh boy!" and dash for the door.

Mom is smiling. "Don't stay out too long." She turns on the porch light and pulls up my mittens. Chasing flakes like a kitten after yarn, I drag my galoshes, kicking odd patterns on the sidewalk. Lost in the snow, feet on white carpet, I play in my kingdom until my fingers grow numb.

## 1960 TO JUNE

In fifth grade I was blessed with my first male school teacher. Mr. Thomas was stocky, commanding, and good hearted. As a boy, I could finally identify with a role model of my own gender. Mr. Thomas was a former Marine and would relish leading his class in singing the Marine Corps Hymn. Occasionally a few of us ornery boys would substitute the word *corpse* for *corps*. He would glare at the offenders, but I knew a smile lurked behind the scowl.



On January 15, 1960, my parents celebrated their silver wedding anniversary. About a dozen friends were over the house to mark their twenty-five years together. I remember helping Eileen glue twenty-five silver dollars onto construction paper to form the digits two and five. The official photograph shows a family of thirteen: John, Jenny, Jeanne, Don, Debbie, Susie, Charlotte, Big Jim, Little Jim, Jack, Eileen, Chris, and Frank.

It seemed dad was always tinkering with the house. In the basement he installed a second toilet and a shower stall. Those additions were mostly for Jack, but they proved useful to Frank and me as well. Dad also improved the attic, constructing one long corridor with mats for sleeping at either end by the gabled windows. He paneled the peaked ceiling and installed book shelves along the entire length of the corridor. The bonus space was too hot in the summer and too cold in the winter, but year-round it was a great place to hang out with friends.

When dad re-furbished the attic stairway, he uncovered a lost treasure. Beneath the bottom tread lay a pound of sugar, a box of baseball cards, and a ration coupon book. Mom recognized it right away. "During the war we all hid things away like that."

In school I was an average achiever. The one subject in which I truly excelled was geography. I could recite all the states and capitols. I collected maps pulled from National Geographic Magazine. In May I received an award from the Daughters of the American Revolution at a school assembly. My name was called and I walked to the stage for my plaque. Both mom and dad were proud of their son and took a dozen pictures.

Mom decided I should take up a musical instrument so she sent me with Eileen to Bialon's Accordion Studio on Indianapolis Boulevard. I only lasted a few lessons. I received letter grades for each session, but I didn't know what they signified. Eileen chuckled as she read, "C-C-D". I put up enough of a stink, that my musical education ceased. All I can recall from Bialon's is "My dog has fleas" and "Every good boy does fine." I guess I wasn't a good boy.

In the Spring of 1960 Frank and I began to follow Major League baseball in earnest. He was an LA Dodgers fan with Sandy Colfax as his favorite and I was a Milwaukee Braves fan, favoring Warren Spahn. From the Hammond Times we snipped out Major League Standings and every day pasted them into notebooks. Frank kept detailed statistics of the sixteen teams.

By 1960, I saw less of Jack. He was hanging out at the bowling alley and rolling cigarette packs in his shirt sleeve. Frank and I grew closer to Eileen. After

meals we developed a routine. Eileen would wash dishes, Frank would dry with a towel, and I would put away on shelves.

During the several years we did this—until she left the home—Eileen taught Frank and me crazy songs. This one, taken from Jack’s *Mad Magazine*, we sang to the tune of the Air Force anthem, *Up We Go*:

Up we go into that wide mouth yonder looking for molars to fill.  
There’s a tooth waiting to hear our thunder. At ’em boys.  
Give ’em the drill, RATA-TAT-TAT.  
We dislike cavities left untreated. Teeth look bad full of decay.  
When we’re in doubt, we pull ’em out. Oh, nothing can stop a dentist today.

Little did Frank know when he sang that ditty, he would grow up to become both an Air Force officer and a practicing dentist.

Some songs were passed along by house guests. We learned this parody to *Back Home Again in Indiana*:

Back home again in dear old Whiting and it seems that I can see  
the electric lights still shining bright o’er Lake Michigan for me.  
And Amazo sends out its fragrance o’er the streets I used to roam.  
And when I dream about the whistle blown at midnight, then I long for my  
dear old Whiting home.

Eileen taught us tongue-twisters like “Big Black Bug Bled Bad Blood”; “Rubber Baby Buggy Bumper”; “Unique New York, Unique New York, Unique New York”; and “She sells seashells by the seashore”, as well as profound questions like, “How much wood would a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck would chuck wood?” and “Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers, a peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked. If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers, where’s the peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked?”

Along with fun, my sister also taught us to recite the sixty-six books of the Bible, from Genesis all the way to Revelation. Frank and I got so proficient that we would challenge each other. He’d say, “Can you name all the books in one breath?”

I would fill my lungs and after sixty-five books, croak out *Revelation*. Then I would challenge Frank. “Can you name all the books of the Bible in one breath while hopping on one foot?” And Frank could do it. What fun to have a little brother like Frank. What joy to have a big sister like Eileen.

Looking back at my first decade of life, I can say that my entire family—dad, mom, Jeanne, Charlotte, Jack, Eileen, and Frank—all did their parts to create a joyful and godly environment to “Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:4)”

## Chapter 4

# ANCHORED

June 1960 to November 1963  
Whiting, Indiana

*Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee.*  
(*Psalm 119:11*)

For Chris Alan Foreman childhood lingered while maturity lagged. Eileen once told me that after rearing their first four kids, my parents were fatigued. As children number five and six, Frank and I were innocents, chaperoned by three older sisters and amused by our own company. I see maturity dawning with two transformational events. First, I was anchored in faith through my baptism into the Christian Church and, second, I was molded in character by my participation in the Boy Scouts of America.

The First Church of Christ loomed large in my upbringing. In this particular Protestant denomination, the two ordinances of scripture played a dominant role. My church served communion every Sunday morning, and my dad being an elder, distributed the wafers and juice. My church also held a legalistic view of baptism. We preached immersion as requisite to salvation. That is, if a believer were not baptized, he could not gain eternal life.

I remember once asking a Sunday school teacher, “So if some guy is walking into the baptismal, slips on a banana peel, bumps his head, and dies, then is he going to hell, because he didn’t make it those last few steps?” The adult suggested a future interview with the minister might be in order.

It was not such legalism that attracted me to the gospel. Rather, it was the loving example of my parents, the robust hymns of the congregation, and the practical preaching of Mister Thickens, which led me to Christ.

I continually observed my parents as living out their faith. They were not saints, but neither were they hypocrites. They did not use profane language; there was never liquor in the house; they did not abuse their children; and dad and mom seldom quarreled in front of us. They welcomed the downtrodden into our modest home and lived an unpretentious lifestyle. Their integrity won me over.

Hymn singing reached into my soul at a level I did not fathom at the time. I remember my mother singing from the hymnal, “There is joy in serving Jesus” and my dad booming out “On Christ the solid rock I stand. All other ground is sinking sand.” These Biblical notions transmitted by song stuck in my ears and migrated to my heart.

The chorus of *Blessed Assurance* goes, “This is my story. This is my song. Singing His praises all the day long.” These lyrics lodged with me to spring out years later during a season of rebellion. At a later time of intense grief, I instinctively held up my arms and whispered the hymn, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty. Early in the morning my song shall rise to thee”. Even decades later I continue to enjoy congregational hymns that I first heard in pre-adolescence.

Mister Thickens preached every Sunday. His official title was *mister* not *reverend* or *pastor*. His messages were as unpretentious as his designation. The Gospel was boldly proclaimed and Scripture was simply expounded. The message was always evangelical: “Come to Jesus and be saved”. He offered an altar call after every service. I really liked Mister Thickens and I was sad to see him return to his native Australia. George Davis was his successor. He was okay, but it wasn’t the same.

## JUNE 1960

My fifteen-year-old sister, Eileen, had been to church camp a few summers already. I had made the drive with family down to Cedar Lake to pick her up, walk the grounds, and wade into the algae-filled water. Now at ten years old, it was my turn to experience Christian camp life. Our theme song went:

Way down at Cedar Lake in Indiana, there is a camp that is the champ of all we know. That’s what we’re here for, we’re here to cheer for. The land is great to learn and play and pray and grow. Good food we eat here. Good friends we meet here as we sit around the campfire glow. There’s story, song, and fun until the day is done, down at the camp that is the champ of Indiana! clap-clap clap-clap-clap.

We sang that ditty in the dining hall three times a day before we rushed to the chow line.

I resided in a cabin with three small rooms. Each room contained two bunk beds housing four boys. The twelve of us composed the Red Team. My cabin-mates were age ten, eleven, and twelve, so I was among the youngest. There were three other cabins like ours; Blue, Green, and Gold.

Teams were awarded points for sports. I wanted to compete in baseball but my skills were minimal. Led by older kids, the Red Team won second place. I sat on the bench and felt useless. Teams also got points for citizenship (keeping clean and staying out of trouble). I think three of the four teams got perfect scores on that measure. Finally, a team could earn points through Bible knowledge. The camp director entered

each cabin and quizzed each camper. I astounded my teammates by casually chanting all sixty-six books of the Bible, then adding for good measure the twelve apostles:

Jesus called them one-by-one, Peter, Andrew, James and John.  
Then came Phillip, Thomas too, Mathew, and Bartholomew.  
James the one they called the Less, Simon, also Thaddeus.  
Twelfth apostle Judas made. Jesus was by him betrayed.

I was the Red Team hero and we won first prize during the award ceremony held on Saturday.

However, first prize was not the highlight of my five days at Cedar Lake. Rather, it was my *going forward* and my profession of faith in Christ. The story goes like this: On Friday afternoon, all forty-eight boys were gathered by the lakeshore to listen to a “famous international evangelist”. I sat on the grassy sand in the back as this preacher strode to the front of the assembly. I couldn’t believe my eyes. I saw Mister Thickens!

I had been feeling guilty, because my desire was to be baptized by him, but he left the church before I could act on my desire. Now, my second chance appeared. When he announced the altar call, I stepped to the front and confessed to the world, “I believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, and I accept him as my personal Savior”. I wanted Mister Thickens to baptize me right then and there in the waters of Cedar Lake, but it wasn’t so to be. He was happy to see me and to rejoice with me. On the next afternoon he gave an envelope to my dad when he came to retrieve me.

I didn’t realize I had to attend classes before baptism, but that was the requirement. George Davis led the catechism for six weeks before the big event. I remember sitting with two adults and one other youth, listening to Mister Davis expound the faith. He taught my first Greek lesson. He said something like this: “The Greek Bible was originally written in capital letters with no spaces. Sometimes that made it hard to translate. Take this sentence for example.” He wrote on the chalk board: NOWHEREISTRUTH. “Does that say ‘Now here is truth’ or ‘Nowhere is truth?’”

At a morning church service on August 7, 1960, Mister Davis immersed me in water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. I pledged my life to the one who spoke, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father, except by me.” Christ became my anchor and evermore would be.

Charlotte attended church regularly and sat with our family. Little Jim played in the nursery while Big Jim stayed home. I remember one Sunday when Jacky and I were goofing off. A touch led to a shove and suddenly my communion cup was spilled all over my lap. Mom turned to me with exasperation while Elder dad winced from the communion table up front. My saintly sister Charlotte rescued

this blatant sinner. Without a word, she removed the tiny cup from my hand, poured half of her juice into it, then returned it to me with a smile. Could there be a better picture of grace?

School started up again in the Fall. This was my second semester with Mr. Thomas. The odd thing about being a mid-term was that in the Spring half-year older kids were my classmates while in the Fall half-year younger kids shared the classroom. I remember Mr. Thomas telling us fifth-graders that the USA was a democracy; that Americans held an election every four years. This was news to me, since in all my ten years, I could not recall a single election. My perspective soon changed as Nixon versus Kennedy was on the TV news every evening.

I still liked history and geography, but I must admit recess was my favorite period and Clark School provided a vast playground. The space was about one-third of the big school block and it was paved with uneven crumbling asphalt. Sprouts of grass shot through large cracks. There were two baseball backstops in opposite corners, and two basketball hoops tucked in another. In early school years, I just ran around and chased other kids. In middle years we would play half-organized games like *Mother May I*, *Red Light Green Light*, and *Red Rover*. In fifth and sixth grade, we boys played a lot of softball, running the bases and occasionally breaking a school window. Frank was always more rambunctious than I was. He slid into first base whether he needed to or not. Mom constantly patched the knees of his school trousers.

I would sometimes hang out with Jimmy Francis at the other end of the block. We would throw darts or play ping pong in his basement. In September of 1960, the Hitchcock movie, *Psycho*, was showing at the Hoosier Theater in downtown Whiting. Jim's dad really wanted to see it and thought it might educate his son. Jim asked me to tag along and we three sat in the theater together. At the time, *Psycho* was one of the few movies that required kids under twelve to be accompanied by an adult. I thought the movie was really creepy, but couldn't understand the tedious psychological ending. Why was Norman Bates dressed like his mother? Why did he preserve her stinky body? Mr. Francis tried to explain Freud to us, but the mumbo-jumbo was beyond my ken.

After following baseball for the entire summer, snipping out and saving the Major League Standings, the World Series was finally at hand. The New York Yankees were again favorites, but Frank and I were rooting for the National League pennant winners, the underdog Pittsburgh Pirates. I listened to every moment of every game. The Yankees would score a lop-sided win, then the Pirates would squeak by the next game by one run. 1960 remains the World Series year in which

the losing team outscored the winning team by the widest margin—Yankees 53 to Pirates 27—and the only series in which the last batter in the last game, in the last inning, smacked a come-from-behind home run. That was Bill Mazoroski. It could not have been more thrilling for a ten-year old boy.

Nancy Jo Zelen, my third niece, arrived just as the World Series was beginning. Chubby Checker sang to her the number one song, *The Twist*.

Just like October, November became a month that stirred my partisan passions. Richard M. Nixon and John F. Kennedy were vying for president of the United States. In my Catholic environs, most of my school mates were campaigning for Kennedy. My dad had picked up Republican pins at the Masonic lodge and provided me with Nixon-Lodge buttons for school. I also wore a badge that read, “Pat for First Lady”. I remember Protestant concerns that Catholic Kennedy would “construct a special pipeline of holy water running from Rome all the way to Washington, D. C.”

While neighbors were celebrating on November eighth, my family was lamenting. Nixon had lost the election and dad suggested the Pope would now rule over America.

My father had been scoutmaster of Whiting troop number 103 for four years. He took on this role to influence Jack in a positive direction. Don Zelen acted as dad’s assistant and Jack’s personal mentor. I did participate in Cub Scouts for a short while, but dad did not care for the den mother nor did he like her craft-centered program.

My eleventh birthday fell on a Saturday. On Sunday I received a birthday/Christmas present of a complete Boy Scout uniform and on Monday, December 26, I attended my first Boy Scout meeting. Dad had prepped me ahead of time and on this first day I passed all the requirements for my Tenderfoot badge.

## 1961

When I returned to school in January, I was in sixth grade. Miss Alison was my new teacher. Two things stand out in my memory. One morning, it was my turn to present something for show and tell. I was not prepared. Television was probably the culprit.

I had read in *Boy’s Life* magazine an article that had caught my eye. It was about the year 1961 being an *upside-down year*, that is, you turned the digits upside down and it still read 1961. That anomaly impressed me. So, just a few moments before it was my turn to present, I grabbed a marker and paper and wrote out “1-9-6-1”. When my turn came, I held up the paper, explained the concept, and turned the paper upside down. I mentioned the last such year occurred in 1881 and the next would not happen until 6009. Miss Alison was impressed and gave me a blue star.

1961 also marked the centennial of the American Civil War. The commemoration was on the news and in our curriculum. Over the next few years, I made several reports about the War between the States, all the way up to April 1965 and the centennial remembrance of Lincoln's assassination.

At the urging of Eileen, I began writing in a diary on January first, 1961. Each day of writing was allotted three lines. Most entries included a ball score, a TV show, a friend who visited, and the high and low temperature of the day. My two juvenile diaries record exact days when life events occurred, but I was not mature enough to share my inner life. However, by writing daily for two and a half years, I did exhibit perseverance.

Boy Scouts became a gigantic part of life for two full calendar years—1961 and 1962. I was attending meetings every Monday, advancing up the ranks, hiking, camping, and earning merit badges. I was proud to wear my scout uniform and give the three-fingered salute. I took to heart the scout oath I recited as a tenderfoot:

On my honor, I promise to do my best to do my duty to God and my country, to obey the scout law, to help other people at all times, to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake and morally straight.

The scout law ran: "a scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent." Our motto was "do a good turn daily" and our slogan "be prepared." Certainly, virtue was being communicated. I was mature enough to grasp the concepts, but not enough so to uphold the standards.

Just as I was entering the Scout ranks, Jack was exiting. His eighteenth birthday loomed and he would soon age out. Dad was frantic because Jack was one merit badge short of his Eagle Scout award. Mom offered her entire month's paycheck if Jack would just buckle down. Finally, dad found a solution. There was an obscure merit badge called *automobiling*. All Jack had to do was possess a valid driver's license, take the tester for a drive, and answer a few automotive questions. So, Jack gave Don Zelen a drive in the family car, earned his final merit badge, and had his papers signed two days before his birthday. Jack was past eighteen when dad presented him with the award at a Court of Honor.

My older brother was an enigma to me. While five siblings were compliant, he was a contrarian. He once bragged to Eileen that he was drunk most of his senior year. Jack graduated in June of 1961—just barely. His grades were horrible and his attitude worse. He had to take summer make-up classes to actually pick up his diploma and he never considered applying to college.

His saving grace was a love of books. He would read novels late into the night. Frank claims it was a youthful reading of J. D. Salinger that planted a rebellious seed in his heart. Maybe so. I did hear him once remark that *Catcher in the Rye* was his favorite book ever. Maybe Jack did identify with the disillusionment of Holden Caulfield and perhaps he did acquire a contempt for the phoniness of the world.

My 1961 diary notes a few memorable events. On March 20, Jimmy Francis and I bought a magnifying glass at Star Sales. After our purchase, I remember the elderly clerk asking if we planned to play detectives. Jimmy shot back, “No, we plan to focus the sun on the butts of ants and watch them explode.”

On April 11, I noted, “Today the U.S.S.R. got the first man in space.” And on April 21, I wrote “Today we got a new 1961 push-button Chevrolet station wagon for \$3,500.”

I also noted a fight I lost to Bobby Wetnight. He was Jacky’s older brother. I remember Bobby pinning me down on the grass with his knees on my shoulders, just laughing in my face while I flailed. I got so furious; I began cussing at him. This was out of character for me, but I knew a few bad words from the school yard. Bobby said, “If you keep cussing like that, I’m going to tell your dad”. I kept up my string of expletives and he did tell my father.

The next day I recall the only full dressing down I ever received. Dad and mom summoned me into their bedroom where I stood at attention in front of a poster board that spelled out ten reasons why a young man should not use profanity. Dad made me read each line out loud, made me promise to apologize to Bobby, and never use that kind of language again. And with a few lapses, I have held to that promise.

In 1961 I remember hunting for Jimmy Walker on my bicycle. Poor Charlotte would lock and bolt her front door, push a few chairs to block escape and then try to take a well-deserved nap. Still two-year-old Jimmy managed to find his way out and toddle the streets. Mom received more than a few frantic phone calls.

In those days, Charlotte spent a lot of time at our house, bringing along little Jimmy. That baby was so precocious and such an early walker. As mom and Char gabbed indoors, I watched Jimmy playing in the back garden. Suddenly the baby screamed at the top of his lungs. I couldn’t figure out what had happened. Charlotte heard the scream and met me at the back door. He kept rubbing his eyes and the more he rubbed the more he screamed. Finally, we investigated his play site and discovered a mushed-up handful of ornamental red peppers. The poor kid had rubbed it in his mouth and eyes. Mom told me to dig up the pepper plants and drop them into the garbage can.

If I were to describe my father in one word, that word would be “scoutmaster”—in an expanded sense of the term. He wanted to be involved in my life, as coach, as mentor, and as role model. I understood this and respected him for it.

Dad’s approval was enough to keep me striving. His disapproval was sufficient to keep me walking the straight and narrow. Dad wanted my life to be more successful than his own. There was an unspoken understanding that I would certainly be going on to college and I would never spend my life as a laboring man.

Dad had troubles at work. I never figured how much was his performance; how much was the changing economy; and how much was his bad luck. Dad lost his job at Standard Oil in 1959 and floundered at a few other jobs. Finally, my mom helped him find employment. She knew somebody who worked at a new high school that was hiring janitors. Dad humbled himself and for a few years worked at Gavit High School. What can I make of this? Was John Foreman a terrible father because he held such a lowly station in life? Or, was he an amazing dad because he accepted help from his wife and did his best to make ends meet?

To earn my swimming and lifesaving merit badges, I took swim classes at the Whiting community center every week of the year. Although I was big and strong, I was not coordinated. The various strokes did not come easily. For my lifesaving badge I had to dive into the deep end of the pool and retrieve a shotput from the depths.

On June 25, I attended my first Boy Scout summer camp. Located along the St. Joseph River, Camp Betz was sixty miles northeast in Berrien Springs, Michigan. During my seven days of tent living, I earned merit badges in Rowing, Canoeing, Woodworking, and Conservation. I remember nightly bonfires, hordes of mosquitos, scorching temperatures, and bug juice/Kool-Aide with every meal. I noticed something about myself that continues to this day. I did enjoy being away from home, but I preferred the solitude of the woods or the quiet of a solo canoe, to the antics of rambunctious pre-teens.

Jack worked as a camp counselor that summer but resented every moment because dad “made him do it”. My big brother moved into our basement earning pocket change by setting pins at the bowling alley.

Sandy Patrick was Jack’s girlfriend. She worked at the Conrad Hilton Hotel in the Windy City and on a few occasions drove Frank and me to Chicago museums. I remember buying an odd assortment of educational gifts like rock samples glued to cardboard and a conch seashell.

In August, the Zelens drove south on a summer vacation. They were kind enough to take along Frank and me. I remember driving to Mammoth Cave in Kentucky and to the Great Smokey Mountains. We wore shorts, camped under stars, ate hot dogs, swam in lakes, bought cheap souvenirs, and mailed home

penny post cards. Jeanne treated us just like she did her own children, Debbie and Susie. Don felt half way between my big brother and my dad. The states of Kentucky, Tennessee, and North Carolina brought my state total to fourteen.

When school started up in the Fall, I was a *boy* three times over. First of all, I was a *Boy Scout*. Second, I got my first job working for *Boy Carriers*. I rolled about two-hundred flat advertising papers into the shape of a thick baton, wrapped each in a rubber band, then tossed them onto my neighbors' porches. My area of responsibility covered six blocks. I worked once a week for a few hours, earning three dollars for each delivery, not bad for a kid of eleven. Third, I was a patrol *boy* at Clark School. I got to wear a white patrol belt across my chest and help younger kids across the street. I felt empowered.

Miss Welsh was my final teacher in elementary school. She was stern and I remember learning a lot of grammar—verbs/nouns, subject/object. I also learned about yo-yos. All the guys seemed to pull them from their pockets. Of course, I joined the Duncan yo-yo crowd. There was the basic wooden model for twenty-five cents, the butterfly for fifty cents, and the imperial for a dollar. I wasn't very adept. I could make the yo-yo go up and down, sleep for a few seconds, and sometimes complete around the world. For a year or so, yo-yos were the craze at Clark.

Frank and I were still big fans of Major League Baseball and the captivating news of 1961 was the homerun battle between Micky Mantle and Roger Maris. Both were trying to beat the sixty homers hit by Babe Ruth in 1927. By August, the sports page was running the daily statistics for the *M&M Boys*. Maris won this race and on the final day of the season belted his sixty-first home run. Frank and I were not pleased that the Yankees won yet another World Series.

Over Thanksgiving our family drove the new station wagon to Columbus, Ohio, where Uncle Stutz taught ROTC at Ohio State University. He treated the family to a college football game. Dad was in his element, but I couldn't figure out what was going on. I knew baseball well, but all I saw on the football field was a bunch of big-shouldered guys bumping their heads together and falling to the ground.

I was introduced to basketball at the end of 1961. I was recruited mid-season to play for the sixth grade Pioneers. I wore the official shirt and shorts as I shuffled around the gym. I didn't know much, but I was taller than most. I remember playing the parochial schools. We lost to Saint John, beat Immaculate

Conception, then in December lost to Saint Adalbert, 35 to 21. I was high scorer for that game with eight points.

My diary tells me that for my twelfth birthday, my parents gave me a tape recorder. For the life of me I can't remember a thing about it.

## 1962

With the new year came a new experience. Junior High School shocked my sheltered life. I was given a school locker with a combination; I earned letter grades: A to F; and my teachers stayed in one classroom while I rotated from teacher to teacher. It seemed so different and so grown up. In my woodshop class, fifteen-year-old boys who had flunked a few grades talked about what they did with girls. It was all news to me.

Miss Forsyth taught math (not arithmetic). We chanted the multiplication tables and mastered long division, no mercy from her. Miss Day—her face like a prune—seemed older than dirt. She had us reciting helping verbs: “Be, am, is, are, was, were, been; have, has, had; do, does, did; shall, should, can, could, will, would, may, might, must.” Mr. Sandala taught geography, and Miss Frasier reading.

My circle of friends expanded. A group of kids from Franklin School began attending Clark, as well as a busload of newbies from North Hammond. Reinhart became a friend and Linda a girl of interest. I exhibited my affection for her by whopping her over the head with my school books. Several of the boys became team mates in basketball and football.

Boy Scouts continued to be a focus of my life. Troop 103 (now renumbered as Troop 230) met on Monday evening from six to seven in the Congregational Church basement. Our troop was the one “non-Catholic” gathering in town. We boys were a collection of Protestants, Jews, and a few Greeks.

A big part of the meeting was the activity. I remember competing in four of them. For *Concentration* boys were numbered and sat in a circle. One would clap “clap-clap-one-two”. Two would return-clap, “clap-clap-two-five” and so on, until someone messed up and was eliminated. The last boy sitting was the winner.

*Steal the Bacon* was a more active game. Half of the boys would line up against one wall and half against the other. A towel (bacon) was placed in the middle. When the leader yelled “one”, opposing boys assigned as one would dash to snatch the bacon and return to the wall before the other touched him. Boyhood energy was thus dissipated.

*Memory* consisted of a tablecloth draped over twenty household objects, then revealed for ten seconds. The scout who could remember the most objects was the winner. *Musical Chairs* was the fourth game but it required a record player.

A January event was called the *Klondike Derby*. As patrol leader of the Apaches, I led in building a snow sled from wood and painted it—of course dad assisted. Fathers would convey sleds to a nearby farm and scouts would spend one long Saturday racing our creations. Each boy would be required to stand in a sled while the rest pulled him along a winding course. It was great fun and we won gold nuggets, which turned out to be melted lumps of brass.

In February the city of Whiting sponsored a Boy Scout Day. I was chosen to be the *Judge* and got to sit in the actual chair of Judge Obermiller. I was supposed to preside over a mock trial, but I was too bashful to say much.

Diary entries tell me that Frank was baptized on February 11 and on April 11 Shelley Ann Walker was born. *Johnny Angel* topped the pop charts sung by Shelley Fabares. I also made note of a new color television dad brought into the living room.

I was thrilled by that purchase. Now I could watch cartoons in the manner they were meant to be watched. Decades later I wrote a story concerning my mother and that TV, calling it *Brown Paper Bag*.

One day after school I rushed home and plopped down in front of the TV. Mom was in the kitchen preparing the evening meal. Engrossed in cartoons, I heard her call out, “Chris, come in here. I need you for something.” I dutifully walked to the kitchen.

“Your dad’s coming home soon and I want to fix a salad, but we’re out of lettuce. I want you to go to the store and buy some lettuce for me.” She put a quarter in my hand and sent me to the corner grocery store.

I ran as fast as I could, not wanting to miss a bit of *Rocky and Bullwinkle*. I rushed past the counter and spotted the leafy round vegetable. I handed over the quarter waiting impatiently for change. Then I raced home in record time and quickly handed over the brown bag resuming my favorite repose.

My bliss was short lived. Again, my mom called out, “Chris, come over here”. Her eyes flashed, “This is not a lettuce. Can’t you even tell the difference between a cabbage and a lettuce?”

My lip trembled. Then I saw her anger melt into exasperation, and her exasperation into resignation. Finally came a sigh, then a smile. “Oh, well”, she said, “I guess your dad will have coleslaw for dinner.”

When I think about my mother, I think about her mercy. I think about her cheerful optimism; her ability to make the best of whatever emerged from her brown paper bag.

As a Boy Scout I was in continual motion. I completed a twenty-mile hike on the Yellowwood Trail in central Indiana. I remember prancing to the finish line as adults panted behind me. My feet hurt, but I was a ball of energy. I earned my hiking merit badge a few weeks later.

In the summer I went to Camp Betz for the second time. I earned four more merit badges and completed the mile swim. The fifty laps were not supposed to be a competition for the ten boys in the pool, but without too much effort, I managed to finish second. I sewed a patch to my swim trunks emblazoned with a sea horse.

Frank wasn't yet eleven but dad pulled some strings and he was able to visit the pool. Word got out Frank was singing and dramatizing all the words to *Little Egypt* who "came out strutting wearing nothing but a button and a bow". The teenage lifeguard bullied Frank into singing before he could hop in the pool. My brother was not a *happy camper*.

After Camp Betz, I was promoted to Life Scout, then Senior Patrol Leader. I was zipping through scouts in the fast lane. Troop 230 continued to meet at the Congregational Church. Ceremony and reverence were important to dad. We closed every scout meeting in a circle singing and reciting:

*Song.*

By the blazing council fire's light,  
We are met in comradeship tonight.  
Round about the whispering trees,  
Guard our golden memories.  
And so, before we close our eyes to sleep,  
Let us pledge each other that we'll keep,  
Scouting friendship strong and deep.  
Till We meet again.

*Taps* — "Troop Attention".

Day is done, Gone the sun. From the lakes,  
from the hills, from the skies.  
All is well, safely rest, God is nigh.

*Scoutmaster's Benediction.*

And now may the great Master of all true scouts be with us  
till we meet again. And may we follow the trails that lead to him.

In August, Frank, Eileen, and I went on vacation with the Zelen Family. Berny Staley—their unofficial foster child—tagged along. It was a great four days at Warren Dunes in Michigan, running down sandy hills. I could accelerate to my

maximum speed, then let myself tumble in the soft sand. Eileen and Berny were continually singing the top song of the summer, *Sherry*, by the Four Seasons.

Just before school started, Jimmy Francis acquired a new passion. Her name was Ellen Wood. I'd ask him, "What do you want to do today?"

He'd respond with a grin; "Let's walk over to Ellen's house."

Then we'd walk to 2121 Superior Avenue. Sometimes she was home; sometimes not. When Ellen was away, we didn't want to waste the eight-block trek, so we would wander a few streets further and hang out around George Lake. The area was marshy and ringed by industry. A mountain of slag dumped by Union Carbide served as our playground. The artificial rocks were sharp and shiny.

One of our past times was to pick cat tails, dry them out, and then smoke them—that is, pretend to puff them like cigars. They produced an incense-like aroma. Our favorite drying bin was the attic of the Francis garage. Once we stuck dozens of cat tails above the ceiling rafters. This crawl space super-heated in the summer. Unfortunately, we forgot our stash and when we returned months later all we found were handfuls of messy brown fluff.

After a year of struggling at home, Jack decided that college was preferable to pin setting. He took special tests to gain admittance to Indiana University. With knowledge gained through book-reading, he passed the aptitude tests.

My parents drove him to Bloomington in September of 1962. I remember visiting his dingy basement boarding room and admiring his IU cigarette lighter. After a semester of classes, he drifted home and for several months lurked in the basement, aimless and depressed.

To say the least, Jack found it difficult to get up in the morning. Bright-eyed and bushy-tailed did not happen for him until the sun went down. Nothing could get him out of bed in the morning. There was one exception. Jack gave me permission to wake him to watch the *Soupy Sales Show*. The comedy acts started at noon on Saturdays. Sometimes Jack crawled upstairs, sometimes he mumbled. But when he did drag himself to the TV, it was fun to watch Jack laugh as Soupy carried on his antics with Pooky and Hippy. "Be true to your teeth and they won't be false to you," I remember Soupy intoning.

By 1962 athletics competed with Boy Scouts for my time. I tried out for Junior High football. As I walked off to my first practice, dad gave me one piece of advice, "Tell them you want to play in the backfield, not the line." I didn't even know what those words meant, but I repeated them. Because I was taller and faster than most, the coaches stuck me at halfback.

I was a fast learner and football was fun. You got to wear a helmet and pads; run fast, bump, and tackle people. I played in several games and made a few touchdowns. I discovered I was a good punter. Dad was proud of me.

In mid-November, seventh-grade basketball started. My diary tells me I threw a football in the morning and shot baskets in the afternoon. Again, my size and speed helped me star in adolescent hoops. In two of the five games I scored one-half of the team points; winning 38 to 20 over Irving and losing 35 to 25 to Saint John. Dad encouraged me by installing a basketball hoop above the backyard pavement between our house and the apartment.

Something tragic happened on November 30. Ron Francis—the seventeen-year-old brother of Jim Francis—died while lifting weights. They said later it was from a rheumatic heart. I knew Ron only casually. I did not know then how devastating a loss like that can be to a family. I didn't see Jimmy for a few weeks and we didn't talk about the death.

Eileen participated in something like Scouts. Her organization was called *Job's Daughters* and was the young ladies auxiliary of the Masonic Lodge. As one of the leaders, Eileen would have girls coming over the house, and would sponsor parties and luncheons. One of the Job's girls had a crush on me. Linda Beeson kept pestering me with notes with such statements as "I like you". The attention was flattering and I returned notes to her. But girls were just a curiosity. We held hands once after a Christmas party then drifted apart.

## 1963 TO NOVEMBER

Now I was thirteen and in eighth grade. I continued with Miss Forsyth and Miss Day as core instructors. I learned a lot from these old women, even though I applied myself a little. Miss Kolasek was my music teacher and Miss Morrison taught Art. These two classes were not book-based and provided a change of pace—no homework. As I recall my Junior High years, my interests lay outside the school doors. Nearly all of my brief diary entries begin with the same line, "Today after school, I . . .".

I remember Miss Kolasek asking her eighth-graders to bring in musical selections from home. My family owned a hundred tunes running the gamut from rock & roll to classical to comic. I borrowed an album from Jack and the class was treated to five minutes of cool jazz: *Take Five* by the Dave Brubeck Quartet.

At thirteen, I began to attend a church youth group on Sunday evenings. We gathered in the social hall, played a few games, and George Davis led us in a Bible

Study. The stuffy minister did not resonate with teens. I thought the whole affair was tedious and only attended to please my parents.

My scoutmaster-dad pushed me hard to earn the Eagle badge. I was precocious, athletic, and motivated enough to accomplish it in record time—two years, one month, and three days. I passed the board of review on January 27 and received my badge at a court of honor on March 4. It was a whirlwind experience. In retrospect, it might have been better for me to delay the zenith award for a few more years, because after I earned the Eagle, I lost interest in scout events. But by that time, dad had a new project. Little brother Frank had been a Boy scout for six months and was zooming through the requirements just as I had.

I played basketball almost every day throughout January and February. My team won the Hammond Eight Grade Basketball Tourney with a thrilling 34-32 win over Harding. We celebrated as world-conquerors. Our reward was to see the Harlem Globetrotters play in Chicago on March 3.

In April, I began track practice. This would prove to be my premier sport. I excelled at high jump, broad jump, and the sprints. I was never a good team player and with track I could succeed in solitude. The overall team score didn't matter too much. If I won my individual event, I was a winner regardless. I required three stitches once when I jumped over five feet high, landed in a sand pit, and the metal bar smashed against my shin.

On April 11, Charlotte was involved in a serious car accident. She was driving Big Jim's Thunderbird when she crashed into the rear of a truck. The sports car was totaled and Frank, Charlotte, and Shelly went to the hospital. Dad, mom, and I rushed to see them. Shelly was in a restraining seat and unhurt. Frank got a few stitches, and Charlotte suffered from whiplash. They all returned home that evening, but the experience resulted in a series of visits to the chiropractor. That's when we began our regular appointments with the Matthias brothers who practiced a bone-cracking technique called *Grostitic*.

Also, about that time, the back apartment changed hands. After Chester was kicked out for galivanting and Linda and Lauren moved out, only Jessica and Jannette were left. They returned to the South and the Walker family of four moved in.

Jack grew concerned about the military draft. One day after dinner he announced he had signed up for the Air Force. A few days later he went off to Lackland for basic training, then to Biloxi for his radio-intelligence specialty. We have a movie clip of Jack—his fiancé Sandy at his side—walking out our back

door and heading to his first assignment in Trabzon, Turkey. Rather than dwelling in the basement, Jack would be keeping his eye on the Commies.

Jack was into comedy albums and just before departing he bought the number one-selling album in the USA. *First Family* featured stand-up comedian and impersonator Vaughn Meader. Even my dad enjoyed the spoof. Was it because the album mocked the Kennedys or did dad develop a genuine affection for the first family?

During her senior year, Eileen became the *Honored Queen* of Job's Daughters. That was a cause of celebration for the family. She graduated from Clark in June and had a steady boyfriend named Al Lewandowsky. I never saw what she liked about him. He was mean to me and disrespectful to Eileen. His nickname for her was *Stubby*, which was ironic because at five foot six inches, she was about as tall as he was. I considered Al a blowhard jock and I was happy when she dumped him before the end of the year.

Eileen would remain a part of the household for three more years. She worked at Saint Ann's Home for a while, then settled in a steno-pool at Standard Oil. She bought a Chevy Corvair to zip around town. Eileen occupied the second bedroom, while Frank and I slept mostly in the attic.

Eileen was a subscriber to *Readers' Digest*, her favorite section being "Laughter is the Best Medicine". The magazines always seemed to collect above the commode.

She once mailed in a humorous anecdote based on a note that I had left her. Somebody had phoned Eileen earlier with an urgent message and directed I put it in a place she was sure to see it when she returned from work. I composed the note, opened the refrigerator door, and placed it in front of the salami. My sister laughed and laughed, but alas, her submission didn't win a prize.

I attended Camp Betz one more summer, working in the kitchen and earning some money. I had free time to canoe and swim. By 1963, I wore the forest green uniform of an Explorer Scout. At a secret campfire ceremony, I was solemnly inducted into the Order of the Arrow.

Dad urged me to sign up for marksmanship at the camp's rifle range. I assumed the prone position, held the twenty-two rifle, and fired about twenty rounds. Only half hit the paper target. I did learn this fact about myself. Although I am righthanded, I am left-eyed. That circumstance went some way in explaining my lack of hand-eye coordination. My interest in Boy Scouts quickly flagged and I was happy dad's attention had shifted to Frank.

The summer of sixty-three was a time of bike exploring. Jimmy Francis and I would ride our bicycles to every odd place one could imagine. One of our favorite

destinations was Egger's junkyard, the ugly twin of Egger's Grove. Straddling the state line and unmonitored by law, these few acres were an illegal dumping ground for all kinds of treasures. Most of the items Jim and I found we destroyed. We would line up bottles and throw rocks at them; locate discarded TVs and pound them to pieces. Sometimes we pretended to be Godzilla on a rampage.

Why do adolescent boys crave destruction? It was always fun to create a sand castle or snowman, but even more fun to destroy our creation.

The oddest thing we found at the dump was an old tombstone. I forget the name but the death date was 1876. I was a student of history and declared this a genuine antique. Jim and I managed to drag this fifty-pound stone into his basement. It lodged in his coal cellar to make an occasional appearance on Halloween.

We also bicycled down to the railroad tracks by Whiting Park. We got into trouble there. During a previous train ride to Chicago, we had paid ten cents to squash a penny in a machine. Someone told us that a rail car could do the same thing but for free. So, Jim and I grabbed a handful of pennies and discovered a place where we could see trains passing back and forth. We placed the copper on the iron rails and marked the position with a pile of gravel. It was so cool. We crushed about a dozen pennies over the course of an hour. We talked about smashing a hundred to sell at school.

That's when a figure approached us. He shouted and gave chase. No chance. Thirteen-year-old boys can run like lightning when spooked. Finally, the old guy shouted, "Please stop, boys, I just want to talk with you."

We obliged him. The man introduced himself as a railroad detective saying we had been reported by the train conductor. He asked if we were trying to derail the trains. "No", we gasped.

He asked why were we then piling stones and we said it was just to mark out where we placed the pennies. We showed him the squashed coins. He lectured us for several minutes, said we should tell our parents, and made us promise not to do such a thing again. Next time we might go to jail. At one point he said, "You boys should be doing something useful. Have you considered the boy scouts?"

Jim smiled. I winced. I didn't want to tell him I was an Eagle Scout.

Soon we were back in school and I developed a penchant for my science class. As a final project, I presented a lesson on laser beams. They were cutting edge technology at the time. I brought in charts and my scout flashlight (the green one with the angled end). I looked for my childhood prism, but couldn't find it.

I explained laser was an acronym for "light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation". The big words impressed the class. Then I shined the flashlight

against the wall and showed how the beam spread as it traveled. I explained white light was composed of the spectrum of colors while a laser beam consisted of a single color of light wave. That's what made it powerful. Mr. Peterson gave me an A. Too bad a pocket laser did not exist back in 1963.

My voice was dropping and hair was growing in funny places. I grew to about five-foot ten. My football season was outstanding. I seemed bigger and stronger than most of the boys. I scored a touchdown in every game and could kick the ball nearly fifty yards. Jacky Wetnight was our little quarterback and I remember in one game picking him up and carrying him five yards forward. The referee penalized me for *illegal assisting of the runner*.

Hormones were also affecting my complexion. Pimples were popping out on my face. Eileen gave me some of her Noxzema, but it didn't help much. I became self-conscious of my looks and even more shy around girls.

I remember at the end of football season there was a special recognition dinner and I received an award. The setting was really fancy, unfamiliar to this working-class boy. We walked down a line of tables and a waiter offered various beverages. He suggested I try hot tea. That was something new to me. He filled my cup then asked, "lemon or cream?"

I didn't know anything about tea. I figured if either were good, both would be better. I said, "How about both lemon *and* cream?" His eyes widened; he smiled; then obliged. I took one sip of the curdled liquid and gagged. I made sure the smug waiter was out of sight before I dumped the contents into the waste bin. I did learn a lesson. Two good things in separation can become one nasty thing in combination.

Jimmy Francis was my singular friend. We would spend hours together in the attic laughing, drawing, and collaborating on homework. Frank would pop in and out. We were getting into popular music and listening to some of Eileen's forty-fives: *Blue Velvet*, *Deep Purple*, and *Sugar Shack*. Jim liked *Wipe Out* and would pound out the drum solo on boxes. I helped Eileen buy the album, *I Am the Greatest* by Cassius Clay.

One of the songs I played was by Bob Dylan: *The Times They are a Changin'*. That seemed to ring true in my life. Occasionally we would re-play *The First Family* album, but on November 22, 1963, the times did change. Cadence Records pulled that comedy album from record stores and destroyed all existing copies. It was a very sad Friday.

## Chapter 5

# FLEDGED

November 1963 to October 1967  
Whiting, Indiana

*Rejoice, young man, and let your heart cheer you. Banish all sorrow from  
your heart for youth and the dawn of life are vanity.*  
(*Ecclesiastes 11:9 & 10*)

When plumage first appears on a bird, it remains bound to its nest and the feathered creature is termed a *fledgling*. By my early-teens, I was acquiring adult plumage and began to stray from my comfortable nest. The vanity of teenage culture engulfed me. Sports moved to center stage and television consumed my time. Rock music cast a potent spell over my soul. I wanted to stand out as an individual by imitating my high-school peers.

On wing by myself, I experienced my first romantic heartbreak and soloed my first adventure abroad. Over fifteen months I journaled my daily pleasures and pains. Yet, throughout four years of adolescent tumult, God continued to be a Chris-whisperer.

### NOVEMBER, 1963

November 22, 1963, began as a typical eighth-grade day. I had just returned to school after lunch and was sitting in math class. The voice of our school principal sounded over the loudspeaker, announcing an immediate assembly in the auditorium. As the hallways filled with students, I heard whispers that President Kennedy had been shot; maybe he was dead.

Teachers were in tears as students took their seats. The principal announced from the podium, “President Kennedy has died. Teachers and students, please take off the rest of the day, watch television for the news, and we will see you Monday morning.” That completed the assembly. We walked home in a daze.

News flashed across the airwaves. I saw Lyndon Johnson sworn in as president, Lee Harvey Oswald marched past reporters, and Jack Ruby pump bullets into Oswald. The planet seemed to careen out of orbit.

Then followed a state funeral with little John Changing saluting a flag-draped coffin. My family bought the *Kennedy Memorial* album and ditched the frivolous *First Family*.

Looking back, the Kennedy assassination marked a boundary. The Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations encompassed my boyhood while Johnson and Nixon demarcated my youth.

After watching endless TV coverage of the Kennedy assassination, I began to follow national events. The Vietnam war was heating up and Walter Cronkite began to intone his nightly scoreboard: number of Americans killed, wounded, and MIA; number of South Vietnamese and Viet Cong killed.

I was getting involved in top forty music. Jim really liked *Surfin' Bird* and could mimic all the goofy sound effects. Frank and I began acquiring our own forty-five records, splitting the one-dollar cost. As the calendar flipped into 1964, I flipped for four lads from Liverpool.

## 1964

The first time I heard *I Want to Hold your Hand*, I sensed my paradigm shift. The beat exuded youthful energy and the shaggy hair hinted at rebellion. Beatlemania spread like a pandemic among American youth and I caught a high-grade fever.

It is difficult to explain the spell the Beatles cast over me. After watching my idols perform on the Ed Sullivan Show, I purchased every album the Beatles ever released. And they were gigantic, monopolizing the top five slots on American pop charts. I was obsessed, wanting to play their music, dress like them, and be them.

As a matter of fact, I did become John Lennon. Our music teacher staged an operetta and wasn't recruiting boys. Jim suggested she allow a Beatles tribute band to perform on stage. And so, I became John, Jim played Paul, Cary was George, and Botch was Ringo. *The College Beatles* strummed the instruments and lip-synched *She Loves You*- yeah, yeah, yeah. As a fourteen-year-old devotee, nothing could have been groovier.

When classes started in January, I found myself in the third semester of eighth grade. School authorities wanted us mid-terms to either advance to the class ahead or regress to the one behind. Since I was an athlete, I opted to redshirt a semester and graduate from High School in 1968 rather than 1967. I was ineligible to play sports from January to June.

Without basketball or track, my class load was light. I listened to hours of Beatles music and hits from groups in the British Invasion: The Rolling Stones, Dave Clark Five, and Kinks.

Our fountain of coolness was WLS radio. Frank and I began to collect the weekly Silver Dollar Survey and tick-mark the forty-fives we had purchased. Every evening at ten, WLS would unveil “the top three most requested songs in Chicagoland”. Frank kept a binder of top-three statistics.

Cassius Clay was also a source of entertainment. His February knockout of Sonny Liston combined prowess with humor. I chuckled as Howard Cosell played the boxer’s straight man. I monitored the ups and downs of Cassius Clay/ Muhammad Ali over the next fourteen years.

Walkers moved into the back apartment when Buchmans moved out in February of 1964. I relished my role as Uncle Chris. My career goal was never to become a doctor or lawyer, but a family man. I aspired to find a good woman and rear children. Because the Zelen family lived just a few blocks away, Debbie, Susie, Nancy, Jimmy and Shelly filled my life with joy.

In the summer of sixty-four, I was also into pogo sticks. I managed to bounce all around the block. Our private rules allowed us to pause at each corner and lean against a lamp post. Agile Frank won this contest with three complete laps.

My parents bowled in a summer church league and I learned the sport by substituting for an absent adult. My average was around 90, but I once bowled a 150 game. On an equal footing with adults, I felt grown up.

I continued to be a big Beatles fan. Jim, Frank, and I walked to the Hoosier Theater to see *A Hard Day’s Night*. The British humor zoomed over my head. A few days before school started, I peddled my bike around the block shouting to any within earshot, “I’m going to see the Beatles”.

On September 5, Eileen drove Frank, Jim, and me to the International Amphitheater in Chicago. It was crazy. From our cheap seats we could barely see the Fab Four prancing on stage and we couldn’t hear a word of song. Female shrieking shattered my ears. Jim stacked chairs to get a better view but tumbled to the ground. Dozens of girls swooned and were carted out on stretchers. Sensible Eileen was disappointed with the noise, but I was thrilled to be a part of this cultural phenomenon.

As school kicked off in the fall of 1964, I was a high school freshman. My class of 1968 swelled by one hundred after an influx of parochial-school students. I made lots of new friends and gawked at new girls.

My classes were new too. I took English lit, German, typing, biology, and geometry. I remember my theological reflections in geometry. I learned a straight horizontal line with end dots indicated a line segment; a line with an arrow at each

end stood for an infinite line; and a line with a left dot and a right arrow indicated a start point but no end point.

My argument was with my scientific classmate, Reinhard Fritz. I contended that the double-ended arrow represented God and the right-ended arrow man. He argued in the actual universe everything is a line segment, passing into and out of existence.

I noted as freshman football began that my size and speed were being challenged. Other guys were getting bigger and hairier than me. A few from the influx outplayed me. George Yearsich from Saint John's starred at quarterback and Duane Duracz from North Hammond displaced me at halfback. I settled for defensive safety and did all the kicking.

My dad loved gadgets. He was early to buy a movie camera, Polaroid camera (with the goop), and color TV. He now acquired a large real-to-reel tape player, wanting to record church events. However, Frank and I appropriated the bulky machine, recording rock songs from the radio.

On the day after Christmas, Jim Francis joined Frank and me at the back apartment. Photographs show us three sitting with Charlotte, Jimmy, and Shelley. My buddy and I are posing with new walkie-talkies. Jim Francis tells me that within the next few days he made first radio contact with a girl named Peggy.

The year ended with a new nephew. When Don John Zelen was born on December 31, the Beatles topped the charts with a two-sided hit: *She's a Woman/I Feel Fine*.

## 1965

My parents remained perplexed by my obsession with popular music. Yet they were indulgent. In 1965 my dad was employed at Youngstown Steel and, through job contacts, he was able to buy tickets to pop concerts. Frank, Eileen, and I went to see several rock shows in Chicago. Slip covers from 45 records plastered one wall in the living room. When adult visitors noted the unusual pastiche, my dad would comment, "Oh, it's just a phase they're going through."

My basketball season began in January and I played forward for the freshman Clark Pioneers. I failed to display the talent or motivation to make the starting five and played about half the minutes. I was too sanguine to excel in aggressive sports.

About that time, Don Zelen accepted a position with Reynolds Aluminum and the Zelen family of six relocated to Lisle, Illinois. I missed that big chunk of

my extended family. We made occasional visits—it was only an hour's drive—but I perceived my close-knit world was unraveling.

On February first, Frank picked up the telephone to hear an unfamiliar voice. He shouted out, “Hey Eileen, some guy named Harry Zipperman wants to talk to you.” Terry later told me he was so embarrassed by that mangling of his name that he almost hung up the phone. And so, Airman Terry Zimmerman entered our life as Eileen's new boyfriend.

To accommodate her need for private conversations, dad bought Eileen an extra-long coiled cord that stretched neck-high from the wall near the kitchen into her bedroom. It proved to be a strangulation device as I dashed through the house.

Dad and mom did not go to the movies much, but I remember them once going on a double date to see *Doctor Zhivago*. When they returned home, I asked mom about the show. She said she liked most of the story line and music, as well as the gorgeous scenery. She generally enjoyed romances, but not this one. The Russian doctor carried out an illicit affair with Laura, even while he was married to someone else. That ran contrary to my mom's sensibilities.

I was a star in track even as a freshman. I broad-jumped over twenty feet and high-jumped five-feet nine inches. I also ran fourth leg in the eight-eighty relay. I earned medals and ribbons galore. I clipped track reports from the Hammond Times and saved them in a binder. I earned a Clark varsity letter in track which mom sewed onto my C-club jersey.

Sports finally ended my regular participation in Boy Scouts. I remember saying to Coach Powell, “About this Saturday track meet? I have a hike with the Scouts. Is it okay if I skip this one?”

He was understanding. “Chris”, he said, “Scouts is a good thing. I'm all for it, but you have to understand if you're on my track team, I need you for every meet. Why don't you talk to your dad about it?” I had the talk and skipped the scout hike.

I became an uncle once more. Herman's Hermits were singing *Mrs. Brown You've got a Lovely Daughter* when Chris John Walker was born in May. Now two nephews and one niece were living in the back apartment.

In June I attended two summer-school classes. I was eager to drive a car and took driver's training. I earned my learner's permit and Eileen let me drive around town. I also took advanced biology. I teamed up with straight-A Eric Tangelos and we scoured the neighborhood to build a large insect collection.

I enjoyed learning for learning's sake whether it be academic or Biblical. In my church youth group, I created charts of Adam, Eve, and their descendants, while in biology class I wrote about Cro-Magnon man. In my bifurcated world Adam and Troglodyte existed hand in hand.

Once when I was talking to Frank at the dinner table, dad interrupted, "Chris, how can you believe that nonsense about monkeys evolving into humans?"

I responded with academic arrogance, "I don't. But it seems likely that men and monkeys derive from a common ancestor."

On July 4, I was invited to a picnic with Marvin and Beulah, the parents of Jim Francis. His mom brought along a bag of sandwiches, while his dad sneaked a bag of fireworks. After consuming the lunch near Whiting Park, Mr. Francis proceeded to blast his cherry bombs and M-80s on a strand of beach near the shore line.

Soon Mrs. Francis ran up to him shouting, "Marvin, you fool, a cop is coming this way." Jim and I grabbed the remaining explosives and dashed down the beach. When we turned back, a policeman was issuing Jim's dad a citation. We sheepishly handed over our paper bag. Jim later told me our escapade had cost his father eighty bucks.

In August our family drove to Texas to visit my two uncles. Both Stutz and Joe had retired from the Air Force and both had resettled in San Antonio. We brought along my Grandpa Dydek to re-connect with his two sons. This was my first trip west of the Mississippi River. I remember paddle boats on canals, the Alamo, and a dash across the border into Mexico. I also remember the Beach Boys singing *Help Me, Rhonda*. The states of Missouri, Oklahoma, and Texas brought my total of visited states to seventeen.

Beginning at 10:00 P.M. on August 15, I recorded the top three requested songs from WLS radio. Number three was *I Got You, Babe* by Sonny and Cher; Number two was *Catch Us If You Can* by the Dave Clark Five; and Number one was *Help!* by the Beatles.

Frank and I attended our second Beatles concert on August 20. Eileen drove us to Comiskey Park in Chicago. With 37,000 in attendance, we cheered through hits like *Ticket to Ride* and *Twist and Shout*. This time there was an ad campaign on WLS radio called *don't scream* and we were able to hear most of the songs.

As summer was ending, Frank was still advancing in Boy Scouts and was striving for his God and Country award. Dad suggested we get the award together, so for a few months we met with George Davis and learned the rudiments of our

denomination. The official photograph shows me standing about eight inches taller than Frank as we pose together with the preacher. After twenty-eight merit badges and an Eagle with bronze palm, I stopped striving.

A short time later, Frank earned his Eagle scout award. From the front of the gathering, my dad remarked how this was his third son to earn that rank. He was surprised when the head of the regional Boy Scouts strode to the front to drape around his neck the BSA's highest award for adults. Scoutmaster John Foreman always wore his *Silver Beaver* with pride.

When school started up in September, I began my sophomore year. I considered myself more of a jock than an academic. I played football for the B-squad and participated in several games. The cyclic rhythm of football-basketball-track seemed as natural to me as autumn-winter-spring. The thought never entered my mind to drop a sport.

Although I was capable, I never strove for academic distinction. To me and my parents, average was normal and normal was desirable. In any case, I was too involved in sports, watched too much television, and listened to too much rock music to make any honor roll. Academics was not my priority at the time.

However, I did enjoy memorizing poetry in my American Literature classes. I amazed adults by reciting *Stopping by the Woods on a Snowy Evening* by Robert Frost as well as the prologue to *Evangeline* by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow: "This is the forest primeval, the murmuring pines and hemlocks. Bearded in moss and in garments green indistinct in the twilight". On occasion dad would request a long recitation in front of his friends.

At fifty years old, dad was still laboring at Youngstown Steel. I remember his routine. He would open the back door about five-thirty. Mom was usually in the kitchen cooking dinner. She would greet him with a kiss as he wearily set his empty lunch pail on the counter. Any children around would greet him as he walked toward the bathroom to clean up.

After a few minutes, he would emerge in fresh clothes and ask us about our day. He kept a mat behind the couch and would lie on the floor. He said he needed to stretch his back. When mom called us to dinner, he would rise and stow the mat. Eileen had set the table for five and we all ate together, engaging in conversation.

Meal portions were generous and food hardy. Mom was a good cook. She typically served a central meat dish—one piece per person, beef, pork chops, or chicken. There were always potatoes, vegetables from a can, bread, sometimes rice or pasta. The only ethnic food we consumed on a regular basis was sauerkraut or polish sausage. Oftentimes there were sweets for dessert. Fruit, salad, and cold cuts were reserved for the lunch menu.

After the meal, we continued the tradition of Eileen washing the dishes, Frank drying, and me putting away. My sister always led us in songs or recitations. An hour after supper, dad would pull the chains on the coo-coo clock, winding it for another twenty-four hours.

For Christmas, Eileen bought Frank and me a nifty 45 rpm record player. It was battery operated and the records clicked into and out of a playing port. It was so cool to listen to my music sitting on the school steps. It also attracted girls. Eileen hit a home run with that gift.

About this time, Reynolds Aluminum once again promoted Don Zelen. The family was leaving Illinois and moving to Florence, Alabama. They called it “the heart of Dixie”. As they lingered at our house on Don John’s first birthday, I turned on the reel-to-reel tape to record Christmas singing and sad farewells.

Nancy Jo sang incessantly “Give us some Figgie pudding”; Shelley bumped her head on a table; and Jimmy shouted, “You’re gonna be so happy, you’re gonna kiss a rock.”

Staying up late on New Year’s Eve, I recorded Art Roberts on WLS Radio. As a sixteen-year-old, I loved the way he counted down from 1965 to 1966.

## 1966

In the first week of January, dad drove me to the DMV. At sixteen, I was finally eligible for my driver’s license. I passed the written test with a near perfect score. When I finished the driving portion, the man said, “You’re a good little driver, but I could fail you on this test”.

Although, I had clicked the signal at every turn, I failed to use my hand gestures out of the open window, as the book proscribed. He said he could have deducted points for every turn, but he only docked me for the first mistake and I passed with a 92 of 100.

Jim Francis got his license about the same time, but he was into motorcycles and acquired his first Honda.

On January 9, Frank and I accompanied our parents on a lightning trip to Alabama, my eighteenth state. Zelens had moved into 209 Colonial Court in Florence. I thought their brand-new place was a mansion complete with chandelier.

We made a recording of the Zelen kids greeting family in Whiting. Don made a point to say, “Y’all come back now, y’hear”; Jeanne reported taking mom to the hair dresser; Susie told the joke, “Did you hear about the crazy old man who said ‘no’” — “no” Ha, ha, ha. Nancy talked about the *vanity* she had received for Christmas; DJ breathed into the mic, “Aha”; and Debbie plunked the piano and giggled as she reported a visit to Wilson Dam (I mean “Darn”).

Back at GRC, basketball season picked up again. I played junior-varsity and at six foot I had leaping skills. I could stand under the hoop, jump straight up and touch the rim with both hands. Coach Dougherty was always screaming at me to be more aggressive. I guess I lacked the killer instinct. I figured I was like Ferdinand the bull; big and powerful, but content to lie in the grass and watch the world at whim.

In mid-February, track began. Although Clark High School fielded a freshman-sophomore team, I ran varsity. I was the premier high jumper and competed with Bob Bobbin for first spot in broad jump. Again, I ran fourth leg in the half-mile relay. After a mediocre football season and poor basketball season, track re-built my athletic esteem.

Rinehart taught me how to play chess. I was a quick learner and we would spend our study hall moving pieces around the board. He usually won the match. I never book-studied the game, except for one move, the Fool's Mate. Rinehart was so shocked when I shouted "checkmate" after my black made two moves: e5-Qh4.

In my church youth group, Mister Davis railed against rock music. He claimed it had no redeeming value. I brought in my copy of the Bird's *Turn, Turn, Turn* and played it on my portable turntable. The lyrics were directly taken from the Old Testament book of Ecclesiastes. He listened but said he couldn't understand a word of the gibberish. Talk about a generation gap!

On Sunday, February 27, I began writing a one-year journal. I managed to fill a complete page of lined paper every day for the following 364 days. This is how the first day read:

Last night I stayed up 'til 3:00 playing chess with Mary Ann. I beat her three games to one. I was tired this morning for church. During church, I let Jimmer (Jimmy Walker) play with my ring and watch. Frank got sick at church so 'Neen (Eileen) took him home. Had a good lunch. Lone Ranger today was in color—weird.

It is now 13 minutes to 3:00 p.m. Jimmer is sitting across for me. He just drank part of my coke. Mom and dad are getting dressed to visit some people at the hospital. Frank is talking to Pig (Jim Francis) about *Ivanhoe*. They're sitting on the couch. Jim has to turn in his book report for his English teacher. A basketball game is on TV. Jimmer is now playing with my diaries. I'll let him sign his name. JIMMY W.

Mom just read the above and she said, "Put down there you should be going to the *singspiration*."

7:00 p.m. – Helped Jimmer paint his jeep gold and silver because we were painting this diary. When I came home from church with Jim in the evening, I asked Jimmer if his jeep was still wet. He said, “No, but my fingers are.” Dad let me drive the car to church and back. I’m watching Ed Sullivan. Jimmer is driving his jeep around the rug; Frank is reading my diary and Jim is writing in his new one. 10:32 – I just decided to take a bubble bath. The high today was 37 and low at 28.

As I peruse the thirty-one pages of March, 1966, several things strike me. First, I find it incredible how much television I consumed. On March 8, I listed ten consecutive shows: 5:00-Garfield Goose, 5:45-News, 6:00-Bullwinkle, 6:30-My Mother the Car, 7:00-Don’t Eat the Daisies, 7:30-Dobie Gillis, 8:00-F Troop, 8:30-Twilight Zone, 9:00-The Fugitive. It wasn’t that I sat staring at the screen for five hours, but the boob tube constantly flickered and chattered in the background.

Second, I had forgotten how the three Walker kids co-inhabited my space. Jimmy at age six, Shelly at three, and Chrissy at nine months, were continually under foot. Charlotte popped in and out while Big Jim dropped by occasionally. I grew to love children and wished for my own.

Third, I participated in a track meet once a week. I recall the ribbons and medals, but had forgotten the anxiety and anticipation. I did not recall the day-to-day butterflies in competitive track.

Fourth, I forgot about our single bath tub. On Saturday evening, five of us would take consecutive baths—not showers. The order was Eileen, Chris, Frank; then later Mom and Dad. I marvel that in 1966 it seemed so natural.

In science class, Eric and I teamed up for a project. Together we built an incubator of wood, wire, and shredded newspaper; then we split a dozen fertilized chicken eggs. With a light bulb to provide heat, we watched the drama of life unfold. Unfortunately, our cooperation turned into competition. Each of us wanted to hatch the first chick.

When my first hatchling pecked through the shell, I grew impatient and *helped* it by pulling some shell fragments away from featherless flesh. I claimed I won the contest, but my poor baby bird bore wounds from where I pulled skin away. I felt bad and learned a lesson in patience. There are some things in nature you just can’t hurry along.

As I study the months of April and May in my 1966 journal, I discern four different groups of acquaintances that seldom overlapped. First was my academic clique. This was Reinhard, Eric, George, Lance, and a few others. I talked science and philosophy with them. When graduation time came, Eric was number one

in the class, Reinhard was number two, and George number five. I fit with this group, but I never focused enough to make the high marks they did. My semester grades were: History-A, English-B, German-B, Geometry-C.

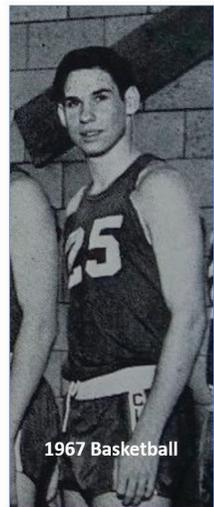
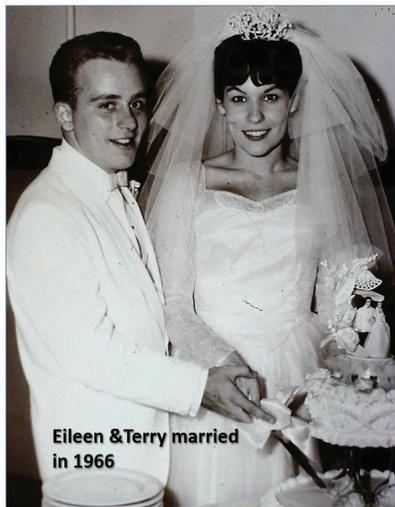
A second group was the jocks. In the spring, these would consist of my track buddies: Rocky, Botch, Jim Ruf, Mike, Bob, and others. We spent hours together in practice, meets, and travel. Athlete buddies were different during the football and basketball season.

A third group was Boy Scouts. I was still involved in outings with Steve, Tex, Bob, Spike, and others.

Finally, a fourth group was from church, both boys and girls, whom I saw only on Sundays. Other teenagers floated in and out of my life, but most could be placed in their proper sphere. Of course, Jim Francis was in a sphere without peer.

Jim even participated in a scouting event. This outing involved a loose group of three fathers and six scouts who convoyed cars and canoes to Xenia, Ohio. Three boats were put in the water on Saturday morning and raced down the Little Miami River. Jim and I got stuck with the worst of three, an old wooden hulk. We struggled to paddle for a while, but realized we could not keep up with the lighter metal craft. So, Jim and I just enjoyed the eight miles of downstream flow, passing under bridges, and wading to shore on occasion.

We spent one night in the big Canadian tent and got home on Sunday evening. Jim skipped some of his fast-food meals, saying he had to save his money to buy a fancy ring for his girlfriend, Peggy.



On June first, the transition from school time to summer vacation was dramatic. Classmates, homework, and sports, all melted away. I didn't try to fill the chasm. I loafed more, slept more, and got bored on occasion. But events soon picked up. Eileen was to be married in a few weeks. Mom had me cleaning the house day after day. I greeted Terry when he arrived on June 8 from an Air Force leave. We all bought new clothes and visited the First Church of Christ for planning sessions.

Six Zelens arrived on June 16 from Florence. Below is a transcript of Eileen's wedding day, Saturday, June 18, 1966

Mom got me up at 10:30. I wanted to sleep later but mom needed me to help her get ready. Watched a few cartoons and Dad got a little mad because he said it was such an important day. We started getting dressed at about 12:00. I didn't know how to put on my tux. A guy who was there taking pictures of 'Neen showed me. My cousins, the Seigenthalers, came over at 1:00. We took a lot of pictures on the front porch.

I left for the church at 1:15 in the station wagon. When I got there, I got a carnation to wear. Then I found the best man and Terry up in the preacher's office. We stayed there for about ten minutes joking about Terry's *misfortune*.

At 1:30 we started to march out. First Mr. Davis, then following, Terry, the best man, and me. Once we were situated, Jimmer in his cute little tux came walking up and stood on a small piece of paper we stuck up there. Mary Ann came up slowly, then Janet, then the flower girls: Nancy and Shelley. Did they go slow! Dad and Eileen had to start before the flower girls were set. George Butler sang before and during the ceremony (*Because*). Immediately after the wedding we went downstairs and stood in line. I can't begin to name all the people there I knew. I had a little punch, wedding cake, and peanuts and then went outside. I threw some rice on Terry and 'Neen.

When I got home there were mobs of people in our little house. We had to fit some on the front porch. A rough estimate of people there is fifty-five. After I ate some ham and polish sausage and drank up a gallon of punch, I snuck up in the attic and slept 'til everyone was gone at 5:30. We saw Terry and 'Neen off to their honeymoon. They came back right away. 'Neen forgot her radio.

Watched Saturday *Night at the Movies*. It was Jerry Lewis in *Rockabye Baby*. Me and Deb left with mom and dad in the middle of it to go to the St. John panel room to see Dick Wetnight's wedding reception. Me and Deb left it because it was too loud. We watched *Broken Arrow* on the late show. Got to bed at 12:30.

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The Zelen family stuck around in Whiting for ten more days, then they headed back to Alabama—but not without Frank and me. We enjoyed a great vacation from June 26 to July 30.

Frank and I visited the Civil War Battlefield at Shiloh, Tennessee; climbed into the depths of a dank cave; exploded M-80s unattainable in Indiana; and splashed in swimming pools almost every day.

Soon after we arrived, Don joined an exclusive country club at Bailey Springs. On a typical day, we would do morning chores around the house. Then, after lunch, Jeanne would drive us to Bailey Springs for swimming, tennis, horseback riding, and just hanging out. Frank and I spent four nights in a country-club cabin where we collected weird-looking insects and listened to far-off WLS-AM radio.

On the fourth of July, we crossed the state line into nearby Mississippi to explode cheery bombs and bottle rockets. That became my nineteenth state.

As a sixteen-year-old, I was slow to get out of bed in the morning. Jeanne discovered an ingenious solution. She would unleash little DJ on me. After ignoring a few calls to breakfast, Don John would enter the room, growl at me, and bounce on the bed. A better alarm clock could not be imagined.

I grew close to Debbie, Susie, Nancy, and little DJ. For three weeks they were like my younger siblings. I was allowed to drive Don's car chauffeuring the kids from place to place. One day I wanted to show off my newly acquired driving skills to passengers Frank, Deb, and Nancy.

I drove the Chevy to Colonial Court, going uphill in drive and coming downhill in reverse. I lost control, bounced over a curb, then plunged down an embankment. I tried to extract the car by gunning the engine, then I put bricks under the back tires.

After I couldn't get the car out of the ditch, Frank walked home to speak to Jeanne. She arrived with a welcome mat, but after seeing the car, she phoned Don. When he arrived, I was surprised he wasn't too angry. He borrowed a friend's truck, but a towing rope snapped twice. Finally, he called a professional tow truck which extracted the Chevy back to the roadway. The muffler was ruined and the bumper suffered a small dent, but otherwise it was okay. The tow truck driver said if the car had progressed a few more inches down the hillside, it might have flipped over.

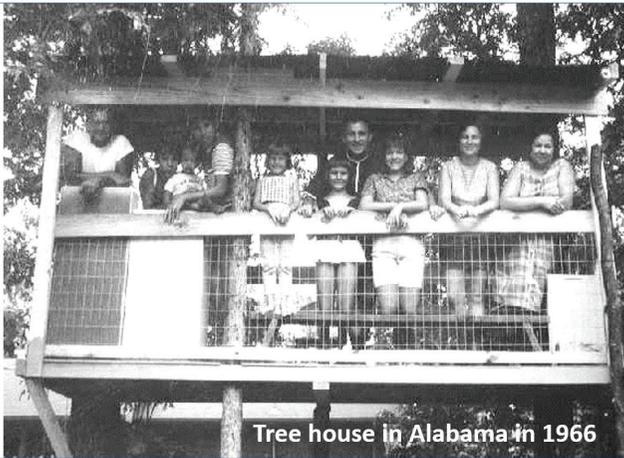
Dad and mom arrived in Florence on July 22. After a one-day pause we headed south to Panama City, Florida, my twentieth state. Don pulled his Apache camping trailer and dad drove the station wagon. The gulf was azure and the sandy beach bright white. Mom and dad slept in their station wagon; Don, Jeanne, Nancy, Sue, and DJ in the Apache; Frank and Debbie in Zelen's station wagon; while I was stuck with a pup tent.

We spent four nights on the beach, running in the sand, collecting crab parts, and complaining about heat and mosquitoes. We all took a ferry to a place

called Shell Island where I collected some near-perfect sand dollars. I also read Mitchener's book *Caravan* a few hours every day and Frank enjoyed surfing.

Just before driving north, Dad made Frank and me toss out our extensive crab part collection. Admittedly, it was getting stinky. We stopped off at Dothan, Birmingham, and Montgomery. Florence felt like home to me.

We devised one last project for the final five days in Alabama. Dad led in the construction of a back-yard tree house. Don did the buying and hauling; dad did the sawing and nailing; Frank and I did the painting. A photograph shows ten of us smiling over the treehouse rail. This backyard feature was well-built and massive. In 1968, when the Zelens sold the house, Jeanne told me it was the treehouse that clenched the deal.



When we arrived in Whiting, much had changed. Frank and I moved into Eileen's refurbished bedroom and Walkers were established on Sheridan avenue. Jim (the pig) told me two pieces of news. He had a new girlfriend named Jeannie Grinstead and Jim Buckner from school had blown off two fingers with a cherry bomb. Listening to Jim's babbling conversation, I felt the comfort of home again.

When August arrived, I went to work. I was striving to save money for a 1967 trip to Germany. The job I found was at Mrs. Zimmerman's house in Hammond. For two weeks I labored painting her porches, pillars, window trim, and outside floors. I also removed and cleaned windows and screens. Mom drove me on a few occasions, but mostly I took the bus. Jim Francis helped a few times. I earned \$176 for all the work.

My activities changed after August 15 when football practice began. The summer schedule went like this: I got up at 7:30, drank a glass of milk, and rested until 8:20.

I walked the twelve minutes to Clark Field and got on my sweats. We ran laps and did calisthenics under the direction of a senior student, then I lunched at home. In the afternoon, coaches showed up. We scrimmaged, learned plays, and did various reaction drills. This summer practice schedule lasted until Labor Day.

August 29 was a good day for both Frank and me. My brother had been buying Marvel comic books for a few months already. Mom drove to a trailer court where a man was unloading his extensive collection. Frank bought ninety Marvel comic books for three dollars. He was ecstatic. His prize was Daredevil #2. Over the next few months, Frank studied these books, sorting and cataloging.

On the same day, I played in an exhibition football game called the Football-o-rama at the Whiting High field. Four high-school teams competed. I performed well, making six tackles, and running the ball a few times. Coach Peterson said I had improved and had earned a starting position.

I was glad of that accomplishment, because it required a sacrifice on my part. On the same evening, the final nail-biting episode of *The Fugitive* was broadcast on ABC TV. After following the storyline for four years, Frank had to tell me if Richard Kimble had finally caught up to the one-armed man.

My football excellence was short lived. Ten days later I started at defensive halfback but made no tackles in the first half. I was yanked out and scolded by the coaches. For the rest of the season, I was relegated to kick-offs and punts. I was discouraged and nearly quit a few times.

My five classes in eleventh grade were: German with Mrs. Calvert, Latin with Mrs. Wilcox, History with Mr. Roman, Physics with Mr. Watkins, and Advanced Algebra with Mr. Aldridge. In spite of too much football and television, I managed to earn an A in history and Bs in the other three.

Mr. Huber was my home room teacher once again. He practiced a unique method of silencing a noisy class. Rather than shout over the din, he would stand in front and begin to whisper his announcements. Those of us who cared about learning would do his dirty work. I was one of a handful of guys who would shout at the rowdy ones to quiet down so we could get the scoop to the school day.

Mr. Roman taught me a valuable lesson. He required a daily one-page report on the reading material. We turned in our new assignments before every class and received our previous day's work. When I saw my paper come back with a big F, I belly ached to the teacher. He said, "Read the instructions! It says 'one page only' so I didn't read your sentences on page two". I was upset, but I learned the value of following instructions. I didn't make that mistake again.

On September 15, my journal contains this note: "Let's see. At 7:30, I watched *Star Trek*. I think it's gonna be one of the better shows of the season." On September 26, a note reads, "Mom got a letter from Eileen. 'Neen is suspecting".

In October, my busy life continued. I enjoyed foreign languages, reading about Julius Caesar in Latin and Wilhelm Tell in German. A big part of algebra and physics involved memorizing mathematical formulae. In history I recited big chunks of the U.S. constitution for extra credit.

Football continued to be an aggravation. I dressed for varsity games on Friday evening without getting my uniform scuffed. Then I played every minute of B-squad on Saturday morning, muddied from head to toe.

Dad decided to enroll both Frank and me in a Judo class which met at the Hammond civic center. We attended about eight evening sessions. I was big enough to win many matches, but was never motivated. The one move I remembered was called *Osotagari*. I think I liked the sound of the foreign word on my tongue as much as the action with the feet. I stuck around long enough to earn an orange belt.

Dad bought a second car for \$280, a 1961 Ford Falcon. From that point, Mom only drove the station wagon, while dad and I shared the Ford. I was constantly driving Walker kids, football friends, and Frank to various activities. The Falcon was odd in that it had a warm-up button. You couldn't just crank the ignition. The spark plugs needed ten seconds to heat.

At the end of October, the family planned a quick trip to Alabama. For the occasion, Frank and I bought belated birthday presents for Deb, Susie, and Nancy. We went to the department store and couldn't decide what to get for Deb. All of the Halloween merchandise was on display so I decided to buy her a Ouija board. I figured it was like our Scrabble game, only spookier. Mom and I worked the board that evening and it predicted Eileen's baby would arrive on April 23.

Over the next few days, Frank and I plied the Ouija board with question after question. My brother said it was scary. I knew for certain that my fingers were not directing that heart-shaped pointer and I studied Frank's closed eyes and could swear he was not choosing the letters. How then did this amazing board operate? It wasn't at all like Scrabble.

We left Whiting on Thursday about 11:00 P.M. and arrived in Florence about noon the next day. Eight of us packed into one station wagon: Dad, mom, me, Frank, Char, Jimmer, Shelley, and CJ. In the afternoon, we gave the Zelen kids their presents.

I gave Deb the Ouija board after dinner. That's all we did until 11:00. Here are some of the question and answers as recorded in my journal.

Frank: "Where is Dare Devil #2?" ~ "In the attic under the bed, Frank F."

Char: "Where is Jim?" ~ "Don't worry. He is where you want him to be."

Deb: "How long will the Zelens live here?" ~ "Six months longer than six years."

Chris: "Will I go to Germany next summer?" ~ "Yes."

The last question Deb and I asked was: “Do you want us to sleep?”

The response was “Yes, very much so. Go to bed please.” The pointer really paused on each of those twenty-six letters!

As I processed my short encounter with that uncanny board, I asked myself. “If neither Deb nor I manipulated the pointer, then what source provided the articulate answers?” I intuited three things. First, the source had to be supernatural. Second, it was not all-knowing because answers were often wrong. Third, the power behind the Ouija board was not heavenly. The God of the Bible would not move a child’s fingers along a painted surface to receive inaccurate answers.

The Ouija board provided me with first-hand evidence that a transcendent realm does exist. Materialism became forever an alien philosophy to my reason. Odd to say, but in my life, God used an occult means to bring about a heavenly end.

Soon it was time for basketball. All the fun had left the sport. I played second string on the B-squad. One Saturday I missed the bus for a game in far-off South Bend. To my surprise, dad offered to drive me. Coach Dougherty was so impressed, he made me captain for that game. But after only two points in the first half, I was pulled out.

A few weeks after that, I mustered the courage to talk with the coach. There was no joy and little prospect in basketball. He respected the face-to-face interview saying most players would just stop showing up. I skipped home; a burden lifted from my shoulders. I began running *winter track* and joy quickened my pace.

In November of 1966, a girl entered my life. Joy leapt into exuberance. This was a diary note from November 16: “I knew something was funny when I saw Jim’s face with a big smile on it and sure enough, he and Jeannie had Debbie Argus there. So, I talked with her a while, only I was a little embarrassed.”

For a few weeks, I conversed with Debbie as an acquaintance of Jim and Jeannie, then the three of us went to her house. I discovered that Debbie was one year behind me and the younger sister of Bob, a fellow Boy Scout. Her family attended the local Congregational church—where the boy scouts met. She seemed perfect.

I wanted to call her, but I had a severe case of phone-phobia. After three days of Jim’s urging, I dialed 659-6711. Debbie answered and we talked for an hour. I learned she played the clarinet, ice skated, and her favorite Beatles song was *Here, There, and Everywhere*. I accepted her invitation to attend a winter formal called the *sub-deb*. When I told my parents, they were surprised saying they’d have to teach me manners.

We continued our phone conversations, sometimes talking over two hours. I felt alive to the marrow, walking Debbie home after school, carrying her books, and sharing her umbrella. My world sparkled with hope.

On December 9, just as I was getting to know her, my world shattered. With eyes downcast she whispered, “We’re moving to Virginia at the end of the semester.” I was devastated. I stumbled home in a light snow, didn’t eat dinner, and tried to sleep off the awful news.

This is a transcript of Jim Francis’s seventeenth birthday, December 16, 1966:

Got up early this morning to do physics, but the problems were too hard, so just slept until 7:45. In homeroom did a few algebra problems that were due today. Latin was stupid, graded the homework, got 68-80-100 on it. It was the best in class. Frau Calvert wasn’t at school today. Mrs. Peterson was our sub. Just did nothing, half-way composed a letter to *Christkind*. In history got that quiz back and passed. Talked a little about the stupid movie that we watched yesterday—a waste of time. During lunch watched TV at home. Physics was a blast! Today was Wad’s birthday. (As you know, it’s also Pig’s.) The whole class gave the Wad pennies. He had a whole desk full. Was it funny! Jap and Mr. Muller came in and the whole class chimed in to sing “Happy Birthday” to him.

Oh well, the period finally ended and since no track today went home and relaxed. At 3:30 went back to school to walk Deb home. I did, but then came back home. Had a few hamburgers and *great shake*. Called up Deb and talked to her a while, then called up Jim to get something or other at his house. I walked over there. And what happened? Well, they had a surprise party for Jim. He blew out seventeen candles. Jeanne and her mom were there with the rest of Jim’s family.

Came home with a box of cakes that Mrs. Francis gave me to give to Mom. Called up Deb and when I hung up, Jim and Jeanne knocked at the door. The whole group was here (Char and all the Walkers). Jeanne stepped in and met Mom & Dad, etc. Then I took the Falcon over Deb’s. After a while of sitting at Arguses, Deb got allowed to go with me to Merri Isle. We each got a strawberry soda (71 cents) and on the way back while driving I had one hand around Deb and she worked the turn signals for me. Stayed over until 10:00 when Deb said I must go home because her papa told her. When I got home, Dad said I didn’t ask permission for the car, so I got a lecture.

My life became a roller coaster for the next few months. Debbie truly liked me and I became obsessed with her. Teenage passion drew us together, while common sense pushed us apart. One moment we were all cuddles and hugs while the next we argued about me getting too close. Debbie’s father tried to cool our jets by

setting strict rules for my girlfriend's behavior. I would ask, "Why can't I put my arm around you?"

She would reply, "My father said we shouldn't do that." And thus, the next six weeks unfolded. Desire battled self-discipline which together equaled frustration.

I saw Debbie every day at school. We hung out in German club and I snuck in to see her play clarinet. When we didn't meet, we spoke on the phone. Finally, after Charlotte couldn't contact the house, my dad dictated a phone limit of thirty minutes.

My journal is replete with confessions of love for Debbie. I wrote it in German: *Ich liebe dich*, and I confessed in Latin: *semper amabo Debram*. I had built my world around this girl even as I foresaw my world crashing to the ground.

The sub-deb finally arrived on December 22. My shoes were polished, my suit was pressed, my heart was full, and her corsage was in my hand. Dad let me borrow the station wagon for the night. I first drove to the Argus home and exchanged carnations. We chatted and posed for pictures. Then I drove to the Grinsted's to pick up Jim and Jeannie. I returned to my house for more picture taking.

We arrived at Vogel's Restaurant at 9:20. The refreshments, slow dancing, and romancing, lasted until 11:30. We drove around for a while and ended up at Jeannie's house for pizza. I didn't want the evening to end, but I dropped Debbie off at 2:30 a.m. Her brother and mother were waiting up for her. The delight of the night ended in sobs as I fell into bed knowing this joy was terminal.

Mother invited Debbie to our house for my seventeenth birthday. After cake and song, she presented me with a brass bracelet engraved with *Chris*. I couldn't take my eyes off her, hardly acknowledging the presence of family. Charlotte said I was *twitterpated*. I spent the moment of 1966/1967 on the telephone with Debbie.

## 1967 TO OCTOBER

After Christmas break, we returned to school to complete the Fall semester. I began a countdown. As a hopeless romantic, I believed that love conquered all, but love could not hold back the tide of time. The days were X-ed from my calendar one by one.

I did not behave well. I wanted to possess her and her to love me. I perceived a void that only Debbie could fill. I pouted, clinging to this fifteen-year-old girl as a drowning man might cling to a life boat. I discovered no magic to prevent her relocation to Virginia. And yet a minor miracle did occur.

The Argus family had planned their departure for January 27. However, on the evening of the 26<sup>th</sup> snow began to fall in Whiting and after thirty-three straight hours, over three feet had accumulated. Roads and airports were closed down. Did God answer my prayer?

School was cancelled and after shoveling my own sidewalks, I phoned Deb. Yes, they had to postpone their departure. Yippee! I asked if I could help clear

her driveway. After an okay from her dad, I leapt through snowdrifts to reach her house. Deb met me outside decked in snow gear, her cheeks rosy. We laughed as I flung snow in every direction. I was invited inside to warm up and reality struck. I saw her living room filled with boxes and draped furniture.

Misery filled the next few days. I was angry at God. I wrote Debbie a long letter filled with the pain of our separation. I determined to become a martyr for love's sake.

January 30 was her last day in town. I walked to her house with a stool and sat across the street just to catch a final glimpse of her beauty. After two hours of shivering cold, she never showed her face, so I stuck my ugly missive into her mail box and trudged home. I never saw or heard from Deb again.

I felt heartsick at her loss. A diary couplet encapsulated my teen-age angst: "I love a girl named Deb. The worst happened, the thing I most dread. She moved far away, leaving me here to stay, and now I wish I were dead."

In retrospect, I see that Christian love cannot describe my relationship to Debbie. My hungry heart did not wish the best outcome for her. Rather, I wanted to consume this girl like candy. This would not be the last time.

My obsession had limited the horizons of my vision. Events outside my personal tragedy occurred in January. Frank was upset because the *Merry Marvel Marching Society* left the TV airwaves (January 9); Mom got mad at dad because he worked a double shift on their wedding anniversary (January 12), The Packers beat the Chiefs in Super bowl I (January 14), and Jack married Barbara in Berlin (January 20).

February was a month of decompressing from my seventy-five-day ordeal with Debbie. I returned my focus to school and track. I even flirted with girls on Valentine's Day. On Sunday, February 26, Frank and I led a youth church service. I closed in prayer and served communion. Dad congratulated me. I confessed to my journal, "I seriously considered being a minister."

I concluded my diary at the one-year anniversary asking a series of questions.

What will be the future relationship between Debbie and me?  
Who shall be the girl whose hand I next hold?  
What about Jim and Jeannie? How long will they stay together?  
What about Europe, will I go? And what effect will it have on me?  
What about track? Will I jump six feet this year?  
How about Eileen's baby due in May, boy or girl?  
I'm now six-foot one inch tall and one-hundred seventy pounds.  
Will that ever change?

What profession will I be? At the present I have no idea.  
 What about the Walkers, Zelens, and Zimmermans?  
 What does the future hold for them?  
 What about the war that went unmentioned during my year of writing?  
 What will become of this war in Viet Nam?  
 What about 1984? Will the prophecy in Orwell's book happen that way?  
 How long will this book keep intact?  
 The beginning pages are already turning yellow.

The months of March, April, and May passed quickly. Some journal questions were answered. Debbie did not respond to ten letters. There was no future relationship. Jim broke up with Jeannie in March. I did clear six feet in my last jump of the year; and Eileen gave birth to a baby girl named Jennifer on May 28. Just after her California arrival, Donovan was singing *Jennifer, Juniper*.

My final grades for the semester were: Advanced Algebra, B; Latin, A; German, B+; History, A; Physics, C+. Considering all my distraction and laziness, I was not displeased with the results. I couldn't believe that Pig actually made the honor roll: AAABB. I asked him about his grades and he said, "Jeannie made me study or else."

My plan was to spend the summer in Germany as part of a student exchange program. I had already made a fifty-dollar deposit. But after consulting with my Air Force brother, we decided I could just as easily live with Jack and Barbara in Berlin. Dad bought me round-trip tickets for a summer in Germany for which I contributed about half of the cost.

Just as school let out, a new Beatles album debuted. *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* was their twelfth album. Jim and I played it constantly. It was the first pop album with all lyrics printed and a no-cut flow on each side of the vinyl. We grooved to it every day until I departed to Germany on June 17.

## BERLIN

In my fifty-day journal, I detailed my jet ride from Chicago to London, then on to Berlin. It was my first time in the air and so novel that I kept my vomit bag as a souvenir.

I was puzzled upon my arrival at Tempelhof Airport. I sat for an hour but no one appeared to greet me. Fortunately, mom insisted I carry the address and phone number of Jack's apartment. I called but without answer. I located a taxi and managed to find his place in the French Sector. It cost seven Deutsch marks.

Barbara was shocked when she opened the door. She pointed speechless then shouted, "Jack, it's your brother."

I was happy to see them, but hurt. “Why didn’t you meet me at the airport? Didn’t you get the letter with my itinerary?”

“No, we didn’t get a letter”, Jack said. “And you’re lucky. We were just about to leave.”

After the shock of my arrival, conversation and beer flowed. I drank the brew, but never developed a taste for it. I grew fatigued after my long journey and fell asleep on a fold-out couch.

My days with Jack were variations on a theme. The pattern was Jack working at Tempelhof from about eight in the morning until three in the afternoon. I slept in, listened to American radio, wrote in my diary, and strolled the local streets. When Jack came home, we visited city sites. After a week, I learned to ride the U-bahn to Tempelhof where our tourist activities began. Barbara worked in a small shop until five and we often picked her up in Jack’s 1962 Mustang.

I visited several small shops and bought German coins from the Third Reich emblazoned with the swastika. I also bought a few beer steins at the request of friends. My prize purchase was a miniature travel chess board. The thirty-two pegged pieces stuck into holes on the checkered surface. I loved it, but unfortunately, I lost a few tiny pieces in the following week.

This is a journal transcript concerning one day in Berlin, Friday, June 23, 1967.

I slept in as late as I could, 11:00, washed and ate some left-over apple pie. I found Jack’s wallet and traded him five dollars for two hundred Deutsch marks, because I needed forty pfennigs for the U-Bahn. I was on the U-Bahn at See Strassen by 11:30. I stood up the twenty minutes across town to the airport. I saw the Soviet soldiers at the station in the East. I was with Jack for about three hours at Tempelhof. We first had something to eat at the snack bar—pork sandwiches—after which I was thirsty all day.

We had some fun then. We went to the top of one of the abandoned towers at Tempelhof and I took a few pictures. It was interesting that those same rooms were in the same state as when the Nazis left them in 1945; bullet holes all over the place. We then waxed the car with some spray wax Jack had. The whole time we talked with a Texas friend of Jack’s. I then walked around at various places while Jack finished up some work, changed his clothes and got a release.

We then went to pick up Barbara but it was only 3:45 so we stopped off at the Dahlem Ethnological Museum. It was very good. First, we went to the Jap-China section, then the Egypt section, but spent most of our time with the paintings. I saw one famous one by Hans Holbein about the Banker.

I really hated to leave that place and pick up Barbara. We did and Jack and Barbara argued the whole-time home because Barbara doesn't have her license and she's telling Jack how to drive. Barbara made a good supper and I was almost asleep on the floor when Heidi—Barbara's younger sister—came in.

So, Jack and I got dressed up and we went to Lothar's bachelor's party. He was 24 years old. There were two guys when Jack and I arrived. Lothar brought out the beer and Jack put on the tape-recorder music that we brought over. It lasted from 7:00 to 2:30 a.m. and I don't know what I could have done that whole time. I admit I did over-indulge a bit but it was lots of fun and a great experience. I had to speak German the whole time. The tape player was full of German bar songs and all seven guys sang at the top of their lungs. There was this one guy who only wanted to sing "Yellow Submarine". Some guys drank beer, others scotch. We joined hands and danced around the parlor room.

Lothar's mother tried to quiet us down and stop us from stomping on the floor. It was hot in there because we couldn't open any windows, too noisy. Jack and I said *goodbye* to Lothar at two and for all I know, the others still might be partying. I was in bed in two minutes and asleep in another two.

During my days in Berlin, I toured museums, monuments, towers, and festivals. At each location, I took a few pictures with a camera borrowed from Big Jim Walker. Checkpoint Charlie was the tense focal point of the cold war. Jack advised me to keep my picture-taking to a minimum. I preferred slides to prints and during my adventure I developed five boxes of transparencies.

West Berlin seemed to have one foot rooted in the past and one stepping into the future. I saw the ruins of Kaiser Wilhelm Church and bullet-pocked walls, testaments to World War Two. I toured the Berlin Wall, the Gates of Brandenburg, and walked past Soviet soldiers, posing near monuments. I was also surrounded by tall glass buildings, constant construction, and bright colors. Berlin was striding into an uncertain future.

Heidi and Lothar Wothe were married at a local church and I took a dozen pictures of the event. There was abundant gift giving, and over-drinking. There was even a second party for Lothar and his friends to which I was invited. This one was an all-nighter. I remember one of the songs as "Wir wollen unsern alten Kaiser Wilhelm wiederhaben", or *We want our old Kaiser William back again*. About midnight, I asked Jack for his car keys in order to snooze in the cramped back seat of his Mustang. The summer sun awoke me at 4:00 a.m.

One time while driving around Berlin, Jack decided to stop at the Funkturm (radio tower). I wrote this:

As I was getting out of the car, I noticed this guy dressed in a Berliner Bear outfit. Were Jack and I suckers! The bear and a few other guys practically forced us to pose with the bear. Then after two pictures, they told us that we had to pay 20 DM. Luckily, we had only 7 DM with us, but unluckily they took that for one dumb picture. I think we talked about that craziness all the way to the top of the tower. And I had to open my big mouth and tell Barbara. She scolded Jack to no end. Oh, well!

I was scheduled to fly to London via Schoenefeld Airport in East Berlin. Jack thought it unwise to enter East Germany, so he helped me cash in the return-flight portion of my TWA ticket. My revised plan called for me to ramble by train, bus, and ferry to Scotland, catch a cheap flight to New York City, then bus to Hammond. I was seeking to prolong my traveling pleasure.

On July 11, I assisted Jack as he mailed giant boxes to Whiting, packed his duffle bags, and caught a military hop to Frankfort, where he met up with Barbara for their flight across the Atlantic. I relocated my bags to spend a few weeks with Barbara's parents at 65 Togostrasse 32e.

Kurt Gierke was a retired shop owner and looked after me most days. He escorted me on the U-bahn to various locations. We went to the city's huge stadium, site of the 1936 Olympics. He liked to bet on horses so we went to the race track a few times. He seemed to know everyone we met. Claire Gierke treated me like a son, always tucking in my shirt and fussing over my meals. Because of their limited English, my German speaking improved.

A highlight of my time with Gierkes, was a two-night camping expedition to the *Grun Walt* (Green Forest). We slept in tents and paddled canoes. I spent a lot of time with a guy a few years younger than myself called Bernt. Lothar tried to show me a good time, but his idea of a *good time* differed from mine. He was a loud extrovert and I was a quiet introvert. Nonetheless, I was sad to leave Claire, Kurt, Lothar, and Heidi as well as my adopted city of Berlin.

## EUROPE

I said *Auf Wiedersehen* to Berlin on the last day of July. I flew Pan Am over East Germany landing in Hanover. I taxied to the train station then traveled by rail to Frankfort then Mainz. I wandered miles to find a hotel for thirteen DM. All of this was accompanied by delay, misdirection, and confusion. But I was on my own and loved the role of international vagabond.

On the next day, I ferried for six hours up the Rhine River to Cologne taking pictures of castles, countryside, and cathedrals. I was constantly hungry with little money. I remember glancing at a boisterous German foursome who were

consuming platefuls of sausage and pastry. The waiter removed half-filled plates. How I longed for those morsels.

My flophouse in Cologne cost me seven DM. I then traveled to Aachen and on to Oostende, Belgium. I counted and recounted my money. I figured I had just enough to reach Whiting, but I would have to be thrifty. I met an English chap named Chris Martin and for twenty-four hours he was my best chum. Our conversations refreshed my spirit and I gave him one of my Kennedy half dollars as a gift of appreciation.

## ENGLAND

Together we crossed the English Channel, looked upon the white cliffs, and passed through UK customs. We traveled to London and toured the city. My friend caught a train to Bristol in the late evening. I decided not to book a hotel but remain in the station all night. He advised me they cleared the depot at one, but said I could reside in Hyde Park until morning. My motive was as much about adventure as poverty.

About midnight the Bobbies swept through the depot asking for tickets. I decided it was time to skedaddle. I walked to Hyde Park, then strolled until 1:30. My feet and back were killing me so I sat on a park bench, soon stretched out and sleeping, my bag as a pillow.

I felt a baton tap on my boots. A Bobbie asked me what I was doing. I told him and he asked for an ID. I produced my passport and he left me alone, remarking that I did not appear to be six feet one inch. I was a little stressed so I walked a few blocks to a Wimpy Hamburger joint. With a purchase of one burger and coke, I slouched there until the 4:30 closing time. I went out into the cold night and sat on a bench. The summer sun began to dawn and I felt safer. About 7:00 I found a hotel with a vacancy and booked a room for three pounds. The space would not be available until afternoon so I rested in the lobby, then explored the city again. I slept in a comfortable hotel room until dark, got up to snack, then slept again until morning.

I did not have enough money for a daily hotel, so I planned to stay every second night on the street. Prices in London were twice as high as they were in West Germany. This day I accomplished a walking tour of Buckingham Palace, Westminster Abby, and the Houses of Parliament. I sat on a bench long enough to hear Big Ben chime out three hours. I sat in the train depot playing chess solitaire and thumbing through Readers Digest. I struck up a conversation with two locals and told them my problems. They said I could come with them and stay in the basement of their night club. The lights went out at four in the morning and I slept soundly on a sofa until noon.

I was in London for another two days, wandering streets with blistered feet. I tossed out my worn razor allowing my beard to sprout. My poverty freed me and constrained me at the same time. I visited the wax museum, Tower of London,

and spent hours in various museums. On Carnaby Street, I purchased a souvenir recording of the latest Beatle release, *All You Need Is Love*.

I walked a few miles from my hotel to King's Crossing. The burden of my duffle bag strained my shoulders. My northbound train passed through Newcastle and into Edinburgh. I was in the Scottish capital from 6:30 p.m. to 5:00 a.m.

## SCOTLAND

Daylight lingered so I was able to walk from Waverley Station to Edinburgh Castle. I rested in the manicured park until dark and then trudged back to the station to wait for my early morning train. About 11:00 p.m. I was approached by a friendly Scot who engaged me in conversation.

He invited me to visit his place for a meal and nap. I considered, then followed him through winding streets and into an upstairs apartment. After sardines and crackers (yuck) he invited me to rest on his cot. The lights went out and the next thing I knew the man was lying next to me with his hand on my crotch. I sprung up and shouted, "What are you doing?"

He responded, "Don't you trust me. Please just rest. It won't happen again. I promise."

Just as I was dozing off, I felt the probing hand again. I slapped it away, grabbed my stuff, and dashed from the room. As I huffed back to the train depot, I felt fortunate to have escaped with my body and gear intact.

My train ride to Glasgow was uneventful, although I did have trouble locating the international airport. People kept directing me to the domestic Glasgow facility. I was the last person to board the transatlantic flight from Aberdeen to New York City. Here is a transcript of that flight back which I wrote a few days after my return home:

Everything I have written before this seems of another world and I wish I was in that world again. It's August 23 and I finally decided to write the last few days of my trip for myself and my posterity. I just hope I can remember most of it. After Glasgow, which seems like years ago and remote as a distant star, I just sat a while. I bought some more candies to kill my appetite.

A little after that, I met those two girls again. They liked my American accent. They said they could tell I was American right off. They asked me questions like "What are the boys like in America?" and "Are you married?" I gave them my address and I might get a letter from them. I left them at 4:30 to get on the jet after the departure was announced. The girls said they would wave to me as my jet left, but as I was seated, I couldn't see out the window because of all the rain.

I have to tell you about the two people who sat next to me. One was a boy about my age and the other was his mother. They were Americans in North Ireland on an Air Force Base. The boy was telling me how he played rugby and about the country where he lived. I read his pop music book and told him when we eventually flew over land. I think our route brought us over Newfoundland and Maine.

A little boy who was sitting in front of me was all excited when he saw America for the first time. I asked my new friend if he had a razor and if I could borrow it. I hadn't shaved in three days and he thought I was growing a moustache. He had none, but he got his mom's leg razor, so I went in the back john and shaved with the dim light and bouncing plane. At least I looked halfway decent. I figure that shave took me 333 miles. The meal was very good and much appreciated. I stashed away the crackers and butter. The trip took about eight hours and since the time change was six hours, I reached NYC about 7:00 am.

## BACK HOME

When I landed at JFK, I didn't understand the geography of the great American metropolis. I figured I could just switch to a Greyhound bus and be on my way. I was tired, haggard, and aggravated when a cop explained to me that I needed to catch an express carriage to the Manhattan bus yard. After a two-dollar ride I arrived at the gigantic depot trying to find my way to a Chicago-bound bus.

With stops in Pittsburg, Cleveland, Toledo, South Bend, and Gary, I finally arrived in Hammond at 1:00 the next day. This was far behind the time I had telephoned to dad.

I concluded by travel journal like this:

Once in Hammond, I asked where the regular bus stop was. She directed me to a location about two blocks away. I gave the bus driver my only money, my last JFK half dollar. I got off at 118<sup>th</sup> street and Calumet. But I didn't feel like going home. I just didn't want my adventure to end! I walked slowly down three streets. I felt like a stranger. I looked down our alley and noticed it was newly oiled. I didn't want it all to end then, so I walked around to the front instead of entering at the back door. I stood bravely and knocked. My magic adventure had come to an end!

Only mom and dad were home. They both were really happy. Dad said he had gone to Hammond but I wasn't there. Pig had made a big sign, "Welcome home, Chris", now draped across the couch.

Mom said, “Gee, you look thin”. I got on the scales: 158 pounds. Wow! Down twenty pounds. I only had thirty-five cents left in my pocket, too. Man, I just made it. That’s about it. I got my big bag the following day and my German-sent box came too. So, I close. Never again will I write in a diary.

When I arrived in Whiting, former Air Force sergeant Jack greeted me from the back apartment. He had just landed a management position. His blue Mustang was in the driveway. Barbara worked in a local medical clinic, adjusting to the American way of life.

On the first Sunday after my return, the Church of Christ held a reception for Jack and Barbara. The movie clip shows the newly-weds holding hands, a room full of church ladies, and a long table full of wrapped gifts. A second movie clip shows my Uncle Frank and Aunt Anne visiting the expanded family.

Within a few days I was practicing football at Clark Field. Once I had reconciled myself to the kick-off and punt teams, my final football season wasn’t half bad. I enjoyed the sideline banter with my second-string philosophers.

In September, I began my terminal year at Clark School feeling I had scaled the twelve-story mountain. I met with my career counselor who smiled, “If your goal is to teach school, Ball State University is a good choice.” She frowned, “Too bad. You’re just a few points short of making the national honor society.”

I too was disappointed in my lack of academic achievement. I had finally recognized myself as more intellectual than athletic. I dropped a fourth-level math class, opting instead for French. I was now studying three foreign languages. Plus, in English literature, I read some Old English (*Beowulf*) and Middle English (*Canterbury Tales*). I embraced my new identity as a Renaissance man.

Jim acquired a new girlfriend while I was in Europe. Sharon played matchmaker for me, pointing out a few friends who—rumor had it—liked me. I gave one young lady a second look. Her name was Arlene Kurek.

## Chapter 6

# ENAMORED

October 1967 to March 1970  
Whiting & Muncie, Indiana

*Let her kiss me with the kisses of her mouth,  
for her kisses are sweeter than wine.  
(adapted from Song of Solomon 1:2)*

My heart was hungry; my soul hopelessly romantic; my hormones rampaging. For as long as I could remember, I held sentimental and idealistic views on love—to the point of obsession. I was ever the knight in shining armor, seeking the damsel in distress. At nearly eighteen years old, I was primed to give my heart to a special girl who might adore me as much as I adored her.

### OCTOBER 1967

October fourth became one of *our days*. That was the Wednesday Arlene and I got together for the first time. I was studying alone at the local Rupp Branch library, when matchmaker Sharon and schemer Jim brought Arlene to form a study foursome. The two girls chuckled as Jim and I called them “mackerel snappers”—a reference to their Catholic upbringing.

I was in the midst of memorizing the prologue to *Canterbury Tales* in Middle English. I impressed Arlene by rattling off the first eighteen lines of Chaucer, beginning with:

Whan that Aprille with his shoures soote,  
The droghte of March hath perced to the roote,  
And bathed every veyne in swich licour  
Of which vertú engendred is the flour;

I enjoyed the attention of Arlene, especially when she sat in the bleachers to watch me play football. I remember trying so hard to really hammer a kick off, but it dribbled off the side of my foot; such an embarrassment. Afterward, I held her hand as we hung out with a group of friends. *Incense and Peppermints* by the Strawberry Alarm Clock was the number one song we grooved to. Still, Arlene was not my passion. I was getting into the academic life. I was glad when football came to an end.

In November, I decided to expand my horizon by joining the debate team. Mr. Ericsson was our sponsor and the national debate topic for the term 1967-8 was: "Resolved, congress should establish uniform regulation for criminal investigation". Four of us debaters stayed overnight at Purdue University for the Indiana High School Debaters Conference. We advanced a few rounds, but our lack of experience betrayed us. I wished I had invested my high school years in lively debate rather than in bouncing balls.

I was re-elected president of the Clark German Club and as Christmas neared, I organized a neighborhood caroling party. We identified local German natives, knocked on their doors, and sang *Stille Nacht* and *Oh, Tannenbaum*. Barbara was a recipient of our merrymaking.

In December, when Sharon asked Jim to attend the winter dance, Jim encouraged me to call Arlene so we could double date. (I learned that's what girls liked to do.) And so, I overcame my phone-phobia and called Arlene. As expected, she invited me to the formal dance. I partied through the 1967 sub-deb with a tinge of sadness. I looked backward to the 1966 event when I gazed into the doe eyes of Debbie Argus.

Arlene lived on Lakeside Avenue across from Saint Adalbert, her parish church. I met with her family for the Christmas Eve mass on my eighteenth birthday. She instructed me when to stand, kneel, sit, and genuflect. I beheld an unexpected beauty in the Latin liturgy and continued to accompany Arlene to Saint Al's on special occasions.

A few days after Christmas, I drove to the Selective Service Center in Hammond, birth certificate in hand. I filled out required papers and received my draft card. The official told me to carry it at all times on my person.

As a newly-minted eighteen-year-old, my father finagled me a position at Youngstown Steel in East Chicago. Jimmy Francis labored alongside of me, both of us putting in sixteen hours over most weekends. I wore a hardhat, carried a lunch bucket, and earned a blue-collar wage of \$2.40 an hour. Dad took me aside to warn me of the foul language used around the mill. I assured him I was familiar with most of the terms.

It later struck me how incredibly easy it was for a wet-behind-the-ears teenager to hire on to a part-time and well-paid position. Within a few short years, all the regional mills would be shuttered and most of the laboring men sent home.

I spent the stroke of midnight 1967/1968 at Youngstown Steel earning time and a half— an incredible \$3.60 an hour.

## 1968

On January 12, Charlotte gave birth to a baby boy named Dan Mitchell Walker, my fourth nephew. As he came into the world, the Beatles topped the charts with *Hello-Goodbye*. I bought that 45 record for Arlene, listening to it together as we snuggled on her parlor loveseat.

Our sparking romance, exploded into flame. Soon we were inseparable, a bonded pair of lovebirds. I passed daily notes to her written with the salutation, “2R”. My hallmark was to slip her a piece of Wrigley’s chewing gum with a secret poem inscribed on the inside wrapper. “Come live with me and be my love and I will show what I’m thinking of. You are the one whom I desire. Come live with me and light my fire”. I sometimes impressed her with my vocabulary. I once remarked, “You know I’m adept at prestidigitation.”

Her eyes got big, “What’s that?”. I told her to look it up. The next day she greeted me, “About that big word, you sure are.”

On February seventh—one of our days to remember— we went on a date to the Hammond Paramount Theater. We sat through *Bonny and Clyde*, hugging and kissing. Seated in my Falcon after the show, I proposed to Arlene that we officially go steady. Her face beamed as we exchanged high school rings. Hers fit snugly onto my pinky finger while mine would be threaded with angora yarn.

At school the next day, Arlene assumed the persona of Bonny and I posed as Clyde. “We rob banks!” I drawled to her, the gap between my front teeth providing a handy notch for Clyde’s ever-present match stick. Both of us were silly with love.

As well as indoor theaters, we also went on dates to the 41 Outdoor Theater. We would pay our entrance fee, find an empty stall, hook up the speaker, and watch the movie. That was the concept anyway. In spite of an occasional romance inspector, Arlene and I spent more time fogging windows than following dialogue.

Rock & roll hits of early 1968 provided a soundscape to our lovefest: *To Sir with Love*, *Green Tambourine*, *Dock of the Bay*, and *This Guy’s in Love with You*. Each was a special song to us. After I sang to her *Judy in Disguise with Glasses*, Arlene decided to dump her black framed glasses and invest in contact lenses. My girlfriend was a knockout!

Arlene turned eighteen on April first. The link to *April fools* provided endless fodder for punny jokes. I treated Arlene to a fancy dinner and we goo-goo-eyed into the evening. Suddenly her shining eyes filled with tears as she shared with me

the tragic death of her baby niece. She said insanity was a contributing factor. She wept, wondering if I could still love her with such a troubled history. All this came as news to me, but I assured her my love was unstoppable.

Mom was still awake when I stepped through the door after midnight. She noticed my sullen expression and asked if anything were wrong.

“Yes”, I said.

Her face darkened as she asked, “What’s the matter, son?”

I spelled out the story and she responded, “Yes, I know about that. It was in all the local papers.”

“Then why did you look so worried when you first asked me about the evening?”

“Oh”, she blushed. “I thought maybe Arlene might be pregnant or something.”

My eyes widened and I paused. “Mom, look out that window. The last time a pregnancy like that happened, a star was shining in the east.”

Viewed through the rose prism of Eros, my entire world-scape sparkled. I relished my classwork, reciting Shakespearian sonnets, and discussing presidential politics. My government teacher was shocked when LBJ declined to run for re-election. Suddenly both Republican and Democratic primaries were wide open.

Mr. Roman asked me to read aloud my political limericks.

President Johnson has quit.  
Eugene McCarthy lacks hit.  
Bobby’s a hippie.  
Hubert’s a drippy.  
The whole stinkin’ party’s unfit.

Now Ethel is pregnant again.  
We thought she might stop once at ten.  
But that’s not our Bobby.  
It must be his hobby.  
Endowing the world with childREN.

Senior track marked the summit of my athletic accomplishment. I was captain of the team and consistently high-jumped over six feet. Coach Powell initiated the first ever Clark Relays in 1968, inviting six schools to compete at Clark Field. Mom, dad, Frank, Jack, Barbara, plus Charlotte with her kids all showed up to cheer. Arlene was present, sitting in the front row in the admiration of her friends. I basked in the moment.

The school year seemed to pass at warp speed. *Tempus fugit* I noted in my Latin notebook. With track, work, and steady girlfriend, I remained deliriously exhausted. I bought a camera snapping dozens of pictures of my female fascination.

At the track sectional meet, I scored second in the high jump. At the regional meet, I finally broke the Clark School record with a leap of six-feet-two and one-half inches. I advanced to the state competition in Indianapolis on May 25—the first Pioneer in ten years to reach the state capitol. Arlene attended the championship meet with her parents. I bombed, barely clearing six feet. My track career had ended on a sour note, but my romance with R continued to sweeten.

The Pioneer News, our purple mimeographed newsletter, ran a senior edition. What did the editors see in the futures of selected twelfth graders? My entry simply read: “Chris Foreman – Arlene”.

The two of us attended the senior prom in May. The theme of the dance was “Love is Blue” named after a popular song of the day. A local rock group, the New Colony Six, provided live music. She was gorgeous; I was infatuated. Afterwards, I parked the Falcon in the dark recesses of Whiting beach. We crossed personal boundaries, sliding into territory we had both vowed to keep off limits. The initiative was mine, but she yielded with eagerness to my embrace. We did not arrive at the terminal, but I did learn that sex is a locomotive that does not possess a reverse gear.

The political times were crazy, punctuated by anti-war demonstrations, fraught with cultural tumult, and populated by long-haired hippies and radical Yippies. Riots erupted across America when Martin Luther King was murdered on April 4 and Chicago shut down after police confronted protesters at the Democratic National Convention. Two days before graduation, Bobby Kennedy was gunned down in Los Angeles. My friend, Kevin Enright, was despondent.

The final day of school was designated *senior day*. The class of 1968 gathered in the gym for hugs, tears, and farewells. I had spent twelve of my eighteen years—66% of my life—in the halls of Clark school. Our high school yearbook was distributed to all who paid the fifteen dollars. Thirty classmates signed their names and scribbled messages into my Powder Horn. One inscribed equation succinctly summed up my emotions that day:

2 young  
2 be  
4 gotton

High school graduation took place on June 6 with speeches in the auditorium and a class photo on the front steps. I talked with dozens of friends whom I figured I would never forget, but soon vanished into oblivion. Eric and Reinhard sat front and center as valedictorian and salutatorian. I managed a class standing of 56 of 241.

I had never before considered the distinction between the words “graduation” and “commencement”. At this auspicious moment, the first lay behind and the second ahead. The picture-pose was a seam in the fabric of life.

School was out for Chris and Arlene. Innocence lay behind us and we looked with eagerness to our future together. I had been admitted to Ball State earlier in the year and in June, dad and mom drove me to orientation. The university seemed enormous. I gawked at the twelve-story Teachers College. Everywhere I looked I saw construction cranes. My cohort of matriculating freshmen would be the high-water mark of the baby boom flood.

Arlene’s plans proved more modest than mine. She signed up for college classes at Saint Joseph extension and found a part-time job at NIPSCO (Northern Indiana Power Service Company). Of course, we hung out every moment possible.

Barbara’s parents came from Berlin to visit their daughter. My folks boarded them in the bedroom of Frank and me. That was okay since I didn’t hang around the house much anyway. Dad shot one of his last movies of a picnic at Forsyth Park. Included in the grainy footage are mom, Big Jim, Char, Jimmy, Shelley, Chrissy, Danny, Jack, Barbara, Clair, Kurt, and me with Arlene. It appeared that R and I quarreled much of the time.

Jim and I worked full-time at Youngstown. The United Steel Workers Union required every millwright be assigned an assistant. My job most of the time was to shadow my mechanic and shine a flashlight wherever he directed. Jim and I made fun of our labor bosses. We labeled the rotund one *Egg man* and the mustachioed one *Walrus*.

As a daily routine, I’d get up at seven, pick up Jim, and be at the mill before eight. I remember the hot summer afternoons. Barely washed, I would find R waiting for me on her front stoop about five. What joy would be on her face as I pulled to the curb and smiled at her! We would paint the town past midnight. I’d drop her off, sleep a few hours, then begin the cycle again. Fatigue held no consequence.

About this time, the Zelen family packed up and moved from Alabama. Don had climbed the corporate ladder up a wrung to a position in Longview, Washington. My brother-in-law now managed a new Reynolds cable plant. After a month in Washington State, Jeanne invited the family to visit the West Coast. Don hinted a job might be in the offing for dad.

It was a tearful parting for Arlene. “If you still love me when you come back, then I know we’ll be all right.” I stuck a letter into the mailbox for every day of our separation, each beginning with the greeting “2R”.

This was a memorable vacation for both Frank and me—our first trip to the west coast. We crossed the Mississippi River, traversed endless cornfields, marveled at snowcap mountains, and puzzled at a sign that read: “Welcome to the Evergreen State.” The hills were parched to parody.

We chugged through the Cascade Mountains, passing the iconic conic Mount Saint Helens. Dad was wonderstruck. He had to pull over the station wagon at the sight of water gushing from a mountain side. He dumped his coffee to fill his thermos. When we arrived in Longview, I had the sense my parents would soon be moving west.

Our two-thousand-mile trek passed not without incident. As I was driving through Nebraska on a narrow side road, I saw ahead of me a pickup truck, towing a large boat, supporting a significant power motor. This long assemblage was backing out of a driveway. I tried to slow, swerved to the right, but the propeller blade shattered the left rear window. My father exchanged insurance information with the apologetic sportsman. For the remainder of the road trip, taped cardboard kept out the highway breeze. I had added seven states to my growing total: Iowa, Nebraska, South Dakota, Wyoming, Idaho and Washington.

We rushed through this visit. Dad had two weeks’ vacation and I had to maintain my work status at Youngstown. We hosted at the Zelen home on 23rd Avenue, enjoying our extended family, cavorting with Debbie, Susie, Nancy, DJ, and Jingles the dog. Don held a well-paid position and generously co-signed for a brand-new vehicle. Mom gushed over our shiny candy-apple red station wagon.

Eileen and Terry drove up from Travis Air Force Base, California, with toddling Jenny and infant Laura. My sixth niece was born on June 24 when Simon and Garfunkel were crooning *Mrs. Robinson*, “Jesus loves you more than you can know.” Terry didn’t appreciate that I called his newborn *Uncle Fester* even though Baby Laura was chubby and bald.

Foremans and Zimmermans headed south on Interstate 5, Terry piloting his newly acquired/slightly damaged family vehicle through Oregon into California. We toured the Golden Gate Bridge, then stopped by Travis Air Force Base and the Nut Tree. Next, we launched our long trip home, first passing south through Disneyland and the Grand Canyon. We stopped at the Four Corners where I stood in four states at one time: Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, and Colorado. We traveled northeast along Route 66 through Kansas which was my thirty-fourth state. Finally, we arrived in Whiting. It was a rapturous homecoming. Arlene and I sang with the Beatles, “Hey, Jude, take a sad song and make it better.”

I opened my first checking account at the First Bank of Whiting and wrote check number one for \$800. This amount, mailed to BSU, covered all expenses for my first quarter of college. Dad appreciated my economic independence.

As I prepared for upcoming college life, dad asked Frank and me to join him on the sofa. Mom sat by tearfully as dad explained that Don Zelen had offered him a job at the Reynolds cable plant. He and mom would be heading west and he wanted to know if we would join them. Dad left the decision to us.

My response was immediate. I intended to enroll at Ball State and stay close to R. Frank was hesitant, but decided to remain in Indiana. He wanted to finish out twelfth grade and compete in gymnastics. It was sad to see my family splitting apart.

On the last day of August, dad and I drove to Muncie in the station wagon laden with my belongings. He helped me carry bags and small bits of furniture up to the seventh floor of Shales Hall. I remember a final cup of coffee and a firm handshake. I had mixed feelings; sad to see my old man depart, but exuberant to be on my own at last.

I tumbled into the tumult of college life: new dorm, new roommate, new schedule, new classes, new classmates—everything had changed in a single day; except for Arlene, my fixed star of heaven.

I was able to bum a ride home every second weekend. My motivation was primarily to visit R, but I also needed to maintain my employment status. To keep my job, I had to work at least eight hours every pay period (two weeks). I acquired my first credit card through AT&T and phoned Arlene's house nearly every day. The conversations ended up costing me around forty dollars per month.

In October, my folks rented a moving van packing it to the hilt. I came home for the weekend to see them off. The photograph shows mom somber, dad determined, and our new station wagon in tow. A U-Haul slogan read "Adventure in Moving". Dad bequeathed Jack custody of our corner lot, me use of the Ford Falcon, and Frank sole possession of the second bedroom where he surrounded himself with Marvel comics and gymnastic trophies.

I followed the 1968 Olympics held in Mexico City in late October. Four things stuck out in memory. First was the black power salute given by Tommie Smith and John Carlos during the award ceremony. Second was the broad jump by Bob Beamon, an astonishing twenty-nine foot plus. Third was the gold medal winner in heavy-weight boxing, George Foreman. Fourth was the innovative method of high-jumping which earned Dick Fosbury a gold medal. And old Coach Powell told me the flop was only a passing fad.

College work soon filled my hours. My first batch of classes included English Composition, World Economic Geography, German Literature, and Swimming. I dropped by the Christian Student Foundation every Tuesday evening, more out of guilt than conviction. I remained late one November evening monitoring election results. How strange the words "President Nixon" sounded in my ears.

Ball State was on the quarter system—Fall, Winter, and Spring. The winter months found me taking more literature, history, and German. I wrote a paper on the European Common Market and failed to appreciate a class titled *Music Appreciation*. My college relationships were wide but shallow, having a multitude of acquaintances, but few friends.

Jim Francis and I remained close, even in the military draft. On December 1, 1968, we sat together in his living room watching a TV special. Officials from the Selective Service drew lottery numbers to determine who would be army-inducted in 1969. The plastic capsule containing my birthdate matched number 95; Jim was one number away at 96. Both of us were draft bait, but I possessed a college deferment. My best buddy would soon relocate to Canada.

Jack and Barbara occupied our old homestead with gusto. A new regime established new norms. Cigarette smoke filled the air, beer the fridge, and liquor the cabinets. Barbara hosted a formal New Year's party for a dozen couples. Arlene and I enjoyed the festivities, imbibing a bit. Big Jim Walker drank more than his limit, but Barbara could not coax Charlotte to partake in a single drop of expensive whiskey.

## 1969

I was driving between Muncie and Whiting every second weekend. My one-way commute of two hundred miles took about three hours. I would leave campus at noon on Friday, work at the mill on Saturday and Sunday, then rush back to Muncie before my Monday morning class. I sometimes experienced road-side hallucinations as I raced through the darkness. Living in a residence hall, I parked the Falcon for free in the Stadium lot.

Back home, I spent evening hours at Arlene's house sitting and talking. Her mother and father seemed positively disposed toward me, keeping a loose rein though close eye on their only daughter. Two older brothers lived in the house as did her nephew, Martin. The little boy's favorite sport was to sneak up on us lovers and giggle as we kissed.

Whiting Park provided our favorite seclusion. After parking the Falcon, we would walk down the lonely shoreline gathering colorful bits of water-washed glass. We would pass blissful hours bouncing the Falcon and fogging the windows. This nocturnal activity was termed *watching the submarine races*.

Sometimes after a double shift, I would arrive at her home in the dead of night. I would climb over her back fence to toss pebbles at her upper bedroom window. R would whisper a greeting, dress, and meet me outside her back door. Love was sweet.

My father remained active in the Masonic Lodge. Somehow, a small Robertsdale house was left to the Masons in his name. Dad thought Terry and Eileen might want to move into it, so he asked Jack and me to visit the dilapidation. Jack appropriated a Masonic sword emblazoned with *in hoc signo vinces* and I acquired a Reader's Digest collection of classical recordings. I played those scratchy LPs for years. While Led Zeppelin and Janis Joplin rocked my play time, Mozart and Beethoven enhanced my hours of study. I recognized many of the classical pieces, discovering that Puccini authored the Lone Ranger theme and Liszt wrote a piano piece for Bugs Bunny.

My grades improved in the Spring. I got A's in Biology, Earth Science, and British Literature. With a low grade in German, I decided to drop that field as my minor. My two P.E. classes were track and gymnastics. Both were easy A's.

My freshman year in Muncie overflowed with dorm mates, classmates, dropouts, and professors. A hundred human faces flashed into and out of my life. I could once address each person by name. All have since vanished into the vapor.

In Whiting, Frank excelled in gymnastics, especially floor exercise and trampoline. I traveled to his state meet and snapped photos of my brother receiving a first place and tenth place trophy. About a week later I attended his Clark High graduation. Mom and dad had returned to Whiting for the occasion. They put the house on the market, enlisted Frank and me for another trek west, and packed up the remainder of their belongings.

Our time as same-state brothers had come to an end. Frank and I gathered about one hundred 45 RPM records which we had purchased over the previous five years. The 45s belonged to us in common, because we split the cost or had forgotten who had actually paid the dollar. We sorted through lots of Beatles, Rolling Stones, and Supremes vinyl. Frank picked the first record, I picked the next two, then we alternated picks. The moment was solemn, like a divorce. I knew we'd be walking down separate paths.

Arlene and I kissed goodbye for the second summer in a row. I planned to work at the Reynolds Aluminum plant for eighty days, long enough to cover my sophomore year expenses. Our parting was tearful, but not traumatic. Both of us were confident our romance was unbreakable.

Dad bought a second-hand pick-up truck and overpacked it with furniture. As a final flourish, he lashed a rocking chair to the top of the heap. Jack called us the Beverly Hillbillies. After stuffing the red station wagon to the gills, four of us headed West. Dad and mom managed the automobile, while Frank and I handled the pickup.

Somewhere in the endless plains, Frank was cruising down a monotonous highway. I chanced to glance left to see my brother with eyes half closed and

grip rotating left. I seized the steering wheel, startling him awake. I have often wondered how life would have transformed if not for that chance glance.

We arrived in Longview at the start of July. Dad and mom occupied a customized four-bedroom home just a few blocks east of Lake Sacajawea. The previous owner of 1618 23rd Avenue had been a local physician and my folks were thrilled to own such a palace.

With a big house, good job for dad at Reynolds, and Zelens just next door, life shined for John and Jenny Foreman. Their only regret lay in the thought that such fortune hadn't shined upon them years earlier, before their nest emptied. Frank and I slept in a paneled upstairs bedroom. I remember an endless playing of Iron Butterfly: *In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida*.

A year earlier, when Terry had honorably separated from the Air Force, he and Eileen settled in Longview. Terry worked at the Reynolds cable plant alongside dad. I enjoyed visits with my little nieces Jenny and Laura.

My summer job was at the aluminum foundry. As an entry-level worker, I labored, swept, and hauled refuse. At the three-week mark, my boss instructed me to lift armfuls of scrap metal from one location and stack the debris by a nearby fence. After three days of this menial toil, I was summoned into his office. He dismissed me, saying I didn't "put my heart into my work". Was it a set up?

I was disappointed because I only earned \$500 rather than the \$1200 planned. However, I would be reunited with R sixty days earlier. Frank remained in Longview. He had earned a gymnastics scholarship to the University of Washington and would matriculate in the Fall. I flew into Chicago O'Hare, bussed to Hammond, and ran into Arlene's outstretched arms.

I had burned my employment bridge at Youngstown Steel, but was fortunate to find another union job at Inland Steel. I soon worked full time at the filthiest jobs one could imagine. For several weeks I climbed into the smoky mouth of an open-hearth blast furnace axe-picking at solidified slag waste. Even with asbestos protection, my feet swelled with heat.

Later I worked on the coke line. The furnace fires were fed through conveyer belts laden with powdered coal dust. The black powder would blow off the belts and my job was to shovel it back on. I remember one guy who partnered with me. At the half-hour break, he would rip off his breathing mask, run to the outside door, and inhale a cigarette. Before leaving for home, my partner and I took turns blasting our clothing with high power air hoses.

By this time, Jack had vacated the old homestead and I began to sleep in Walkers' basement. I was a bit upset with Barbara. Frank and I had left several boxes of memorabilia in the basement and my sister-in-law left our precious stuff

by the garbage cans. She chuckled as she reported a line of garbage pickers going through the boxes. I think I mourned my lost Beatles posters most.

1725 Sheridan became my official college home of record. But in fact, I spent more hours at R's house. I remember watching her TV on July 20 as Neil Armstrong stepped foot on the moon. We took steps of our own into the humid night hand-in-hand to gaze into the dark sky. "Could it be possible?", I asked her.

Then, on August 15, we watched reports about that hippy rock concert in New York State called *Woodstock*. It seemed we had entered a brave new world in regard to both science and culture.

My Ford Falcon finally collapsed at Whiting Park and the junk man towed it away. I was under twenty-one so Mr. Francis, acting as a surrogate father, helped me buy a 1961 blue Chevy Biscayne. His own son had already found refuge in Toronto. Mr. Francis told me Jim was about to marry Peggy who had traveled north to join him.

The end of August saw the beginning of my second college year. I had earned enough money in three months to pay cash for the following nine months of university.

Mark Orewiler had been a casual friend at Shales Hall and had procured an off-campus residence for the Fall term. We arranged to be roommates at 312 McKinley Street. Our tiny space was up a flight of stairs, one of three bedrooms with a communal bathroom. Mark and I became fast friends. Our old landlady lived downstairs looking after her still older brother.

About a week after I settled in, Mark burst into our room with breathless news. He had spotted the old man in the garage dangling from the end of a rope. I rushed out to see. I touched the leg of the body and he jiggled as if alive. Further observation persuaded me the octogenarian was deceased. I walked to a nearby college office and called the police who carted the corpse away.

Because of my excellent grades during my freshman year, I received an academic scholarship and admittance into the BSU honors program. The centerpiece of the Honors curriculum was a course called *Humanities*, meeting five days a week for the entire school year. I felt I had joined the intelligentsia. Without German as a drag-me-down, I earned straight A's during the fall and winter quarters. I figured I had my life under control: a good place to live, outstanding grades, and a faithful girlfriend. The Beatles released *Abbey Road* and I was singing "Something in the way she moves attracts me like no other lover."

Things got even better with R. Her parents were kind enough to escort her to Ball State to attend the Football homecoming. I can't recall the main event, but I do remember the joy. I was so proud to strut around campus holding her

hand. Mark joined us on the grassy quad to throw a frisbee. We three tossed and chased the plastic disc. Mark was better at the backhand toss; I was accurate with a sidearm finger flip. Arlene was having a ball. I hinted to Mark that the two of us might be married soon, perhaps by the following summer.

In October, I visited the college jewelry shop and purchased on credit one diamond engagement ring with matching wedding bands. I didn't consult with R and she was shocked when I showed the rings to her. I decided my Thanksgiving break would be the opportune time to ask Mr. Kurek for his daughter's hand in marriage. R was apprehensive.

Before the lavish meal, I spoke alone to Mr. and Mrs. Kurek. I boldly asked for the hand of Arlene in marriage. They were interested, bewildered, and subdued all at the same time. The dinner was great with her two brothers and nephew seated around the table. One brother congratulated me on my straight A report card.

I never heard a peep of response from her parents; only silence. And the silence grew to estrangement, then to hostility. I was never quite sure what the issue was. R would say, "Oh, my parents are mad at you". My hunch centered on the elephant in the room: our religious divide. It seemed the Kureks were accepting of Arlene having a non-Catholic boyfriend, but not of themselves having a Protestant son-in-law. I sensed a drift in Arlene as well.

It was a strange time. We became physically closer even as we grew more emotionally distant. Every weekend an intense quarrel seemed to trigger a more intimate embrace. The more I felt her slipping away, the tighter I hung on. I knew she was floundering.

Over Christmas break, Mark traveled with his girlfriend from Muncie to Whiting. The four of us drove into Chicago for a concert of the Moody Blues. It was a kind of twentieth birthday present for me. The night was intended to be carefree, but R and I battled continually. I felt embarrassed to have my best friend witness me shouting and avert his gaze when he saw Arlene foot stomping.

In contrast, we celebrated New Year's Eve, two hearts beating as one. In the backseat of my Chevy, we heated the mid-winter chill to a sizzle. I had liberated a flask of liquor from Jim Walker's cabinet. As the whistles and booms welcomed in the new decade, we sipped a toast to each other. Where there is life, there is hope.

## 1970 TO APRIL

I treasured my moments with the Walker family. I have pictures of Chrissy and Danny standing on a highchair and draped with a sash reading 1-9-7-0. Charlotte was so kind, putting up with my late hours, sullen attitude, and consumption of food. Big Jim mostly ignored me, and the four children clung to me at times. It was obvious Jim and Charlotte were mismatched and miserable.

I received a letter from Frank. He seemed to be suffering from ennui, struggling to discover meaning in life during this freshman year at the University of Washington. His gymnastics scholarship failed to materialize and he hated the permissive and liberal attitudes in his dormitory. His grades were fine, but he portrayed himself as a misfit.

I was still laboring at Inland Steel. The mill rats knew me as a college whiz-kid. I remember asking a wizened worker about pressurized tanks. Some were labeled “OX” for oxygen and some “PP” for propane. After contemplating a while, I asked him what “MT” signified. He laughed, called his buddies together, and asked me to pronounce the letters slowly.

A goofy co-worker was called “bubblegum” by the bosses. A few months before I was hired, this guy was pounding nails into a wall and dislodged a gooey substance. He sniffed it between his fingers and proclaimed it to be bubblegum. More was discovered. He insisted it was chewed bubblegum. Nearly the entire wall was uncovered. He never backed down admitting he was wrong. Bubblegum deserved his moniker.

The mill was an educating experience. A piece of graffiti scrawled on the side of a foundry crucible read: “America=The melting pot. Scum rises to the top and those on the bottom get burned.”

Ball State had a one-week break between the Winter and Spring term. Arlene cut a day of work and sneaked down to campus. It was an afternoon of erotic delight. The pattern was familiar: anticipation (of what was about to happen)—recreation (giggling and foreplay)—consummation (moments of fleeting rapture)—realization (once again breaking our self-promise)—and, resolution (not to let it happen again). We were constantly filled with guilt. Anguish followed ecstasy.

I rationalized that since I was going to marry Arlene anyway, then what’s wrong with a little premarital sex? That veneer peeled away as I increasingly suspected marriage may not be in the cards. Yet, my lust flamed more than ever. Arlene became an object of my passion, a means to satisfy an animal appetite.

I astounded my friend Mark by pledging a Greek fraternity. I had a hole in my heart and thought I might fill it with male camaraderie. During rush week, I pledged Theta Chi. It was so odd. There was a month of kindness, they courting me. Then came a week of abuse and physical testing. A guy named Spoolie had just left the army and treated us to military-grade hazing. I did push-ups until my arms ached. I tried my best to cop a gun-ho attitude, but like in high-school sports,

my personality was too stoic. Plus, I had no palate for the keggers. I was accepted into the fraternity—I learned later—not because of my winning personality but with a high GPA I bumped up the frat house average.

In the Spring quarter I sparred with God. I had no doubt He existed, but I no longer liked Him. After all, the Supreme Being was pulling Arlene away from me. In Philosophy 101, I excelled when the topic shifted to the question of God's existence. No student rivaled me with knowledge of Scripture, not even the professor. I was able to demonstrate, without doubt, that God was just a fairy tale, a projected father figure. I received an A+ on a paper contending that the Creator might just as well be a committee of gremlins as the God of Genesis.

In my Humanities class, we studied the Bible as literature, along with the *City of God*. Again, with practiced Bible skills, I proved that Saints Paul and Augustine were closet Platonists more than Christian monotheists. At the time, I mistook my hubris to be intellectualism.

I also earned a bit of scholarship money by leading an Earth Science Colloquia. My professor-mentor lectured three hundred freshmen in an auditorium, but my small break-out group consisted of about twenty. After preparing and teaching the material, I acquired a lifetime of knowledge about how the earth revolves and rotates.

Arlene and I were still writing each other a few times a week. She shared her opinion that I was too long-haired and too radical by speaking out against the war in Viet Nam. She scolded me for suggesting I might seek asylum in Canada if drafted. In one letter she said, "Be careful. I think my mom is opening my mail and reading what you say to me."

I was filled with righteous indignation. I addressed the next letter to R and wrote in bold print an opening line, "Dear Mrs. Kurek. These words are private, directed to Arlene, not you. Please mind your own business!"

During our next phone conversation, I asked R if her mom had opened the letter clearly marked *personal*. She said, "Oh yes, she screamed at you for ten minutes."

Our romance was collapsing. Her parents forbade me to stop by her home, so I picked R up at her workplace. One day she stepped into my car reluctantly and suggested it might be wise to give our relationship a few months' rest. Maybe we could date other people. I was aghast, clinging and pleading. As we left the parking lot, R glanced behind and said, "Uh oh, my dad's following us." I drove around for ten minutes. Finally, R directed me to pull into a lot.

I stepped from the car and held my ground. My passive face did not react as her mother sputtered insults. Her dad cursed so hard his dentures flung loose.

Finally, he yanked Arlene from my car and pushed her into their backseat. My girlfriend was sobbing. My world was crumbling.

I plunged into despair, diagnosing my problem as “Boy meets girl/Boy loses girl/Boy loses himself”. I sought a pharmaceutical solution. For a few months already I had been smoking an occasional joint with Mark and his friends. I inhaled marijuana as a means to escape reality. It seemed like a generational thing to do. I enjoyed the TCP high, but not the smoke filling my lungs. It also seemed like maximal effort to achieve minimal buzz. Hashish was better, but still inadequate. Plus, dope smoking proved to be a social activity and I was a loner.

One of my newly-acquired fraternity brothers was a known drug dealer. I scored a hit of LSD for just eight dollars. Over the next fourteen months, blotter acid was my trip of choice—without smoke, without companionship, yet pseudo-spiritual. I tripped across inner space without traveling a step. Cannabis Sativa may have been a recreational drug, but Lysergic Acid Diethylamide was a recreational vehicle.

I determined to take a dramatic stand to win back the heart of Arlene. In desperation I skipped classes on April first—her twentieth birthday—paid twenty dollars for twenty long-stem roses, then zoomed two hundred miles northwest to her work place. Over three highway hours, I begged God to work a miracle and return Arlene to me. I figured if God cared about me at all, He could certainly manage such a trivial request.

## Chapter 7

# DISSIPATED

April 1970 to July 1971  
Muncie & Longview

*He gathered all together, and took his journey into a  
far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.  
(The prodigal son from Luke 15:13)*

My romantic heart had continually yearned for love and wept at love's demise. My soul had always resonated to sentimental songs of unrequited love: *Blueberry Hill* by Fats Domino (1956), *Mr. Blue* by the Fleetwoods (1959), *Blue Velvet* by Bobby Vinton (1963), and *Suite: Judy Blue Eyes* by Crosby, Stills & Nash (1969). Each song lyric is a variation of my own heart-crushing Arlene blues.

In later years I diagnosed this heart ailment from which I suffered as EGRD: *Eros-God Reversal Disorder* suggested by First John 4:8. The transitive sentence reads: "God is love". Logic may infer an equivalence of nouns on either side of the verb, but that is a deception. The meaning distorts when reversed into "Love is God". I know this through experience. I made love my god, worshiping Eros as deity. I enthroned an idol where only God should reign. The result of EGRD was dissipation on earth and estrangement from heaven.

### APRIL 1970

April 1, 1970, marked Arlene's twentieth birthday. I had purchased twenty roses for the occasion. At about four o'clock I pulled into her workplace lot. I paced the sidewalk with nervous tension, rehearsing magic words I prayed might regain her affection. I imagined her familiar smile and conjured an embrace still fresh to memory. Rain began to patter my ballcap, so I sat in the Chevy. Red roses rested on a cushion so recently laden by Arlene's backside.

Drizzle muddied the dusty windshield so I didn't see her face. Rather, I heard that achingly familiar laugh, then words like, "Help me out. I can't open this umbrella." I next heard a chuckling male response.

I flung open the door and confronted R. Her escort froze in bewilderment. I inhaled a breath of courage, removed the bouquet from the car, and handed the bundle to the startled stranger. I sputtered, "Today is Miss Kurek's birthday. Do me a favor and pass these flowers on to her". I gave the astonished Arlene a warped smile, then returned to my car. I saw the two gesticulating as I sped away.

I parked on a side street, turned off the ignition, and howled in pain. An arrow had pierced my heart. I pounded the dashboard in anguish. The woman I had worshipped had betrayed me.

After regaining a measure of composure, I drove to Whiting. Charlotte recognized my pain and let me be. I stretched out for a few hours then drove in the darkness back to Muncie. Fantasy was dissolving. Reality was sinking in.

A few days later I received a polite note from R. She thanked me for the birthday flowers, adding I had misinterpreted events. Her kind co-worker had offered to escort her to the lot on a rainy afternoon. He supported her elbow because the stairs were slippery. Arlene said I had embarrassed her in front of a co-worker and was no longer welcome to visit her at NIPSCO. I crumpled the letter in agony as I scanned her multiple photos plastered around my study desk.

In my final letter to R, I related a story about my four-year-old nephew Chrissy. He had attended a pre-school party and had brought home two goldfish in a plastic bag. Charlotte placed the little critters into a glass bowl at his bedside.

Chrissy really loved those fishies, but on the second morning he stumbled down the stairway in tears. The goldfish were dead. Chris had loved his friends so much he plucked them from the water and set them near his heart. And thus, it had happened to his namesake uncle as well.

On my next visit to Whiting, Arlene asked to meet me outside her home. I noticed her mother peeking through a front curtain. Through a rolled-down car window, I handed over her 1968 class ring and she returned mine. It was officially over. By coincidence, on the same day R and I separated, John, Paul, George, and Ringo signed papers dissolving the Beatles partnership.

I returned the wedding bands to the jewelry store in late April. I had paid about half of what I owed for the \$350 set. I hinted perhaps the jeweler might return some of my cash. He smiled, "Sir, we can guarantee the jewelry, but not the relationships."

I muttered to myself, "Would that you could".

I fell into a deep funk known only to those who dwell in a lonely place. I resonated with the tragic words of Humphrey Bogart: “I was born when she kissed me; I died when she left me; and I lived a few weeks while she loved me.”

I found myself in free fall during the months of April and May. Life held no meaning. My language coarsened. My company worsened. Drug parties and radical politics entered my life. Boone’s Farm wine and Winston cigarettes became staples. My comrades termed themselves *freaks* and the word seemed apropos. In our clothing, vocabulary, and attitude, we strove to distinguish ourselves from the *straights* of the world.

In the midst of depression and turmoil, my Spring grades held remarkably steady: An A, three B’s and a C. Mark was impressed. I told him, “That’s why they call it a BS degree.”

Since I had abandoned German as a minor, I had to find an alternative. I dropped by the assessment center and took a battery of aptitude tests. My interests scored all over the map, from science, to philosophy, to history. With such an array of aptitudes, the counselor suggested Library Science where I could be a jack of all trades and a master of none.

On May 4, anti-war sentiment boiled over at nearby Kent State University. Four students lay dead at the hands of the Ohio National Guard. A group of us rallied on the Ball State mall and I signed a petition supporting *The Peoples Peace Treaty*. I looked on as several college men burned their draft cards in protest.

The guy who lived across the hall invited me to a local Unitarian Universalist Church. I obliged, thinking it would expand my horizons. I was shocked to see Buddhas, saints, Krishnas, and minarets intermingled throughout a gilded meeting hall. I realized I remained Christian at core. If someone were to ask me, “Who is God?”, my response might be, “The Holy One against whom I am rebelling”.

About this same time Jesus was making a cultural comeback on campus. I began to notice students sporting t-shirts that read *Jesus People*. The vinyl album *Jesus Christ Superstar* topped the pop charts. What was this buzz about Christ? I dismissed it as camp; something that provided amusement to the sophisticated. Jesus was so un-cool; He was becoming re-cool.

Before school let out, I accompanied Mark on a quick trip east. He wanted to see New York City and visit a former girlfriend in New Jersey. We slept out along the way at rest stops. We stayed a night at the girlfriend’s house, but Mark complained that she paid more attention to me than him. The trip was fruitful though. We did get to look around the Big Apple and I added New Jersey at my thirty-fifth state.

Don Zelen’s mother—Grandma Rose—invited me to live in her basement for the summer of 1970. I was able to work forty hours per week at Inland Steel, spending off hours with the Walkers. One summer evening Arlene dropped by the

house. I think she felt sorry for me. I invited her into the kitchen for a grape Nihi soda. My ex-girlfriend showed me the new car her parents had purchased for her. I quipped, "So that's how they bought you off, huh?" Arlene was not amused. She drove into the sunset not to reappear for many years.

My former high-school teacher, Mr. Erickson, lived alone in a Whiting apartment. He invited a gaggle of young men to his place for discussion and counseling. I knew of his foppish reputation, but he was cultured and kind. After watching the movie, *Patton*, I was thrilled to discuss events of World War Two. To my amazement, Mr. Erickson was a journalist in 1945 and had actually interviewed the famous general. It struck me for the first time that an old man's biography is a young man's history. Over the next year, I dropped by his place whenever in Whiting.

In July, I skipped work to help Jack relocate. We hitched a U-Haul trailer to the back of his convertible and drove two thousand miles west to Longview, Washington. Jack soon found a job selling real estate while Barbara looked after her kitty named Puppy.

Jack and I went to the Kelso Theater to see *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Afterwards we talked for hours about the future of space travel and what life might be like in the twenty-first century. Would we have computers like HAL? Maybe I would live on the moon.

Dad and mom had some kind of religious experience that didn't interest me. However, I was fascinated by their collection of Bible recordings. An actor named Alexander Scourby had recorded the entire New Testament on long-play phonograph albums. As I overheard the King James Version, my spirit inside wept.

I remained with my parents for a week before flying to Chicago. My Chevy began to burn oil and black clouds trailed me to the junk yard. I replaced it with a classic 1961 Impala for \$250. Unfortunately, three days later, this big-finned beauty was side-swiped while parked on Calumet Avenue. I had no insurance, so my two-tone car remained crumpled for a month of driving.

Big industry was shutting down in northwest Indiana. After my final steel-mill paycheck, I bought a 1965 Catalina for \$450. With bankbook nearly depleted, I packed my belongings and motored to Muncie for my third year of college.

I hooked up with a nineteen-year-old friend named Lynn and together we moved into 828 East Adams, a hippie-house known as the *mansion*. Rent was low, times were high, and music reverberated. Lynn liked me; I used her. She was attached; I was detached. I was in full rebellion mode against God. I remember steadying a

wobbly kitchen table by mashing Gideon pocket Bibles under two wooden legs. The communal house adopted a stray dog and I named the sickly animal “Jehovah”.

The Library Science program accepted me and my curriculum altered course. I attended three library classes that Fall: Reference & Bibliography, Card Catalog, and Children’s Books. The workload proved overwhelming and I barely squeaked out C’s. My bohemian lifestyle contributed not a little.

An assortment of odd balls and flunk-outs moved into the mansion, only to reside a day or two. Dozens were attracted to parties, to dope, who knows? The more I struggled to be free, the more I fell into bondage. I barely survived that Fall term, managing to stay off the street, out of jail, and outside the psych ward. Things had to change. In December, I abandoned Lynn and vacated the mansion, packing my worldly belongings into the big Catalina. Lynn wept at my departure, but I didn’t care.

I faced a three-week Christmas break, no place to live and little money. I was overcome with wanderlust and got the crazy notion to hitchhike cross country. I figured this would be a trial by ordeal; a test of pluck and resolve. I parked my car in the Theta Chi lot and Mark drove me to his home in Pendleton, Indiana. I stayed with him overnight and departed the next day.

On December 19, at 9:45 in the cold of morning, Mark dropped me along Interstate 80. I was wearing two sets of pants, two shirts, double wool socks with boots, a heavy coat, ear-flap cap, and ski gloves. Over top of all this, I poked my head through an Alaskan parka. I lugged a navy duffle bag filled with raingear, extra socks, snacks, soap, flashlight, transistor radio, canteen, pen and tablet. Into the toe of my sock, I tucked my life savings—eighty-six dollars. My hand-drawn sign read: “San Francisco”.

I kept a log of my rides to Longview. These were my fourteen encounters during the two-and-a-half-day slog:

1. From Pendleton, Indiana, to Interstate 80 by Mark.
2. I-80 to Indianapolis by a couple who have a kid at Purdue.
3. Indianapolis to Kansas City by two freaks on a honeymoon from Connecticut.
4. Kansas City on I-80 only two exits by four high-school kids.
5. Two more exits on I-80 by a guy with a GTO. His back tires were falling apart.
6. Three more exits by a GI stationed at Fort Leavenworth.
7. One exit by guy in a VW. He gave me a swig of whiskey.
8. Along I-80 about two hundred miles in VW van. I slept a little.

9. From Oakley, Kansas, to Welles Nevada, about 1100 miles, twenty-three hours with Jack and Betty. Roads were bad. Passed through Denver at 10:00 a.m. Sunday. Nevada marked my thirty-sixth state.
10. From Welles to Sacramento. Guy who was driving the VW van was a hitchhiker himself. Couple was sleeping in back. I slept for several hours. Lots of ice and snow.
11. From I-80 in Sacramento off exit 100 yards. Someone felt sorry for me. Stood for two hours near Sacramento to 11:00 a.m. I drew a new cardboard sign that read, "North".
12. From 1-5 outside Sacramento to the Albany exit in Oregon. Eight hours by Berkeley student. Said he was wanted for murder in California. Far out!
13. Got approached by cop who said hitchhiking is illegal in Oregon. Got picked up by hip couple to Vancouver, Washington.
14. To Longview, one block from home at eight in the evening on Monday.

I didn't tell my folks I was heading West, so they were stunned to see their prodigal son standing at the front door, grubby and disheveled. Dad and mom were in the midst of a charismatic home meeting. About twenty enthusiasts sat in the living room on fold-out chairs. I greeted the happy-clappy Christians, then took a hot shower and slept until noon on the following day.

The change I saw in my father was startling. He was effervescent, dressed in a flashy polyester leisure suit. He could not speak without joy bubbling in his voice. Dad had never liked restaurants, now he was eating out every second day at Roy's Chuckwagon. He counted these as opportunities to witness the faith. Dad had become a thorough-going and effective evangelist. Mom was his full partner, ministering to the ladies.

Frank later wrote this story about dad:

A church friend invited dad to a Full Gospel Business Men Fellowship International (FGBMFI) meeting in Vancouver. For the first time in his life, my dad saw men excited about God. They talked about the reality of God in a restaurant! They talked about Him changing their lives, guiding them in their businesses, and healing their bodies. For many years he had prayed for the sick. Now he heard about people actually being healed. Then he saw them being healed! And he saw people speaking in tongues and dancing for joy in the Spirit. This was what he had thirsted for all of his life. John Foreman jumped into the roaring River of the Spirit with both feet. Jennie Foreman grabbed his hand and jumped in right next to him. At that first meeting he was speaking in tongues and dancing in the Spirit. Mom soon followed.

I was in the Longview house for eight days, enduring incessant chatter about something called the *baptism in the Holy Spirit*. I didn't do drugs at the house, but acted stoned so my family wouldn't pester me. To any testimony they attempted, I'd nod my head and croak "far out". The strategy seemed to work.

The family celebrated my twenty-first birthday followed by a big Christmas dinner. Six Zelens, six Foremans, and four Zimmermans sat around the dining room table to hear dad preach about Jesus and lead in group prayer. Frank shared with me about speaking in tongues, describing his recent experience on December 14. He gave me a book by some English dude named C.S. Lewis. I promised to read it on my return hitchhike. Don took me aside and said he would pay for my flight home, if only I would cut my long hair. Fat chance! Plus, I looked forward to my return adventure.

Jack sold real estate out of an office in Kalama. We talked as he drove me sixty miles south into Portland, dropping me off at 8:00 a.m. on December 28. It took me three and a half days to get back to Whiting. These were my twenty-seven rides:

1. Jack drove me from Longview to Portland on Interstate 5.
2. Two exits by a kid in a pickup. He needed me as a side view mirror.
3. Three exits by farmer in a pickup.
4. Long wait, then picked up by guy in beat-up '61 Chevy. I went about 150 miles.
5. To Redding, California, by a weird guy going to the Rose Bowl, about six hours.
6. To the San Francisco exit. He was an expert in artificial insemination. We conversed the whole way. He dropped me at 11:00 p.m., now heading east on Interstate 80.
7. To Davis, California, by a Davis student, short ride.
8. Picked up by Davis cop whose wife is from Kokomo. He said I couldn't hitchhike on I-80, so he drove me one exit further dropping me off the big highway.
9. With a guy from Auburn who drove me a few exits into Auburn
10. Was in Auburn four hours in cold and dark! Got picked up by a trucker. I spaced and dozed to Reno where I was let out. Walked miles through Reno and Sparks. Made a new sign because I lost my original in Redding. It's easy to find cardboard.
11. To Salt Lake City by a student from Brigham Young. Got eight hours of fitful sleep.
12. Through Salt Lake City about five miles to city limits by a commuter. It was 5:00 p.m. Wednesday.
13. About twenty miles by guy in VW going home.

14. To Wyoming by guy from Georgia on vacation in '71 Pinto. I had a five-hour wait somewhere in Wyoming. City cop said if state cop found me it would be \$150 and ten days! I was shuddering cold and shook up.
15. Finally got picked up at 2:00 a.m. by trucker who slammed on brakes. He said I was crazy to be out in a blizzard. He drove me nineteen hours to Council Bluffs, Iowa. He bought me a meal along the way. I spent New Year's moment near Council Bluffs with my thumb extended. I know because I heard fireworks pop in the distance.
16. Drunk guy drove me through town a few miles.
17. To Des Moines by guy driving about 120 MPH. Slept most of way.
18. By trucker on exit. He drove me a few miles because he thought I was needy.
19. Man drove me another few miles east off of Interstate.
20. Back to I-80 by Des Moines about thirty miles.
21. Black dude to Iowa City. I drove his GTO the last thirty miles. He said he was an entertainer and dead tired.
22. Trucker to Moline, Illinois. He made an abrupt stop at exit to let me out and cop was right behind him. The cop gave him a ticket and me a warning not to hitchhike.
23. I walked off the roadbed to the on-ramp. I got a ride about ten miles to some small city and waited near I-80 for a few hours.
24. Guy going to Detroit took me to Route 41 and I-80. He got a speeding ticket.
25. Got a ride north to downtown Munster. Guy congratulated me on trek.
26. Another three-mile ride. Got to Hammond at 4:00 p.m. on New Year's Day.
27. Jeannie Grinsted (by pure coincidence) drove me to White Castle hamburgers. I looked up to Mr. Erikson's apartment window and saw the light on. I put my feet up and we talked about my great adventure.

## 1971 TO AUGUST

I hung around Whiting for a few days recovering from my arduous journey. I discovered Charlotte was now a raving Pentecostal. Dad had preached to her by telephone and my second sister was now speaking at me in tongues. I could not escape. Was the Hound of Heaven nipping at my heels?

I did some overdue accounting and withdrew my first student loan: \$1000 from the First Bank of Whiting. Big Jim Walker dropped me on Calumet Avenue and after

a three-hour hitchhike I reunited with my abandoned car. The doors were frozen shut and the battery was dead, but I was happy to resume my university lifestyle.

I didn't have a place to stay, but I had a pocket full of money. After a day of searching, I found a suburban house on Lynda Lane, spent \$250 of bank money, and moved in. I was accompanied by Mark and two hippie friends. Each agreed to contribute \$30 per month, but their money was slow in coming. I met Jim Richardson who played guitar in a rock band. After moving in, Jim needed space to practice, so drums, guitars, and amplifiers occupied the living room. Two band members began to couch-sleep in the day and noise-make in the night. Everyone wanted to stay, but no one wanted to pay. After three months of expense, I abandoned the property forfeiting my \$100 deposit.

My grades recovered: An A, two B's and two C's. For the Honors Colloquium my group met in Dean Lawhead's house. These dozen hours a week were an island of tranquility in a sea of chaos. I hooked up with a few girls, but nothing clicked. I was intelligent, but unstable; attractive, then offensive. I suffered from ennui; weariness and discontent of soul.

During times of depression and hallucination, my spirit—without prompting—reached back to my childhood days. I never recalled sermons or scripture verses. I rasped embedded hymns: "Praise Him! Praise Him! Jesus our blessed Redeemer. Sing, O earth, His wonderful love proclaim. Hail Him! Hail Him! Highest archangels in glory. Strength and honor give to his holy name." These words rescued me from abject despair.

My Catalina was back-smashed and three of us went to a local hospital. Our injuries were not serious, but the car was totaled and the driver uninsured. For the next several months I struggled without a vehicle. My thumb managed to get me back to Whiting every few weeks.

On a hitchhike north, a Purdue student picked me up near Lafayette. As we were talking on Highway 41, the driver scooted toward me and rubbed my thigh with his right hand. I shoved it away and he apologized. He said he was hoping I'd turn out gay. He added he was heading to a gay bar in Chicago and asked if I wanted to join him. Always wanting to broaden my horizons, I consented. It was an eye-opening evening. I drank a few cocktails while fending off several advances. The guy was cool and dropped me off at Walkers at about 3:00 a.m.

The stately Eliot Hall at BSU was reserved for seniors only. In the Spring term I discovered I had enough units to qualify, so I applied and took up residence. Regular sleep and meals helped me cope with depression. My roommate was a graduate student named Grubb, who led the *War Resistance League* on campus.

Every week we gathered at an anti-war rally. I accumulated a new set of friends, some idealists, some rowdies, and some—like me—just wanting to make the scene.

I followed Grubb and soon became a protégé. I helped him pass out handbills emblazed with the red clenched fist of civil disobedience. On April 30, a dozen of us anti-war activists piled into the back of a U-Haul truck and headed to Washington, D.C. Our goal was to shut down the capitol. My button read, “If the government won’t stop the war, the people will stop the government.” My travel bag contained a camera, handbills, snacks and water. The driver stopped every hour to lift the back hatch giving us a breath of fresh air.

May first, 1971, was crazy. About 30,000 protesters camped out in West Potomac Park near the Washington Monument grooving to rock music and preparing for political action. A fellow traveler provided me with two hits of LSD. I experienced the biggest bummer of my life and partook in my last experiment with hallucinogenics.

It was really heavy stuff and with all the music and strange antics in the park, my mind freaked out—tasting sounds and hearing colors. My primary hallucination was that the world would end at dawn. The distant shining monument appeared to be the gates of heaven and chattering protestors huddled around fires appeared as demons from hell. I must have blown my mind because I found myself lying in a medical tent babbling about four horsemen of the apocalypse. I recovered my senses during the night.

At dawn on May 2, bullhorns announced the park would be cleared. I woke sleepers as helicopters buzzed overhead. A few dozen of us spilled onto a street to block traffic. When we saw D.C. police busting heads, we ran for it. Two in my May Day tribe were collared by the cops. The remainder jumped into a VW minibus to watch the action from a safer distance. I rested in a sanctuary church then spent the night with compatriots from Virginia.

On the evening of May 3, I headed to Indiana in an overstuffed car. My satchel went missing and I mourned the loss of undeveloped film. At 4:00 a.m., as we were entering Muncie, a patrol car stopped us. They combed the car and the people in it, but found no dope. We spent a few hours in detention, then were released. May Day ended my activist career. I still searched for meaning, but I knew it could not be found in radical politics.

I was at a pot party when I hooked up with Patty. I regret taking advantage of that freshman girl from Whiting. For a while I experienced the best the world had to offer. I remember having Patty in bed with me and my best friend Grubb sitting across from me in conversation. We were passing hashish back and forth when suddenly on the radio my favorite song sounded: “Eight Miles High”. For a split second I thought, *I have sex. I have comradeship. I have dope and I have rock & roll. O, Lord! Why am I so empty?*

Soon my third year of college ended. Patty's father provided me with a ride home. I told my girlfriend I was going away for the summer. With a tear, she gave me her Saint Christopher's medal. I hitchhiked to Pendleton and spent a week with Mark stowing some of my goods in his basement. I remember us lying under a full moon in his backyard, bundled in sleeping bags, rambling on to each other through the night.

Mark's parents drove the two of us to Whiting and seven packed into Char's station wagon. Mark and I alternated driving while my sister managed four kids in the back. We traveled on the cheap; eating sandwiches and pausing for sleep only one night. Charlotte, Jimmy, Shelley, Chrissy, and Danny sheltered inside the car, while Mark and I stretched under the stars. In the wilderness of Wyoming, I awoke with a rabbit refusing to vacate my chest.

Charlotte was an incessant talker. Her sole topic was God—the Father, the Son, and especially the Holy Ghost. Mark drank in the gospel, asking question after question. I found myself an unwitting Bible teacher, knowing more scripture than my sister. Mark grew in knowledge as I meditated on the words pouring from my own mouth. I knew the Holy Spirit was gunning for me.

When I arrived at the John Foreman house, I fell under conviction. I perceived spiritual battle. Was my soul the object of targeted prayer? Were dark powers at work—like those who moved the Ouija Board? I suspected such. Mom embraced Mark and called it a *Pentecostal hug*. My buddy told me he didn't know what *Pentecostal* meant.

Mark had only to observe my dad to grasp the meaning. Dad was a Pentecostal dynamo. In later years someone wrote this testimonial:

John Foreman was a spiritual mentor to me and led me into the baptism of the Holy Spirit at a Full Gospel meeting in Longview. My life of miracles began that night. He was both a teacher and a role model for me. I attended the home prayer and Bible study meetings in Longview and saw every kind of miracle. Not only did I watch as John prayed for people's legs to be lengthened and see people's legs grow before my very eyes, but John prayed for me and then I prayed for others when I got home and their legs were healed as well.

Mark and I entered into many rap sessions with my family, especially with Frank and his new girlfriend Lelia. As religious renegades we escaped to Lake Sacajawea, smoked cigarettes, and talked about Jesus. Could it all be true? We could not refute their testimony nor deny their joy. But being a sinner does provide its pleasures. Were we willing to forego our debauchery?

Mark told me this story of his conversion: One night while he was trying to sleep, he felt under attack by demons. Dad and mom were still awake so he rose to talk with them. Finally, they prayed for him and he was filled with the Holy Spirit.

I felt abandoned after Mark's conversion and recognized pride as an obstacle to faith's return. If mom and dad were right about this Holy Spirit business, then I must be wrong. I had been arguing with Frank and others too long to concede.

After three weeks, Mark, Charlotte and the kids returned to Whiting. Without a job East or West, I lingered in Longview. Dad had purchased a 1961 VW Beetle. He allowed me to putter around town, mostly to shop and visit nearby family. The choice of this car had surprised me. He had once spoken of the VW Beetle as *Hitler's dream*. My father was certainly a changed man.

Dad was often a first adopter of gadgets. He lent me use of his new cassette tape player to hear famed Pentecostals such as Kenneth Hagin. I also watched TV shows by faith healers like Kathryn Kuhlman, and read several books by Christian apologist C.S. Lewis who soon replaced Khalil Gibran as a spiritual mentor. While dad favored the fervor of Hagin and Kuhlman, I appreciated the reflective reason of Lewis.

My father was the newly elected president of Full Gospel Business Men Fellowship International. On the second weekend in August, the fellowship held a convention in Boise, Idaho. I knew I could not return to college without Jesus at the center of my life. It was now or never. Which would it be?

## Chapter 8

# REVIVED

August 1971 to November 1972  
Muncie & Longview

*And he arose, and came to his father.  
But when he was yet a great way off,  
his father saw him, and had compassion.*

*(Luke 15:20)*

Like the prodigal son who came to his senses while mired in a stinky pigsty, I returned repentant to the sweet fragrance of my Heavenly Father. My revival was not splashy. Still waters run deep.

### AUGUST 1971

The day was fast approaching for my return to Indiana. I believed God had orchestrated the circumstances. Dad had long planned a drive to his Full Gospel convention in Boise and I agreed to accompany him. We talked the whole distance, but in deference, dad suppressed his glee. He realized inside I was kicking and screaming.

Of his entry into the Christian faith, C. S. Lewis famously remarked he became “the most reluctant convert in all England”. I can identify. My reluctance was not due to a lack of belief. I totally embraced the Christian gospel. I was reluctant because I counted the cost—which encompassed everything. I had adopted the view of *Invictus*: “I am the master of my fate; I am the captain of my soul”. If I chose to follow Jesus, there would have to be a new master and captain. I was reluctant to surrender my throne and to abandon my helm.

The featured speaker was a man named George Otis, former CEO of Lear Jet Inc. and baptizer of crooner Pat Boone. While dad whooped in the main convention hall, I joined a young people’s rally. I knew when the presentation concluded, the time had come for me to re-commit my life to Jesus. After stepping forward, I followed a dozen initiates into a gigantic hotel room. George Otis prayed for me; I was filled with the

Holy Spirit; I spoke in tongues. My experience was genuine but subdued. I was not an emotive person. My ecstasy arrived in a rush of joy, tears, and inner healing.

Of course, my dad and mom rejoiced at my *baptism in the Holy Ghost*. The lost sheep had returned. Yet the lamb continued to graze on the margin of the fold. Charismatic emphasis on healing, prophecy, and prosperity struck me as misdirected.

I came to view those baptized with the Holy Ghost along a spectrum: 1. Spirit Filled, 2. Pentecostal, 3. Charismatic, and 4. Holy Roller. I counted myself in group one, remained comfortable with group two, skeptical with group three, and put off by group four. My intellectual bent and contemplative nature disposed me toward the *Mere Christianity* of Lewis rather than the particular Pentecostalism of Oral Roberts. Still, I found true *agapé* love among all Spirit-filled believers.

Dad blessed me with a gift of his VW Beetle. I packed it to the window line, and installed a top rack for suit cases. Before pulling away from the house, my dad anointed the VW with oil. He made a small cross on the windshield—top center.

Accompanied by my sixteen-year-old niece, I began my journey east. Debbie had felt suffocated at home and leapt at the chance for adventure with her hippie uncle. We paused at coffee shops and slept outdoors. Once Debbie fainted in a stuffy phone booth. I kept a cautious eye on her for the next thousand miles and advised her to cut back on cigarettes. After we arrived in Whiting, I stayed with Charlotte while Debbie visited her cousins, Bonny and Julienne.

I drove my Bug to Pendleton, picked up Mark, and we settled in Muncie. Truly Mark was a converted man. He chuckled as he described how his parents marveled at the change. My companion and I had metamorphosed from *freak* to *Jesus freak*. Our outward appearance remained much the same, but our talk and demeanor had transformed. Mark helped me clean up my VW. As we washed, I noticed the smudged cross of olive oil, said a prayer for my father, and avoided washing the protection away.

While cruising down Riverside Avenue, I noted new construction and a sign proclaiming the “Christian Student Foundation”. This was the same outfit I hung out with in 1968. I stopped to investigate and conversed with Gary Edwards, the campus pastor. As I spoke with excitement of my baptism in the Holy Spirit, he appeared pleased, but apprehensive. I told him I considered myself a card-carrying member of the Disciples of Christ, but with an additional blessing.

Gary offered me an upstairs room for the Fall term at no cost. He was unable to charge, because walls were un-plastered and wood dust filled the air. He also asked me not to advertise my Pentecostal bent. As a revived Methodist, Mark found a nook a few blocks down the street.

Instantly, I acquired a bevy of new friends. Marge was CSF live-in secretary, like a house mother. I called her the “Bee’s Knees”. Ken, Jim, Steve, and Paul were co-

habitants. Girls like Susie, Laura, Cookie, and Boston hung around downstairs at odd hours. I slept on a floor mat and grabbed meals as I could. The CSF felt like a sanctified version of the Adams Street Hippie House. I was loving my senior year!

Bible study and prayer became part of my daily routine. One night in a dream, I heard a distinct voice repeat three times: “fifteen John five.” I awoke and guessed the words referred to a Bible verse, but had no clue as to content. I turned to John 15:5 and read: “I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing.” I determined to abide in Jesus all of my days. My friend, Susie, was gifted in embroidery. A vine and branch soon adorned the backside of my blue jean-jacket.

While walking on campus, I often ran into old friends from my dissipated years. I remember a heated conversation with a former radical comrade. Later I wrote him a letter explaining why I no longer attended any of the moratorium meetings against the war and why I withdrew from social protests.

What makes you think I have abandoned my desire to see justice rendered and lost my love for man? If anything, my love and concern for people has grown because I have found the source of all love. *God is love.*

Why should I spend my time treating symptoms (war, discrimination, and murder), when I can treat the causes (hate, prejudice, and anger) all of which can be summed up as sin. No amount of marching, protesting, voting, or lobbying can change the heart of a single person. Only Christ Jesus can rescue us from sin. Wars will not stop, until Christ is in the heart.

I no longer strive to stop this war or that war, but I strive to stop hate, because when hate stops, all wars will stop. Yes, our methods may differ, but our goals remain the same. You contend one man can change the basic attitudes and morals of another man. But I say only Christ and his Gospel can do that.

The Gospel of John became my favorite book of the Bible. Several of us residents wanted to publish a Jesus Paper and I suggested calling it *The Door* taken from John 10:9: “I am the door; by me if any enter in, he shall be saved, and go in and out, and find pasture”. We worked a few weeks, writing, typing, cutting, copying, and drawing in order to publish *Door* issue number one. A caption on my column read, “If you’re not close to God, guess who moved?” Kenny Hopper printed two hundred copies of the twelve-page paper in Indianapolis.

We promoted the first day of October as the Jesus Trip Festival, headlined by Pat Boone and supported by a multitude of Christian speakers and entertainers. It

was a full day of witnessing our faith, passing out *one-way* buttons, and distributing *The Door*. We promoted a theatrical release called *The Cross and the Switchblade*.

The hillside venue was filled with young people sitting on blankets. Two of my friends-to-be came to the Lord that day, Carol Bennett and Jim Rich. I was also introduced to Merle, Denny, and Sunny, adding them to my roster of Christian brothers and sisters. Charlotte drove from Whiting for the event with twelve-year-old Jimmy in tow. He told me in later years The Jesus Trip Festival was a turning point in his life.

An assortment of Jesus people attended an assembly at the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Mitchell. The atmosphere reminded me of my parents' charismatic gathering back in Longview. We clapped, shouted, and sang choruses. My favorite came from the gospel of John:

We are one in the Spirit. We are one in the Lord.  
And we pray that all unity will someday be restored.  
And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love.

For young people, these raucous occasions provided a safe space to flirt and pair up. I found myself in continual prayer that God would bring the right *Christian sister* into my life. An unvoiced question hovered over every female encounter. "Could this be the one"? Sexual tension abounded. I remember a time when Jim was interested in Susie, Susie was interested in Chris, Chris was interested in Sunny, and to complete the circle, Sunny was interested in Jim. Romance was a merry-go-round, each participant stretching a hand to take hold of the brass ring.

My Fall classes were mostly in Library Science and Education. I remember a Teaching Practicum class in which I was required to observe classroom teachers. I attended Clark School for three days, sitting in Mr. Roman's history class. I felt odd at twenty-one, older than students, but younger than staff. I met a neighbor of Arlene. She told me my ex-girlfriend was about to marry and the groom-to-be looked a lot like me. Was I to laugh or cry?

While in town, I also learned my buddy, Jimmy Francis, had fathered a son in Canada and had named him *Jason*. I recalled Jim had always favored that name as both manly and muscular.

To receive a public-school credential, I needed to student-teach for one full term. In preparation for the winter quarter, Lynn cut my long hair and Kadee helped me acquire a suit of clothes from a second-hand store. Charlotte arranged for me to rent space from Mrs. Walker, her mother-in-law. As I was driving my VW Bug to Whiting, the engine threw a rod and had to be replaced. It took one month and a bank loan to recover my little Beetle.

Following a Thanksgiving holiday with Charlotte, I began teaching at Whiting Junior High School. I shadowed Mr. Mihalo as he taught social studies to three classes of seventh graders and one of eighth graders. It took weeks to adjust to the formality of coat and tie.

For ten days, I observed Mr. Mihalo in action. I interacted with students only when he called upon me. That changed suddenly when his mother passed away and he took a month's leave. I felt like I was thrown to the wolves. I learned much about children and more about myself. Here's a story I wrote about student teaching:

I was in the midst of a history lesson when a spunky girl interrupted me and said, "Mr. Foreman, your face really looks shiny". She was being purposely disrespectful and I ignored her as if her comment didn't faze me. However, before I returned to school the next morning, I found some talcum powder and applied it generously to my face. I really rubbed it in so that my face wouldn't appear shiny. The next morning, as I began teaching with my powdered face, the same girl interrupted me and said, "Gee, Mr. Foreman, how come your face looks so white?" This was a game and as we glared at each other we both realized that student had conquered teacher.

When I met with Mildred Evans, my BSU supervisor, she offered advice on handling my mouthy girls and rowdy boys. "They won't care that you know, until they know that you care."

My nephew, Jimmy Walker, sat in my advanced seventh-grade class. He told me the definition of a *googol*, stating it was "a one followed by one hundred zeros." I was impressed. He added, "A *googolplex* is a one followed by a googol of zeros."

Then I discussed the offensive spunky girl. "What if I made Jamey go to the blackboard and write 'I won't talk in class' one googol times?" He laughed. We enjoyed our conversations.

My landlady, Mrs. Walker, was a difficult person to live with. I remember using a squirt of her catsup on one of my hotdogs. She scolded me to no end. Just after the Christmas break, I relocated a few blocks to the apartment of Bill and Yolanda Butler. Bill was a family friend from the First Church of Christ. He drove me to Lafayette, Indiana, where I picked up my repaired VW, forking over \$400 of bank-loan money. I then proceeded to Muncie resuming college life with my menagerie of friends. I was happy to ditch my monkey suit and return to denimwear.

A few girls in the house baked me a birthday cake and a dozen residents helped me blow out twenty-two candles. I disappointed Charlotte by spending Christmas Day at Mark's home and New Year's Eve at the Christian Student Foundation.

## 1972 TO NOVEMBER

New Year's Day holds a sweet memory. The foundation provided a chaperoned space in which to welcome the arrival of 1972. I initiated a long conversation with a pretty high school senior named Jo Caine. We talked for hours about the ways of Jesus and the ways of the world. After sharing a personal problem, she cried, I embraced, then we kissed. I pushed her to arm's length and sighed. Jo blushed. She was too young and I was too old. We exchanged a few letters but both recognized a romance that could not be.

I drove down to Pendleton with Mark and spent a few more nights with him and his folks. Both parents voiced their approval at the change in their son. For my last dinner in town, they invited the youth pastor to join us—a guy of about thirty. He talked to Mark about the Methodist church and presented his testimony about coming to Christ.

The next day, as I was leaving for Whiting, I asked Mr. Orewiler for directions to a local barbershop. I told him I was returning to teach and my hair needed grooming. Upon arrival, I sat in a chair draped in a gown. As the barber began to clip, the youth pastor strode in. He sat near the magazine table, sorting through the stack. I glanced at him but he never noticed me. He picked up a well-worn favorite and began to flip through the pages. Was that what I thought it was? Yes. When he flipped it sideways and un-furled the centerfold, he left no doubt. I chuckled to myself then waved at him as I left.

Returning to Whiting, life improved. I had reclaimed my commuter Beetle. Plus, Bill and Yo were very kind to me and I received much more than I gave. I grew to enjoy my boisterous junior high students. I managed to finagle a video camera from the athletic department and to record students as they recited lessons. My kids were thrilled to mug for the lens and view themselves for the first time on TV. The boys and girls knew I cared about them. My BSU supervisor sat in on that class and commended my pedagogical action. For the winter term she awarded me with eight hours of A and seven hours of B.

I hung out sometimes with my old Whiting girlfriend Patty, now a BSU drop-out. She would stop by my place and we would flit from food joint to shopping mall. With some of her crowd she drove me to Chicago to see Donovan in concert. Soon Patty stopped dropping by. Without sex as a bond, we discovered little in common.

In March, I moved back to Muncie for my final college term. Merle agreed to shelter me at his house, 401 Riverside. I admired his gracious hospitality. A constant flow of guests streamed through his front door, lounging on sofas,

petting cats, and sipping coffee. Some were my friends and some were Merle's friends. In the end, all became our mutual friends.

I was active in sharing Jesus with fellow students. I was outspoken in class, pushing back against professors who mocked the Bible. Some atheist debaters got the better of me. At times my belief system seemed incredulous: How could God send people to hell? Is Jesus truly the only way? Why is there suffering? Two things kept me on track. First was my encounter with the Ouija Board. That transcendent experience was undeniable and unexplainable through materialism.

Even greater was the testimony of the Paraclete; God's own Spirit witnessing to mine. I learned the distinction between *showing God* and *knowing God*. I could not easily demonstrate God's existence, but I never doubted His indwelling. The Holy Spirit was my ace in the hole, the *defeater-defeater* so to speak. Whatever clever argument could defeat me: whatever sour mood deflate me; the inner witness of the Spirit could in turn defeat. Often, the assurance came after I whispered to myself in miraculous tongues.

Frank and I kept up a correspondence. He was preparing for medical school and had set a July date to marry Lelia. My serious little brother desired to put away his *childish things*, specifying WLS radio, sports trophies, and marvel comics. At his behest, I filled a large carboard box with comic books and shipped his ex-treasure to Great Neck, New York. Frank also encouraged me to read more C. S. Lewis; and I did, everything I could lay my hands on. Lewis became my exemplar of a Christian who was both faithful and intellectual. He showed me I didn't have to abandon my academic brain to embrace my religious heart.

My final classes were History of High School, Selection of Library Material, Library Administration, Cartography, and an Honors Project. I was too distracted for rigorous study and my final grades were all B's. My four-year grade point average at Ball State was 3.242 out of 4.0

My honor's paper was titled: "The Jesus Movement: Revival of the 70's?" in which I compared the current Jesus movement to various awakenings and revivals of previous centuries. After Dean Steven Hall accepted the proposal, I procrastinated. Then I rushed, staying up for two nights while a female friend flirted and retyped. The final product was sloppy, besmirched with white-out. My sponsor appreciated the effort, even though I misspelled his name as "Stephan" throughout the paper.

In addition to my college classes, I sat with a Lutheran pastor to learn New Testament Greek. I didn't progress much more than the alphabet and a few dozen vocabulary words, but he inspired me to purchase the Interlinear Greek-English New Testament—still a fixture of my Bible study.

As the Spring term wound down, Denny led an expedition to a local cave. He called his passion *spelunking*. Sunny and Boston joined us squeezing down tight shafts and squirming over wet rocks. The girls refused to trudge further when bats flapped past their ears. By the time we fled to the car, the four of us were soaked to the bone, miserable, and complaining. Oddly, the next morning we bragged to others about our great adventure.

On May 24, 1972, I graduated with honors from Ball State University. My family came for the occasion. When my name was read out, I rose from the folding chair, strolled across the lawn on the main quad, and received my Bachelor of Arts diploma. My major was Secondary Education with an endorsement in Social Studies. My minor was Library Science.

I posed in my blue cap and gown, an honors cord around my neck. Dad chided me because I wore combat boots under the gown—a token of lingering nonconformity. The photo in front of the Christian Student Foundation shows me in the center, flanked by dad and mom. Frank, Lelia, Charlotte, Jimmy, Shelley, Chris, and Danny are huddled around. Other pictures of the day show dozens of my Christian buddies smiling back at my camera. It was funny. Every time I pointed the lens at Frank, Lelia would leap into his arms.

After a night in Muncie, the ten of us car-pooled up to Whiting. Dad bought an old pick-up truck to haul the last of his belongings retrieved from Rose's basement. Then our caravan headed west. Dad drove mom in the station wagon; Frank and Lelia followed in the pick-up, while Grandma Rose accompanied me in the VW bug. Rose peered out the side window mile after mile, often remarking, "How can there be a population crisis? There's so much open land."

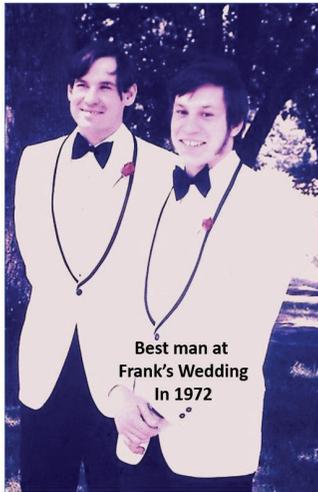
In Longview, my dad operated in full Pentecostal mode, fasting every morning and praying through the night. He had found the pearl of great price and he wanted to share its beauty with all he ever met. He also longed for the miraculous, something beyond mundane leg-lengthening and slaying in the spirit. God granted his petition.

The story goes as follows: Dad was working at the Reynolds cable plant where two-inch diameter strands of aluminum cable tighten around eight-foot wooden spools. One morning he heard shouts and rushed to a co-worker who was squeezed in a death-grip of winding cable. Operators unwound an unresponsive body and set it on the pavement. Dad lifted the victim in his arms and prayed fervently. Breath returned to his co-worker as an ambulance carried him to the hospital. The man survived without lasting injury to his body or brain.

The October issue of *Voice* magazine—a publication of FGMFI—ran a three-page article with the headline: “I prayed for a dead man, and literally saw a life loved back. I firmly believe that faith and assurance was the result of fasting and prayer.” John Foreman became a celebrity in the Full Gospel community. People in search of miracles flocked to our house.



**Rebel at Ball State  
in 1970**



**Best man at  
Frank's Wedding  
In 1972**



**Teaching in Korea  
In 1973**

A looming event was the wedding of Frank Foreman and Lelia Rose set for July first. On the Saturday before the ceremony, dad planned one last fling with his two unmarried sons. His goal was to leave the house for Mount Saint Helens at five in the morning. It would take a full sixteen-hours of daylight to reach the summit and return. However, Frank and I were lazy and we didn't head out until seven. The climb was a lark for the two of us and about half way up, dad spotted a serious climber quick-stepping downhill. After a powwow, dad ruefully announced we could not attain the summit that day.

Frank and I were not unhappy at the turn of events. We each had brought along a small patch of tarp and planned to sled down the mountain side. Things did not go well for me. The layer of snow contained pockets of exposed lava-rock. Once I gained momentum, I could not stop. Excitement turned into terror. Seeing a large outcropping ahead, I pivoted off the plastic, digging in my toes and fingers. Thankfully, I survived the harrowing slide with only a bruise to my ego.

Frank had invited his Seattle land lady to the wedding. He asked me to pick up Sylvia and drive her back to Longview. On the return trip down a small county road, I became confused not knowing whether to turn right or left. My VW

plowed straight ahead up a dirt embankment, breaking a front axle. I was unhurt, but poor Sylvia bumped her head.

The wedding was supposed to start at noon on the shores of Lake Sacajawea. Folding chairs and tables were in place. All participants waited for the delinquent best man. At 12:15 I hurriedly donned my tuxedo and sped to the lake. I was breathless; Sylvia was dazed; Lelia crossed her arms; and the ceremony began fashionably late. Lucy Rose served as bridesmaid, so I escorted her down a grassy aisle between chairs. Frank and Lelia exchanged vows under a large Douglas Fir. A singer and guitarist performed *Wedding Song* by Peter Stookey: "Wherever two or more of you are gathered in His name, there is love."

Back on twenty-third avenue, we held a reception for the newlyweds. Lelia opened gifts handed to her by eager-eyed Jenny and Laura. Tall Susie Zelen caught the bride's bouquet flung from the back patio. I can't remember how Sylvia returned to Seattle, certainly not by me. I eventually sold my broken Bug for \$450, getting cash for the undamaged engine.

A few days later, the Full Gospel Businessmen held a convention in San Francisco. By the time dad and I arrived at the downtown hotel, Frank and Lelia had already enjoyed two nights of honeymoon. We bopped around the Bay, gawking at the landmarks, before driving back to Longview.

By mid-July Don had left his position with Reynolds. Rumor had it my brother-in-law had been dismissed for cronyism, that is, for hiring his own father-in-law and brother-in-law unbeknownst to the company. But Don was an entrepreneur at heart and looked forward to making his own million. He began to manage a Hardware store in Chehalis and soon the Zelens purchased a farm in the little town of Napavine, complete with horses, gardens, and duck pond. Jack migrated with him, leaving real estate sales and assisted Don with appliance delivery. Jack grew closer to Don than to his own father.

At a later date, Frank wrote this story about how dad had converted my brother Jack:

John's boldness and zeal never wavered. At times, it went over the top. I remember being very uncomfortable as he and I prayed over my brother Jack to receive the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. It went on and on and on. Dad was commanding his son to speak in tongues. "Just say: 'ba be ba' and it will start." Finally, Jack babbled something just to get his father off his back. Dad and mom celebrated as Jack got up and ran out the door. I scratched my head and wondered.

Jack and Barbara bought a funky fixer-upper in Napavine. They were in the midst of major rehabilitation when their family suddenly expanded. I was first to

learn about Patrick's arrival. Alone in the Longview house, an adoption agency telephoned asking for Jack. They said it was urgent. Born on June 15, 1972, Patrick entered the family a few months later.

Almost simultaneously, Barbara's son from her first marriage arrived in Longview for an alleged *vacation*. Alan had spent most of his eleven years with his father in Scotland, his grandmother doing most of the child-raising. The vacation turned permanent and unexpectedly both a newborn and a pre-teen were part of the Foreman gang. Skinny Alan was fascinated by all things American. He fattened up on hot dogs the entire summer.

I found myself at a crossroads with no clue of future employment. Where would my life lead? First, I had looked for teaching positions in Indiana. I discovered a glutted market but that was okay. I wanted to move west anyway. In Longview, I handwrote one-hundred letters to school districts throughout the state of Washington. I received only a handful of rejection responses and one offer at an Indian Reservation that quickly evaporated.

In August I received a certified letter from the selective service in Hammond, Indiana, and reported to an assessment station in Portland. I passed the induction physical with flying colors. Uncertainty plagued my days and apprehension kept me awake at night. I wasn't keen on combat in Viet Nam, and applied to the Air Force for an aviation position. A few interviews looked promising, but then I failed a mechanical aptitude test. I was disheartened but not surprised. I knew my hand-eye coordination was sub-par.

A popular song from a musical called *Godspell* helped keep my spiritual balance: "Day by day, O dear Lord three things I pray: to see thee more clearly, love thee more dearly, follow thee more nearly."

Salvation from military service arrived from an unexpected quarter. Way back in March, I had visited a Peace Corps booth in the Ball State commons. I had casually filled out all the papers and mailed in my application. I had forgotten about it.

After the Air Force rejected me, I received a timely letter from the Peace Corps offering me a position in South Korea as a middle school teacher. I telephoned in my agreement and received a confirmation document. I was committed to begin service in November as a Peace Corps Volunteer (PCV).

Just two days later, I received *Greetings from the President*. I had been drafted into the U. S. Army. Fortunately, since I had already enrolled into the Peace Corps, my military duty was deferred. (I had dodged a bullet, so to speak.) I had ridden an employment roller coaster for three months and was glad to hop off.

Waiting for my PC start date, I found time on my hands. Every morning I walked around Lake Sacajawea and every evening I watched wood flicker in the fireplace. I was in the habit of strolling to a Salvation Army store to augment my wardrobe. On one visit I stumbled across a display of old Victrola 78RPM records. At first, I bought a few World War One recordings, playing them on my portable record player: “We don’t want the bacon. What we want is a piece of the Rhine”. Then I purchased a 1930s phonograph with a crank wind-up and listening horn. At twenty-five cents a record, my collection soared to over two hundred antique disks.

The Peace Corps sponsored an orientation session at the *Heart of Denver* Hotel. From October 21 to 23, I met many of my future comrades: Allen, Jim, Glen, Sherry, Karen, and Pat. I also met some of my soon-to-be Korean and American staff. We listened to lectures on language, culture, and survival.

I learned that Korea was called the *Hermit Kingdom* because of its self-imposed isolation. Western missionaries did not set foot on the peninsula until the 1880s. At the nexus of three world powers (China, Japan, and Russia), it’s a near miracle that little Korea had maintained a distinctive language and culture for three thousand years. It was the Korean War of 1950-52 that turned this obscure country into a household word.

My group of middle-school teachers was designated *K-25*, the twenty-fifth cohort to serve in Korea. I would be teaching English-as-a-Second Language (ESL). I was pleased God saw fit to direct my path in this unexpected direction.

Rather than catch a return flight to Portland, I decided to visit my family and friends in Indiana. I had planned to hitchhike, but a Colorado cop disabused me of that notion. Instead, I took a thirty-nine dollar/thirty-hour bus ride to Hammond. Charlotte picked me up at the station and I stayed with the Walkers for five days. I loved my sister and her four children. It was tearful to leave them.

I hitchhiked to Muncie on Halloween, landing at the Christian Student Foundation. Several dear friends were hanging out there, and when word got out that Chris had arrived, even more came to greet me. We gabbed through the night. The fellowship was fantastic. I thought of this re-acquaintance, *Is this what homecoming in heaven will be like?*

I stayed in Muncie a few more days, then traveled to Indianapolis. I met Carol tooling around the city in a Carman Gia. She offered to drive me back to Denver, but wanted a female companion. After a long phone call, Sunny agreed to accompany us. I liked Sunny a lot and I think she liked me. But we were both

shy and a romantic conversation never ensued. I was not commitment averse, rather rejection afraid.

The three of us drove to Whiting to stay overnight with Charlotte, then we began our westward journey. Somewhere west of the Mississippi River, Carol suggested we drive all the way to the coast. With three in agreement, we changed course. I was glad I possessed a Gulf credit card to pay for the miles of gasoline.

Traveling through South Dakota, we were listening to the radio. In a forty-eight-state landslide, President Richard Nixon had defeated George McGovern. The Democrat failed to carry even his home state—through which we were then driving.

The travel was not all pleasant. We got tired and cranky at times, mostly about when to stop and where to stay. I booked a single-bed hotel room in Wyoming for nine dollars, then snuck in the two girls. From there it was non-stop to Longview with Carol and I taking turns behind the wheel. The Cascades were treacherous with snow and I almost slid the little car into a ditch.

My Hoosier friends spent a few blissful days in the evergreen state but soon it was time for them to return home. I gave Carol the Gulf card with instructions to destroy it when she arrived in Indiana. I later sent dad money from Korea to pay off the \$110 gas charges.

I spent a full week at *Uncle Donald's Farm*. I looked after Alan and the Zelen kids as they traversed the Lewis County Fair. Debbie was trolling for boys; Susie and Nancy rode on horses; I helped Don John with amusement park rides; while Alan scarfed down hot dogs and cotton candy. I also earned a hundred dollars by charging people to carpark in Don's hardware store lot. With the help of Don and Jack, I constructed a sturdy treehouse near the poopy duckpond.

Back in Longview, I began filling my overseas bags, collecting items that would tide me over the next two years. I cassette-recorded five hours of rock & roll and five hours of classical. I compiled a rolodex of addresses for international correspondence and filled an album with photographs. I packed by Interlinear New Testament and three books by C.S. Lewis.

I also sorted belongings for storage, schlepping boxes of memorabilia, cartons of 78 RPM records, and odd pieces of furniture up into the garage attic. I determined to burn every trace of the faithless Arlene. I collected her love letters, her slides and photographs, then one-by-one consigned them to fireplace flame. I wanted to obliterate the very memory of that heart-crusher. Once again bitter tears flowed. "Tis better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all?" Oh yeah? Alfred Lord Tennyson must have never run across the likes of Arlene!

Thanksgiving at the farm doubled as my going away party. Dad thanked the Almighty for a bounty of both food and family. I felt as stuffed as my fifty-pound bag. As I looked at friendly faces and familiar surroundings, Korea seemed an infinite distance and two years an eternity. Yet I longed for the voyage.

Two days later, on November 25, dad and Frank accompanied me to Sea-Tac Airport. We were sharing a fast-food meal when I began to recognize familiar Denver faces. Dad laid hands on my head and Frank prayed. We walked together hefting giant suitcases. As I stood in the metal-detecting queue, my father and brother spoke a last word then retreated out of sight. I began to re-acquaint myself with fellow PCVs from K-25. A new chapter of life opened. I was about to board a jet plane and launch into the Far-Eastern unknown.

## Chapter 9

# LAUNCHED

November 1972 to September 1973  
Chunchon & Muguk, Korea

*Be happy, young man, while you are young,  
and let your heart give you joy in the days  
of your youth. Follow the ways of your heart and  
whatever your eyes see.*

*(Ecclesiastes 11:9)*

During my entire Korean adventure, I kept a daily journal, filling five notebooks over the course of 655 days. Journaling filled three needs. First, I anticipated my time abroad would be a watershed event so I wanted to record my experience, preserving a written record of this sojourn. Second, I lived an isolated existence, a big-nosed Westerner in a sea of Korean faces. Putting to paper my deepest feelings provided therapeutic release. Finally, journaling clarified my thoughts. As Flannery O'Connor once remarked, "I write because I don't know what I think until I read what I say."

### NOVEMBER 1972

My flight from Seattle to Tokyo took about eleven hours. I talked and played cards with a businessman seated to my right. I was impressed with a stewardess in my section. She was good-looking and read her Bible in spare moments. I was too shy to speak with her, so I slipped her a note. Miss Brabant and I exchanged a few letters.

At the Tokyo Airport I passed through immigration, health certification, and customs, then bussed into the giant metropolis. Downtown Tokyo was ablaze with neon, many of the signs flashing in English. I slept soundly at the Aksaka Hotel, totally jet-lagged, and almost missed the return bus ride to the airport.

I dropped by the zone of tax-free shopping and bought an Olympus Trip-35 camera, along with four rolls of slide film. After the four-hour flight to Seoul, I passed through immigration and customs once more, this time greeted by American diplomats. My cohort of thirty-five PCVs boarded a bus for our training location, the city of Chunchon, capitol of Kang Wan Province.

Along the route, I gazed at the barren countryside. I saw rustic farmers harvesting a cabbage crop with oxen pulling the wooden carts. I exulted in the absolute foreignness of this view until I noticed a smashed Budweiser beer can by the side of the road. Ugh.

## CHUNCHON

We arrived at the King Sejong Hotel where our training began the next day. I plunged into a new mode of existence, mixing with four groups of people: fellow PCVs from K-25, American teachers and mentors who were mostly former volunteers, Korean language teachers, and Korean hotel staff. I was given the new Korean name, *Oh Song-min*. The “Oh-min” sounded like *Foreman*, while *Song* translates as *Saint* or *Christ* or *Chris*.

The first few weeks whizzed by. Initially, my roommate was John Bell, but because he smoked like a chimney, I asked for a switch. Jim McGuire became my second roommate and turned into my best friend. His Korean name was *Meng Jinsu* and I mostly called him “Meng”. Our schedule looked like this: Korean language from eight in the morning to noon; lunch to one; language again until three; followed by some kind of ESL training until dinner at six. On most evenings there was an optional cultural event.

Meng and I sought out local color by exploring frozen side streets. Sometimes we purchased sweets from sidewalk vendors. At other times we sipped ginseng tea at a local *ta-bang* (tea room). At one tiny restaurant the waitress saw us entering and dashed to the stereo to put on “Tell Laura I Love Her”. *America, won't you ever leave me alone?* It is true I may go for weeks without seeing a Western face, but I can't pass a minute without seeing Western influence.

We snapped photos of sights exotic to our eyes. One such sight was the *honey dippers*. These were local farmers who emptied latrines. Each dipper carried a long pole across his shoulders with a balancing bucket attached to each end. They would lower the buckets into toilets, haul up the human waste and dump the stinking mess into crude wagons which were usually pulled by oxen. I was told no money changed hands. The farmers obtained fertilizer and the homeowners got rid of excrement. We quickly learned to walk upwind and across the road from honey pots.

Korean was a difficult language for me to grasp. To help the process, I was allotted a cassette tape player with four tapes of conversation. My pronunciation improved somewhat, but after a day of schoolwork I could never focus on the language tapes. To be honest, I listened more to recorded music than Korean dialog.

After a few weeks of classroom drudgery, each volunteer went on an outing to visit an established PCV. I traveled to Seoul with friends, then alone to the town of Kumsan. My Peace Corps host was Gus Stokes. He was my polar opposite, a want-to-be sports reporter obsessed with football, liquor, and hookers. He voiced a distaste for all things Korean and went through the motions of teaching. I observed his performance, then followed him to the Roman Club where he wished to educate me in drinking and whoring. He bought us a few bourbons and explained how I could procure a girl of the night for just one-thousand won (\$2.50). I sipped the liquor, but no girls showed up. We returned to his guest house at curfew—ten o'clock.

The next day, December 22, was a national holiday, the inauguration of President Pak Chung Hee. After dark, we walked into the bar again. This is my journal entry:

Just after Gus and I sat down and ordered drinks, a young lady walked through the door and snuggled up to Gus. She was all made up with ruby red lips. Gus said, "Chris, let me introduce you to my girlfriend".

I politely bowed and she giggled. *Wait a minute*, I thought. *I didn't know Gus had a Korean girlfriend.*

Gus continued, "And I have a girlfriend for you too. She wants to go home with you tonight." From out of the shadows a young lady stepped forward and winked at me. She was gorgeous. My eyes looked up and down her youthful body.

My mind raced between *yes* and *no*. Finally, I blurted "anyo" (no) and backed away. Gus stared in puzzlement as I fled from the club.

I later thanked God for enabling me to flee the Roman Club. If I had hesitated one more moment; if I had spent that one night in carnal delight, I can only speculate about how my future may have unfolded. Thank you, Lord, for provoking me to run out the door.

When I returned to Chunchon, I read accumulated letters from home. Along with my parents and the Zelens, Sunny had sent me a hand-made card complete with silly drawings. What could I make of it? Did her *silly* mean she was *serious*? Should I pursue her? I still couldn't figure out girls.

My twenty-third birthday came and went. With the Korean peninsula being sixteen time zones ahead of Ohio, I mused about when my birthday actually

occurred. On Christmas day I attended a ten o'clock service at Chunchon Holiness Church. I appreciated being in a throng of Christians as they sang familiar carols. I enjoyed bellowing the words in English.

On the day after Christmas, I presented my first ESL class, team-teaching with Andrea. Our lesson plan was based on the *May I* pattern: "May I stand up?" "Yes, you may stand up." I felt relaxed, but knew I could have done better. We spent an afternoon critiquing our performance.

On New Year's Eve, several friends and I hiked to a local Buddhist temple. I didn't make it to the top, because my big flat boots were too slippery on the snowy grass. After dinner, we gathered in the wedding hall—our activity center—for a party. I wandered around conversing with many and talking about Jesus to a few. I went to my room to pray-in the new year of 1973 and heard gongs and shouts herald its arrival.

## 1973 TO SEPTEMBER

Peace Corps training in Chunchon continued for two more months. As I review my journal of January and February, I glimpse a twenty-three-year-old youth, familiar to me yet distant; compassionate yet arrogant.

I hung out mostly with females, their sensibilities more attuned to my own. Karen Bachelor and Pat Lunitz were platonic friends while Lia Driver and Mary Davidson were romantic interests. With these two women the question always hung in the air: "Could this be the one?"

The few male friends in my life were introverts like me: Meng of course, Ed Haugh, Gordon, and Phillip. Allen Chernin was the refreshing exception. He was a curly-haired Brooklyn Jew who claimed he was born in a taxi cab. Allen was loud-mouthed and profane; expressing off-color thoughts that I kept sequestered inside my head. In a group of guys, I often acted as his straight man.

In my off time I played hours of scrabble. Meng was my usual opponent, but dozens of PCVs dropped by our room to compete. During scrabble marathons, classical music stimulated my brain cells—mostly Beethoven. One time, as I prepared for an overnight trip, I wrote down my *essentials* as "cassette player, tapes, journal, scrabble board, and clothes".

I played lots of ping pong, losing most matches. I displayed excellent spin, but possessed no slam. I kept up with events at home by reading *Time Magazine* and by listening to Armed Forces Korean Network (AFKN). The audio version of the Johnny Carson show was a late-night favorite.

I heard on AFKN that President Nixon declared an end to the Viet Nam war. I was dumfounded, assuming that conflict would endure forever. Then word came that

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Secretary of Defense Laird had called off the draft. A few months later, the selective service mailed me an official non-induction notice. I was off the military hook.

The bulk of my time was spent in the classroom absorbing the Korean language and practicing ESL skills. One technique of drill and practice was called *minimal pairs* in which Korean speakers tried to distinguish between English words that differ by only one phoneme. The liquid sound of R-L proved particularly difficult for Koreans. In one ESL lesson I drew on the blackboard a bowl of RICE accompanied by a bug drawing which I labeled LICE.

I would point to the top figure and pronounce “rice” then to the bottom one and shout “lice”. Middle school students roared with laughter as they struggled to distinguish the two. Other such minimal pairs were *juice* versus *Zeus* and *sheep* versus *ship*.

Our instructors insisted we publicly perform a traditional Korean song. They knew Korean hosts required American guests to entertain at party and restaurant functions. In fact, over two years, I was often asked to sing a song. My American song of choice was “Wake Up Little Susie, Wake Up” and the Korean song I mastered was called *Oma-ya, Nuna-ya, kang byung sal-ja*” which translates as, “O mother, O big sister, let us go into the mountains.”

Ad hoc groups of PCVs planned weekly outings, going to snowy mountain-top temples and drizzly southern ports. During these short excursions, I engaged my comrades in philosophic conversation. I identified two groups of volunteers: go-getters who viewed the Peace Corps as a stepping stone toward an academic or diplomatic career versus slackers who simply sought to prolong their adolescence by means of an overseas adventure. I, of course, resided in the latter group.

I noticed with some concern that my eyesight was not as sharp as it used to be. I visited a local optometrist and discovered my vision was 20/50 and 20/70. The Peace Corps bureaucracy in Seoul questioned my prescription, but the government ended up paying for my first-ever pair of glasses.

As the close of training drew near, I sat with Ed Scott, the head of Peace Corps-Korea, for a final evaluation. I passed with mediocrity. Gary Hendricks said I often arrived late to class and I slouched in my chair. He rated my language aptitude at 2 of 5 and my ESL skill at 3 of 5. Six of my cohort were sent home packing, never earning the title of *Peace Corps Volunteer*.

A few days later, with our ranks thinned to twenty-nine, we sat in the wedding hall to receive our assignments. I requested “the most remote site available” and

that's what I got. Muguk was the only location of twenty-nine listed as a *village* not a town or city.

On our final day as a unit, K-25 held a celebration. I acted in a Korean-language skit, earning a second-place certificate. Anorexic Becky won the award as "Miss Minimal Pairs" and Meng was voted "most likely to fall into an outhouse". As the evening wore on, my friend Christine overindulged in *soju* (Korean wine). I enjoyed her company, but when she sat on my lap and puckered for a smooch, I knew it was time to skedaddle to my room.

On the next day, we took a bus tour of the demilitarized zone, where I stepped past a conference table into North Korea. Then on February 25, at the Seoul headquarters, members of K-25 were officially sworn in as Peace Corps Volunteers. I now worked for Secretary of State Henry Kissinger.

I met Principal Kim and co-teacher Miss Pak on the following morning. We bowed and smiled, as Miss Pak translated my fractured Korean to my new principal. I accompanied them in a taxi, then an express bus to Muguk village.

## MUGUK

I stayed at the home of Mr. Yoo, a fellow English teacher. His humble abode included several interconnected rooms, a separate cooking area, gravity-powered outhouse, and circular water well. Electricity arrived intermittently. I occupied the premier structure, a twelve-foot by twelve-foot room with one sliding-door to an outside porch and a second to the family area.

This traditional Korean building was roofed with red tiles, supported by earthen walls, and covered inside with varnished paper and plaster. The building was *on-dal-bang* style which means the room was heated by placing charcoal beneath the brick flooring. The inside floor was barren. When sleep time came, a mattress, pillow, and blanket were placed over the warm spot. When meals were served, low tables replaced the sleep gear, then removed at meal's end. Not a single chair could be found on the entire premises. Mr. Yoo presented me with three prize books: The B volume of an old encyclopedia, a 1965 World Almanac, and a 1951 GI manual on meal preparation.

The family outhouse included a pig in the cellar. Occasionally I heard the snorts, especially as the pig consumed a fresh meal. I had once heard a Peace Corps rumor alleging that one lady volunteer fled to American in horror after she was nipped on the buttocks. I doubted the story at the time, but I could imagine such a thing happening in Muguk.

Mrs. Ahn was Mr. Yoo's wife. (Korean couples don't share a family name.) The three children were Weeju (a five-year-old boy), Chulju (a seven-year-old boy) and Mi-ran (a ten-year-old girl). The family joined me in this big room for meals, but I slept in it alone.

Korean cuisine was simple—rice and kimchi three meals a day. This two-part diet made sense in such a cold agricultural climate. Rice was the universal staple; the measure of wealth and the staff of life. The crop was harvested in the autumn and dispensed throughout the year. Kimchi was *pickled peppered cabbage*. Fields of Napa cabbage were harvested in October, chopped and mixed with hot pepper and salt, then buried in the ground in large ceramic pots. This two-part meal was served with various side dishes: seasonal fruits and vegetables along with small portions of meat or fish. My only American indulgence was instant coffee. I drank the dark liquid three times a day.

Once, when my instant coffee jar was empty, I tossed it away without considering the matter. A few days later, the discarded jar reappeared. The label had been removed and the glass container was filled with kimchi. This brought to mind my own American wastefulness as well as the poverty which abounded in Korea.

Located to the rear of my house and across a ditch, ran a paved road. It bustled with a jumble of pedestrians, ox-carts, bicycles, and the occasional honking automobile. In early March, frozen rice fields and drab mountains surrounded the valley floor.

Hygiene was challenging, especially in cold weather. I washed my hands and face every morning with one tea kettle of hot water and once a week I dropped by the village *mog-yok-tang* (public bath house) to get a thorough cleansing.

I suffered from food poisoning on two occasions, complete with projectile vomiting and explosive diarrhea. Without electricity and flush toilets, the nocturnal malady required two bedside buckets. Such episodes ceased after my stomach adjusted to the local cuisine.

Park Chung Hee was the president of South Korea. He was certainly an autocrat, but this ex-general strove to raise the standard of living, especially in the countryside. He instituted a program called *sae-mal-undong* or “the new village movement”. The green flag of this movement flew from every pole. Speech contests were held among high schoolers, and every morning, I opened my ears to the peppy theme music of *sae-mal-undong*.

Most schools in Korea were sex-segregated, either a boy’s school or a girl’s school. But because Muguk was such a small village, the local schoolhouse accommodated both genders. Most schools were also designated as a middle school or a high school, but I taught at a mixed Middle-High School of six hundred countryside children.

Public schools at the time were military in nature. All students wore black uniforms with white shirts. Boys’ heads were shorn and those of girls cropped. This practice was a legacy of Japanese military occupation magnified by South Korea’s

war posture toward the North. Every school day began with children standing at attention for *Tai-kook-ki* (national anthem). Twice a week, uniformed boys and girls marched on the parade field. Discipline was harsh for those out of step.

Muguk was home to one other American national. My compatriot was Father Kolinsky who lived a few blocks away in the back of a Catholic church. We often shared conversation and American delicacies like Salerno Butter Cookies and Ovaltine. Father Ko—as he was known— always sent me home with a well-worn paperback or an armload of old newspapers. I appreciated whatever he gave me.

To deal with isolation and homesickness, I was constantly posting and receiving correspondence. I mailed aerogrammes to family and Muncie friends. I stuffed Korean envelops with onion-skin paper and mailed them to Peace Corps buddies like Meng, Lia, Mary, Jim, Allen, and Ed. I spent hours a day in penmanship both journaling and corresponding. It was a joy to receive letters and packages even if American mail took four weeks to arrive.

As I review my early days in Muguk, I see a man in severe culture shock. My biggest challenge was bridging an *expectation gap*. Every day I failed because “who I was” differed so radically from “where I was”.

So, who was I? Chris Foreman was a free spirit—a child of the sixties. My generation learned to “question authority” and not to trust “anyone over thirty”. Plus, as a Peace Corps volunteer, I embodied the idealistic adventurer. As an American, I cherished individualism and as an introvert, I coveted privacy. On top of this, I assumed my personal set of values to be superior to all others. My Christian faith mitigated my arrogance, but sadly not by much.

So, where was I located? In regard to authority, Korea was still a traditional culture with a proud four-thousand-year history. The king had been an absolute monarch and no one dared question his authority. Subordinate leaders were vested with power down to village level. Households were headed by the oldest male, while women and children held minimal social status. Orders were to be obeyed and directions followed explicitly.

In regard to age, Korea was a Confucian society. Elders were honored and ancestors venerated. An entire village celebrated when an elder reached the retirement age of sixty. One day a month was set aside to decorate the graves of the revered deceased. Mr. Chung replaced Miss Pak as my co-teacher. When he learned he was five days older than me he thrilled to call me “little brother”.

In regard to privacy, Koreans lived in tight quarters. There was never an America notion of personal space. People packed onto busses and slept six to a room. Insistence on privacy was taken as suspicious behavior. What was that sneaky person up to?

In regard to individualism, Koreans took pride in their national identity; part of a larger Korean collective. They celebrated a common blood, common purpose, and common culture. I once heard that a Peace Corps volunteer disparaged an old man by saying, "I can't tell you people apart. You Koreans all look the same." To which the elder sincerely responded, "Thank you."

Given this circumstance, it's no wonder I ran into trouble. I battled my school principal, whose actions seemed arbitrary and needless. He required me to remain on school grounds from nine to five o'clock just like the rest of his faculty, even though I taught only three of these hours in the classroom. Since I could not converse in Korean, I wanted to experience local sights as a tourist. I often snuck out the front gate. Fellow teachers spied on me and the vice principal tattled to the boss. To his credit, the principal did consider me a special case, but there was constant tension.

As a matter of fact, I was a special case to all Korean teachers. Most had never rubbed shoulders with a creature of my appearance, language, and manner. Some looked down upon me as an oddball or outcast. However, most looked up to me as an ambassador from a dominant nation enjoying special privileges. I was permitted to be a non-conformist; I could act out in ways they could never dare.

One bridge between me and fellow teachers proved to be soccer. Every Wednesday teachers picked sides to play their favorite sport. Since I was young and athletic, I was always assigned as goalie. This position fit me well. I didn't need to coordinate movement using language and I could punt the ball farther than any of them.

I constantly asked teachers about inexplicable events, and the answer was usually, "We don't know" or "It's Korean custom". I remember preparing for a full day of classes only to arrive at school and have the principal announce a full day of physical exercise. *What? Are all classes cancelled? Then why am I expected to remain in the kyo-mu-shil (teachers' room) all day long?*

On another day, I was writing on the blackboard, when a student poked his head in the door, yelled something out, and all my girl-students dashed from the classroom. Startled, I discovered later a provincial leader was coming and all students were required to sweep and scrub.

I remember *wooly caterpillar day*. When I arrived at school, morning classes were cancelled. All six hundred students were given chopsticks and a hundred glass jars were distributed. Teachers were issued long bamboo poles. I followed this outing shooting pictures of boys and girls as they collected jar after jar of crop-destroying caterpillars. Students would pick them off plants with their sticks, or off the ground when teachers dislodged them from tree tops. I actually enjoyed that bizarre experience, but I did not teach English that day.

I didn't mind staying in Mr. Yoo's large guestroom. I enjoyed the times his three children hung out with me. The boys taught me two children's songs. *San toki tokay ya* was about mountain rabbits, and *Sagwa katan ne owlgul* compared a baby's face to an apple. The kids fit into my world as surrogate nieces and nephews.

However, I ran into problems with my host and landlord. Over a period of three days, Mr. Yoo boarded family guests. For three nights my *private* lodging sheltered four relatives who stumbled in after dark stinking of drink. From that point, I began to seek out a private *ha-suk-chip* (boarding house). Mr. Yoo took umbrage and for a while forbade his children to visit me. I think he needed the money the Peace Corps provided him for my upkeep. We eventually reconciled, but hard feelings remained.

I found myself in a continual complaint mode; whether it be about silly rules, primitive facilities, slow service, or unresponsive bureaucracy. I failed to appreciate the tradition and virtue of the Korean people. I demanded respect, yet failed to dispense it. Much of my discontent fed upon miscommunication which led to mistrust.

One of my irritations concerned photography. The local camera shop developed black and white prints in three days. Always impatient, I ended up paying an extra four hundred won (50¢) for one-day service. I complained to the shop keeper because it took two full weeks for color slides to process in far-off Seoul.

My favorite picture-taking location was an idyllic garden spot perched high over the village. In later years, I wrote "Staircase to Nowhere".

Soon after I arrived in Muguk, I discovered a nearby stairway. This wasn't an ordinary set of stairs, but an elaborate concrete structure of about one-hundred steps winding from a roadside restaurant to the top of a high hill, terminating on a surface area overlooking the entire village. I couldn't figure out the purpose of the stairs. Why would anyone build such a huge staircase just to visit grass and wildflowers? But the view was truly spectacular and I have pictures of Mu Kuk in the winter, Mu Kuk in the spring and Mu Kuk in the summer.

It surprised me that the stairs were in such disrepair. Erosion knocked many steps out of kilter and most had cracks running from side to side. I asked my Korean family to walk up with me, but they seemed reluctant and I always walked the stairs alone. The place remained a mystery.

After a few weeks away, I crossed the familiar bridge and walked toward the concrete stairs, but they had vanished! I was really puzzled by all this and finally decided to talk to one of the English teachers about the mystery.

Mr. Lee shook his head sadly and told me this story: "During the rule of the Japanese, Mu Kuk was administered by a cruel magistrate. He forced local farmers to construct a large concrete stairway to the top of the highest hill.

On the summit he built a Shinto shrine where Japanese officials gathered to worship and lord it over their Korean domain. The place was despised by the locals and on the day of liberation, the people ran up the stairs and tore down the shrine. The stairs were too bulky to destroy and so were abandoned.” He added, “Just last week the mayor decided to break the concrete into pieces and haul the debris to a local water project.” How sad I thought that such a beautiful place had such a sorrowful history.

I escaped from the isolation of Muguk almost every weekend. Sometimes I paid visits to friends; Eumseong to see Gerry, Cheongju to see Mary, and Suwon to visit Meng. I also traveled to Seoul to revive my lagging spirit. At the Peace Corps building volunteers greeted me in the lounge. We conversed and shared woes and meals. It felt like rising from the ocean depth to breathe fresh air.

On May first, I moved away from my adopted family and into a guest house. The accommodations improved and I experienced more privacy, but still I felt empty. I confessed to my journal:

I want to go home. I'm not happy here; but neither am I unhappy. I'm just dead inside. I feel like I'm sitting on a three-legged stool, staring at a blank wall with a blank face and blank mind. What am I doing here in Korea? To what end am I doing it? I can't feel it anymore! I can't pretend to feel it.

I know what it is. I don't love anything here. I may like it and appreciate it, but where is the passion? Can that be why I don't feel? I must love and be loved in order to be real.

In Korea, I don't share of myself. My inner-most parts are withering in a dungeon never seeing light. I do not love and I do not share.

I thought my tour in the Peace Corps would change my life into something positive and worth living, but, But, BUT. It's more of the same. Lord Jesus, hear my plea. Have mercy on me a sinner and return to me the joy of thy salvation.

As May progressed, my mood improved. The weather brightened and the countryside blossomed. Girl students changed from long pants to skirts. My morning routine included thirty-three minutes of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. I pushed the cassette button at 8:15, knowing the four movements well enough to time my exit. My punctual sensibilities thrilled when I could click off the music at 8:47, rush out the door, and enter the teachers' room at 9:00 on the dot.

I enjoyed teaching my girls and boys American songs. I never knew how they would react. “Are you sleeping” was easy for them to sing, but “Row, row, row your boat” brought them to giggles. Those three initial R sounds proved impossible for them to articulate.

On May eleventh I journeyed to Seoul for a three-day language workshop. I dubbed the bus driver “Speed Racer” because he sped to the capital city in just two and a half hours. For me, the academics were secondary. I cared more about meeting friends than learning language. I connected with dozens of buddies in the Peace Corps lounge. Then I perused the current Newsweek magazine; the pages filled with Watergate scandal. *Could President Nixon really get impeached?*

Lia and I hung out a lot. We shared a meal and a movie. I played for her a recording of a favorite 78 RPM by Montana Slim: “Makes no difference now what kind of life they hand me”. She commented it was so melancholy, so like me. I was unable to decipher her. So, was Lia interested in me as more than a friend? I floundered in uncertainty. Again, my fear of rejection outweighed my desire to become intimate. I confessed to my journal, “Faint heart ne’er won fair maiden.” Still, my heart remained faint.

Back at my hotel, I roomed with Allen. We talked until dark then I began to write in my journal. He looked over my shoulder and commented, “If I ever write a book about Korea, I’ll title it “Two Years in a Whorehouse”. Allen then went out to the streets to conduct research for his proposed book.

After he left, two PCV girls sauntered into my room, inviting me to join them in smoking weed. I politely declined and continued to write and read. Allen returned after midnight, inebriated and unsuccessful in his data quest.

The next day I had a chance to talk with the two girls in the adjoining room—Peggy and Diane. Peggy asked why I didn’t want to get high with them. The discussion turned religious, Lia joined in, and after a few hours, I led Peggy to the Lord. She really wanted to know about Jesus. She asked me to write her explaining the gospel. I counted my day as blessed.

Just before leaving Seoul, Lia and I dropped by the local camera shop to pick up a batch of black & white photos, but the prints were still sitting in development fluid. She laughed out loud when I sang out to her in falsetto, “Someday my prints will come. Someday we’ll meet again.”

I spent two weeks in Muguk, missing my good times in Seoul. Throughout South Korea, May was designated “Defend Freedom Month” and May eighteenth was “Anti-communist Day”. I helped four students write patriotic speeches to deliver in English. I considered the whole exercise rather hokey.

I was often startled by the cruelty with which teachers punished students. The designated punishers were the vice-principal and the P.E. coach. I witnessed a dozen girl students get their hands wacked with a ruler for failing to display proper uniforms. At one outdoor assembly all the boys were ordered to empty their pockets. Any student found with cigarettes was slapped and knocked to the ground. Boys so punished had to return to their feet and suffer abuse again.

A few weeks later, I visited Allen. I wrote about an incident that occurred at his school:

In June, Allen invited me to visit his Middle School in Seoul. I left Muguk on a Saturday morning with my camera in hand. When I arrived, he was just finishing his English lessons. Allen asked me to wait in the teachers' room for a few minutes until his class finished.

I introduced myself to the vice-principal and met some other teachers. After a few minutes, a young boy-student entered the teachers' room and stood in front of the P.E. teacher's desk. I didn't have anything else to do, so I watched the proceedings. It seemed odd to me, because the teacher purposely ignored the boy. I'm sure he saw the trembling student, but he just shuffled papers and joked with fellow teachers. The student stood rigid at attention in front of the big desk, his black uniform out of place in the room of suit and tie.

After ten minutes or so, the P.E. teacher began to shout at the student. I couldn't understand the words but I sensed the anger. The teacher yelled out a question ending with EH? and the frightened student would whimper a meek answer. The teacher got red in the face and finally began to hit the student with a blackboard pointer. Most other teachers were looking on and grinning. I looked away for a while, but looked back as if witnessing a train wreck. The P.E. teacher got out from behind his desk. He grabbed the boy by the shirt and belt and hurled him like a bowling ball across the slick floor. BANG! The boy hit some steel lockers and remained on the floor shaking. The teacher picked him up and smacked him in the face. Again, he hurled him against the lockers. Again, there was a loud bang as head hit steel.

In my heart I knew that the student was being mistreated. I felt I had to intervene. My Korean wasn't very good and I knew my words would not have stopped the beating. My camera was around my neck, so I took it in my hands and walked to where the angry teacher could see me. I pretended to take a picture of the incident.

I took a few steps back and pretended to take another picture. The P.E. teacher looked puzzled then he took a few steps toward me. Two fellow teachers took him by the arms and I quickly left the room.

I waited outside for Allen, sitting on the front stairs. My adrenaline was still pumping when he met me several minutes later. I asked if he were in trouble with his principal. He said that the principal was mad at him, but not to worry about it because I had done the right thing. Allen told me that the seventh-grader was being punished because he held a part-time job. It was against the rules for any student, no matter how poor, to work in a shop. When he told me that, I replied “In that case, I’m glad I brought my camera with me today.”

Mr. Chang was my daily companion in Mukuk. As my co-teacher, we coordinated our classroom schedule. I would conduct drill and practice while he would lecture. We eventually grew into a proficient tag team. As an English speaker, we spent after hours together as well. He dropped by my room every second evening usually with boy-students in his company. Sometimes I enjoyed our get togethers, more often they proved annoying.

Gerry lived down the road in Um-song. He was a K-23 volunteer and was in the process of returning to the States. After a few visits, he agreed to bequeath me his excess property. On one trip, I wrestled home a fifty-pound bookcase and on another occasion, I rode his bicycle back to Muguk. It was a sturdy simple bike, but bumpy roads required constant upkeep. Fortunately, the guy at the local bike shop kept my vehicle well-tuned at a low cost.

The bicycle brought joy into my life. I raced to school and peddled around town. One June day school was not in session because it was *rice planting day*. On a whim, I decided to bike all the way to Cheongju to visit Mary Davidson. That distance was about one hour to Um-song then another to Mary’s school—four hours round trip. I brought along a satchel of water bottles and headed north.

I lunched with Gerry in Um-song while he was having a going-away school party. I also shelled out two-thousand won for a padded bicycle seat. Then I headed to Cheongju. This leg of my journey was arduous. I walked my bike up long stretches of steep switchbacks, but the following miles of downhill proved exhilarating. As things turned out, Mary wasn’t home. I hung out in her guesthouse for a few hours reading her paperbacks, then as I was leaving, she showed up. We shared tea, cakes, and conversation but shadows were growing. It was time for me to head home.

I really pushed my body on the return trip. My butt hurt and my muscles ached. I did pause to take a few pictures of the hundreds of farmers, families, and students toiling in the rice fields. I straggled into Muguk as the last beams of light passed behind the mountains. My landlady was surprised to see me so disheveled

and offered me my evening meal and pan of soapy water. I partook of both and brought to close a long day.

The next morning, I brought three pairs of pants to the laundry/tailor shop. He measured me and took the waist line in about two inches. I had lost fifteen pounds since arriving in Korea.

On June 22, I took a long train trip to the southern coast, to Ul-san to visit Lia Driver. I really liked her. I confessed to my diary that I was *in fantasy* with Lia. Yet my heart was faint. Being a K-23, Lia was in her final days of Peace Corps service. I toured some local sites with her and attended going-away parties. She lent me *Out of the Silent Planet* by C.S. Lewis which I read intently over the three nights I lodged in Ul-san. Between Lia and me everything seemed chemically combustible, but a spark never ignited a romantic fire. Similar to my non-romance with Sunny in Muncie, if I had kissed Lia just once, who knows how my life may have altered.

The months of July and August were *optional summer school* in Korea. Some children continued to study at extra expense while others worked in agriculture. On June 30, I bussed to Seoul to attend the wedding of Christine Miller. She was the PCV who wanted to smooch me a few months earlier. She had found an army sergeant to share her smooches. I threw rice at the newlyweds as they emerged from the Camp Page chapel. I didn't say much to her; just clasped her arm and wished her God's best.

While in Seoul, I attended a send-off celebration for all K-23 PCVs. We hugged our final goodbyes. I exchanged American addresses with Mary and Gerry. Lia was about to catch a flight to Paris, so I joined the line for a last embrace before her departure. I put my hands on her shoulders and looked at her with sad eyes, then I pecked her on the cheek. As I turned away, I heard a whisper, "Someone finally kissed someone." I glanced back, she smiled, and I walked into the evening wondering about what could have been. Why is love so elusive?

On July 1, I stayed at a hotel which hosted dozens of volunteers. After weeks of English-as-a-second-language, how great it was to express inner thoughts in my mother tongue! I mixed with a host of recent acquaintances, spending hours in conversation with Diane Ferramonti. I liked this woman. She was K-26, a university teacher with a master's degree. She had taken vows as a nun, but never joined a Catholic order. In the evening, I visited her place and she prepared a delightful dinner for me. I invited Diane to visit my countryside home.

In July, I carried on a whirlwind romance with Diane. She shot into my life like a rocket then crashed to earth in a ball of flame. On July 6 Diane paid me a visit in Muguk. I gave her a tour of the village and my middle school classes. All

this was a stark contrast to her cushy environment at Ewha Woman's University in Seoul, but she was game to experience the rural adventure. She checked into an adjoining room in my guesthouse. We talked and joked long past midnight.

The next day we departed on a big outing to the swimming pond. Mr. Chung and a few students joined the fun. We procured a bicycle for Diane and we all peddled down a rippled road to the water hole. I lent her a t-shirt and shorts and we took the plunge. I swam one-hundred yards to the far side then back to the middle to meet Diane. I gave her a big body hug savoring her buxom figure. After an hour we dried off and headed home. Poor Diane. She struggled with her bike, so I switched with her. Still, she arrived back at the guesthouse bruised and bedraggled. I figured this was a test of sorts. I reckoned she liked me because she endured this punishment with grace. After an evening meal, I promised to meet her at her college on the following weekend. Diane was on my mind and heart for the next six days. Was she the one?

On July 14, I headed to Seoul for a weekend rendezvous. Diane's college apartment consisted of two side-by-side rooms. I stayed the first night in the smaller of the two. She walked me around Ewha University and I looked in on some of her classes. We talked and laughed until midnight. Then she asked, "Is it okay if I rub your back?" I consented and our friendship exploded into passion.

It had been so long! Her lips, her body; her sexual frolic, ecstasy. She drew a line before consummation. "Okay", I assured her. "That's as far as we go." As our fires cooled, I confessed, "Diane, I will make you a good friend. I can make you a passionate husband, but I lack the self-control to make you an honest boyfriend. Please figure out what you want. I'll follow your lead."

I attended mass with Diane on Sunday morning and in the afternoon, we walked to some of her downtown haunts. Once again, unbridled passion thrilled the evening, but I knew where to draw the line. Neither of us wanted the night to end. About three in the morning, we collapsed from sheer exhaustion. At daybreak, she shook me awake, asked me to dress quickly, and vacate her apartment. Diane said a scandal could ensue if word got around that a gentleman shared her room. She might even lose her job. We kissed goodbye and I was out the door.

Back in Muguk, my thoughts churned in circles. What was this about? Is it a game? Is she real or an illusion? Will I marry Diane or is she history? Why are my thoughts gravitating to Lia? On July 22, I traveled to Seoul once more seeking answers. As Diane and I sat across from each other in a tea room, she explained it was time to terminate our relationship. She claimed she did not love me. My feelings were truly mixed. I was crestfallen at the rejection yet relieved of the burden. I liked Diane but we were incompatible. I partied with other PCV friends that evening and Diane left my life as quickly as she had entered it.

I wrote my ex-girlfriend a long letter expressing my frustration. I ended it with a lyric from Bob Lind: "Don't be concerned, it will not harm you. It's only

me pursuing something I'm not sure of. Across my dreams with nets of wonder, I chase the bright elusive butterfly of love.”

After spending several days with Meng in Suwon, I traveled to the east-coast resort town of Gangneung. About twenty of us PCVs had signed up to participate in a government workshop. The provincial governor was on hand to see how the experiment would fare. We five Americans shared accommodations with a dozen young Korean diplomats, not only teaching formal English lessons, but also sharing meals, entertainment, and daily life. This select group of young people was intelligent and motivated to learn.

Our hotel sat on the shoreline with cool breezes chasing away summer heat. Every evening, we walked the beach, sometimes braving an invasion of jellyfish to splash in the refreshing Sea of Japan. Our Korean hosts continually corrected us by calling this body of water “the East Sea”. My two-week holiday of fine food and excellent accommodation passed all too quickly.

I returned to Muguk, but remained for only a few days. The Peace Corps was sponsoring a re-training session in a town called Euseong. I decided to attend but I added adventure to academia. I packed clothes, supplies, and sleep gear into a duffle bag. I bought a large-scale map of Korea to help me navigate the roads. The odd thing was, I could not purchase just a road map of the Republic of Korea. For political purposes every map showed a single nation from the Yalu River to Jejudo Island. With a pair of scissors, I cut off the portion north of the DMZ.

The skies were dark as I began my fifty-mile trek; and after just a few miles, rain began to pour in buckets. I kept peddling, speeding down a highway until a policeman told me only motor vehicles were permitted on the road bed. Next, I found a dry spot under a bridge, but an old man told me it was illegal to sleep outside. Next, I hung out in a large culvert for a few hours, but I garnered attention. A group of half-naked kids sat pointing at me in wonderment. *Me-guk sa-ram! Me-guk sa-ram!* (American! American!)

Well after midnight, I stumbled upon an overnight guesthouse and slept soundly until morning. The next day I peddled my poor body into Euseong, checking into the Peace Corps hotel. After cleaning up, I met dozens of my friends who were amazed at my travelogue. Unfortunately, I also met Diane.

My ex-girlfriend ignored me, sometimes carrying on polite conversation in the presence of others. It's not that I harbored any romantic feelings toward Diane, but just being near her accentuated my loneliness. I longed for intimacy, confiding to my journal: “Chase love and it will flee from you. Flee from love and it will find you.”

I spent time with friends like Allen, Gordy, and Ed, but I was depressed. I attended Korean language sessions, but my heart was not into learning. I often

slept late, missing a few hours of morning instruction. I wrote, "I guess I like sleep because it comes closest to oblivion."

I remembered that August 18 was the day Debbie Zelen was to be married. Jeanne wrote me that she could not see what attracted her daughter to Denny Necker. I had insight into my niece's motives. Sometimes a person marries to escape loneliness, to hope for happiness even in a forest of red-flags.

The ten days proved difficult. I felt as if I were in exile from life. I wondered again what I was doing on this far side of the globe. Rain fell every day. I remember sitting at a sidewalk cafe slurping noodles with Allen. He told me that he had purchased a half-price ticket home by agreeing to accompany orphans from Seoul to New York City. I decided to look into that. Maybe I could fly home over Christmas.

Pelting rain made further conversation impossible but Allen was reluctant to step into the downpour. I shouted to Allen, "Don't worry. This fiberglass roof makes the rain sound more important than it really is."

I biked home on August 25, experiencing rain one moment and sunshine the next. I splashed through puddles as trucks splattered me with road spray. By the time I finally straggled into Muguk, I was sunburned and muddied head to foot. My Korean friend at the guest house ordered me to assume the push-up position while he hosed down my entire body.

After a few days of recuperation, I traveled to Seoul to check out the Holt Adoption Agency. I filled out an application form, paid twenty dollars, and provided two photos. I discovered that the agency was headquartered in Eugene, Oregon, and began to converse with the representative. She discovered my charismatic predilections and invited me to a prayer meeting.

Mrs. Devoir drove me to a missionary's house where dozens of believers were assembled singing praise songs. It was being transported back to Longview. I requested "Silver and Gold Have I None", one of my dad's favorite tunes. The leader of the group asked if anyone had a miracle testimony. I raised my hand and shared the miraculous circumstance by which I had arrived at this house of praise.

At the start of September, I participated in a *mid-service conference*. The two-day event was held in Seoul and involved Peace Corps volunteers providing feedback to administrators. A few dozen of us sat around a large table and spoke directly to area reps, directors, as well as officials from the Korean ministry of education. The most hotly discussed issues were site selection, corporal punishment, and money. Prices in Korea were rising faster than our monthly stipends. As usual, my interests lay outside the conference room: mixing with friends, recording cassette music, and figuring out life.

When I returned to Muguk, the school year was just beginning. Mr. Chung and I were busy planning and co-teaching middle school classes. The weather grew variable: cool one day and hot the next. I switched out my summer short-sleeves for sweaters. From Jim Francis, I received notice of a second son named Ryan and from Sister Jeanne, a note that she was pregnant with baby number five. I noted in my journal there were four things I liked: 1. sorting photographs, 2. writing in my journal, 3. receiving mail, and 4. reading my Newsweek magazine.

On the fifteenth of September the village of Muguk, like the rest of South Korea, held a daylong air raid drill. As sirens screamed, all shops were shuttered, traffic was stopped, students marched, and police motored their vehicles up and down local roads. I sheltered in my room napping and enjoying the four things I liked.

September 17 was a momentous day; the day I decided to quit Muguk. Several events conspired to harden my resolve. First was the cancelation of classes. I had just opened my lesson book, when word came that all students were required to sweep and scrub the school grounds because the military inspector was due at the school. Just when students were reassembled in classrooms, again they were dismissed. This time because the cleaning job was not adequate and they had to tidy up again. The dozen who did not demonstrate janitorial aptitude were marched onto the parade ground and swatted with sticks. I sat in my empty classroom listening to the shrieks.

I wrote in my journal:

How can I explain my wanting to leave? I simply must go. The only joy in my work turns into my greatest pain—my students. It's such an upper to see happiness in their eyes when they learn something new, but such a downer to see pain in their eyes under the rod of an unmerciful teacher. I just can't stick around any longer. I may be able to endure Muguk for another year but why? Just to say I've done it? I'm going to Seoul to see what else I can do.

The next day, I impulsively jumped onto the first available bus to the capitol city. I stood for a while cramped in a corner. Babies were wailing. Passengers were bouncing. I finally acquired an open seat, but a woman plopped onto my armrest using my shoulder as her backrest. I called the experience "a cramped, movable three-ring circus, available for the price of a bus ticket."

I had hoped to get a job in Suwon as a conference planner, but that position was already promised. Then I hoped to transfer to the PC HQ in Seoul managing the library, but that job was discontinued. Finally, I spoke with Mr. Williams, the director of Peace Corps-Korea, who said my only option was to transfer to another middle school, but that change was not guaranteed.

Mr. Song was the Korean liaison to schools in my province. He traveled with me back to Mu-guk and spoke with Principal Kim. The man was shocked to learn of my desire to leave his school. He asked me to reconsider and promised changes. I hesitated, but my resolve stiffened. I asked Mr. Song to proceed with my transfer. I could see the principal was trying hard to accommodate me, but I could also perceive a culture of Korean education too deeply embedded to make serious change.

The next day, I traveled with Mr. Song to the city of Jecheon, about sixty miles north. We met with the principal of the city's middle school and he offered to accommodate me in his English department. A deal was struck, but I still had to wait for the official papers to process through the American and Korean bureaucracy.

My final week in Muguk was surprisingly sad. I didn't realize how attached I had grown to my village, my school, my English teachers, and my guest house. Fellow teachers even sponsored an unofficial going-away party for me. Mr. Yoo and his little boys were tearful to see me leave town and provided an elaborate meal on my last night in Muguk, September 30, 1973.

## Chapter 10

# ENRAPTURED

October 1973 to March 1974  
Jecheon & Seoul, Korea

*Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.  
(Proverbs 31:10)*

My steps led me to the city of Jecheon. My heart led me to a wise and virtuous woman. Could such a thing really happen? Could God's providence be so great? Could the name of my beloved truly translate as "wisdom and virtue"?

### OCTOBER 1973

The first day of the month found me living in the new town of Jecheon. My contract required I teach at both the girls' school and the boys' school. Mr. Lee was my primary co-teacher and was kind enough to show me around town.

On the next day, I returned to Muguk to pack up my possessions and lug them to Jecheon. I was able to recruit three boy-students to help me carry the heavy items including a bookcase and a portable wardrobe. It was an all-day affair, from bus, to train, to taxi, into my new digs. I bought the boys lunch and provided them with return bus fare plus a handsome tip. I spent several hours sorting and arranging my stuff in the guesthouse room.

A newly-arrived PCV dropped by. Larry Oresick was about my age and volunteered at the *po-gun-so* (health clinic). His job was to screen patients for tuberculosis by looking at sputum samples through a microscope. Larry was a close companion for the months I resided in Jecheon. He would lend me cassette tapes of Johnny Carson monologues and I would provide him with classical music.

When I reported to my principal on October 4, he advised me that all schools were on a one-week break to observe *Chuseok*—the three-day harvest festival. I mapped out

a journey that took me on visits to Karen and Meng, then to Gordy's wedding in Busan. I bussed to Seoul, then caught the train south. Because of the holiday season, all modes of transportation were packed to overflowing. For long periods, I stood on my feet more than I sat. Finally, I arrived in Busan on the far south coast.

Gordy was a casual acquaintance and I attended the event as much to tour the country and schmooze as to celebrate the wedding. I couldn't help but wonder how far in the future my own wedding would occur. After an elegant reception, I hung out with PC buddies at a local night club. When noise rose to an ear-shattering level, Meng and I retreated to our guesthouse for quiet.

We caught the bus on the following afternoon, but with crowds, delays, and a lack of reservations, we only got as far as Miryang, achieving forty miles in three hours. We struggled to find accommodations for the night. Meng and I left early the next morning and made it to the large city of Daegu, where we joined a gigantic Chuseok Festival. Karen and Pat caught up to us and we four strolled the park grounds.

It was so odd. We ran across a kind of side show complete with acrobats, men in tiger suits, and a leashed baboon. As we stopped to observe, we turned behind us to see Koreans pointing and gawking at the four Americans. Unbelievable! Someone even asked to have a picture taken with us. Where was the greater freak show?

During my return trip through Seoul, I paused overnight to recover from all the travel. I passed the evening by reading the momentous national and international news. I couldn't believe it. Spiro Agnew had resigned as Vice President and Israel was once again at war with its Arab neighbors. I saw pictures of cars lined up at gas stations waiting to fill up on over-priced gasoline.

When I returned to Jecheon, I began teaching in earnest. Although I felt a kind of homesickness for Muguk, I liked my new situation. The town was much bigger and offered better facilities. My guest house was not so primitive, and the schools were better appointed. Plus, since I itinerated from school to school, I was less accountable to a single person. In transit, I could rest in my room and run day-time errands. As long as I taught my classes, the principle was satisfied. Larry was in my life almost every day, talking, shopping, or just sharing life. It was good to have a local support system.

At midmonth, I returned to Muguk to pick up mail and collect a few stray items. When I returned to my guest house in Jecheon, I was stunned. Yellow tape draped my doorway. The landlady spoke in broken English "robbery". What could I do? I immediately determined my tape player and camera were missing. Cassettes, jeans, and trench coat were also gone.

The houseboy ran to school to fetch Mr. Lee. He brought a police man with him and I gleaned this from the discussions: I had locked both the front door and

the window, but a sliding door between my room and an adjoining room was only glued shut. During the night, the boarder in the neighboring room, broke through, pillaged my belongings and escaped to Seoul. The landlady knew the thief and police would try to track him in the metropolis.

I was devastated with the loss of my camera and cassette player. Media was such a big part of my life, helping me cope in my exile. Over the next few weeks, I noticed small items missing: thirty-five dollars tucked into my Bible, a jar of peanut butter, a pair of socks, and an umbrella.

A few days later, from behind a high wall, I heard the wobbly strains of Beethoven, but the sound faded and I could never locate the source. The thief was never caught and the items never returned.

I traveled to Seoul a few days later to report the theft. The front office mercifully gave me another tape player (for language learning of course) and the director authorized an emergency stipend of fifty dollars.

On October 14, I made a jackass of myself. From the journal I quote:

A messenger arrived in the teachers' room with a letter for "MacDonald". He was the former PCV who had returned to America a few months earlier. I assumed the letter was addressed to him.

Mr. Kim who sits next to me received the envelope and slowly began to open it. I got a little upset. Then he began to read it and I got angry. I scolded, "Mr. Kim, you shouldn't read another person's mail."

He continued as if he didn't comprehend. His non-response made me even edgier. Finally, I snatched the letter from his hand and self-righteously tore it to pieces. Mr. Kim looked utterly bewildered. My rage continued until it slowly dawned on me what I had actually done. I realized the letter was not *to* David McDonald but from David McDonald *to* Mr. Kim.

What a perfect ass I had made of myself. I didn't know what to do. I wanted to evaporate, to crawl into a corner and die. Such embarrassment and self-loathing I had seldom known. I profusely apologized, dug the aerogramme pieces from the waste basket, and pasted the jig saw puzzle to a sheet of paper.

I continued to seek forgiveness and helped Mr. Kim translate the English. David MacDonald had written such a beautiful letter. I nearly wept at the thing I had destroyed. I resolved to acquire a new attitude of grace. I can be so impulsive and quick to condemn. I must change all that. Lord, help me!

My job in Jecheon was expanding. I tutored the principal's niece on Tuesdays and taught factory workers on Fridays. I was helping high-school students prepare

for English exams. The local education minister tasked me to instruct all the English teachers in the city. There were about fifty in total.

On October 22, I organized my first city-wide workshop at the ministry building. We were supposed to start at six in the evening, but teachers were still trickling in at seven. I began to speak to the group, asking the best time to meet and the best curriculum to incorporate.

In the midst of this discussion, I noticed a petite woman sneak into the classroom and stand plastered against the rear wall. I waved at her and she waved in return. As a final comment, I asked all participants to sign the attendance roster. The late-arrival walked from the back of the room signing her name “Kim Hyun Deok.”

The next few weeks overflowed with daytime teaching and after-hour carousing. With Larry as a co-conspirator, we decided to take a class in taekwondo. We purchased the outfits, learned a few moves, practiced on each other, and ran in formation through city streets. The instructors were distracted by our participation and we couldn't grasp what they were trying to teach us.

In November the weather turned frigid. The *Korea Times* reported a nighttime low of seventeen degrees Fahrenheit. Two exposure deaths occurred in the Chung-Chan province. Fortunately, my parents had mailed me a woolen union suit which became a feature of my daily clothing. I bought a kerosene heater to boil water and keep my room frost free. One of the reasons I finally quit taekwondo concerned sub-freezing temperatures. The blackbelt instructors required us white belt neophytes to wrestle and run barefoot outdoors. I took issue then took leave.

I remember one evening walking home cold and hungry from an ESL class. I solved both problems with one purchase. I noticed a street vendor selling boiled eggs. I bought two, grasping one in each palm. When my fingers thawed, I snacked on the hand-warmers. On frigid days, the bathhouse proved a balmy respite. I would spend an hour in hot water scrubbing and luxuriating. I jumped from hot to cold then cold to hot. During the walk home, my de-sensitized body defied the cold.

Meng paid a visit to Jecheon staying a week in my guest house. He always lifted my spirits. Larry joined us for conversation and scrabble. We three swapped books and copied music. From Meng I received *Alice in Wonderland* and from Larry I recorded an album by Tom Paxton. “The High Sheriff of Hazard” was my favorite. Eyes and ears were kept busy over long cold evenings. With the *oil crisis* in full bloom, the Korean government considered closing public schools to save on fuel costs.

Wherever the three of us walked about town we became the objects of attention. Many times, a stranger would invade our space making a comment like, “I want

to English conversation you.” We were forbearing up to a point, letting our body language inform the intruder when it was time to bug out.

On my street there was a man with a loud voice who sold kimpop (sushi). He would shout out “kimpop, kimpop”. One afternoon, Meng, Larry, and I were sitting on my floor with the sliding door open. Meng demonstrated how he could imitate the street vender with a loud “kimpop, kimpop”. Suddenly another door flung open and a man shouted in Korean, “Hey, give me some kimpop over here”. He was startled to see an American making the sound. We laughed to exhaustion.

I could not distinguish between *discipline* and *punishment*. Sitting in the teachers’ room at the girls’ school, I observed five seventh graders as they were marched to the vice-principal’s desk. A female teacher held each head while the man chopped hair with an over-sized pair of shears. I was told girl-student hair could not hang below the collar. Was this discipline or punishment?

At the boys’ school, I looked through my frosty window onto the parade field. A few hundred boys were on the ground in the front-leaning rest position, their knuckles in the dirt. As the P.E. Teacher barked orders, they would lift then wiggle an arm or leg. I asked Mr. Lee why they were being punished. He glanced out the window and remarked, “that’s not punishment, just discipline training.”

As I sat pondering, I figured Mr. Lee had a point. In the Republic of Korea all males must serve three years in the military. There were very few exceptions. The high-school boys on the parade field would soon be in army uniform and endure greater discipline than leg wiggles. Perhaps this outside activity was good training.

Word came to me that a round-trip *charter flight* was planned from Seoul to Seattle costing only \$300. I managed to telephone the PC HQ and reserve a seat for the mid-December to mid-January flight. I traveled to Seoul to follow up on this fantastic deal.

On this third weekend in November, my cohort of K-25 also celebrated its *one-year endurance party*. I hung out with a dozen of my buddies until booze reduced conversation to blather. On the next evening we dropped by the apartment of our PC director who hosted a traditional Thanksgiving meal. The American furnishings, cornucopia of food, and familiar talk of past holidays provoked a sigh of nostalgia. I relished an upcoming month in the States. However, my furlough was dashed. The oil crisis had restricted all air travel and my charter flight was canceled.

I completed my third Korean journal on November 27, having filled 224 pages over 104 days. I tallied the letters I had received over the course of one year: Mom & Dad-5, Zelens-7, Walkers-7, Jack-5, Eileen-3, Frank-7, Sunny-8, Boston-10, Lia-8,

Lynn-5, Carol-4, Mark-3, Jim Francis-7, Jim Rich-7, Maggie-3, Kaydee-3, Merle-3, and Denny-4. Plus, I received about twenty letters from people who wrote once or twice. The 110 letters represented about one USA letter for every three days in country. And for every single piece of American mail, I received two from friends in Korea and the PC office. With daily journaling and corresponding, my literary life was full.

I finished up this journal asking, "I can't help but wonder what the next 104 days will hold. They couldn't possibly be as unpredictable as the last ones. Could they?"

Over the final days of November, I attended a planning conference in Daegu. Mr. Williams, the PC director, led the day-long event. He informed us that all public schools in Korea would be on an abbreviated schedule beginning on December 4. He also requested that PCVs not take photos of university riots in Seoul. Not by coincidence, I thumbed through the international section of *Time* magazine and noted that all photos of campus disruptions had been clipped out.

My friend Karen Bachelor dropped by Jecheon for an overnight visit. She slept in my room while I doubled up with Larry sacking out on his floor. On December 5, Karen assisted me as I taught at an evening workshop. The dozen local teachers were pleased to see two Americans in conversation. As we walked from the education building, Miss Kim approached the two of us inviting Karen and me to a tea room. Up to this point, Miss Kim had been just one of twelve faces. I learned she was twenty-two years old and in her first year of teaching. I was impolite peaking at a newly-arrived letter from Lia. Karen carried most of the conversation.

Since schools were on a minimal schedule, I traveled to Seoul for the weekend. I visited with K-25 buddies who also shared an unexpected vacation. I walked to the Korean telephone department and requested a long-distance call to Longview, USA. I hadn't spoken to my parents in a year and it was a joy to hear their voices. I was transported to America for the ten minutes of connection.

Back in Jecheon, I enjoyed my fellowship with Larry. He would drop by my room; I would give him newly acquired magazines; and for an hour we would sit in silence. I didn't seek communication, but communion. As the new vice president, Gerald Ford appeared on the cover of *Time*.

On December 12, I led the final teachers' workshop of 1973. As we were breaking up, I asked Miss Kim to join me at a tea room. (I thought I would return the favor for the previous week.) I told her we could practice English conversation. As she sipped ginger tea, Miss Kim asked if I could continue to teach her after the workshop was over. She added that she wanted to teach me Korean. As unsure as I am about persons of the female persuasion, I figured she liked me. I invited her to a movie on Saturday and she accepted. On the walk home, my romantic self

caught fire. Immediately I entertained notions of marrying this woman, of the ramifications and possibilities.

On December 13, I received a letter from Lia. She informed me she had obtained a job in Japan. I was happy for her, but sad for me. I had fantasies of Lia and me getting together in America, maybe spending a lifetime together. Japan was not in my plan. The future prospect of Lia dimmed while the present reality of Miss Kim brightened.

On December 14, I walked through Jecheon, taking pictures with Larry's expensive Nikon camera. I noticed long lines of vehicles cramming a local gas station, horns honking and drivers shouting. I snapped a few pictures. As I was walking away, a policeman approached me from behind and scolded me. To the best of my understanding, he was distressed that I was making Korea look bad. I apologized, but what could I do?

Finally, December 15 arrived. This Saturday evening at six, I planned to meet Miss Kim at the cinema. I thought I was early when I greeted her at 5:45, but she was upset. She informed me our appointment was at 5:30! She said, "I planned to count slowly to one thousand. If you didn't arrive, I would go home. You're lucky. I just counted to eight hundred." I was indeed fortunate. If I had arrived at my scheduled time, Miss Kim may have been history.

The James Bond movie was difficult to follow. I stopped trying to explain the action to my date and just bask in her company. There was no physical contact, just giggles and flirtation. When I returned to my guest room, I confessed to my journal:

My emotions are tangled. I'll have to pray hard during the coming weeks. I have a feeling that our relationship will either get hot fast or get cold fast. A simple friendship looks improbable. Before I pursue this woman further, I must be sure on two counts. Number one, that my attraction to Hyun Deok isn't based on loneliness. Part of love must surely be the need for intimate companionship, but that can't be all of it. Number two, I must be sure that my exile in Korea isn't skewing my perspective. If we were both in America with American girls all around, would I still prefer this Korean woman? I must be sure.

On December 16, we attended her church together. I think she was checking out the depth of my faith. I knew the songs and could recite the scripture. I think I passed her religious test. Back in my room I wrote this:

I'm thinking about Hyun Deok now. Could she possibly be the one that God has in store for me? I'm sure she likes me and that I could force romance to happen but is that the best for me? for her? Love must be free to take its

course. There are so many practical considerations, but *agapé*—God’s love—is the thing that rates of greatest importance. Let events take their course and may I be open to God’s will.

On December 17, I was busy at school and did not see Miss Kim, but on December 18 she paid me a visit. As was my custom, I asked the landlady to dial her number. Once she was on the line, I invited her to my place to meet a few American friends. Unfortunately, the group was late in arriving. Miss Kim hesitated in the courtyard, then entered my room. I knew this was a bold gesture for a single Korean school teacher, even with the door wide open. She glanced around, remarking my room was small. I walked her home. My buddies were warming around my kerosene heater when I returned. I blushed as they quizzed me about the woman in my life.

On December 19, we shared another date, this time at a ping-pong parlor. To smack the ball, Miss Kim had to remove her winter coat. I was astonished. She actually had a shapely figure. To this point, I had never seen the contours of her body. It was a pleasant surprise. I sighed, *maybe it would become a bonus*. I won three matches and she won two but we weren’t counting.

As I walked her home, a bitter wind whipped her coat. She kept her hands in her pockets. I asked why and she replied that she had lost her gloves. We stepped into a small market and she allowed me to purchase her a pair of nylon mittens.

The walk to her house was pure joy. The roadway was dark and slick. She would slip on a patch of ice and I would quickly put my arms around her waist to keep her from falling. This happened several times. On each occasion I released her when she regained her footing. It was not proper for a single girl to be seen having physical contact with a man.

As I walked her home, I asked if she were happy. She responded only “half happy” and that when we were together in Seoul, she would be “full happy”. I thanked Jesus under my breath. I escorted her to her door and wished her good night. So many subtle cues emerged over the course of that evening. Just maybe I had finally netted that *bright elusive butterfly of love*.

I was at school on December 20 when I received a message from Miss Kim. The runner told me she had an emergency in Seoul and had to leave immediately. I had to stick around the classroom for another hour. When I returned to my room, the landlady said Hyun Deok had dropped by. She showed me this note: “To Mr. Foreman, I have some trouble. So, I can’t meet you tonight. I go to Seoul right now. I can’t wait for you. Excuse me. Please call me up on the 23<sup>rd</sup> after five o’clock, tel. 2502. from Miss Kim.”

My first thought concerned the sweet note. The second thought concerned the sweet woman who penned the sweet note. I held the paper close to my heart. I think it was at that moment I fell hopelessly in love with Miss Kim Hyun Deok.

While Miss Kim was in Seoul, I had business in Cheongju. I had agreed to assist the Peace Corps in the sale of Christmas seals. This concept was novel in Korea. Why would people pay money to buy charitable stamps to affix onto postage? I stood in front of a post office, my alien face attracting curious shoppers. A Korean partner did the hustling.

Many kind people bought one stamp for ten won, which is about two cents. It never made sense to me. Korea was still a poor country without a tradition of charitable giving. I was provided an eight thousand won (sixteen dollar) per diem for my two days in town while my team sold just a few dollars' worth of Christmas seals.

On December 23, I met Hyun Deok at the entrance to her church. As we sat side by side, she handed me a Korean-English Bible turned to Ephesians, chapter five. She pointed to the last verse: "Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself, and the wife see that she reverence her husband."

After church, we sat in a tea room for a serious discussion, no giggles. I sort of asked Hyun Deok to marry me. I couldn't figure her out! I think she was afraid of me—afraid of marriage—yet in love with me. I didn't get an answer, or whatever answer she provided proved as vague as my proposal. At times she was reassuring and at other times baffling. In one breath, she insisted it was too early to speak of marriage, and in the next breath she spoke of it. In any event, her parents might not permit their daughter to marry a foreigner. She smiled. She wept.

I reminded her the next day was my birthday. She agreed to meet with me in the afternoon. We closed our eyes and for the first time at midtable we touched fingertips. I prayed that God would sort out this mess for the two of us and His will be done in our lives.

As I trudged home, my mind was swimming. I recognized that our hearts were way ahead of our heads. It was December 23 and just eighteen days earlier we sat face to face for the first time. *Oh God, You must be the author of this union. If not, we are doomed!*

I turned twenty-four years old on the twenty-fourth day of December. My sisters would term this event a *golden birthday* because the calendar number matched my age number. The day was golden indeed! On this Christmas eve, 1973, Kim Hyun Deok and Chris Alan Foreman pledged to marry. We were uncertain of the date and place but confident of the outcome. We knew God had joined us together.

I woke up on my birthday to the coldest day of the year. I fired up the kerosene stove at six and set the kettle to boil. I re-emerged from under my blanket at seven. The room was still chilled with frost on the inside of the papered windows. Walking into the bathing room, the plastic pan of water was frozen solid and

the waterpipes unworkable. My kettle water melted the ice and made for a comfortable face wash.

When I arrived at school, Mr. Lee informed me the nighttime temperature had dropped to minus seventeen Celsius—one-degree Fahrenheit. The dozen teachers shivered around the single pot-bellied stove. After warming my hands and picking up mail, I rushed home.

I wanted the daylight to pass. My date with Hyun Deok was set for 5:00 P.M. I read through the newly acquired *Time* Magazine, then took a nap. My thoughts and prayers focused on my Miss Kim. How could I live without her?

I arrived at the tea room early and stood in the doorway. Soon she strolled up. What a delight to see her form. While sipping tea, she gave me a card which read, “To Mr. Foreman. Happy birthday and Merry Christmas. Thank you for your sincere teaching. From your student, Miss Kim.”

The card I handed her was more straightforward. “Merry Christmas. Remember I love you.”

As her lips sounded the words, her eyes filled with tears. After a moment of silence, she whispered, “I love you too”.

I felt a tingle from head to toe. I waved to a shy ragamuffin girl and bought two of her tiny tangerines, paying double her asking price. Giving Hyun Deok one, I promised her a truck load of tangerines when we settled in America. She responded that all she wanted was my love. I knew in my bones that I had just won the lottery of a life time.

As conversation continued, we spoke of marriage. She was so afraid of how her mother might react to wedding plans. She also said she was in trouble at school. A man teacher had hassled her because she was spotted in public with an American. That was a breach of Korean propriety. Young ladies could not be seen with an American man. The woman might be looked upon as a prostitute.

I walked her home through the dark cold, then skipped to my room in light-hearted song. I thanked God for His magnificent goodness and for His personal concern. How could there possibly be a better birthday gift? Wrapped in a gorgeous package, God had presented me with the desire of my heart; the love of a Christian woman whom I loved in return. I asked for His wisdom and continued blessing.

Christmas began as another frosty day so I sheltered in my room. Shops and schools were shuttered for the holiday but Hyun Deok was stuck with school duty, which meant she had to sit alone in the chilly teachers’ room until 6:00 P.M.

I paid a few visits to fellow teachers distributing small bags of Christmas candy. Finally, darkness fell and I headed to the tea room to meet with the love of my life. We gazed into each other’s eyes as we talked for hours. I learned she’s the oldest of six kids, spaced two years apart. First born were four girls then came two boys. All

six children have a “Hyun” in the name, which means *wise*. The “Deok” in her name translates as *virtue*. She explained that “wise and virtuous” is typically a boy’s name.

We spoke of our common future. I wanted to wed this wise and virtuous woman as soon as possible. She wanted to leave Jecheon and relocate to Seoul. Small-town prejudice was too strong against a mixed-marriage. Events were moving fast, but when you are sure of your destination speed is your friend. We planned to travel to Seoul the next morning, so we parted ways about ten. My mind thrashed in a dozen directions. I heard my wall clock bang three.

I dropped by my middle schools in the morning and met Hyun Deok at the train station at 11:00. The three-hour ride was wonderful, just to sit hip to hip. I was so much in love. She whispered to me that everyone on the bus was staring at us. I chuckled, “Well, that’s something you better get used to.” When we arrived at the Seoul depot, my hip left hers so I could catch a local bus to the city center. She caught a later bus to lodge with her sisters.

I had reserved a space at a hotel near the Peace Corps headquarters (PC HQ). My roommate turned out to be Jack Farrell, a K-27 and casual friend. He was in the process of reading through a dozen books and asked me not to disturb him. So, I spent the rest of the day with Meng, Allen, and Sherri. We went to a movie, ate dinner at the Civilian club, and played board games into the night. Returning to my room, Jack and Allen were passing around a dope pipe. I departed talking in Meng’s room past midnight.

I spent much of the next day with Hyun Deok. In the morning, I met Hyun Ok, who scanned me head to toe. If the second sister approved, she might support our cause with their parents. We taxied to the Civilian club on Yong San army base. Passing under the front gate, I was transported back to the States. Hyun Deok was impressed with the American look—wide streets, lawns, and lampposts. But she was apprehensive in the midst of so many young ogling soldiers. She kept her coat on to hide her figure.

Hyun Deok didn’t recognize anything on the menu, so I ordered us spaghetti. She commented the pasta seemed like Korean noodles, but such food could be better eaten with chop sticks rather than a fork. We returned to the PC HQ where I introduced my wife-to-be to my best friend Meng. We talked a while, then the hour came for her to depart.

I kept an afternoon appointment to see the Peace Corps dentist, who filled a large cavity. While exiting the building I ran into Allen. My libertine friend was on his way to see the doctor in order to have his VD treated. I asked him if he could relate to Bob Dylan’s *VD Blues*.

On Saturday, I met with Hyun Deok's best friend Miss Lee. We visited a giant department store called *Cosmos*, talking, shopping, and getting to know one another. As we were taxiing to the PC HQ, I noticed the two ladies were arguing in the back seat. When I spoke afterward to Hyun Deok, she said that Miss Lee had stunned her by saying, "How can you trust this American guy? You can't even trust Koreans."

I did what I could to assuage her, assuring her of my character and motives. Nonetheless, there was substance in her words. The two of us were certainly rushing headlong into an unknown future. I told her, "Sometimes in life you must be bold, trust your guts, and ignore the naysayers."

The evening was unforgettable. We went to the top of Nam Sam, the mountain in Seoul where the radio antenna towers above the skyline. In the shadows I could put my arm around her. I nearly wept with joy as we cuddled and looked upon the shimmering lights of the big city. Hyun Deok murmured it was the happiest day of her life. Her expression of joy ratcheted my own joy to an even higher level.

The next morning Hyun Deok and two of her sisters met me at a tea room near my guest house. Since it was Sunday, we headed to the Protestant chapel on the army base. After the service, we lunched at the military cafeteria, then headed to her alma mater—Kyung Hee University. She said it was her first visit since graduation. We strolled the campus, but no hand-holding. She met five of her eleven sorority sisters while I walked the grounds giving the girls time to chat. By day's end, I had spent twelve hours with Hyun Deok. The time felt short because the love was long.

The next day was New Year's Eve. I attended a few Peace Corps meetings, receiving some new ESL material. Dan Holt invited everyone to his big apartment for a New Year's Eve bash. Allen told me he wasn't going. His doctor said alcohol and VD antibiotics don't mix.

I met Hyun Deok about noon. She had been to the beauty parlor in preparation for the big party. Her black hair was shellacked, appearing to me like a football helmet. I preferred her natural coif, but kept my thoughts to myself. She surprised me by inviting me to her house for lunch. When we arrived on the far side of town, she was embarrassed by her humble surroundings. I greeted Hyun Ok and met her high-school sister named Hyun Hee.

For the first time, I saw the playful side of Hyun Deok as she flipped through picture albums. She laughed, danced, and spun in circles. My girlfriend was alive with joy. Hyun Ok served a dinner of rice and soup. We talked a while then the two of us headed back down town.

Hyun Deok was a bit frightened as we entered Dan's house. The space reverberated with loud partying Americans. On the first floor we snacked and drank punch, which I spiked with a bit of vodka. On the second-floor celebrants danced to loud music while the roof top was cold, but quiet. We spent most of the three hours on the snack floor sitting and talking. We avoided the intoxicated crowd and walked to the roof top. The city lights shimmered. I put my arm around her waist, pulling her close to me. She put her chin on my shoulder and we almost kissed.

The roof top was cold so we retreated to the punch bowl level. I talked with some friends as I saw her converse with Jack Farrell. When we returned to the rooftop just before midnight, Hyun Deok was sullen. I finally weaseled out of her the cause of her distress. Jack had told her to slow down and not marry an American so fast. She questioned with tears, "First Miss Lee, now your friend; Do you think this is right what we're doing?"

As shouts and gongs marked the new year of 1974, I said to her, "Sweetheart, you and I determine our own future. If it were up to me, I would marry you tomorrow. But if you want to wait, I can do that too. I will always put your wishes before my own." And that's when I received her very first kiss.

## JANUARY 1974

The first twelve days of January were momentous for Hyun Deok and me. On January first, as we were walking down a side street, a teenage boy began to follow us shouting out insults. He trailed far enough behind so I couldn't throttle him. I understood some of the nasty words, but Hyun Deok came to tears. She was so shaken we sought refuge in a tea room. As we recovered from the harassment, she said, "Let's get married soon and leave this country." Hateful words led to a joyful heart.

I attended language classes while in Seoul, but my brain could not process. Every few moments my thoughts wandered to the object of my passion. I felt guilty when I picked up my sixty dollars for attending the re-education. Dan smiled, "Don't worry about it."

On January 5, we survived our first significant quarrel. It had always been a slow-burning issue. I continually wanted to put my arm around her while she insisted we display no public affection. At a bus stop, she said I was no *gentleman* and I called Miss Kim "Miss Prim". Harsh words escalated; I shouted; she stomped away. I pursued her apologizing. She ignored me. I turned from her and circled the block. Her back was to me gazing in the direction of my departure. When I called her name, she spun to me in tears. She embraced me and all was forgiven. After that incident, my hands remained in my pockets—at least for a while.

Over time I figured out there were two steps for us to marry then four additional steps for her to travel to America. This required coordination between American and Korean bureaucracies. The process would eventually involve numerous headshot photos, countless forms, four *toe-jangs* (signature ink stamps), multiple signatures, a dozen separate fees, two interviews, and one bribe.

After picking up my passport at the PC HQ, we walked to the nearby American consulate to obtain a form called “Document of eligibility for an American citizen to marry a Korean citizen”. On my part, I only had to show my U.S. passport and state that I had never married. Hyun Deok had to obtain a paper stating, “We the parents of Kim Hyun Deok born on February 20, 1951, do hereby permit our daughter to marry Chris Alan Foreman, an American.” This form was required because my bride-to-be was not yet twenty-three years old.

One of the female administrators looked askance at the two of us, figuring I was a GI and she was a streetwalker. I perceived her rudeness and in my feeble Korean spoke to her, “Peace to you. A Peace Corps volunteer I am and my girlfriend a middle-school teacher is. Much each other we love. For helping us thank you.” The woman gasped at my language and Hyun Deok grinned. The administrator’s helpfulness improved.

We were also required to listen to an embarrassing lecture about “sham marriages.” A consulate official closed her door and warned the two of us in private that many Korean women marry American men just to get a one-way ticket to the US. She looked at me and added “Eighty-percent of marriages like yours end in divorce after two years in the States. Are you sure you want to proceed with this?”

I was agitated but responded in measured terms, “You neither know me nor my fiancée. If you had bothered to look at us two as individuals, you would see a man and a woman in love with no motive other than to spend a lifetime together.”

During these busy days, Meng was my supportive roommate. He liked Hyun Deok, saying she was a *great catch*. We talked for hours in the evening, listening to cassettes. Simon and Garfunkel strummed out, “Old friends sat on the park bench like bookends. How terribly strange to be seventy”. I mused if I would still be with Hyun Deok at that distant age.

I sought for advice and counsel from several quarters. Mr. Keaton—the second in command of Peace Corps Korea—advised me to terminate before I married, saying he could not support a relocation to Seoul, especially since I had transferred once already. I figured I had about one more month as a PCV.

One of my American doctors was married to a Seoul woman. Hyun Deok and I met with the couple. My wife-to-be was greatly encouraged by the Korean-to-Korean conversation. She was reminded that South Korea’s first president, Syngman Rhee, was married to a foreigner. The older woman contended that love, commitment, and prayer could overcome any cultural obstacle. Hyun Deok was also glad to hear

that I could easily earn \$600 per month teaching ESL at a Seoul language school. I needed that money. I had just presented my fiancée with a \$300 engagement ring.

Hyun Deok traveled to her family home in South Cholla Province to break the marriage news to her mother who was still clueless. She also had to fetch her family genealogical records along with required toe-jangs.

On January 12, I returned to Jecheon. With school on an oil-crisis hiatus, I could rest and read. Hyun Deok arrived a few days later, bringing good news. After initial shock and mutual tears, her mother was open to our international marriage. Yippee! A weight was removed from her shoulders. Since her mother had been informed of our intentions, I asked my bride-to-be to write a few lines to my own father and mother. Together we composed an introductory letter, enclosed passport photos, and mailed it off to America. She was concerned my mother might object to her son marrying a foreigner. I responded, “You don’t know my mother. She’ll love you to pieces.”

Hyun Ok had accompanied Hyun Deok and stayed in Jecheon a week. Her sister really liked my praise cassettes, singing along with many of the choruses. I lent her my tapes and player while she was in town.

## SEOUL

After a middle school graduation ceremony, we returned to Seoul. My life zoomed into the fast lane. Rather than lodge in a guest house, I located a host family. My rent was modest because I agreed to teach English. The Kims were kind to me: a father and mother, teenage twin boys, and a little girl. Their house would remain my Seoul home for the next few months.

The cute girl posed for dozens of pictures and one of the twins presented me with a cassette copy of the String Quintet No. 3 in C major by Mozart. It grew to be one of my favorites. The piece ran for 31 minutes and 18 seconds. Unfortunately, the thirty-minute cassette castrated the allegro with 78 seconds remaining. It was brutal, but I adjusted.

I gradually met members of Hyun Deok’s family. First there was Hyun Ok then Hyun Hee. Next, I visited their home for dinner to meet Hyun Ea and Kyu Nam. The big event was to actually meet her mother. This woman, Lee Il Song, loomed large in Hyun Deok’s psyche—the person who sacrificed everything so her daughter could succeed.

Hyun Deok told me her mom’s story. Il Song Lee was born in 1927 in a small town near Pyung Yang in what is now North Korea. Her own mother had died when she was young and she was raised in a comfortable household by her

grandmother. In a time of Japanese occupation when most girls went uneducated, Miss Lee graduated from High School and attended Pyung Yang Presbyterian Seminary. Her early experiences shaped her in two ways: first, for her entire life she remained a devout Christian and second, she always valued education, especially for girls. But soon her life changed dramatically. Overnight she transfigured from college student to refugee.

When the Korean War broke out in 1950, Miss Lee left her home and fled south. She hid in the daytime and crossed over mountains in the night. If stopped by the Northern side she would be accused of fleeing to help the enemy. If stopped by the Southern side, she would be accused of being a northern spy. Miss Lee ended up seeking refuge at a farmhouse in Cholla Nam Do Province.

There she met and married a young teacher named Kim Youg Ou. This was a love marriage, but it was also difficult: north meets south; city meets country; modern meets traditional; Christian meets Buddhist. Another problem was children. In a culture that prizes boys, the first five children were born girls: Hyun Deok in 1951, Hyun Ok in 1953, Hyun Hee in 1955 and Hyun Ea in 1957. Hyun Ea's twin sister died in childhood.

Kim's father was a teacher and moved between villages almost every year. This made a stable home life difficult. The last two children born were sons: Dong Hyun (In Ju) in 1959 and Kue Nam in 1961.

There are many stories to tell from these years as this mother of six struggled to pass along the twin passions in her life. She single-handedly sent her four daughters to be educated in Seoul and supported them with a meager income. She also passed on her Christian faith as best she could.

Her parents grew estranged, because her traditional father had acquired a younger mistress. He did not see a problem with an extra-marital sex partner. Her Christian mother disagreed. She had little contact with him, struggling to support four of six children in Seoul schools.

I met her mother in a tea room sitting across from her with Hyun Deok at her side to interpret. Dong Hyun, the fifth sibling, was also with us. Il Song studied my appearance then asked questions. "Why do you want to marry my daughter?"

I responded, "I love her. That's why I want to marry her".

"What do you want to do for a living when you return to America?"

"I want to be a good husband to Hyun Deok".

I saw some concern on her mother's face at the responses. I was as honest as I could be. My life goal had never been to become a doctor or lawyer, but to marry a good woman and raise a family. I believed her daughter was better than any woman on earth. After several minutes of interrogation, I left mother and

daughter to talk alone. Hyun Deok later told me the meeting was productive and her mom would support our marriage. She did advise we slow down the process.

The Lunar New Year fell on January 23. In the morning, we celebrated by eating traditional pastries. Next, we stopped by a photography studio posing for our official engagement picture. We sat through a cinema matinee of Bruce Lee in *Enter the Dragon*. In the evening, she visited my private room and we passed the *kiss barrier*. I struggled to contain my libido and promised to wait for consummation until our wedding night.

I discovered Hyun Deok had a male admirer. She made a tea room appointment to inform him of our upcoming marriage. She asked me to greet him, so I met him briefly. He was an ensign in the Korean navy. I saw disappointment in his downcast eyes.

When I met Hyun Deok later in the evening, she was troubled and asked, “Do you think we can have a spiritual relationship?”

She went on to explain that the ensign had told her, “You can have a physical relationship with this American guy, but never a spiritual relationship.” She was tearful.

I asked, “Are you God’s daughter? Am I God’s son? That’s more basic than being American or Korean. If we are His children, we can certainly have a spiritual relationship with each other through Him. Hyun Deok, we are one in the Spirit. We are one in Christ. Soon we will be one in marriage.” Her face shone with release as we prayed together.

## FEBRUARY

We determined to complete the civil wedding as soon as possible in order to facilitate her Korean passport and American visa. We knew that process could take a few months. We stood in line at City Hall to collect papers and pay fees. This was bureaucratic hoop-jumping at its max. We needed one form in triplicate, we needed her family genealogy translated into English, we needed the toe-jang stamps from two witnesses. We were not able to complete the process on February first nor on the second.

February third was a Sunday. I bussed across town to the largest Presbyterian church in Seoul—perhaps in the world. The crowd overflowed as eight of us sat in a row. Her mother, all six kids, and me. I once caught a glance from her mom. She smiled when she saw me singing, even though my words were in English.

We returned to City Hall on February fourth with documents complete and handed the bundle to the clerk who processed international marriages. He plopped the papers into an inbox, then shuffled away to handle the application of

the couple behind us. Finally, Hyun Deok figured out the problem of delay. The clerk wanted a *saba-saba* (bribe). My almost-wife was furious, but what could we do? She discreetly asked around and the standard fee to expedite the process was one-thousand wan (two dollars). She handed the clerk a cash-filled envelope and fifteen minutes later we were officially married. My watch showed high noon.

With certificate in hand, we walked to an office building that processed Korean IDs. We gave the clerk a copy of our paperwork so my newly-minted wife could obtain an ID with the name of “Kim Hyun Deok Foreman”. This was her first step in getting a Korean passport with which she could obtain an American visa. After paying a five-thousand won fee, we taxied to her place. Her mom had prepared an elaborate meal and all six children were on hand to celebrate.

That night I wrote in my journal: “Guess what? This is my first entry as a married man. I still can’t believe it! Hyun Deok is officially Mrs. Foreman!! The Lord sure has been good to me!”

Hyun Deok and I returned to Jecheon the next day. School was finally starting after a prolonged winter break. I reported to both of my middle schools. Rumors ran rampant among my teaching peers. Was I in a relationship with Miss Kim? Were we engaged? Married? I learned several more people had spotted us together in Jecheon. The P.E. teacher claimed he had seen us in a Seoul tea room. I shrugged off their inuendo, smiling and giving vague replies, more amused than offended.

My new wife could not shrug off the malicious gossip. At her own school, she was grilled unmercifully. She reported that one of the men teachers asked her slyly, “So, what do you like better? Korean hot dogs or American hot dogs?” She was mortified and stormed from the room.

Her agony was short lived. The next day, the principal at Jecheon East Middle School called her into his office. He handed her a resignation paper and asked her to sign it. What could she do? She signed, cleared out her belongings, and walked home in tears.

This was more than a mere job loss. She was abandoning her career. All Korea was one big *school district*. If she could not teach school in Jecheon, she could not teach anywhere in the nation.

When she came to my room, her tears were dry. “It’s all for the better,” she said. I hate it there and I was about to quit anyway.” She looked into my eyes, “I am trusting you with my life. Please be my protector and husband.”

I understood her sacrifice. Sixteen years of Korea schooling had just gone down the toilet. “You married the right man. I will never leave you. When we get to America, you can start fresh. Any career is open to you.”

The times were confusing. Were we married or not? Should we consummate our relationship or not? I thought *yes* but she was unsure. After one embrace, my young wife would jump from guilt and despair to joy and passion. Our love was genuine and white hot. Yet, everything about sex frightened and embarrassed her. She was an absolute innocent. Nobody had ever given her *the talk*. She was indoctrinated with the idea that *only whores enjoy sex*. She wanted no part of it.

She confessed she had never intended to marry, never wanted to bear children. She said she desired *a pure non-physical spiritual relationship*. Yet, after one kiss all that talk dissolved. She was every bit my equal in the Eros department. We loved each other with an ardor that brought tears to my eyes. Every page of my daily journal became splotched with tears and peppered with the words, "I love you so much."

One Saturday morning, we were cuddling in my room. I answered a knock at the sliding door and who should appear but Meng. Both of us were delighted to see him. He had just returned from a fortnight in Japan. Meng handed over my new camera, a replacement Olympus Trip 35 with flash attachment. I had given him one-hundred dollars a few weeks earlier to make the purchase in Tokyo. Once more I could document my days in Korea.

The next morning, Meng, Hyun Deok, and I walked through crunchy snow about forty minutes to reach a city park. My new wife looked great in the boots and gloves I had presented to her. The outing displayed an arctic landscape. Gazebos were graced with new-fallen snow and the cheeks of my princess bride blushed in the cold. A small boy was selling roasted snacks tucked into a cone made of newspaper. It was *bon-degi* (silk worm). Hyun Deok crunched on them like popcorn, while Meng and I snacked on a few roasted chestnuts. Three pairs of legs were sore when we finally trudged into town.

Meng was with me a few days, playing scrabble and talking of life. I shared with him the extent of Hyun Deok's sexual inhibitions. He proposed to me that Western Christians struggle with guilt (an offense against God) while Eastern Confucians suffer with shame (an offense against community). Meng conjectured that being an Eastern Christian, perhaps my wife was plagued with both dispositions.

Larry was proving to be my good friend. I talked with him almost every day. He was now lending me Sherlock Holmes mysteries while I lent him Christian philosophy. We had some serious talks about Jesus, but he never reached the point of commitment.

Sometimes, I'd drop by his health clinic interrupting his inspection of sputum samples. Once I found him in a side room, observing a lecture on family planning. I noticed the charts and contraceptives on display. I mentioned to him that my wife was concerned about pregnancy but was too shy to visit a clinic. When the meeting

adjourned, Larry introduced me to the nurse-lecturer. She promised she would pay a confidential visit to Hyun Deok and soon my wife was family planning.

Hyun Deok's twenty-third birthday occurred on February 20. I presented her with a timely gift—a shiny wrist watch. She loved it. I told her, “Now there's no excuse for you being late for a date.” She received a second gift. I gave her a piece of mail addressed from Longview. I had already peeped at the contents. As she read the words, worry turned to joy. Both mom and dad welcomed her gladly into the Foreman family.

On February 21, I filled the last page of my fourth journal. My epilogue read:

Book number four of my Korean life is complete. I can now peek behind at all the pages to glimpse God's hand in the past seventy-seven days. The miraculous has happened in an inconceivably short time. At the beginning of this book, I knew her only as Miss Kim. Now she is my wife. God knew my heart's desire. My life has acquired a new meaning. Jesus has mended my broken life and has given me Hyun Deok. I will always sing your praises, Heavenly Father.

I waited on the Lord; most often reluctantly. But now I see plainly the path my steps have trod. I see why a dozen girls never became my wife in spite of tears and pleading. And I see why my steps led me to this little town in Korea. I see and I praise the Lord.

I announced in my fifth journal that I would not be writing daily entries. Life was too hectic. I needed to recover and repurpose that one hour per day.

I noted that on February 23 we spent our first night together. We had talked over wedding plans in my room until past midnight. It was rainy and she consented to sleep with me. We were both so fatigued, yet somehow, we frolicked for hours. She left before sun up.

My last day in Jecheon was February 24. A replacement PCV had arrived in town named Alan Landry. I showed him around town and around the middle school. He claimed my guest-house room. In the evening, Hyun Deok and I caught the train to Seoul, lugging a huge suit case and over-stuffed duffle bag.

I was fortunate because the next day in Seoul, I landed a part-time job. I began to teach English at a *hac-wan* (small private school) for one-thousand won an hour. At first, I taught only two hours per day, but that soon expanded to four hours. I was prepping a dozen Koreans who were traveling to the USA. For many, I was the first American they had met.

Until my wedding day, I lived with the Kim Family and Hyun Deok continued to lodge with her three sisters and brother.

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## MARCH

As the month began, my time in the Peace Corps ended. The process took a few days. I sat through an exit interview turning in my ID card—I was sad about that. I submitted to a complete medical examination, discovering I had parasites in my poop. Dr. Coe said my condition was common and the pills he prescribed would eliminate my problem. I signed a pile of papers and received a severance stipend of twenty-thousand won. That cash came in handy. My bride-to-be was pleased to receive half of it.

I was blessed with a second teaching position on March 4. This contract was with Korea Airlines (KAL). I taught a few dozen employees between five and seven every evening, earning 1500 won per hour. With my first job at CASA *hac-wan* and now this second job, I was able to marginally support the two of us in Seoul.

The next few weeks were consumed with ESL employment and wedding plans. Events were hurtling to our March 23 marriage date. I left most of the planning to Hyun Deok, who with the help of her mom and sisters chose the minister and the church. I passed out invitations to about thirty of my Peace Corps friends and bought a new brown suit. Meng agreed to be my best man and Larry would take pictures with his Nikon camera.

We often went to Yong Sang Army Base. I told Hyun Deok it was to get her *Americanized*. One afternoon we went bowling. It was her first time to knock down pins. She threw mostly gutter balls getting a 47. I amazed myself. I threw four straight strikes scoring a 193, my highest total ever. We were so exuberant, the grouchy man to my left scolded us, telling me “to pipe down”. But we were so young and so much in love.

We did have some trouble with her family. Dong Hyun was a rebellious teenager. He got picked up by the Seoul police for breaking curfew. As punishment he was sent home to the countryside. He got even with us by blabbing to everyone that his oldest sister was marrying an American. Gossip ran wild. This was a problem because now the father was in the loop. I asked Hyun Deok if her dad could attend our wedding. She was estranged from him, still she would have preferred him to be present. However, her mom would have none of that.

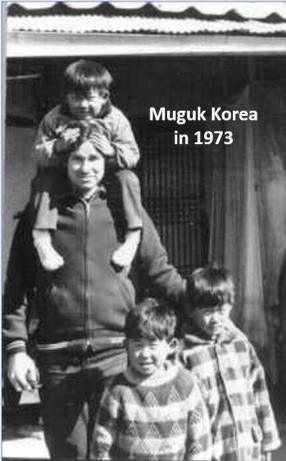
We located an apartment a thirty-minute bus ride from downtown and agreed to rent a large room. On March 21, we moved our bits of furniture and luggage into the place. We received gifts of sleeping mats, blankets, and low tables.

As I was sitting in the Peace Corp lounge talking with Meng. I overheard a new PCV speak of her unsuccessful efforts to locate a living space in Seoul. I connected her to the Kim family—the place I was about to vacate—and Pam

moved in the next day. She was thrilled to exchange rent for ESL. I had always felt guilty because I was supposed to teach English, but I was too involved in marriage plans to accomplish much.

I must have showered too much attention on the perky volunteer. Just before bed time, Hyun Deok pouted, “So you like Pam now. Are you sure you want to marry me?”

My eyes closed and I exhaled. “You are my world. Nothing can ever come between us. Tomorrow we will marry and I’ll be the happiest man in the world.” She was at peace and I fell asleep for the last time as a single man.



# Chapter 11

## NEWLY-WED

March to September 1974  
Seoul, Korea

*For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother  
and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.*  
(Genesis 1:24)

Our church wedding was scheduled for 4:00 P.M. on March 23. Although I had considered myself married since February 4, this was the real deal; the moment I would vow before God and witnesses that I would forever love, honor, and serve this woman in holy matrimony. The bride, groom, and minister practiced on March 22. I whistled the wedding march because the pianist didn't show.

### MARCH 1974

Meng and I shared a hotel room and we rested until ten the next morning. Then the most transformational day of my life began. We bought cake and punch for the wedding reception, donned our newly pressed wardrobe, and filled my last suitcase of bachelorhood. We left for the Sam-San-Li Church at three and arrived just before four. Nobody was there, but soon Hyun Ok arrived, then my Mu Kuk co-teacher Mr. Chang. Next came the minister with my soon-to-be mother-in-law.

I was nervously waiting for my bride to arrive. This wedding was really on the cheap. The back-pew rows served as our reception area. Onto fold-out tables, Meng, Hyun Ok, and I laid out sponge cake, punch, with other finger food.

The bride showed up at 4:30, saying her hairdresser was a perfectionist and would not let her depart until she was satisfied with the look. I smiled at my gorgeous Hyun Deok arrayed in a white gown, veil, and mask of makeup. Guests filled the front rows. It was time.

I wrote these words a few days after our wedding:

The bride and groom stood at the back of the church a few seconds until the minister took his first step. We then began our long march up the aisle. It seemed I floated in a surrealistic dream; the wedding march music, my friends with their heads craned back, all the smiling faces, and me taking those slow steps up the aisle unable to hide my own grin. We finally made it to the front after a seemingly eternal amount of time. All was quiet for a brief moment and I couldn't believe where I was. I couldn't believe it was actually happening to me! Me, Chris Foreman, Clark High School, Whiting. I couldn't believe it was coming true.

A million things rushed through my head. It seemed I had known Hyun Deok for such a short time yet there she was, my bride. A few months earlier she had been my student in a Jecheon workshop. Now she was about to become my wife. Amazing.

I thought about my family, about Arlene, and my old girlfriends. I felt a little bit surprised to look next to me and see a Korean woman. I blinked. It seemed very strange and yet very proper, very right, and very natural. As the minister droned on in Korean, my mind wandered more. I swung between moments of nonchalance, "What's the big deal?" and surprise, "My Sweet Jesus, is this really happening to me?"

My good friend Meng was still taking pictures while at the same time recording the event with my trusty cassette player. I was embarrassed by the minister's fractured English. I fought that negative feeling and relaxed through the rest of the ceremony. I said "I do" at the appropriate moment and promised to love and cherish Hyun Deok until death us do part. One of Hyun Deok's sorority sisters sang, then another prayed, and it was all over.

We held white-gloved hands and walked up the aisle, but had to return for a series of pictures. It took a while because the minister had to find a brick to stand on. My white-gowned wife did not break a smile. Korean folk wisdom dictated that if a bride smiled for a wedding portrait, her first child would be a girl.

I greeted each guest, disappointed that only fourteen had shown up; five Koreans and nine Americans. We received several wrapped gifts and piled them into a waiting taxi. Hyun Deok, her sister, mom, and I took a forty-minute taxi drive to our new apartment room.

We enjoyed a pleasant dinner with our hosts, then we were finally alone. For us two newly-weds, the night sizzled beyond delight. Oh, how I loved that woman!



After the wedding, I took a hiatus from journal writing. Instead, I began reading novels borrowed from the PC library. Work kept me busy too, not only with teaching but also endless commuting. Plus, my new place did not have a chair or desk and I found it difficult to write sitting straight-legged on the floor.

Toward the end of March, I went on a Spring picnic with my hag-wan students. I intended it to be a show and tell. About a dozen of us took a bus to a nearby mountain. We hiked to a stream and cooked rice over a twig fire. I enjoyed the outdoors and the company. I told them, “Go into the woods. Find something interesting and I will tell you the word in English. You then have to record it in your notebook.”

One student approached me with cupped hands and showed me a *jee -bangi*, asking for the English word. I looked at the unusual insect and responded “walking stick”, thus expanding our vocabulary.

One of my best students was Mr. Cho, Chinese by heritage. He shared how difficult it was for Chinese people to prosper in Korea. His family was looked upon as second class non-citizens. His university-trained parents struggled to operate a meager restaurant. I was surprised. Just looking at my Korean and Chinese students I couldn't tell the difference.

## APRIL

I traveled to Jecheon on a one-day mission to pick up stored summer clothing, along with a few left-behind items. The six hours round trip zipped by as I read all 425 pages of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*.

My suitcase bulged when I returned late that night. Hyun Deok expressed curiosity about my four Korean diaries. She asked if she could read them. I wanted to be totally transparent with my new bride so I handed them over. A few days later I asked about the books.

“I just thumbed through them and whenever I ran across a girl’s name, I read carefully.” She was saddened when she read my words about Arlene and Diane, but gleeful about the many times I confessed my love for her.

I responded, “I’m glad you know about these things. I will always be honest with you; no secrets between us.”

On Easter Sunday, April 14, we travelled to the church where we held our wedding. The minister was glad to see us, calling us to the front of the congregation. I waved and Hyun Deok spoke a few words of appreciation. I gave him a copy of our official wedding portraits. We then bussed across town to a small lake. A bit overdressed, we rowed to mid-water and kissed. Lots of pictures; it was wonderful.

The next day I discovered a new source of breakfast food. While strolling down a side street I spotted a vendor who shot rice from a cannon. Big paper bagfuls cost only two-hundred won. With a little sugar and milk, puffed rice became my morning staple.

After two and a half months and ten-thousand won, Hyun Deok’s passport was finally ready. Her official name was now *Kim Hyun Deok Foreman*. I asked Mrs. Foreman, “So, do you want me to introduce you to my American friends as *Kim*?”

She closed her eyes and uttered the name. “Yes, that will be better. They always mangle the name *Hyun Deok* anyway.” That’s how she adopted the first name of *Kim*.

I found another job working for a different hag-wan called *California*. For the first few weeks I only tutored one couple for one hour, but soon things picked up. My day then started at 10:00 when I left the house and tutored at two neighboring *hag-wans* in the down town area. I commuted home for a few hours before continuing on to Kimpo Airport for my big ESL class. I typically got back to Kim by 7:30.

## MAY

Once Kim got her passport, the next objective was to obtain an American visa. The first step in this long process was to pass a physical exam. After accumulating several thousand won, she went alone to a Catholic hospital to have her chest x-rayed. On May third, the doctor pointed out a dark spot on her lung telling her it might be tuberculosis. She freaked out.

In tears she burst into our room, “I can’t get a visa. You can’t kiss me. We can’t sleep next to each other.” I calmed her down as best I could. I told her such requests were impossible. I’d love her no matter what. After all, that was our vow: “in sickness and in health”.

I learned that in Korean culture TB was akin to leprosy. Kim was scared; about herself; about being a pariah among her own people; and about me deserting her. Her fear was not unfounded. Such things did happen in Korea.

She hadn’t had enough cash to pay for two weeks of TB medicine, so she and I returned to the hospital the next day. She talked with the physician who explained many people in Korea have TB and it’s perfectly treatable. Nobody in Korea nowadays dies from TB. He added the disease will not disqualify her for an American visa, as long as she takes medicine.

We scheduled a follow-up x-ray, picked up her pills at a local pharmacy, and went home. It was a difficult time, compounded because Kim chose to keep her condition secret from family and friends.

When she took her second x-ray, it was confirmed she had *soft TB*. Again, she was in tears when she arrived home. With earnest eyes she pled, “Chris, you must divorce me and go to America alone”.

I assured her such a thing could never happen. “I will always be at your side. This experience will make us stronger.”

I described in my journal three big problems. First was Kim’s TB and visa situation. *Lord, help us out with that*. Second was my readjustment allowance. The Peace Corps owed me nine-hundred dollars—sorely needed—but the check was hung up in DC. Third was a Holt flight to America. I maintained weekly contact with the adoption agency, hoping to procure two cheap tickets to the USA. For the first time in my life, I felt the burden of two lives weighing on one set of shoulders.

On May 15, misfortune struck. As I was exiting a crowded bus in downtown Seoul, I discovered my wallet was missing! After double-checking my room, I drew the obvious conclusion that my pocket had been picked while I was scrunched back-to-chest in the bus.

I calculated I had lost two thousand Korean won, four American dollars, my Washington State driver’s license, a photo of Kim, and of course my nearly-new leather wallet. The loss wasn’t great because I had so little.

Kim and I were really living hand to mouth. We counted our wealth and discovered she had eight hundred won in her purse plus nine hundred in loose coins. The landlady kindly lent her three-thousand won. Fortunately, a few days later I received my week’s pay from KAL, 18,000 won.

I wrote down the big news events on May 24: 1. President Nixon is coming closer to impeachment. 2. Henry Kissinger is signing a peace treaty in the Mideast. 3. Patty Hearst turned from a kidnap victim to a criminal. In local news, strawberries are now in season and every day on the way back from work, I buy a bagful for my berry-loving wife.

## JUNE

Kim wanted to get out of the apartment and acquire a useful skill for America. She began to take English typing lessons at a downtown hag-wan. Since I knew the keyboard, I would shout out to her, “A-B-C-D” and she would respond with the appropriate finger movement.

At the same time, I acquired a fourth job. This one was part time at a telegraph center. The Korean telecom firm sent telexes to America and wanted an educated English-speaker to proof them before they were sent out. I guess I qualified. Most of the messages were in good shape. I corrected a misplaced *the* and repaired subject-verb agreement. Only on occasion did I suggest a clarifying phrase.

I was amazed to see the company’s three-shift *hangul* (Korean alphabet) typewriter. I didn’t realize such a mechanical contraption existed. I also handled my first digital calculator. It had a small black LED display with red letters. When I clicked the *on* button, a random number sequence flashed until the first digit was pushed. It was incredible to consider pencil and paper calculations were on the road to obsolescence.

Since I now lived in Seoul, Meng stopped by the apartment whenever he occasioned a visit to the metropolis. Most stop-overs were unannounced. He’d just rap on the door and appear. It was great to have such a friend. We would play scrabble, snack, and talk until the last bus left the corner.

Since Kim and I did not take time for an official honeymoon, we decided to do something traditionally Korean. That was to visit Jejudo Island off the south coast. This marked a double-first for her: first time in an airplane and first time on the island province.

We packed our bags on June 4, and early on June 5 arrived at the Airport. My Kimpo friends assured me I would get a discount since I taught them English, but that benefit proved to be only for full-time employees. Kim’s Korean passport (Kim Hyun Deok Foreman) did not match her ticket (Kim Hyun Deok) and we had to pay an extra five-hundred won. We rushed and were last to board the plane.

Kim was so excited to gain speed, leave the ground, and stare out the window. She didn’t look away for the eighty-minute flight. When we landed, she said, “I can’t believe I’m actually in Jejudo.”

I was supposed to hook up with my Peace Corps friend, Jim Nemeth, who lived in Jeju City. While Kim was on a pay phone trying to reach him, I recognized Jim standing in a line to board our same airplane. It was a brief introduction. He and his Korean girlfriend were headed to Seoul for a civil wedding. Jim said not to worry about getting around the island because his friend, Miss Lee, would function as our tour guide.

Miss Lee was unusual to behold. She was rotund and dressed in Jim's cast-off clothes. She said to call her *dung-sun-ee* which translated as "fatso", so that became her name. She was hospitable and walked us to a few hotels. The first was too expensive; the second too run down, so we settled for a third priced in the middle. Dung-sun-ee walked with us on a tour. First, we visited Dragon Head, a large volcanic formation along the ocean shore, then we walked through snake cave. We shared dinner with Dung-sun-ee as Kim partook of her first-ever glass of *makoli* (Korean rice wine).

We bussed back to our hotel room; Kim woozy on her feet. We got to bed early in order to rise at dawn.

My watch read 4:45 when I aroused Kim to get dressed. The sun's first rays illuminated our path as we trudged toward the beach then up a huge rock formation that rose along the extreme eastern tip of Jeju island. The sun quickly climbed above misty clouds and we could see sheep grazing on hilltops. The ocean stretched before us and Mount Halla loomed behind, the central feature of this volcanic island. It was a beautiful sight. We returned to our room by 6:00 and slept until 9:00.

Dung-sun-ee lived on the reverse side of the island, so Kim and I boarded a local bus to continue our adventure. The ride to Soegunpo was memorable. Old women stepped aboard with wooden boxes filled with thrashing fish. Water sloshed onto floorboards emitting their peculiar odor. The vehicle turned out to be a fish market on wheels.

Dung-sun-ee sat at a tea room waiting for us. We dropped our bags off at a nice hotel, then walked to Song-pang Falls, famous as the only stream in the orient that plummets directly into the ocean. I liked the falls, but Kim loved it, saying it was the most beautiful place she had ever been in her whole life. I could tell that was true by the rapture on her face and her twirling outstretched arms.

We visited a few more sights, buying straw hats and lava-bead necklaces. We were tired from our long day and returned to our hotel room for some rest. After dinner with Dung-sun-ee, we played a tournament of ping pong. I settled for third place.

The next day we three hopped on a bus and traveled down the shoreline road. We jumped off at an obscure crossroad, remote in the countryside. We strolled

a half hour, past a cascade of four waterfalls to reach the seashore. Chung Mun Beach was pristine and deserted, with a run-down changing room, a spicket of fresh water, and a natural cave. We donned our swimwear and frolicked in the waves. I swam on my back, while Kim, not able to swim a stroke, splashed in the shallows. We laughed and stretched on beach towels for a while. The sand was hot to our soles. After rinsing off salt water, we sat on basalt rocks to write postcards.

On the return walk to the crossroads, we ran across a young girl carrying a huge pack of cane on her back. I snapped a photo while Kim spoke to her. Kim was shocked because she couldn't grasp a word of her extreme dialect.

On our final vacation day, we returned to Jeju City, but not by the coastal route. This time our bus chugged toward Mount Halla, at 6300 feet the highest point in South Korea. From the summit, we could view ocean in all directions. We met with Jim that day along with his new wife. Five of us strolled the boardwalk then we caught our return flight to Seoul.

When we arrived home, late in the evening, I plucked a grain of sand from between my toes then hugged my beautiful wife. I was so thankful to God for providing me with more grace than I could ever deserve.

On June 21, we decided to move from our rented room into a studio apartment. We desired more space and privacy. Plus, issues arose. This was one incident I wrote about in later years.

When I was first married, my wife and I rented a small room in somebody else's apartment. In the main room, our landlady kept a large cabinet with glass doors. In the cabinet she displayed her treasures. I saw family pictures in frames, golf trophies, Korean dolls, a fancy set of teacups, and on the top shelf I noticed a toaster.

One morning when I was alone in the apartment, I decided to fix myself an American style breakfast of eggs and toast. Not thinking much about it, I opened the glass cabinet and removed the toaster. I put two pieces of bread in the slots and enjoyed a big breakfast. When I was finished, I cleaned up the dishes, wiped down the toaster and put it back in the cabinet.

Later in the evening I was reading in our room. Suddenly I heard a boisterous Korean conversation in the main room between my wife and the landlady. Next my wife stormed into the room.

She said in English "this crazy woman says that her toaster is ruined and that you ruined it".

I said with some guilt in a timid voice “Well, I did make some toast this morning” and I added quickly “but I thought that’s what the toaster was for. You know, to toast bread.”

My wife stared at me like I was crazy, then she talked some more with the landlady. I think I heard her apologizing and something about “Americans not being sensitive to Korean culture.”

So that evening, I helped my wife take the toaster apart and shine every portion of it until every crumb was cleaned away.

I said while I was rubbing, “This is ridiculous. It’s just a toaster”.

She said, “But whatever is behind glass is valuable for show, like the dolls and the golf trophy”.

So, I said, “you mean the toaster was a trophy too?”

She nodded *yes* like I was from some other planet for not understanding.

“Okay”, I said to myself “a trophy toaster” and another small bit of Korean thinking worked itself into my brain.

## JULY

July first fell on a Monday. I noted the year was half complete as I began another busy week. I fell into a rhythm of commuting to three or four worksites; reading while idle, collecting small cash payments, while interacting mornings, afternoons, and after dark with the love of my life. This is a complete journal transcript for July fourth, 1974:

Although this day is a holiday back in America, it was just another working day for me. I got up at 8:15 and stayed in bed until 8:30 when Kim brought me breakfast sandwiches. I then hurried to the bathroom to pee and wash up. (I got back in thirty seconds.) I consumed two egg sandwiches and two peanut butter and jellies, along with two cups of coffee before leaving the apartment. My wife always waves to me from the sixth-floor window until I’m out of sight.

I felt a few drops of rain as I caught the 129 bus and read *Sherlock Holmes*, nearly missing my stop from engrossment. A few more drops hit me while I walked to the Ku-Ho telegraph office. I had to write a nasty telex because Kum-ho has so many missing parts, they can’t assemble the teleprinter. I then walked to the CASA hag-wan through a slight rain. The two hours went by quickly as I tutored the two America-bound women. Soon I was out on the rainy street again, umbrella-less. I got just a little wet during my ten-minute walk to my bus stop.

I read my book and time zoomed past. It was raining hard and I had already accepted my wet walk to the apartment. But who happened to be there waiting for me? None other than my lovely wife Kim Hyun Deok Foreman. It was so nice of her to bring me that umbrella. Such a wonderful wife I have!

It was good to have two hours free before heading to work again. We did not waste our playful time together. I left around five o'clock, taking the umbrella along. When I got to Kimpo Airport I was told that lesson 13 was missing (perhaps stolen) so I did an impromptu lesson 14. It wasn't raining when I walked from the airport to the first bus stop and then to my second bus stop to home.

After dinner, I settled down to finish *Hound of the Baskervilles*. Then I just sat and talked with Kim. That's why I'm such a lousy diarist; all spare moments that formerly went into writing are now spent in her arms. The rainy evening was cool and I slept lovely then soundly.

On July 12, when I returned home from my tutoring work, Kim was despondent. She couldn't find her diamond ring. I helped her search the two rooms but to no avail. She remembered taking it off while washing dishes and placing it on a food tray. Our best guess is that she emptied the tray into the garbage chute, with the contents dropping down seven floors into the giant waste bin. I assured her I would buy her a new ring when we settled in America. It was our love that bound us together, not the ring.

On July 13, I got a letter from Frank. His life had turned a significant corner. After months of frustrating attempts to enroll in medical school, my brother had signed papers with the U.S. Air Force to attend dental school at the University of Washington.

I dropped by the PC HQ a few times every week because it was next door to my downtown hag-wans. I was constantly checking in and out library books and running into old friends. On a Friday, I met Meng, Pat Lunitz, Jack Ferrell, and Larry Oresick and invited the four to my apartment the next day. They accepted my invitation and Meng led the bunch to my front door.

Was I showing off my beautiful wife and marvelous life? Perhaps. Kim served American hot dogs and Korean watermelon. The rooms were stuffy on this late July date so we retreated to the rooftop for conversation and Meng's wine.

On July 22, Kim phoned me at CASA hag-wan to tell me the critical letter had arrived from Longview. It contained my long-lost \$900 separation allowance as well as a certified letter from Doctor Starr stating he would supervise Kim's TB

treatment. Now we could move forward with her all-important visa. We filled out forms the next day, paid the fee, and submitted the doctor's form, but ran out of daylight before we could actually obtain her visa. On July 24, Kim was the proud possessor of both a Korean passport and an American visa. All we needed now were two flight tickets to Seattle.

In July, I became addicted to radio news, listening for hours to impeachment hearings on AFKN. Kim couldn't understand my fixation with politics. I became an even more voracious reader, consuming two or three books a week. I read all 1087 pages of *The Source* by James Michener in four days. I remember falling asleep with that volume smacking on my face then dreaming about Israel and antiquity.

I read Cooper's *Deer Slayer* over a few days and dreamed of Natty Bumppo and flintlock frontiersman. *Robinson Crusoe*, *The Peter Principle*, *The Scarlet Letter*, *Gulliver's Travels*, along with numerous anthologies were checked in and out of the PC library.

## AUGUST

The month entered with a heat wave. I coped with the extreme temperature by guzzling ice water, facing into my electric fan, opening windows, and spraying insecticide to combat bugs that passed through holey screens. One late evening we were relaxing on the rooftop. The wind picked up and within thirty seconds the heavens opened with the heaviest rain I had ever experienced. We were drenched in the ten seconds it took to reach our apartment. Kim had to mop the floors because the downpour had entered through our windows.

We began to pack, wrap, and mail parcels to the USA. The cost was 2580 won for a sea-mail package under five kilos. We sent a dozen over the month. The post office girl greeted be by name. Now we knew we would have some possessions when we finally set foot in America.

I continued to monitor the political situation across the Pacific. On the morning of August 9, I heard the resignation address of President Nixon, and the next day listened to President Ford reciting his oath of office. I strained with rapt attention to hear the radio commentary of Paul Harvey. I wrote in my journal. "The king is dead; long live the king."

Kim and I acquired yellow WHO cards and received our necessary inoculations. I had no reaction, but poor Kim hurt for a few days. We checked with the Holt Adoption Agency a few times a week. There were flights to New York, Chicago, and Houston, but none to Seattle. Patience was a virtue we did not possess.

On August 12, an event called *Explo 74* launched on Yoido island. The site was just a few bus stops from our apartment. Billy Graham topped the big-name billing. Hyun Ok, Hyun Deok, and I attended the opening proclamation. I was astonished to see one million people jam onto the gigantic military plaza. Featured speakers were simultaneously translated and with amplified reverberation, I could hardly catch a word of English.

Kim and her sister spent hours at Yoido in prayer and praise. I attended on the final day, August 20. I stood close enough to see Bill Bright preach and was peeved that he denigrated Pentecostals, telling folks not to get excited about the Holy Spirit and not to speak in tongues.

August 15 was Korean National Independence Day. President Park Chun Hee was addressing an immense crowd when shots rang out, missing him, but killing his wife. The nation was in grief. Kim watched the breaking news weeping with the lady from across the hall. Shops were closed while the nation mourned. I was off work a few days and cocooned in the apartment.

Waiting for our Holt flight, I grew bored. At the hag-won I taught two ladies for two hours and at the telex office I sat for one hour, helping with English messages. I felt guilty for receiving a five-day salary of ten-thousand won for mostly reading books. On August 20, I ended my work for KAL. Kim and I attended my going away party. I drank too much makoli. Kim was a bit embarrassed.

I received my Time magazine with Gerald Ford on the cover; Also, my Newsweek featuring the *population bomb*. I spoke to myself, *Could the world population really reach ten billion people by the year 2000? What would my life look like at the new millennium? By God's grace, will I even be alive?*

Kim's little brother, Kyu-nam, dropped by our place for a day. We took him to an amusement park which used to be a golf course. Kim gasped at the manicured lawns. She had never seen such greenery before.

In my boredom, I played hours of solitaire, rummy, scrabble, and wha-too (a Korean card game). Every evening at 9:00 Kim walked next door to watch Korean dramas. I went to the breezy roof top to read under a lamp post.

On the last day of August, Meng dropped by. I handed him a copy of an old Newsweek and snapped a picture as he showed off the headlines "Nixon Resigns". He had always been proud that his home state of Massachusetts had been the only one in fifty that voted for McGovern.

Kim and I enjoyed walks around our neighborhood. We often ran across a father-daughter team who sold bon-dig-ee (steamed silk worms) served in little

newspaper cones. The man would shout “Bon-bon-bon” and the little girl would chirp “dig-ee-dig-ee-dig-ee”. I only tasted silk worm once and didn’t care for it. At one time Kim ate the treat like popcorn. I used to tell my wife, “If we ever lose our jobs in America, we could always sell bon-dig-ee! I’d shout ‘bon-bon-bon’ and you could follow with with ‘deg-ee-de-gee-de-gee.’”

I also remember an old gentleman who used to push a small Ferris wheel around the neighborhood. The wheel only held four small children. I think he charged ten won per child for turning the wheel about ten times. I sometimes stood to watch the smiles of kids as they went round and round. Once I gave the man one-hundred won and asked him to turn the wheel as long as he could.

I recall the little girl who sat in a small chair next to a hot grill and sold little waffles to passers-by; and the man I only spotted on rainy days with his arms full of cheap umbrellas.

## SEPTEMBER

I ripped August from the wall calendar, crumpled the paper into a ball, then tossed it toward our waste basket (two points!). I commented to Kim. “Well, I predict this month we’ll be going to America.” I was restless in my hot apartment and we were both anxious; me to return to the world I once knew so well and Kim to leave the only world she had ever known.

On September 4, when I arrived at CASA hag-won, the secretary approached me exclaiming in broken English. I understood the words “wife”, “telephone”, “Holt” and “tenth”. That was enough. Hooray! I suffered through the one-hour tutorial, then bussed back to our apartment. At the news, Kim was sad, happy, and determined.

The next morning, we hopped on the 103 bus for Holt. Yes, we shared a flight to the States in just five days, but it was complicated. Kim would travel one-way to SEATAC airport then de-plane. I would continue on to JFK airport and spend one night in New York City, returning to Seattle the next day. That was the best Holt could offer, so we accepted their deal.

I discovered details of our journey. Kim and I would each escort two orphaned babies, both around the minimum six months old. Korean personnel would assist until we boarded the aircraft, then at the other end, American helpers would greet us and complete the adoption process. Our specific duty was to chaperone the babies while in transit. To make the system work, we signed papers becoming temporary employees of Northwest-Orient Airlines. Kim and I then each made a \$300 *donation* to the Holt Adoption Agency. With the airfare paid and papers signed, our days in Korea were numbered.

In the afternoon, Kim and I went to the California Hag-wan. It was my final lesson and I wanted my two ladies to meet my awesome bride. Kim was impressed with the two telling me they were very rich. They invited us to a fancy restaurant where we enjoyed a ham dinner. My wife was also impressed with her husband. One lady told her, “Mr. Foreman is a great teacher and a true gentleman”.

The next day we attended an orientation lecture where Holt agency reps provided details of the process. I met Mary Davidson who was with Nick, her new husband. They were planning to honeymoon in Europe and were escorting children. It seemed several older kids were headed for Europe while a dozen babies were going to the USA.

I was able to reach my groggy mother in Longview and give her the date and number of our Northwest flight. Kim and I spent the remainder of Friday buying small gifts, souvenirs for my family ahead, and tokens for her family behind.

Kim wanted to spend one last night at her home town in Cholla-do. It would be six hours on the train, twelve hours on the ground, then six hours back again. I asked if I could accompany her. I figured it would be respectful to meet her father.

She sighed, “That’s not possible. It would upset my mom too much—too much drama. At this time in my life, I have to choose between my mom and dad. I can’t be friendly with both. Even though I think she’s wrong-headed, I have to honor her wishes. She supported me through high school and university. My father did not lift a finger.”

I asked her to share some memories of her father. She told me these four stories.

When I was five years old, I was tiny for my age. Maybe it was my poor diet during the Korean war. My dad taught primary school and would let me tag along, even though I was too young. I liked to be with him. On cold days, he would tuck me inside his top coat and button it up. My head popped through the collar. I remember that.

I have a distinct image of my dad and me walking across a frozen rice field. A big gust of wind blew off his round hat and he chased it across a road. It was rolling and he was running. That image will never leave me.

Here’s another memory. We lived inside an orchard and my favorite fruit was persimmon (yum-yum). My dad would get a long pole and knock fruit from the higher branches. I would try to catch them before they hit the ground. Dad asked me to poke the low persimmons, but I couldn’t because I didn’t see them. I discovered I was totally colorblind and not able to distinguish the red persimmon from the green-leaf background.

When I was in eighth grade, my parents were breaking up. My traditional father didn't see anything wrong in sleeping with a younger woman. It was Korean custom, he said. One evening in mid-winter, my dad dropped by our separate living quarters to talk with mom. He asked me to leave the room. I saw their winter coats hanging side-by-side on wall pegs. I wanted them so much to reconcile so we could be a family again. I found a string and tied the coat sleeves together—like holding hands. When they came out from the room and saw what I had done, dad was amused, but mom scowled and broke the string. I cried. I loved them both and wished they could get along. What more can I say about my father? He was a happy-go-lucky man, a decent dad, but a miserable husband.

When Kim went south for the weekend, I invited Meng over for the day. We spent our last hours eating fried rice at a Chinese restaurant then sipping rice wine back in the apartment. We played scrabble, talking for hours. We also exchanged gifts. He gave me a portrait of Jesus composed of miniscule text taken from Luke's Gospel. I gave him a carved lava idol I had picked up in Jejudo. (I would feel awkward taking it into my parent's house anyway.) We walked to his late-evening bus stop, shaking hands for the last time. When Kim came home after 10:00, she collapsed in fatigue.

The next day we made a point to visit our wedding minister and my pre-wedding family. It was sweet sorrow to greet then depart from them. They had been so kind to me. Kim spent that penultimate night at the family residence, weeping and hugging her farewells. I returned to my empty apartment feeling lost without the love of my life.

Our final day in Korea was hectic. The apartment was a mess with sorting, packing, and giving away. Her mom and siblings kept coming and going. We finally got to bed after midnight. Kim sobbed herself to sleep. I stared at the ceiling in anxiety until the wall clock struck two.

I woke up the next morning at 7:00. Just as I was climbing into my pants, her mother knocked on the door with Hyun Hee and Hyun Ea in tow. After a fast breakfast, we carried our two big pieces of luggage—a trunk and duffle bag—down six flights of stairs and into a waiting taxi. Her mom and sisters stayed behind to clean up the apartment for inspection. Our adventure was about to begin.

We were first to arrive at Holt, but soon five foster mothers entered the lobby. It was heart-breaking to see the women part with the kids they had nurtured for six months. I counted eight infant girls and two boys about the age of three. Soon, four other escorts arrived. I was elected spokesman of our six-person group.

The Holt bus took us the Kimpo airport where I was surprised to see Kim's mother and two sisters once again. They walked with us all the way to the Northwest Orient

gate. Hyun Ok ran up at the last moment passing onto Kim her college transcripts translated into English. The mom with four daughters embraced for the last time.

Kim had sobbed all her good-byes; wept all her tears dry. Now it was our obligation to usher and care for two babies each. Farewell Korea. Hello USA!

## Chapter 12

# RELOCATED

September 1974 to May 1976  
Longview, Washington

*I have come down to rescue them and to bring them up out of that land into  
a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey.*

(from Exodus 3:8)

The United States of America in the Korean tongue is called “mee-gook”, which translates as *beautiful land*. Re-crossing the Pacific, I was eager to resume my interrupted life in *the land of the free and home of the brave*. Sitting at my side, Kim was leaving behind a lifetime of family and friends, crossing into a *promised land* she had never laid eyes on.

For 655 days, I had been a stranger in a strange land. Now Kim and I would reverse roles. I didn't recognize until decades later how difficult this transition was for my new wife and how much trust she placed in her new husband.

### SEPTEMBER 1974

The Northwest Orient jet pulled out at 11:30 and soon the 747 was in route to Tokyo. I made friends with Mr. and Mrs. Suderman, an older couple who were escorting four babies to New York City. I wrote in my journal:

How can I describe the situation? We had the back of the un-crowded jet to ourselves. Kim and I were very busy and didn't get a chance to see each other much. There were two young boys and eight baby girls to look after. The boys were compliant but I had to hold the infants, walk them around the cabin, change diapers, and listen to incessant wails. When one baby cried in solo, seven others joined the chorus. Thankfully, the flight to Tokyo only took ninety minutes.

We were supposed to deboard the plane to allow for cleaning. However, our babies were sleeping. The pilot got permission for the seven escorts and twelve orphans to remain on board. The Japanese cleaning crew worked around our feet.

Soon we were winging to Seattle. The nine hours dragged. There were few passengers and the kind stewardesses walked the aisles with infants at their shoulders. The kids quieted adjusting to their surroundings.

We landed at SEATAC at 7:00 a.m. local time. Kim and I roused and dressed our orphans then headed to a waiting room. Holt volunteers managed the twelve kids during our two-hour stopover.

It took eighty minutes for Kim and I to pass through customs and immigration. While plodding in a long line, I spotted our welcoming party through glass panels. I counted twelve in all: dad and mom; Eileen with Jenny and Laura; Frank and Lelia; Jeanne, Susie, Nancy, DJ, and a very pregnant Debbie. I wrote:

It was really weird to look at them. How can I explain it? Not only had they changed in my two-years abroad, but my perspective had altered as well. They just weren't the way I had pictured them in my mind. Their noses seemed too big and none appeared too attractive. Perhaps I had grown accustomed to Korean faces.

I only chatted twenty minutes with family when the Sudermans called me onto the flight to New York City. I left my bride in the care of family and soon was in the air winging East. Since it was after midnight Korea time, the orphans and I slept the entire flight.

After landing, I woke and dressed my two infants. I handed off one baby to a Holt rep and carried a second in my arms to meet her new parents. I read off the name tag, "Matthews" and two young parents shrieked with joy. I handed over their new child. It was a memorable event. I talked with adoptive parents for a while, posing for some photos.

The return flight would be leaving for Seattle the next day at 10:00 a.m. How fortunate I was. The Sudermans offered me a place to stay for the night. We taxied to Manhattan, where I passed the night in an apartment overlooking Central Park. Skyscrapers glittered out the eighteenth-floor window.

After a hot shower and night on the couch, I thanked my hosts then taxied back to JFK Airport. I wasn't one-hundred percent sure my SEATAC ticket would be waiting on me, but there it was. I boarded the same aircraft and a familiar flight crew greeted me.

Upon landing in the Northwest, I noted a cultural shift. One of the uniformed passport agents was a female. That was different. An airport cop was also female and she holstered a gun! That was shocking. Then, when I telephoned my family to advise them of my landing, the operator was male. America was changing.

After a long wait, my sister Jeanne showed up in her station wagon. I saw for the first time my six-month old nephew, Nathan. My sister drove me to the farm in Napavine. It was great to see my wonderful wife, meet Denny Necker for the first time, and marvel at how my nieces and nephews had sprouted.

## LONGVIEW – WITH DAD AND MOM

After dinner on the farm, my parents drove Kim and me to their home in Longview. Lelia had decorated an upper room, which would be our abode for the next several months. The next day, we visited Terry and Eileen to view their new family room—converted from a garage, as well as Jack and Barbara to see their new place on Nichols Boulevard. So much was familiar. So much had changed. The next day I got word that Debbie had given birth to a baby girl named Stephanie. Jeanne was now a grandmother and my mother became great.

As part of her immigration process, Kim was required to visit Dr. Starr once a month to receive anti-TB pills and to sit for a chest x-ray. The doctor told her the tuberculosis was vanishing and there was no reason for concern.

We were only in town a few days when Frank and I decided to visit Expo 74 in Spokane, Washington, taking along our wives. We drove dad's Chevy van, camping halfway there then again halfway back. We enjoyed many international exhibitions. In the USSR pavilion, we were looking at the mounted heads of Russian wildlife. Kim spotted a moose-like creature with a large proboscis. She joked to Lelia, "That's how all Americans look to me".

We also visited the South Korea exhibition. Kim was astounded to see dozens of compatriots in traditional garb, folk dancing, and synchronized drumming. How strange that I didn't see that quality of performance during my twenty-two-month tour of Korea.

Kim had the time of her life when a Native American boy called her on stage to join in a Blackfoot dance. After leaving the stage, Kim remarked the dance was a lot harder than it looked. On the return trip, we stopped to greet the great aunt and uncle of Lelia, then paused to look at the Stonehenge replica in Maryhill.

It was time to get serious. I needed a job. I followed the employment principle of ABC—anything, better, career. My *anything* job started at the labor hall in Longview. I donned my work clothes every day, packed a lunch pail, then sat in a smoke-filled room for two hours with a dozen other guys. I did get a few one-day jobs, earning twenty dollars, but it was frustrating.

Finally, a *better* job arrived. I had applied for positions at the Weyerhaeuser Lumber Mill and on October 7, I began to work at a facility that manufactured *presto-logs*. This

portion of the huge mill collected mountains of sawdust, fed the waste product into a pressure machine, which pooped out cylinder-shaped logs about twenty pounds each. My job was to remove the logs, one in each hand, from a circular conveyer belt and stack them onto pallets. A forklift driver would then relocate the pallets onto flatbed trucks. I worked the evening shift—four to eleven—with an eighteen-year-old named Mike. I stacked presto-logs for about four months.

As the weather cooled, my extended family drove six cars on a big outing to Mount Saint Helens. Four siblings and a dozen nieces and nephews frolicked in the snow. Kim had an especially good time joking with Eileen.

I did enjoy my family. I used to give the little girls a squeeze and shout, “I love nieces to pieces.” I remember letting Jenny and Laura drive my car down the back alley. They were so thrilled to sit on my lap with their little hands grasping the steering wheel as I maneuvered dad’s Mazda past a few back yards.

The big house at 1618 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue contained four bedrooms. My parents occupied a downstairs room while Kim and I lived out of the paneled room upstairs. In October, my parents invited Grandma Morris into the second bedroom downstairs. My folks possessed the gift of hospitality in a way I could respect but not imitate.

Kim was a high achiever, eager for everything. I began to give her driving lessons, borrowing the station wagon. I sat in the passenger seat, while she drove around the empty Mark Morris High School lot. Kim enrolled at Lower Columbia College taking English language classes. She knew more grammar than most high school graduates, but her accent was still heavy.

Kim was finding her stride in America and hooking up with local Koreans. She commented, “When you find one, you find them all.” In contrast, I was becoming depressed. In Korea I had held a respectable job and earned a decent salary, but in this land of plenty, I devolved into a humble laborer working by the sweat of my brow and not by the dint of my education. My depression manifested in my sleep. After working a swing shift from 4:00 p.m. to midnight, I would unwind alone until 2:00 a.m. I remained in bed nearly to noon, share a few hours of activity with Kim, then return to the drudgery of physical labor.

I earned the prevailing wage, netting about \$280 per week. With one paycheck, we sent \$100 to Korea, with another Kim enrolled at college for \$136, with another I paid dad \$50, with another I bought a fancy stereo for \$200, and with another we put \$100 in the bank. I worked as much overtime as possible to make things comfortable for Kim and me. Still my life was going nowhere.

Faith kept us afloat. We adopted the charismatic home-style, listening to Christian cassettes and watching Pentecostal TV. Dad's favorite show was the 700 Club. As son of the president of Full Gospel Businessmen Fellowship International (FGBMFI), I accompanied him to several of his functions. Kim was involved in Bible studies and prayer groups. Together we supported the home prayer meetings, setting up folding chairs and watching dad lengthen legs.

In spite of his Pentecostal bent, dad remained a faithful elder at the First Church of Christ in Longview. Kim and I were regular attenders listening to weekly sermons by Earl Sample. Dad shared with me his trick to turn these non-Pentecostals into Charismatics. "Raise your left hand if you love Jesus," he would shout. Next, he would add, "now raise your right hand if you're happy you're saved." He would follow up, "See. It's not that hard to get two arms in the air. Keep both of them up there as we praise God with a joyful noise."

In late autumn I accompanied dad to a Full Gospel retreat in Thorpe, Washington. His continuing quip was, "Why do they call this a *retreat*? It's an *advance*." John Foreman was exuberant as he stood in front of one hundred peers to introduce Jack Foreman, Chris Foreman, Frank Foreman, Don Zelen, and Terry Zimmerman.

My parents' home acquired an ambient soundscape. Eileen had presented them with the *Praise Album*, by Maranatha! Music. These simple repetitive songs continually filled my ears. "Don't you know it's time to praise the Lord in the sanctuary of His Holy Spirit? So set your mind on Him and let your praise begin and the glory of the Lord will fill this place". Indeed, the unending words of praise to God soothed my agitated soul.

A strange incident occurred at work on Halloween night. I was somewhere on the noisy conveyer belt, clearing a logjam with a crowbar, when I heard a weird howl. At first, I thought it was a Halloween prank. but as I continued to walk down the line, I saw Mike screaming and pulling at his leg. I flipped the emergency switch, helped Mike extract his broken foot from the belt, then ran for the shift supervisor. My young co-worker was carted away in an ambulance not to be seen again.

On November 13, Kim went to Dr. Starr's office for her fourth TB checkup. This test proved negative, but a second proved positive. My wife was pregnant. The way she calculated; she was just entering her second month.

Kim was dismayed, not wanting a baby at that time. She was so concerned that her child might be damaged due to a contraceptive foam or by TB pills. It took weeks of prayer and assurance for her to embrace the miracle growing inside of her.

As Christmas approached, the economy worsened. Unemployment rose to 8.5%. My boss at Weyerhaeuser told me to enjoy the holiday with one week of un-paid vacation. During that winter week, I visited Frank at the University of Washington and applied for graduate school in the department of Library Science. When I reported back to work, I learned the presto log facility was idled. I was reassigned to the planer, pulling boards off the chain.

For this job, twelve-foot-long planks of Douglas fir clattered along a wide conveyer. A few specialists quickly examined each plank and marked it with an A, B, or C. My job was to grab and stack the different grades of board. Sometimes the work was slow. Other times I struggled to keep up with the pace.

I was handed a second week of un-paid leave over Christmas and New Year's. Despite the underemployment, Kim and my family encouraged me with a happy birthday party and a merry Christmas morning. We rang in the new year with festivities at the Zimmerman house.

## 1975

As the year began Frank and Lelia hung out at the house. Kim and I got along well with them, playing scrabble, walking around Lake Sacajawea, and visiting local family.

By mid-January, work picked up. I was able to do double shifts at the planer and dry kilns. We began to put away some money for the baby due in July. Kim passed through a miserable season of morning sickness, then glowed as the pregnancy progressed.

In February, my parents opened their house to a homeless couple. The Hunters moved into the vacant room across from us: Dave and Jeanne with children David, Shelly and Deja. Kim and I felt imposed upon, but what could we say? My Christian parents were living out their faith.

Dave Hunter helped me buy a used car. Up to this point I had been borrowing my dad's Mazda pickup. He and I shopped around and settled upon a 1972 VW Opal. I paid \$250 cash and borrowed \$1200 from the credit union. Kim was not pleased with the purchase and flunked one driving test because the stick-shift car stalled at an intersection. I never realized until decades later that my mom underwent a *Korean mother-in-law test*. Kim told me she passed with flying colors. I wrote this:

When I returned home from the Peace Corps, my Korean bride accompanied me. Of course, she was anxious to meet my family and her new in-laws. After we passed through customs at Sea-Tac Airport, she met for the first time her brothers-in-law, her sisters-in-law, her father-in-law, and with most apprehension her new mother-in-law. They all hugged my new wife and welcomed her into the family. But what kind of mother-in-law would this be?

We lived with my mother and father for the first several months of our life together in America. There was a lot of adjusting to do. My only task was to adjust to a new wife, but Kim had to adjust to a new husband, to a new culture and to a new mother-in-law. But what kind of mother-in-law would this be?

Kim had told me stories of the typical Korean mother-in-law. She was first a girl who was born as so-and-so's daughter. She had no rights or authority. She next passed into womanhood and married. As a wife she was often powerless. If she were lucky, she gave birth to a son. Still, she had no voice. Finally, when her son married, she herself became a MOTHER-IN-LAW, often a living terror, ruling over her son's wife with an iron fist. This is especially true if the poor girl is unlucky enough to live with her husband's parents, compounded if the first baby turned out to be a girl. But what kind of mother-in-law would this be?

Shortly after I arrived in America I went shopping for a car. I saw a white Opal in a used car lot. Some of my buddies said it was a good deal so I bought it and drove it home. I did not consult with my new wife and she was not part of my decision-making process. My lovely wife disliked the Opal from the start. Maybe it was the stick shift or maybe she didn't like it because I bought it without her approval. We drove the Opal around the block then entered the house. We started to shout at each other in the kitchen. My mother was sitting at the kitchen table listening to the angry words. My wife knew that in Korea, a son's mother would always side with her son against his wife. But what kind of mother-in-law would this be?

With tears streaking her face, my wife looked to her mother-in-law. My mom locked eyes with mine and said, "Chris, you have a wife now. You should not have bought that car without talking to Kim about it first". I sighed in resignation, nodded my head in agreement, and a few weeks later I sold the car. A month later, we shopped together and bought a Toyota. The relationship between my wife and my mother has seen its ups and downs. But in the kitchen on that day, my wife discovered what kind of mother-in-law she turned out to be.

In April I began working at the large Weyerhaeuser planer with a group of four. Three would be busy pulling and stacking boards, while the fourth rested. I spent my sit-down time reading paperbacks in 15-minute increments. I also discovered that my transistor radio fit nicely into the webbing of my hardhat. The plant was noisy and nobody noticed my musical head. KFOG radio helped the time pass until the station signed off the air at midnight.

My nastiest job involved the pull chain. A few of the plank graders loved to chew tobacco. They would mark the plank A, B, or C, then spit their chaw into the pit. My job was to walk down the long gully and toss out broken and splintered boards. It was like treading in a spittoon.

My future remained in the air. I considered working at the Trojan nuclear plant, but the starting salary was too low. Weyerhaeuser told me a management position might open up in the fall, and for me to hang tough. I received a non-acceptance letter from the UW department of Library Science, and no letter at all from all the applications I sent to Washington State school districts. There seemed little hope to escape manual labor and I resigned to put it all in the Lord's hands.

I visited Frank on April 20 when Joshua Caleb was born. He was only nine hours old when I snapped his first photo. I whistled to Frank a tune I twisted into "Pomp and Circumcision".

With the station wagon rather than the Opal, Kim passed her driver's test on the third try. She began to drive herself to LCC college classes. She was attending a helpmate class, a circle class, and macramé lessons. Her life was full.

Eileen became active in Women's Aglow Fellowship—an organization similar to Full Gospel Businessmen. With amazing speaking and organizational skills, she soon led the Longview chapter with mom providing front-row support. Kim, wearing her Aglow lapel pin, often joined in the meetings and retreats.

My father also continued on the speaker circuit. I have a recording of him addressing a Full Gospel audience. His outline ran like this: First he described the baptism in the Holy Spirit and the lengthening of legs; Then he led in the singing of *Silver and Gold Have I None*; Then he read verses of Jesus healing; presented his testimony about fasting; told about witnessing to a doctor; talked about the power of positive confession, then prayed for Nancy Jo, Susie, and overeaters.

The news was shocking in April, 1975. Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia, fell to the Khmer Rouge. A week later Saigon fell into the hands of the Viet Cong. Sixty-thousand refugees from Southeast Asia were streaming to the shores of America.

In May my employment situation became shaky. I'd report to my supervisor for my daily assignment. Most of the time my job entailed sweeping and shoveling sawdust. I remember listening to top forty hits as I pushed the broom. I enjoyed a song called *Mandy* by Barry Manilow. I remember thinking about baby names while shoveling wood chips into a hopper: Amanda for a girl and Geoffrey for a boy. I also liked the name *Zachariah* as a Bible-based name. Kim preferred *Zachary* because she liked the John Denver song: "Oh we want to call him Zachary and we'll raise him in the mountains." We also determined to give all of our offspring Korean middle names just in case we ever resided in Korea.

I accompanied Kim on her pregnancy check-up. Dr. Starr said I could participate in the delivery if I took part in six Lamaze classes. I attended class one called the third trimester, class two about imagery, and class three about the Lamaze method. I was still writing occasionally in my Korean journals. As the last entry in the last book, I detailed the birth of my first born.

On May 22, from midnight to 5:00 a.m., I was aware Kim was awake most of the night. I'd roll over and notice her sitting up or not notice her at all because she'd be in another room. I arose at 5:05 for my work. She told me she was having pains all night, nothing bad but just enough to keep her from sleep. She joined me at coffee downstairs.

Then just before I left, she experienced a sharp pain. (She later said that was her first real contraction.) I didn't think much about it. After all the baby wasn't due till July. So, I went to work and had an average day, not giving much thought to the morning events.

I got home at 2:15 and saw mom talking to some lady friends. She had a worried-serious look on her face. I could tell something was amiss. She said Kim was up in the room having regular pains. I couldn't believe it. Mom wanted to take her to the hospital earlier, but Kim insisted on my arrival. I rushed upstairs. She said the pains started right after I left for work. She went to her church circle and to the new Korean store in Rainier. She couldn't believe the baby was on its way.

I sat with her timing her contractions and interims on my wristwatch. I saw her wince in pain and decided to call Dr. Starr. He was out of state. He told me to take her to the on-call doctor at Cowlitz General Hospital. I got there about 3:15. Kim was examined by a nurse who said her cervix was dilated and could give birth that day or in a month. The nurse released her and we left about 4:00 pm.

For the first time I came to grips with the fact I was about to become a papa. Over the next two hours I was with my wife timing the length of her contractions. I thought the baby was way pre-mature so I hoped they would go away, but they didn't. She was in a lot more pain when I took her to the hospital for a second time at 6:30. She could hardly walk as I got her into the back seat of the station wagon. She laid on her side. Mom and dad weren't around because they went to Chehalis to pick up my new used 1968 Toyota.

This time the duty nurse said the baby was on the way. I stayed with Kim a few minutes, then went to sit in the waiting room. I had a wallet full of cash from my work check so I paid sixty dollars as a down payment for the medical bill. I sat down from about 6:30 to 7:40 and nearly finished *The Confessions of Nat Turner*. At 7:45 I decided to go thru the swinging doors and see how my wife was progressing.

I asked an aide about it. She smiled and said, it was all over! I couldn't believe it. She pointed to a window and there through the glass and in an incubator was my child. They wouldn't tell me what sex it was. During the entire pregnancy, I guessed on a girl, but at the last moment I figured it would be a boy.

They wheeled Kim out on a stretcher with a needle in her arm and glazed eyes. She told me "a boy". The specialist who delivered the baby told me he arrived about three weeks early. I saw Kim in the room again and we decided upon *Zachary Jin Ha* for the name.

Visiting hours ended at eight and they asked me to leave. On the way down Broadway, I passed mom and dad in the pick-up. Terry and Eileen were driving my new Toyota. We went back to the hospital and were able to see Kim and Zachary. Born at 7:30, weighing five pounds and five ounces. He was 16.5 inches long. We stayed about one-half hour. After getting home, I called all my brothers and sisters. I got to bed about ten, still not fully believing what had happened that day and in no way feeling like a daddy yet. Was it a dream?

Kim spent only one night in the hospital and on Wednesday morning I drove to pick up my wife and new baby boy. The attending physician wanted to keep Zachary in an incubator for a few days, saying his weight was at the margin, but we both insisted and the newborn came home with us.

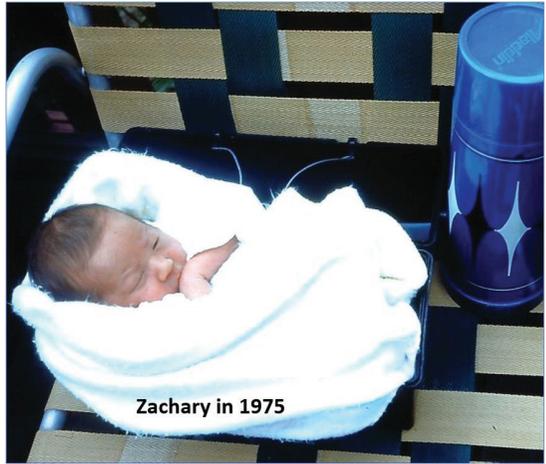
A few days later we returned to Cowlitz General for a checkup with Dr. Starr. He was a bit concerned with Zachary's yellow tinge thinking it might be jaundice, but concluded it was his Asian heritage. He gave the baby a PKU test, which later proved negative. The doctor also noted the Asian bruise at the base of his spine and weighed him in at five pounds-one-ounce; just two ounces over the incubator recommendation.

Kim was room bound for five days marveling at the wonder of her new born son. Two Korean girlfriends brought this new mother traditional seaweed soup. Zachary struggled for a few weeks with nursing and weight loss. We marked his progress: Up to five pounds-two ounces on May 30; five pounds-fourteen ounces

on June 6; eight pounds on July 1; and sixteen pounds on September 1. In later years, I explained to Zachary he was *double-ating* during his first half year of life.



Kim in Seoul in 1974



Zachary in 1975

On June 1, Kim and I officially joined the Church of Christ. I clipped a birth notice from the bulletin: “Chris and Kim Foreman are the proud parents of a baby boy and his name is Zachary Jin Ha (*Jin Ha* means *truthful*). Of course, John and Jenny are proud grandparents!”

I took dozens of photos of my new son. One of my favorites shows tiny Zachary bundled into my Weyerhaeuser lunch bucket. I joked with Kim I would take my son to work with me. At five and a half pounds, he and his blue blanket fit snugly. I also snapped plenty of pictures of Zachary with his cousin Joshua, one month his elder. One of these photos I called *Bottle Battle*. The two cousins are in a crawl position with a baby bottle between them. The camera shutter snapped as the bottle tilted into a fall.

Looking back, it may have been a questionable undertaking, but on July 2, Kim and I began a road trip to Indiana. Along with baby Zachary, Frank, Lelia and Joshua loaded into my dad’s van to launch a round-trip trek of five thousand miles. In the mid-1970s, seatbelts were not required and the two babies were lap held or rested on mats.

We brought along camping equipment and slept in the big white Chevy van. After three marvelous days on the road, we pulled into Whiting spending three nights with the Walker family: Big Jim, Charlotte, Jimmy, Shelley, Chrissie, and Danny.

Terry and Eileen surprised us by appearing unannounced at Walker’s door. They laughed as they explained their last-minute decision to visit Terry’s mom in Hammond. The next day, two brothers, two sisters, with eight kids drove to the Indiana dunes, dancing in the sand and splashing in the waters of Lake Michigan.

We also dropped by the Chicago Field Museum and visited Grandpa Dydek. One of my favorite photos is of this eighty-year-old man grinning as Zachary squirmed in his arms. In another photo, Josh is in one arm and Zach in the other.

Our van traveled south to Muncie, Indiana, where I showed off my new wife and son to as many Jesus-People friends as I could locate. My time with Mark Orewiler was especially delightful and he hitched a ride back to Whiting, where he and Charlotte renewed their Pentecostal acquaintance. We then headed into the sunset with Shelley as a seventh passenger. She helped with the babies and slept on a mat mounted across the front seats. We traveled a southern route across Colorado and Utah. The mid-July Rockies and deserts were spectacular. The whole cross-country adventure was one for the ages.

## LONGVIEW - A PLACE OF OUR OWN

When we returned to Longview, Kim told me ten months was long enough to live with her in-laws. I was gainfully (if not happily) employed and she was tired of the noisy Hunters. A church friend owned a nearby apartment complex and soon we packed our belongings. I was paying dad fifty dollars per month and our new two-bedroom apartment rented for one hundred dollars more. So, on August 2, we moved into 838 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue, apartment 3, in Longview.

We didn't have much furniture and went to an auction to buy what we needed. We got a king-sized bed and throughout our married life Kim and I stuck to that size. Grandma Morris donated to us a good-looking sofa. Unfortunately, a cat had sprayed the couch and no matter how hard I chemically cleaned it; a persistent odor lingered.

Our place was quickly inundated with Kim's Korean friends. I think my wife was reluctant to invite them to my parents' home which perhaps was one of her motives to move out.

Jim and Charlotte Walker drove out to Longview in early August taking along Chris and Dan. On August 10 my extended family celebrated a reunion at Lake Sacajawea. The official photograph shows thirty relatives in attendance: My two parents, their six children with six spouses, fourteen grandchildren, one great grandchild, and one Denny Necker. Jimmy Walker was the only absentee. Most of that crowd visited our new apartment and a few presented us with house-warming gifts. After a week on the west coast, Walkers returned to Indiana with Shelley.

Our small apartment hosted all the local family; Mom and Dad, Jack and Barbara, Terry and Eileen. The two Zimmerman girls often tagged along and gushed over baby Zachary. Jenny at eight and Laura at six loved to play babysitter. My sister gave them their first training in anatomical differences between girls and

boys. As the three of them changed Zachary's diaper, a stream of liquid arced into the air. I remember Eileen saying, "See. That's what little boys do."

On August 29 Kim and I walked to the front of our church to dedicate Zachary to the Lord. Dozens of people cuddled him in their arms and blessed him. The next day we held a celebration for Zachary. Our son was exactly one-hundred days old. On this auspicious day a Korean male child was added to family records and a stylish photo was taken of his naked body-bearing witness of the maleness. We celebrated with family and friends but pictures of Zach show him in his green and red Korean wardrobe.

I played an American game with my son. I spread out before him a hammer, a pen, a toy rocket, and a comb. I wanted to test him. Would he be a laborer, a scholar, an astronaut, or a barber? I think the fix was in. As he reached out, his mother pulled three objects back and pushed forward the pen. Sure enough, with his mother's connivance, Zachary would become a scholar.

I fancied myself as an inventor of games. I played a lot of scrabble with family and friends and devised my own scrabble board. My *super-scrabble* board boasted 400 squares (20 x 20) rather than 225 (15 x 15). In the corners, I placed four quadruple-word squares. I created the board from construction paper and colored the squares with markers. I combined two sets of wooden scrabble squares and played ten letters at a time. I actually played this game with Jack and Barbara. My brother said I should try to market it, but inventing was my gift, not salesmanship.

I also devised something I called *circle chess*. The board was shaped like a large donut. Instead of 64 squares, circle chess had 120. The single home row still housed the eight key pieces, but there was a of pawns on either side (16). The game was played exactly like chess, the only rule change being that a board piece could not circle the board and rest upon the same square it had left. I played that game a few times too, but not being much good at chess, I stashed this invention in my drawer of unrealized dreams.

In September, my work duties changed again. I was assigned to the night shift to a large room into which all Weyerhaeuser sawdust funneled. Alone for eight hours, my duty was to make sure none of the giant bins became clogged. I sat most of the time but every twenty minutes, strolled to inspect a dozen hoppers. I carried a ten-foot pole to poke loose an occasional jam. Once or twice the night supervisor walked through the building. My greatest challenge proved to be staying awake. I did a lot of reading.

About that time, our church sponsored a representative from the Wycliffe Bible Translators. I was intrigued. I dreamed of quitting my crummy job, of traveling to an exotic location, of living with the natives, and of translating scripture into their language. What could be more wonderful? It would be like a sanctified Peace

Corps. There were two problems. First, I would have to raise my own funds; something I found distasteful. More importantly, Kim was aghast even at the hint. She had just left the *exotic* land of Korea to pursue the great American dream. And I wanted to go to the boonies with my newborn son!? I fully realized what a dreamer I was and what a realist she was. We were opposites in this respect, but good in combination. As our life progressed through the years, she would rush down the path to success while I would pause to smell the roses.

On the Wycliffe table display, along with recruiting brochures, lay a few dozen pocket Gideon New Testaments. I asked if I could take a few home. I showed them to Frank who was on break from Dental school. He knew about my night shift and suggested I begin memorizing scripture. I liked that idea and decided to focus on my favorite book, the Gospel of John. I returned to church on Sunday and picked up five more New Testaments. I placed one in the car, one by my bedside, one in my lunch bucket, and kept several in reserve. I was serious.

I began with John 1:1 in the King James version: "In the beginning was the Word. And the word was with God and the Word was God." Having identical books was handy. I could memorize by both sight and sound. I strove to remember both the appearance of the text on the page and the rhythm of the words on my tongue. Memorizing great chunks of scripture proved to be a joy.

In the solitude of night, I was able to knock out chapter after chapter. On one night I would struggle through eight new verses. The next night I would recite them to myself again and again as I paced the lumber mill. The next night I would bring pen and paper to write out all the verses I had learned. By October I could recite the first four chapters of John. I kept on going.

Although I appreciated the solitude of the night shift, I wanted something that would pay more. Job openings were posted on a bulletin board and I applied for a position as a band saw sharpener. I took the aptitude tests and toward the end of November I moved to a different part of the plant. It was probably the top wage job and I got a dollar-an-hour raise.

The two men I apprenticed with were kind to me. The talkative one explained the intricacies of band saw sharpening. He told me it might take years to become a master sharpener like himself. The quiet one just grunted and pointed. The two guys walked constantly, tinkering and measuring, as the automated grinders whirled and buzzed.

I got the feeling if I wanted a steady blue-collar career this might be the summit. But that was not my aspiration. I feigned interest and did learn to operate the machinery, yet I could not picture myself twenty years around band saws. My heart was not in it.

The year 1975 was drawing to a close. For my birthday I presented myself with a Cannon SLR camera. I could finally take the quality photos I wanted. We celebrated baby's first Christmas then Kim invited a dozen Koreans over to welcome in the new year.

## 1976 TO MAY

My job at the lumber mill was now steady days and I cleared over fifteen hundred dollars a month. Kim and I could enjoy life, even though I did not relish my work. With my new camera, I was taking a hundred pictures per month—some transparencies, some black & white, some color prints. The object of my photographic obsession was Zachary. My mom hand-stitched a papoose backpack for me and I carried little Zac almost every time I walked outside. Sometimes he bounced in his Johnny Jump-up as I snapped photos of his giggling face.

Kim and I made friends with church couples and went on outings to Cannon beach and Ecola state park. I truly liked the Pacific Northwest, my domestic homelife, and my church. It was also a pleasure to have loving family within driving distance. Kim was blossoming, happy with a host of Korean friends, new baby, and study at Lower Columbia College. Zachary was an unmitigated joy. However, I endured my menial job and no better prospect appeared on the Longview horizon. I was dissatisfied. I wanted a challenge, an adventure.

I interviewed for a position as a Cowlitz County deputy sheriff. College education was a plus, but service in the Peace Corps did not recommend itself to law enforcement. After I was passed over for the position, the sheriff obliged me with a conversation. He appreciated my sincerity and values, but he told me there were a dozen Viet Nam veterans waiting in line for the job. And they knew how to handle weapons.

That interview planted a seed. In February unplanned I drove past the Armed Forces Recruiting station in the Triangle shopping center. I passed it several times deliberately before I parked in the lot. I spoke to the Air Force recruiter first. Jack and Frank were both airmen so maybe it would work for me. The sergeant said I could enlist but there was no expedited program to become an Air Force officer.

A few days later I spoke with the Army recruiter. He explained there was a new program for men like me. He called it the *College Option* program. This special track was available to any college graduate who could pass the requirements. First, I would have to qualify on paper, next graduate from Basic Training, finally graduate from Officer Candidate School (OCS). If I accomplished all that, I could be commissioned as a second lieutenant in the United States Army. This was an opportunity not a guarantee. If I washed out of OCS, I would be obliged to serve in the enlisted ranks.

I stopped by a few more times to talk. The recruiter explained the *army pyramid*, something like one general for every five colonels, one colonel for every five majors, one major for every four captains, and one captain for every three

lieutenants. Since the end of the war in Vietnam the pyramid was out of whack. There was a surplus of captains and a dearth of lieutenants. Captains were hanging on attempting to retire while lieutenants fled for civilian life. The army needed thousands of new lieutenants to expand the base of the pyramid. Did I have the stuff to become an officer?

I talked with Kim. She was surprised. She knew how much I disliked my laboring status, but wasn't this an extreme solution to a temporary problem? I spoke with her about the army pyramid and she grasped the window of opportunity. She said, "I never dreamed I'd be married to an American GI. I tried to avoid those guys." Many of her Korean girlfriends were married to (or divorced from) American GIs. She prayed about this life re-direction and after a while warmed to the idea.

I talked with dad. He was troubled, saying "Chris, you don't have to join the military. A good job will open up for you soon."

I didn't share his optimism, especially in 1976 and in Longview, Washington. "Sometimes the army is a person's employer of last resort." I joked that the army was like the Boy Scouts but for grown-ups.

I talked with myself as well. I couldn't fathom my own inclinations. I seemed to have a love-hate relationship with military life. Invading foreign lands seemed repugnant but defending my homeland seemed noble. Taking the lives of others seemed unbiblical, but laying down my own life for the sake of others seemed Christ-like.

Back in 1971, I had rioted in the nation's capital to end the war in Viet Nam. In 1972, I was relieved to dodge the draft by joining the Peace Corps. How is it possible to jump from the Peace Corps to the *War Corps*? It seemed crazy. Maybe it was.

I spoke with my mother. Her biggest concern was me getting killed, but without the war in Viet Nam she supported my decision. My brothers encouraged me, although Jack shook his head at my transformation of heart and mind.

Kim invited over a Korean friend who was married to a former army officer. After dinner, the ex-captain offered suggestions, telling me my path would be physically and mentally challenging, especially OCS at Fort Benning. Yet it could be rewarding. Kim was more accepting of a military life after her friend spoke in Korean about the privileges and prestige of an army officer's wife.

I passed a battery of physical and aptitude tests in Portland. Then, after getting a final nod from Kim, I signed up for the army on March 22, 1976. I enrolled in something called the *delayed entry program*, which meant my time in service for rank and retirement purposes would begin on that date, even though my army report date wasn't until May 17.

I remember sitting in the break room at Weyerhaeuser. I was acquainted with most of the guys, many of them Viet Nam vets. When I announced to them, I was quitting

my cushy job in band saw sharpening to enlist in the army, they were flabbergasted. “What, I was counting the days to get out and you’re going in? Are you crazy?”

When I told my two mentors at the sharpening room about my impending military service, they were not especially surprised. The talkative one said it was all for the good since I could never attain his status of expert sharpener. The quiet one opened up about his army experience in World War Two, something he had never mentioned. I asked him lots of combat questions and during my last thirty days we became actual friends.

I began to run laps around Lake Sacajawea, do push-ups and sit-ups. At home and at work, I continued to memorize scripture. I was determined to complete all twenty-one chapters in the Gospel of John before beginning a new chapter in my own life. By May Day, I was able to recite chapters one through nineteen, two chapters short of my goal.

My biggest disappointment about the timing of my departure was Zachary’s birthday. He would be one year old on May 22, so I would miss the event by six days. Kim and I decided to celebrate his birthday one week early and invited everyone to the park across the street from our apartment. Zachary was dressed in his one-hundred-day-old wardrobe. At one-hundred days it was too baggy; At one year it was too tight. Zachary walked on tip toe through the tall spring grass and of course I took dozens of pictures.

Kim and I stayed up late on the day before my flight left from Portland. I figured we might be separated for eight weeks. We wept, we prayed, we embraced, we planned. What would our world be like when we next got together?

Early the next morning, May 16, Kim was still sleeping with Zachary at her side. My wife had a morning class at LCC and it had been a long night for the two of us. I kissed her sleepy lips, then Zachary’s rosy cheek and was out the door.

I left for the airport with my brother Jack. Along the way we reminisced about our time together in Berlin when he was in an Air Force uniform. As he dropped me at the gate, Jack gave me a big hug and said he was proud of me.

I flew into Columbia, South Carolina, attaining my thirty-seventh state. I was alone now on the cusp of a big adventure. I knew I had twenty-four hours before I had to report for duty at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. During two flights, one bus ride, and one night in a motel, I managed to recite the last verse in the Gospel of John: “And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.”

I had accomplished the biblical task I had set out to do. Would the same be true for the whirlwind I was about to step into? Could I complete this military training and actually become commissioned an army officer?



## Chapter 13

# COMMISSIONED

May 1976 to April 1977  
Fort Jackson – Fort Benning – Fort Belvoir

*They charge like warriors; they scale walls like soldiers.  
They all march in line, not swerving from their course.*  
(Joel 2:5)

As I stepped onto the military bus, I knew I was stepping into a new life. The seats were packed with swaggering young men, representing a swath of America unfamiliar to me—Blacks, Latinos, eighteen-year-olds from dixie and cowboys from the wild west. There were no females. I didn't understand in the moment, but the goal of BCT (Basic Combat Training) was to deconstruct this motley crew—including myself—then to reconstruct us into a lean, mean, green, fighting machine. This process lasted eleven months.

### MAY 1976

### FORT JACKSON, SOUTH CAROLINA

Reception station was a half-step into the army. Over four hectic days, raw recruits shed their distinctiveness to adopt a common appearance. We were fitted for uniforms with name, rank, and unit. “Foreman” was sewn over my right pocket. A PFC patch (one up/one down) adorned my right shoulder. I had earned the rank of private first class by virtue of my four-year college degree. Most of my comrades were privates (slick sleeve) or privates E2 (mosquito wing). The round patch of TRADOC (United States Army Training and Doctrine Command) adorned my left shoulder. Along with a duffle bag of army gear, we received buzz haircuts, ID cards, inoculations, and the rudiments of military behavior. I was handed my embryonic medical, personnel, and finance records.

After this inprocessing, we bussed across post to our billets. Our six weeks of BCT had begun. The vehicle had barely stopped when two drill sergeants leapt through the door screaming: "Hurry up. Grab your gear. Line up over here". Talk about immersive training! This was like being cast headlong into unknown swirling waters.

Our barracks were brand new, air-conditioned structures. We called them *starships*. My particular starship was four stories high with one training company on each floor. I was in Charlie Company, first platoon, consisting of about forty men. We were led by Drill Sergeants Rodriguez and Michaels. Lieutenant Cooper seldom showed his face.

The two drill sergeants taught us to stand at attention, right-face, left-face, about-face, present-arms, order-arms, parade-rest, and at-ease. We learned to march. Double time marching meant *run*. We received our M-16 weapons (not called guns). For those who voiced the verbal error, a drill sergeant had them repeat and gesture, "This is my weapon. This is my gun. With this I kill commies. With this I have fun." We had some classroom instruction, most of which was monkey see/monkey do. We recited the ten-step chain of command from Second Lieutenant Cooper to Commander-in-Chief Ford.

Our bodies were whipped into shape. The newly adopted PT (physical training) test consisted of only three events: sit-up, push-up, and two-mile run. Because the late Spring temperature was already severe, we fell into formation at zero six hundred hours. Fort Jackson was notorious for its sandy hills—two steps up and one step back. As we double-timed, we sang in cadence to old ditties about Viet Nam. We sweat and marched until zero seven hundred. The chant while responding to physical training was, "More PT drill sergeant; more PT. We like it. We love it. We want more of it. More PT drill sergeant; more PT."

During our hours of double time in formation, a drill sergeant would serenade us with ditties like:

When my granny was ninety-two, she did PT just like you.  
When my granny was ninety-three, she did PT just like me.  
When my granny was ninety-four, she did PT out the door.  
When my granny was ninety-five, she did PT to keep alive.  
When my granny was ninety-six, she did PT just for kicks.  
When my granny was ninety-seven, she up and died and went to heaven.  
Met Saint Peter at the pearly gate. Said to Saint Peter, "Hope I'm not late."  
Saint Peter said with a big old grin, "Drop down granny and give me ten."  
Your Left. Right. Left. Right. Left. Right.

The first week we sat side-by-side at long tables disassembling, cleaning, then re-assembling our weapons. The M16 assault rifle, when field stripped, fell into fifteen components, each with a name we had to recite; its nomenclature. By the end of the week, some were able to disassemble and re-assemble the rifle blindfolded. I could never accomplish that feat because I fumbled around with the tiny spring.

Our rifle training consisted of three parts. One week we *zeroed* our weapons at fifty meters. My shot group ended up being tighter than most, six holes in the center two rings of the paper target. The next week was *field fire*. Here we alternated at three positions (foxhole, kneeling, and prone) to fire at pop-up targets from 50 to 300 meters. We kept tallies, but this was just practice. Our refrain as we left the firing line was “no brass, no ammo, drill sergeant.”

During the last week of BCT we went for *record fire*, similar to field fire but with the pop-up targets having a system of automated scoring. There were three levels of achievement: marksman, sharpshooter, and expert. I missed the expert badge by just three points out of forty. Two things limited my performance. My black military-issue glasses kept slipping down my nose, especially in the prone position. Second, I fired left-handed which meant I needed a deflector to keep the ejecting brass from jumping down my shirt.

We experienced a weapons week when we fired the M50 machine gun, the light anti-tank weapon (LAW), and threw a hand grenade. The grenade toss was dangerous for drill sergeants. If a trainee dropped his explosive ball, things could turn ugly. A few of the mental marginals mustered out before they threw a grenade.

We camped in the woods for three nights to hone our survival skills. My shelter half joined with another. We dug a tent gully around the perimeter with our entrenching tool, and two of us spent the night head to toe. The trench was needed because it rained during most of the field training. I passed the PT test with flying colors nearly maxing the push-ups and sit-ups but sucking wind on the two miles.

Part of the strategy of BCT was to script every second of the day, no breaks; from lights-on at zero five thirty hours to lights-out at twenty-one hundred. Every minute was allotted such that no time was free. On one occasion, a bus was late at pick-up, we broke into pairs and asked each other questions about the Code of Conduct. Once my platoon found itself ahead of schedule. Word was out, “when your weapons are clean, you can break”. I must have scrubbed my M16 spotless for two hours straight. The inspector told me time and again “Clean it. It’s still dirty”. He pointed to an imaginary spot on the bolt. Magically, ten minutes before scheduled dinnertime, the drill sergeant inspected weapons and all were acceptable.

I did keep in regular correspondence with the Homefront. As a matter of fact, the drill sergeants gave everyone a pen and paper and ordered us to write our parents so they wouldn’t pester the company commander with phone calls. I missed Kim and baby Zachary and was able to exchange about one letter per week. One guy in the barracks possessed a polaroid camera and for one dollar I mailed my wife a picture of her soldier-husband. I learned that right after I left for the army, Jeanne gave birth to her sixth child, Benjamin Josiah.

My age, personality, and religious bent conspired to keep me an outsider in my platoon. My fellow trainees also knew I was an officer-to-be. This engendered both admiration and resentment. I went with the flow and after fifty-three days graduated. By that time, several fellow trainees warmed up to me and wished me luck at OCS. I had once heard the high point of morale in any soldier's career is upon graduation from basic training. After watching the amazing transformation of teen-age losers into credible soldiers, I believed it.

On the last day of training, I was singled out and disciplined. Sergeant Rodriguez had a lucky-trainee pass the hat for a collection. All forty of us were requested to contribute five dollars each. Supposedly this was to recognize the drill sergeant for his outstanding service. Thirty-nine contributed. After I refused, I was directed to remain at attention while the others were dismissed to supper. I stood rigid for an hour until Lieutenant Cooper passed by. He asked what I was doing. I explained. He dismissed me, saying he'd have a talk with Sergeant Rodriguez. Nothing more was said, although a few buddies in my squad gave me a "way to go".

We graduated on July 2. The following day was supposed to be a day of R&R (rest and relaxation). However, the commanding general of Fort Jackson ordered all trainees to the parade grounds. We practice-marched and synchronized for eight sweaty hours.

This extra effort was aimed at a gigantic Independence Day celebration, the bicentennial of the USA. A dozen notables sat in the stand as we passed in review. At the head of the first column marched four figures: one dressed as a revolutionary soldier, two from the civil war (one blue and one gray), and one from World War Two. The post band followed playing marshal music, then I marched somewhere in the mass. The new command I learned to execute on that day was "eyes-right".

I remember watching the fireworks display over the parade ground wishing Kim were at my side. I sang under my breath the current hit "Sky rockets in flight. Afternoon delight". I was missing my delightful wife.

As a successful graduate of BCT, I was issued orders to report to Fort Benning on July 14. I lagged a few days at Fort Jackson, working in a mess hall, then bussed 340 miles southwest to Columbus, Georgia, where I entered my thirty-eighth state.

## JULY 1976 FORT BENNING, GEORGIA

The official name of my upcoming program was Basic Infantry Officer Candidate Course (BIOCC). The class number was 1-7T. Congress had just changed the start of the fiscal year from July 1 to October 1. Therefore, the three-month interim was designated as neither 1976 nor 1977, but as T for *transition*. BIOCC 1-7T lasted thirteen weeks, broken into three phases with each phase granting more liberty.

As stated in my handbook, the mission of BIOCC was “to train selected personnel in basic military subjects, to evaluate and qualify them for commissioning as second lieutenants in the Reserve Corps of the United States Army, and to prepare them for subsequent officer basic course training.”

There were three routes to an army commission. First was through the Military Academy at West Point. That was the most prestigious. The second source of commission was ROTC, participating in army training through four years of university. The third source was OCS. This route was designed for enlisted men who aspired to become officers. Nearly all in my cohort had experience as army sergeants. Just a few like myself were *college option*, my only prior military experience being fifty-three days of basic training.

As I reported to duty, I was promoted from PFC to Specialist Fifth Class, but that was only for pay purposes. As rank, I wore the brass letters *O.C.S.* like all candidates. No one candidate displayed a higher grade than another.

Fiftieth Company of the Training Brigade consisted of 170 officer candidates. We were divided into seven platoons and housed in four WW2 barracks which surrounded a central courtyard. I was in first platoon with 1LT Weiss as my *TAC officer*.

My old-style *temporary* barrack consisted of two floors with long central corridors. Four-man rooms with two bunkbeds each flanked these hallways. My two roommates turned out to be David Dungan and Chuck Puchon. A fourth man never materialized, for which we three were grateful. Because he was senior, Chuck slept on a lower bunk without a top bunkmate, while I slept on a bottom bunk with shorter David on the top. Dave and Chuck became two of my best friends.

I was issued seven additional sets of olive drab fatigues. These wrinkly cotton uniforms were so heavily starched that I had to push my arms and legs through the holes. Sometimes we had to *break starch* twice a day. My fatigues were continually being starched and returned to my room. I was also issued a black gloss helmet embossed with OCS. This served as my primary head gear.

The first five weeks were the hardest, constant drill and ceremony, physical training, and weapons training. There was plenty of fault-finding and shouting by the TAC officers, but nothing over the top. The *new army* commencing after Viet Nam focused more on professionalism and less on mindless harassment.

The PT test consisted of five events. The run-dodge-and-jump involved zig-zagging through four hurdles, leaping over a ditch, hand-smacking a post, then returning to the start point. I managed to max this event most of the time. The inverted crawl (nicknamed perverted crawl) was a short there-and-back race with belly upward, hands and feet on the track. This was a challenge until I learned the technique of sideways crab crawling. I was sometimes able to max this event.

The third event was the horizontal ladder. My body was too heavy for these overhead bars and I was happy to pass with a minimum score. For the first few weeks

I couldn't even get there and back on the twelve-rung ladder. The fourth event was sit-ups and the fifth was a one-mile run. My overall performance was among the best.

In July and August, Fort Benning grew devilishly hot. We ran in shorts and t-shirts at sunrise. The lieutenant was constantly whirling a contraption called the *wet bulb*, a metric of temperature and humidity. If the reading was too high, we stopped running. Rumor had it that a candidate collapsed and died a few months earlier.

Similar to Basic Training, we always sang *Jody songs* as we marched and ran. The chants helped us to keep in step, which always proved to be an issue for me. When the word *left* was spoken, you stepped on your left foot. Some of the trainers had outstanding voices. The cadence I remember best went like this:

Your left, your le-ef; Your left, right, left; Your military left; Your left, your right, now pick up the step, your left, your right, your le-e-ef. Sound off (one-two); sound off (three-four). Bring it on down; (One-two-three-four, one-two-THREE-FOUR).

You had a good job when you left. (you're right).

Your mother was there when you left. (you're right).

Your girlfriend was there when you left. (you're right).

And that's the reason you left. (you're right).

Sound off (one-two); sound off (three-four). Bring it on down; (One-two-three-four, one-two-THREE-FOUR).

OCS maintained detailed evaluations. TAC officers took copious notes of candidate performance and on Sundays we filled out our own self-assessment. Peer assessments covered seven candidates in my squad. There were words like *military bearing*, *judgment*, *intelligence*, and *tact*. Check boxes ran from one to ten. The hardest part of the evaluation was to rank order the eight (including myself) from top to bottom. I generally fell in the mediocre middle. Our unspoken motto was "cooperate and graduate."

*Integrity* was the premier criterion. Anything other than ten of ten might be reason for dismissal from the program. One candidate down the hall was dismissed a few weeks into BIOCC.

The senior TAC officer was a West-Pointer named Captain Travis. We called him the *Beast of Benning*. He seemed to delight in inspecting bunks, tearing them apart, and making you late for formation.

Candidates were required to rotate combat boots every day. One pair was on our feet and a second pair was spit polished, displayed beside the bunk. Captain Travis would ask, "Candidate, did you rotate your boots today?"

He had a test if he was suspicious. When the room was empty, he stuck a scrap of paper in the toe of a boot. If you presented him with the note on the next inspection, you earned a weekend pass. If he found the note in the bottom of your display boot after you swore you rotated your boots, then you packed your bags

and were gone by morning. I learned there was no compromise with integrity. It's either one-hundred percent or not-at-all.

The T in 1-7T stood for *transition*, the three-month gap between FY 76 and FY 77. My class also marked a transition in another sense. We were the last to be all male. Beginning in FY 77, women would compose one platoon. A female lieutenant in our midst drew curiosity until we learned LT Prewitt was on the ground to facilitate the integration of enlisted women into class 1-77.

I went on sick call twice during the ninety-two days of OCS. Once I was pulling night CQ (Command of Quarters), walking the grounds from lights-out to midnight. It was a steamy night and electric fans were aimed at sleeping bodies. As I opened my room door, I knocked over a fan, tried to catch it with my bare hand, and nearly lost a thumb tip. The scar remained.

A few weeks after that, the company was on an activity called "land navigation over extended distances during hours of limited visibility." It involved three soldiers; one with a map, one with a compass, and one walking paces. My group collapsed in place about zero three hundred hours and stood up again at sunrise. It was a dreadful rainy night.

The next day, back in barracks, I reported to LT Weiss for sick call. He growled questioning my ailment. "And what's wrong with you, Foreman?" I said nothing, just lifted both trouser legs to expose fiery red bumps from mid-thigh to ankle. "Oh, chiggers!" he grimaced and signed my pass.

About this time, candidates were asked to apply for army branches. The decision rested first on the needs of the army and second on the preference of the applicant. Dave put in for Military Police and Chuck for Signal Corps. My first choice was Corps of Engineers, followed by Artillery, then Military Intelligence. A few weeks later, all three of us learned we had received our first choice. I would be reporting to Fort Belvoir for Basic Officer Engineer School.

All candidates were also urged to apply for Airborne and Ranger training, both held at Fort Benning. I opted for Airborne wings, but nixed the Ranger patch. Thus, I was scheduled for three weeks of Airborne school at the conclusion of officer training.

Phase two of OCS began at the end of August. Spouses were now authorized to occupy post housing. Kim had already vacated our Longview apartment, sold the Toyota, and stored furniture in my parent's garage.

She and Zachary arrived at the Columbus, Georgia, airport on a Sunday afternoon. Kim packed only a few suitcases. Tears ran down my cheeks as I saw her step down the walkway. *This woman really loves me*, I thought to myself, *making such a sacrifice to join her husband in super-hot south Georgia*. I spent one delightful night with my wife in guest billeting before I returned to duty on Monday; *Sky rockets in flight*.

I was unable to assist Kim's transition into military life. Thank God for the Officer's Wives Auxiliary. This group took Kim under their wing and helped her get housing, ID cards, clothing, and pantry furniture. She made fast friends with a few Korean wives. God certainly blessed my family of three as we came back together after three months apart. From this point on, candidates were on pass from Saturday evening to Monday morning. The army understood the readiness value of a happy soldier and strove to accommodate families.

Training in basic military subjects continued. We were constantly evaluated, qualified, and prepared for life as an Army officer. I learned how to use the bayonet and fight hand-to-hand. We began to have hours of classroom and motor-pool training. The unchanging constant was PT, long runs before breakfast and after sunset. I became so overheated, I would return to my room, strip to my skivvies, and hug the polished linoleum floor until the heat ebbed out.

In the long boring classroom sessions, I could sneak out a blank sheet of paper and write out a chapter of John's gospel. It looked like I was taking intensive notes. Dave who sat next to me was astounded at my memory. To fight fatigue, dozens of candidates would line the walls study notes in hand. We joked about the *ranger alarm clock*. This was a sharpened pencil clutched in your fist and pointed upward. If you began to doze, you'd stab yourself in the forehead.

Kim got a hold of my paycheck and bought a one-year-old Toyota Corolla. I learned the precept "happy wife/happy life". I signed up with USAA for my car insurance—the beginning of a decades-long relationship.

One Saturday evening we headed south in the Toyota to Panama City, Florida. I wanted a diversion from army over-saturation. We spent one night in a hotel and a full Sunday on the bright white beach, splashing in the gulf and playing in the sand. Zachary had a ball, but I didn't think to apply sunscreen. Stupid me! In the evening, Zachary squealed in pain while my ankles and legs burned. I applied wet towels helping me drive home.

The next morning, I was really hurting with body parts beet red and swollen. I was able to score some Bactine spray from a buddy, but couldn't report to sick call. My wounds were not duty-related and I would earn demerits. So, I suffered in silence. I remember on a Monday PT run, deliberately splashing in puddles to alleviate my ankle pain. It was torturous, but after a few days improved to tolerable.

At phase three of OCS, we acquired powder blue helmets. TAC officers relaxed and wives were involved in more activities. We were learning the social aspect of being an army officer. The company sponsored a formal ball where Kim looked

stunning in her white Korean hanbok. Both David and Chuck were single and dropped by my quarters on free weekends. They took a fondness toward Kim and a liking to little Zachary. My neighbors were wonderful at helping Kim and I thanked them whenever we met.

I was in good physical and mental shape as OCS drew to a close. I qualified as expert on the rifle range and maxed three of the five PT events. I was a little slow on the mile run and never able to master the horizontal ladder. I graduated number 53 of 174.

On October 18, after 92 days in OCS, I swore my oath as a commissioned army officer, thereby becoming a second lieutenant:

I, Chris Foreman, do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So, help me God.

I invited Dave and Chuck to my quarters for a farewell party. We stayed up past midnight, looking back on our *mission accomplished*.

I enjoyed about ten days rest, then signed into the Basic Jump School, designed to be three weeks long. Because I was stationed at Fort Benning, I was put through an unofficial *zero week*. I reported to the school to run two hours in the early morning, then reported again to run two hours in the evening. We chanted such ditties as:

C-one-thirty moving down the strip. Airborne daddy gonna take a little trip. I don't know, but I think I might jump from an airplane while in flight. Stand up, hook up, shuffle to the door, jump right out, and count to four. If my chute doesn't open wide, I got another one by my side. If that one should fail me too, look out ground I'm coming through.

Week One was called *ground week*. Here we learned the PLF (parachute landing fall). We jumped straight down from increasing high platforms then tethered to steel cables at different angles. The actual jumping was simple. It was imperative to learn how to hit the ground without hurting yourself. We also visited the parachute-packing facility to see first-hand how these packs were put together.

Week Two was designated *tower week*. Fort Benning possessed two huge jump towers each with four hoisting cables. I understood the army purchased these monsters from a New York amusement park. We lined up to make our jumps, four a day, and so had twenty jumps during tower week. We didn't pull a cord, but all jumps were on a static line. When we reached two hundred feet, the chute

automatically popped open and we floated to the ground. Except for the combat gear I was toting, Fort Benning felt like Coney Island.

Week Three was designated *Jump Week*. On Monday I loaded into a C-130 aircraft, circled a drop zone near Phoenix City, Alabama, then leapt from the open door. I stood upright in the center aisle in full battle dress, steel pot, and M16 rifle. Our parachute packs were checked and double-checked. We scrunched chest to back. Our chutes were attached to an overhead static line which meant they flung open upon clearing the exit. A jump master managed the exits, spacing them apart, and pushing each of twenty jumpers out the door.

On my first jump the single thing that staggered me was the incredible tumult. Training can't prepare you for that. Standing at the open door, the jet engine roared at 140 decibels. The 150 mile-an-hour wind added to the chaotic soundscape. Once out the door—very suddenly—an incredible stillness ensued with a slight downward rocking motion.

After such a deafening roar, the descent of one thousand feet seemed silent. How beautiful it was to float to earth gazing at surrounding chutes and the land below. It took about forty seconds to strike the ground. And as the surface approached, I had the illusion of falling faster and faster.

A paratrooper generally hits the ground at 22 feet per second. That equals a free fall from a height of seven foot-six inches. My first jump was perfect. I executed my PLF, gathered up my open parachute and double-timed to the parked bus. I thought my first jump was the most exhilarating experience of my life.

My jump on Tuesday was equally thrilling, but this time I could relax because I knew what to expect. I had completed two of my five required jumps. My Wednesday jump was a bit difficult. The wind dragged my chute along the grass before I could stop and gather it.

The humor went: after completing a successful fourth jump all you need do is strike the ground for a fifth time to earn your silver wings. A broken leg or body cast doesn't matter. You have earned the right to be called airborne, dead or alive.

I didn't quite make it that far. On Thursday, I struck the ground hard. Maybe I stepped in a chuck hole. I don't know. I stood up limping and I struggled to carry my parachute to the bus. A doctor examined my left foot, pronounced it not broken, but sprained. He advised against jumping on Friday.

And so, I was recycled for one week. I was disheartened not to graduate with my cohort, but what could I do? I stayed off my feet for three days, ran for three days, then showed my foot to the doc. He said I could jump if I wanted to. After all, this was my fifth jump and all I need do was survive the fall.

My final jump was textbook. I stuck the PLF and ran with joy onto the waiting bus. Kim and Zachary attended the ceremony when silver wings were pinned to

my chest. I knew my wife was proud of my accomplishment and we both looked forward to the military adventure that lay ahead.

It was late November and Engineer Officer Basic didn't commence until January fifth. I was assigned work in a training headquarters assisting an infantry captain. He asked me to review his reports and look for errors. I double checked his math and one day asked about a number he presented as ".02%". I informed him 1/50 should be represented as either .02 or 2% but not both. He was grateful for the correction and gave me the rest of the day off. Larry and I became friends until I left the post.

This captain told me how fortunate he was to have survived the *rollcall reduction in force*. He explained that in the same way the army was frantically acquiring lieutenants, it was shedding excess captains. On the first day of a recent Infantry Advanced Course, he was among 200 army captains who had gathered in the installation auditorium. The infantry commandant read the names of 100 officers who then stood, grabbed their headgear, exited the hall, and involuntarily mustered out of the Army.

Kim and I enjoyed our few months living in Fort Benning quarters. On Halloween, Zachary wore his 100-day Korean outfit, very tight by this time. I walked him to a few front doors to collect candy and a neighbor thought he was costumed as a pirate. I also bought a costume; a second-hand dress blue uniform—the army equivalent of a tuxedo—for just fifty dollars.

November second was election day. Although most of my army buddies voted for Gerald Ford, I cast my ballot for Jimmy Carter. A few days later, on Saturday, I drove twenty minutes to Plains, Georgia, the president-elect's home town. A large banner read, "Welcome home, Mr. President". I stood far back in the crowd as Jimmy Carter stepped to a microphone to deliver a joyous speech. I snapped a few photos, milled around, then returned home.

We attended the post chapel as often as we could and I enjoyed conversations with Chaplain Wright. As we talked theology, he suggested I should have opted for the corps of chaplains rather than the corps of engineers. I agreed, but the die was cast. My Christian faith would have to simmer on a back burner, while my military career boiled in the front.

We also attended a Korean church in Columbus. Kim loved listening to her native language and schmoozing with fellow Koreans. Zachary met several kids like himself, half-American and half-Korean; *Amerasians*?

I checked out my accrued leave. At two and a half days per month, I had earned two weeks' vacation. I talked it over with Kim and we decided to drive the Toyota all the way to Longview, then resume for a cross-country trek to the east coast by January 5. It would be a mammoth trek, but my adventurous wife was up for it. She wanted to see America close up. We cleared our quarters, serviced

the car, packed our bags, said our good-byes, and left the state of Georgia on December 19. I bought a top rack, so we didn't leave much behind.

We decided on a southern route along Interstate 10 with the first leg ending in San Antonio, Texas. We passed through Alabama, Mississippi, then Louisiana which was my thirty-ninth state. Kim and I took turns at the wheel driving over fourteen hours and nine hundred miles. We only made the necessary stops and pulled in to my Uncle Joe's house about noon. I hadn't seen Joe and Hattie since 1966. We talked about his Air Force career, shared dinner, phoned my mother/his sister, and left the following morning.

We drove another twelve hours to stay a short overnight in a Phoenix hotel. We brought groceries along the way and ate with Zachary at a few rest stops. Kim marveled at the trackless vistas. She wanted to stop at the Grand Canyon, but there wasn't time.

The drive was long into California, then up Interstate 5. We paused near Mount Shasta for the night, then continued north. My sister Jeanne had recently relocated to Eugene, Oregon. We stopped there for a quick visit and meal, then finally arrived at my parents' home about midnight. The three-thousand-mile drive was exhausting and we were glad to flop down in the same paneled bedroom we had occupied a few years earlier.

The next day was my twenty-seventh birthday. Jeanne, Jack, Eileen and Frank dropped by for the occasion. During our eight days in Longview, we met and played with friends and family; I answered all kinds of questions about my military life; We visited Mount Saint Helens to play in the snow: and I took a line-up picture of six babies sitting on mom's big sofa: Nathan, Josh, Stephanie, Zachary, Benjamin, and three-month old Heather.

There were two pieces of bad news. I was not surprised that Charlotte's marriage to Jim Walker was unraveling. I was never quite clear if they were officially divorced or on the verge. Also, my dad did not look healthy. He claimed he was just fasting a lot, often two or three days a week. Frank told me dad was discouraged because he had been voted out as president of Full Gospel Businessmen and mom said he was going through jars of antacid tablets to ease the discomfort of heartburn. I was concerned about my old man.

Like most everything else, the army had a regulation about assignments. If your orders send you to a location for less than sixty days it's called TDY (temporary duty), but if the orders state sixty days or longer, then it's called PCS (permanent change of station). My orders to Fort Belvoir sent me there for ninety-two days. Kim could accompany me; the army would pay a housing allowance and ship my household goods from my HOR (home of record) which was Longview. Kim and I boxed our belongings stored in the garage, ready for pick-up when we established ourselves in Virginia. We sold some things, gave more away, and threw out even more.

One thing we did not toss out was Kim's pregnancy wardrobe. We shared with the family that Kim was expecting our second child. Like Zachary, baby number two was due on the Fourth of July. I was jubilant. Kim was apprehensive. One child was a handful. What would two be like?

I wanted to make the most of this West Coast visit, extending it to ten days. I have a photo of cousins Zachary and Joshua standing together draped with a sash announcing the arrival of "1977". Kim and I spent the new year moment at the Zimmermans.

## 1977

We left town early on New Year's Day beginning a twelve-hour drive along the entire length of Interstate 80 North (since re-named I-84). Wind in the Columbia Gorge pummeled the Toyota, making it hard to keep on the roadway. We passed through Oregon then Idaho. I bought snow chains in Twin Falls where we paused for dinner. We spent an eight-hour night near Ogden, Utah.

The next leg was the longest, over nine hundred miles along I-80. We soon left Utah and travelled the length of Wyoming and Nebraska. The temperature dropped to the teens, but we were fortunate in that there were just a few snow flurries. Kim and I took turns driving. When not at the wheel, I dozed or looked after Zachary in the back seat. My son was good most of the time. He seemed to love the rocking and whirl of a moving car. He spent a lot of time looking out the window and snoozing. When Zachary did act up, Kim or I (the non-driver) would hold him on our lap.

We found a cheap hotel outside of Omaha and left six hours later at sunrise. I apologized to Kim, admitting we should have skipped the New Year's party and left a day or two earlier. Our original plan had called for us to spend a night in Whiting, but since we were in a rush, we struck south speeding along I-70 rather than I-80. It was another long slog, seven hundred miles through Iowa, Missouri, Illinois, and Indiana; all the way to Columbus, Ohio. Snow was falling, but plows kept the Interstate clear.

We were both exhausted, so we decided to rest at a Quality Inn for a full twelve hours. I told Kim my report time was 8:00 a.m. the next day and I would drive the last leg in the night and report for duty exactly on time. We left the hotel about four in the afternoon in the midst of a snowstorm. I had four hundred miles ahead of me.

The first few hours were decent driving. I-70 to Wheeling was fairly flat and kept clear of snow. But then triple trouble began. I ran into darkness, mountains, and a blizzard. When I finally crawled into Morgantown, West Virginia, the Toyota was sliding on the roadbed. I stopped at a service station and paid to have my chains installed. It was a slow-going slog from there, through the Appalachian Mountains, the parkland, and finally over the Cumberland gap at midnight.

The snow ceased to fall, a full moon beamed overhead, and the mountains appeared eerily bright. Trees, telephone wires, housetops; everything was flocked

with a blanket of fresh snow. The bright moon and white landscape almost constituted daylight driving. But the roads were still dangerous. With a hundred miles left, I checked my watch. It was zero three hundred hours. At thirty miles an hour I made it to Hagerstown. I removed the chains at Fredrick. The hubcaps had formed an interesting four-point star of roadway slush. I edged around Washington D.C. and arrived at Fort Belvoir thirty minutes late.

The admin clerk didn't seem to notice my tardiness. He remarked because of the snowstorm, check-in for the Engineer school would not commence until the next day. He stamped my papers and directed me to the billeting office. I had wasted a lot of anxiety.

## JANUARY 1977 FORT BELVOIR, VIRGINIA

After signing in to the Engineer Officer Basic Course, I drove weary Kim to billeting. We all slept together in a big bed in a big room with shower and kitchenette. It wasn't until evening when we left our room for dinner. We occupied that guest quarters for about a week

This course was different than the previous three army courses—BCT, OCS, and Airborne. EOBC was a *gentleman's course* in that I spent most days in a classroom and most nights at home with Kim and Zachary. According to the book, my goal was to learn combat engineering, general engineering, and geospatial engineering.

Training was divided into four modules: a defensive module, an offensive module, a general engineering module, and a construction module. For most subjects I studied in the classroom first, then executed in the field. Because we were officers, we received a grand overview of combat engineering, not so much to perform the grunt work, but to lead platoons in what they should do.

Most subjects seemed to have a constructive side and a destructive side. For instance, we learned how to build bridges and how to demolish them. We learned how to lay a minefield and how to detect one. We also learned how to operate heavy construction equipment. I operated a bulldozer in a mud pit. That was the high point of the course.

There was a voluntary PT run every morning before the first class at 07:00. I usually ran with the group. There was also a mandatory formation and PT run on Friday afternoons.

Because of the nature of this course and my personal constitution, I did not make many friends. My focus was on my home life with Kim and Zachary. A few weeks after his inauguration, President Jimmy Carter announced an amnesty for draft dodgers in Canada. As most of my comrades complained loudly about this, I thought of my buddy, Jimmy Francis. A few weeks later, I did learn that he had returned to Whiting.

While I was in the classroom, Kim was seeking an apartment. Her strategy began by looking in the yellow pages for a Korean grocery store. Here we were in luck. Northern Virginia was home to more Koreans than any place on the east coast. Once she walked into a Korean shop, she introduced herself, and was directed to the best Korean church. After a single Sunday among Korean worshipers, a dozen compatriots from the pastor on down were willing to assist her in any way they could. Kim was always gregarious and collected friends like a magnet gathers iron shavings.

She found a nice apartment in Woodbridge, about thirty minutes south of Fort Belvoir. I arranged for the Longview furniture to be shipped east, and after ten days we moved from sleeping mats to our own bed. Our bulky TV arrived with the picture tube shattered. The mover asked, "Did you ship it like that?" We were happy to have the government pay for a replacement.

Woodbridge was our home for the next eighty days. I drove the Toyota to work on most mornings. Sometimes Kim would drop me off in order to shop and get out of the house. She would pick me up about 5:00 p.m. and we'd do something special on post like bowling or catching a movie.

EOBC seemed to be a regular day-job with occasional fresh-air outings. I did well on written exams. Book tests were always my strong point. I didn't do as well with the hands-on field tests; how to lay a minefield or how to inspect a dump truck. The four phases and thirteen weeks whizzed by.

I was astonished at how fast the words of John's gospel faded from memory. I figured brute memorization was like this: I once shoveled snow off my driveway during a daylong snowfall. The original task of plowing was most difficult but as light flakes continued to fall; I had to go outside every few hours to brush away recent fluff. In Virginia, I brushed up the Gospel of John chapter by chapter.

We made two tourist outings during our three months in Virginia. One morning we drove to D.C. to visit the monuments. We leisurely walked the capitol mall from the Lincoln Memorial to the Capitol. We also spent a lovely afternoon at Mount Vernon. I remember strolling the grounds with Zachary perched high on my shoulders. As I took a picture of smiling Kim in front of Washington's tomb, she grimaced. "Is his dead body really behind that door?"

I also remember visiting the home of a faculty member who showed me amazing technology. He had an electronic gizmo attached to his television. He switched from broadcast TV to this thing called *Pong*. He handed me a device with four buttons and I played my first video game. I couldn't fathom how such a gadget operated.

I enjoyed my homelife with a lovely wife and toddling son. Zachary was speaking his initial words, the first of which I think was "no!". Kim was astounded when I taught him a baby song I learned as a Peace Corps Volunteer, "San-toe-key, toe-key ah" about the hopping mountain rabbit. He performed the song and gestured at our Korean church and Kim's friends giggled in delight.

January and February were unusually cold. We walked in our neighborhood bundled up and kicked a beach ball around the apartment parking lot. March weather was still cold and windy. Warm weather didn't arrive until April. Walks around Fort Belvoir were verdant with Spring growth and cherry blossoms.

A few weeks before graduation, I petitioned for my first duty assignment. The army's choice was with the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. I countered with a tour in Korea. The Engineers accepted my preference and orders were cut for Korea. When I read the document carefully, I recognized it was an unaccompanied short tour. I had assumed Kim would be accompanying me, so I asked for a change. The army was reluctant, but re-assigned me to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri.

I only took a single picture of my EOBC; a graduation photograph. The picture shows fifty-seven graduates with one female and one Saudi student at front and center. I graduated three months to the day after I had arrived in Virginia.

We lingered at Fort Belvoir for a few days, packed up our household goods, and headed west to Missouri. We included a diversion visit to Whiting. Jim Walker had already moved into his girlfriend's house down the street. I knocked at Charlotte's door on April 9<sup>th</sup>.

As we talked, she explained how she worked at a care facility, emptying bed pans and caring for the elderly. The pay was paltry, but she said she was able to witness about Jesus and pray for those on death's doorstep. As a senior in high school, Jimmy was mostly out with his buddies. He stayed with his dad on some occasions too. I remember walking with Shelly, Chris, and Dan to Whiting park to give my sister a break. Kim, Zachary, and I strove to provide her cheer as she entered a season of singleness.

Charlotte had become friends with my old flame, Arlene. She and her husband lived just half a block down Sheridan Avenue. At the mention of Arlene, I felt that old stab in my heart. I dawdled behind Zachary as he toddled down the street. I paused across from the big corner house, gazing at the structure that contained the woman who had jilted me five years earlier. I sighed, did an about-face, and returned to Charlotte's place.

April 10 was Easter Sunday; I decked out in my class-A uniform with special engineer brass. Seven of us went to Charlotte's church across the state line in the Hegewische section of Chicago. The place was over-the-top Pentecostal. The Holy Ghost dove at the front was major, the cross at the back was minor, and quotations casting out demons plastered the walls. After the Easter service, Char, Chris, Dan, Kim, and Zachary posed for pictures on the front stoop, candy-filled baskets in hand.

After this short but sweet visit, Kim and I headed southwest to Missouri on Monday morning. A new adventure lay ahead.

## Chapter 14

# DEPLOYED

April 1977 to August 1980  
Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri

*To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:  
A time to be born, and a time to die; ... a time of war, and a time of peace.*

(Ecclesiastes 3:1-2,8)

My three and one-half years at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, marked a season of Ecclesiastes; a time to be born (my son Simon) and a time to die (my father John); a time of war (honing battle skills) and a time of peace (no combat on the horizon). It was also a season to gather stones together (launch a military career) then to scatter them. (separate from active service).

### APRIL 1977

I drove through the front gates of Fort Leonard Wood on Monday evening, April 11, 1977. We only spent two nights in guest housing before moving into our new quarters. My sponsor accompanied me as the housing official showed me various homes. As he was walking through two-room billets, I said, “but my wife is pregnant and is due in a few months.”

He nodded, “Then let’s look at three-bedroom places”. My sponsor later suggested I showed cunning when actually I was being truthful.

We moved into 11 Pick Place, the right half of a one-floor duplex at the end of a cul-de-sac. It took a week for our furniture to arrive from Virginia. Our duplex-neighbor was a nurse with a civilian husband and a girl named Shannon, about Zachary’s age.

Fort Leonard Wood was a training post (TRADOC) with a primary mission of preparing recruits (BCT) and conducting AIT (advanced individual training) for the MOS (military occupation skill) of 12b, that is combat engineer. The post was home base to enlisted engineers just as Fort Belvoir was home to engineer officers.

The mid-size military installation was about a one-hour drive southwest of Saint Louis along I-44. The nearest cities were Rolla and Springfield. Situated at the north edge of the Ozark mountains, the setting was rural but with a first-class hospital, PX, and commissary. Its nickname was “Fort Lost-in-the-Woods, Misery”.

My initial assignment was with Training Group as a range officer. I drove between four firing ranges: M16 zero, M16 field fire, M16 record fire, and LAW (light anti-tank weapon). Each of these ranges was led by one Sergeant First Class accompanied by three or four other enlisted men. Sometimes I sat in the shack—a cinderblock resting area. At other times I walked the firing lines, especially while they were active with trainees.

I was a functionary *butter bar* knowing less of the operation than the least of the enlisted. I interacted with my own NCO’s but also with drill sergeants that accompanied the recruits. It was odd to consider that just eleven months earlier, I myself was that struggling trainee firing an M16 for the first time.

Kim made Korean friends immediately. (If you find one, you find them all.) Most of her lady friends were wives of military men. Some lived on post while most lived in the off-post towns of Waynesville and Saint Robert. Of course, she located a Korean church as well. She would have liked to look for employment, but at seven months pregnant, her focus remained elsewhere.

As April warmed into May, we planted a garden beneath our kitchen window. Soon, starter plants of tomatoes, beans, peppers, and squash sprouted with tiny fruit. Rain and wind were abundant. A furious thunderstorm knocked a utility pole into our back yard, just missing the house. We survived without electricity for two days. As her pregnancy advanced, Kim spent more time at home, chasing Zachary, and sitting in the backyard sun.

By this time, I was able to recite the entire Gospel of John in one stretch. It took about two hours straight as I spoke into the bedroom mirror. I decided to enter a bold quest to memorize the entire New Testament. I mapped out a four-year strategy listing all twenty-seven books plus several forays into the Old Testament. My next challenge was to memorize twenty-one selected Psalms.

Blessed *is* the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. (Psalm 1:1-2)

As part of her pre-natal care, Kim was making regular trips to U. S. General Leonard Wood Army Hospital. Ultrasound revealed our number two child was a boy. I joked with Kim that she was batting two-for-two. I wanted to give this son

a thoroughly New Testament name. I liked the name *Simon* as well as the name *Peter*, but the two in combination sounded awesome. Kim selected a Korean name that alliterated with *Peter*. She chose *Pyung Hwa* which means “peace”.

On Monday morning, June 20, Kim experienced contractions. She said they were nothing like what she had felt with Zachary. Plus, she added, the due date was still two weeks off. She encouraged me to go into work. Should I have said *no*? When I returned home about 1700 hours, Korean church friends sat ministering to her. I drove Kim to the nearby hospital. One of her friends agreed to look after Zachary.

Army policy allowed husbands to share in the birth experience and I intended to do so. I milled in the hospital for ten hours, sometimes at her bedside, and sometimes in the waiting room. A few expectant fathers shared the space with me. Both were bummed out because the hospital commander had just ordered cigarette smoking banned inside the facility. They kept stepping out of and into the waiting room. I almost smoked my first cigarette in years.

Finally, about 0500 hours, I spoke with Captain Stoddard, the attending physician. He informed me her contractions had paused and I might as well go home and get some rest. I peeked in on Kim as she was lying on her back, flipping through a Korean magazine. She agreed I should rest at home. And so, I drove the ten short blocks.

Three and a half hours later, as I was preparing to return to the hospital, the telephone rang to inform me that I was the father of a baby boy. I had missed a second birth! At 0806 hours on the first day of summer, Simon Peter Pyung Hwa entered the world. He measured nineteen inches long and weighed in at seven pounds, ten ounces. I grabbed my camera and headed for the hospital.

Kim was sitting upright in a gurney signing papers. She was smiling. “Do you want to see your new son?”

“Of course, I do.”

An attendant walked in with a tiny bundle and placed the newborn in Kim’s arms. I snapped a picture, then gently lifted Simon Peter to my chest as the attendant photographed me with a big grin and the baby with a big yawn.

I apologized to Kim for missing the birth. She insisted that was okay with her, confiding she would have been embarrassed and it was not a Korean custom anyway. She felt strong; the baby was healthy; and that’s all that mattered. When I signed out the next day with my wife and her bundle, the army bill totaled \$12.30: \$4.10 for each meal she consumed.

A week or so after Simon’s arrival, Kim and I held a talk about family planning. She was sobbing. “Two babies are enough. I don’t want anymore. I want a career. Zachary came in spite of contraceptive foam and Simon with an IUD in place. Chris, I love you, but I don’t want to get pregnant again. It’s your turn to step up and do something.”

I understood her meaning. In the army we termed it *change the angle of the dangle*. It was my sacrifice for her sake. More children would have been fine with me. Although it was elective, the army provided the procedure at no cost and soon a vasectomy was performed. The doctor said the surgery might be reversed, if done within a few years. That made me feel somewhat better.

The family went to an Independence Day celebration held at the post parade ground. As we picnicked, I sat my newborn strapped in a baby holder against a pine tree. A dozen passers-by stopped to admire the sixteen-day-old boy. I was certainly proud of my growing family.

The summer of 1977 witnessed a cascade of family visitors. Being on the route between Whiting and Longview had something to do with it.

First, six Zelens dropped by: Jeanne, Don, DJ, Nate, Ben, and Grandma Rose. They stayed one night at the army guest house. Nate, Zachary, and Ben splashed in a backyard plastic pool. Soon they headed out to Eugene with Don's mother to spend the summer together. Susie Zelen was going to be married to Don Davis in August.

A few days later, dad and mom dropped by in the white Chevy van. Frank, Lelia, Joshua, and Shelly Walker were also part of this group. My dad looked rail thin. He told me he had an ulcer and that made it difficult to swallow. Just before dark I put on my PT clothes to run a few miles behind the house. Dad responded, "Well, I don't feel strong today, but maybe on the next visit I'll run with you." Standing by, Frank wagged his head at that suggestion.

I have a wonderful photo of Kim and me, mom and dad, with Zachary and Simon posed in front of 11 Pick Place. My dad studied me in the battle dress uniform of a second lieutenant, saying he was proud of my accomplishment.

As he was leaving, Frank told me how much he liked Fort Leonard Wood. He and Lelia had visited a local waterfall after a thunderstorm and witnessed an amazing full-circle double rainbow.

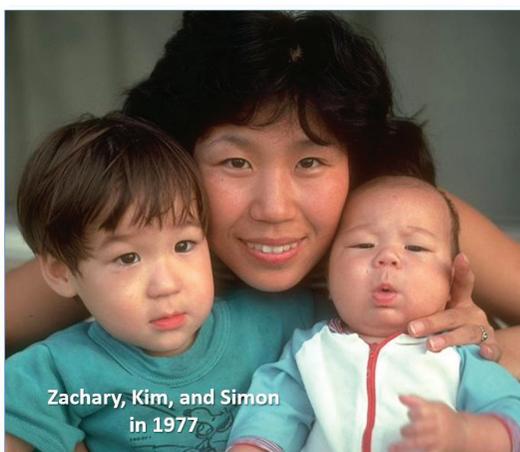
Just as they were leaving, Charlotte arrived with Jimmy as a co-driver, Chris, and Dan. They also stayed a few days. The two boys were eager to climb inside the Sherman tanks resting near army headquarters. I learned that my sister Charlotte was in a serious relationship with my best friend, Jim Francis. I was amazed. He was twelve years her junior, but something clicked between the two of them.

A month after this, four Zimmermans stopped by for one night at the guest house. I showed them around the post. Terry wanted to look at the aircraft. Jenny and Laura played mommy with baby Simon.

On September 1, we celebrated Simon's 100 days—*pek-il-ki-nyun*. He was a happy chubby-cheeked gurgling bundle of joy. I took dozens of pictures of my two sons posed side by side.



Mom and Dad in 1976

Zachary, Kim, and Simon  
in 1977

In September, I was in weekly communication with mom and Frank. I learned dad had been diagnosed with esophageal cancer and the disease was spreading. Almost every day my mother was driving him to Portland for chemotherapy. Finally, on October 5, I got a call from my brother Jack. He told me dad was dying and I should hurry to Longview. I didn't have enough money to cover three tickets so Jeanne loaned me the funds to fly west. The Red Cross informed the army and I was allotted ten days of emergency leave.

I was the last of six children to arrive in Longview. Dad was at home and chemotherapy had ended. The cancer had spread to his pancreas and there was nothing more doctors could do. Dad decided to spend his final days at home.

When I first saw him, dad was lying in his bedroom on a narrow hospital bed. Charlotte and Eileen ministered to him most of the time, moving his body position to make him comfortable and prevent pressure sores. He was so lightweight it took little effort. A nurse who attended the Christian Church dropped by once a day to check his vital signs.

Dad was so grateful the single time I assisted him onto the toilet. After years of him caring for me, it seemed odd but correct for me to assist him in this personal way. Throughout most of his suffering, praise tapes sounded on a cassette player near his bedside. Gospel choruses drowned out his occasional groan.

I sat with him in the evenings and read scripture mostly from the Psalms I was memorizing. I repeated to him the psalm he once recited as a child passing through Indian burial mounds in Ohio:

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through

the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever. (Psalm 23)

Frank explained how the previous months had been so difficult on the family. My father was a Pentecostal man with a stubborn streak. Being a disciple of Kenneth Hagen, he believed in positive confession, denying that sickness had invaded his body. Through gritted teeth, he proclaimed he was in perfect health. He resisted going to the doctor when he first struggled to keep down food. Perhaps this cancer could have been successfully treated in March. We will never know. Dad resisted medical help until mom coaxed him to see Dr. Starr who diagnosed his esophageal cancer. Even after chemotherapy and a terminal diagnosis, my father continued to confess that Jesus would heal him of cancer and his survival testimony would astound the world.

Dad's older brother Frank and my Aunt Anne were staying in the house. Uncle Frank helped me push Simon's baby carriage to Lake Sacajawea where Zachary fed the ducks with bread crumbs. Terry, Jack, Frank, and I played golf one afternoon—my one and only attempt at the sport. One day we picnicked in the woods, but sorrow overwhelmed most hours of the day. While I was in constant conversation with my five siblings, Kim was occupied looking after Zachary and Simon. For my brother Frank, joy tempered his sadness. Lelia was expecting baby number two in just a few months.

My ten days of emergency leave soon expired and my family was just about to return to Missouri when dad took a turn for the worse. I was granted additional leave and about 10:00 p.m. on October 19 my father passed away. I stood at his bedside when he shuddered. I heard the death rattle in his throat as he swallowed down his last breath. His eyes were shut and he hunched into a fetal position.

I fought to contain my grief. I walked into the kitchen to announce to faithful friends that Jesus had taken their mentor home. I lifted the phone receiver and dialed the funeral home. I could not utter the word *deceased*, but burst into uncontrollable sobs. One of dad's friends took the phone from my hand and calmly passed on the information. My father was dead, just one month beyond his sixty-third birthday.

Mother sat alone with dad for an hour longer, grieving and carrying on a one-way conversation. Soon Jeanne, Charlotte, Jack, and Eileen arrived at the house. We wept for my father as mortuary workers removed his remains for transport to the funeral home.

The next day mom and Eileen went to Longview Memorial Park and bought two crypts in the mausoleum. Mom picked out a coffin and brass name plate.

The burial service was held two days later at McVicker's Parkview Funeral Chapel. Dad's coffin and viewing took place in a small room set to the side. Three pastors spoke words of comfort and we sang some of dad's choruses. A large stain glass window portraying Jesus the Good Shepherd cast colored light upon us. Zachary wandered the mausoleum in a cookie monster jacket while I held Simon in my arms. Mom placed a temporary marker on my dad's marble crypt: "With Jesus".

A memorial service was set for October 17 at the First Christian Church. For the next five days, we comforted mom and reminisced about dad. We all loved John Foreman, yet I felt resentment that he hadn't sought medical treatment sooner.

"He could still be with us", a sister said. "He was just a year from retirement. He had wanted so much to make that road trip with mom at his side."

The thought that early intervention could have restored my father seemed to make his untimely death even more tragic. "And only sixty-three years old!", Uncle Frank lamented.

The *Homecoming Celebration* was held for John F. Foreman at the First Christian Church in Longview on October 27. The bulletin, produced by Eileen, shows Earl Sample presiding with the Vader Brothers leading in Praise and Worship. Jack gave the eulogy; Chris the Scripture Reading; and Frank gave the closing prayer.

A singing of his favorite song, "Because He Lives" closed the ceremony. On the back of the bulletin were words to another of dad's songs: "He is Lord! He is Lord! He has risen from the dead and He is Lord. Every knee shall bow, every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord!"

A few of his fellow Reynolds workers were in attendance and presented mom with a Bible in memory of the man who touched so many lives at the cable plant. Dozens of his fellow Full Gospel Businessmen wiped tears as they spoke of him. My father was loved and respected by so many people. He had led hundreds into the kingdom of God.

In later years, Frank wrote this about our dad:

John's burden to see God's Kingdom advanced was burning in him. He saw the need was urgent. And his patience was not great. But as his Pastor said at his Memorial Service: "Some didn't like how John did things, but I think that God liked how John did things better than how we don't do things." His zeal was sometimes not leavened with the greatest of wisdom. But as Jack said at his memorial service: "It's hard to not like someone who is constantly telling you how much he loves you."

His death was very difficult on his family. All loved and respected our father. To a varying extent they had embraced his faith teaching. It was difficult to comprehend God taking their father after only seven years of incredible ministry.

Thirty-seven years later, Don still said that the first thing that he wants to ask God in heaven is why he took John too soon. It is always risky to attempt to discern the meaning behind God's actions. Eileen feels as if God was sparing dad from the waves of perversity that would flood our society in the decades to come.

Taken to its extreme, the faith doctrine can be very cruel and unloving toward the poor and hurting. And dad was never one to take anything half way. My feeling is that maybe, if dad had continued in this path, it would have compromised his loving ministry. God had mercy and gave him an early retirement.

The day following the memorial service, my family of four flew back to Missouri. I meditated on my father and the transience of life. Like Saint James said, "For what *is* your life? It is even a vapor, that appears for a little time, and then vanishes away." I think what caused my heart the greatest sadness was that my two boys would never get to know their grandfather. They would have no remembrance of him. I was also grateful that I had three older sisters. Mom was in good hands. What if I had been an only child?

Kim spoke up about what a great father-in-law my dad had been; what a role model for me and what a rock of support for her. She shared, "I didn't know what to expect when I first landed in your parents' home. On the second evening here, thirty people crammed into the living room. A picture of Jesus hung on the wall. I was timid and afraid until the whole group began singing and clapping. Your dad led that group and your mom banged the tambourine. From that point, I knew the heart of your parents. I guessed we might have some issues with them, but I observed love was so thick, it could cover any misunderstanding."

When I returned to duty, I learned that I was charged twenty-one day's leave. I was ten days in the hole—no vacation for a while. I also learned that Charlotte upon her return to Whiting had married Jim Francis. My oldest friend had now become my newest brother-in-law.

I continued to work on the firing ranges. Captain Walton was my supervisor and Major Moore was his boss. One day I got a major chewing out by the crusty major. It happened like this: Major Moore published a weekly newsletter for everyone in Training Group. He included hails, farewells, safety tips, and a calendar. In his personal column he lambasted readers of the newsletter, especially junior officers. He stated he had "deliberately made spelling errors and grammar mistakes in a previous newsletter" and he was disappointed no officers pointed out his mistakes. He added we should strive to write in a soldierly manner.

I took his comments as a personal affront. After all, I once taught language and grammar. After distribution of his next newsletter, I carefully read his opinion column. I took a red pen to it, making suggestions, then passed it on to a command sergeant major in the headquarters. A few days later, I was summoned into the major's private office. He smiled as I closed the door behind, then as they say in the army, *he proceeded to tear me a new rear end*. I stood impassively. When he finished his rant, I saluted smartly, about faced, then exited the office. The NCOs were grinning. Was I a hero or goat? Captain Walton was upset with me, but nothing more came of it. I later heard the Colonel of Training Group had a good laugh at Major Moore's pomposity.

I got a break from the routine when I attended a three-week workshop on the "Systems Approach to Training". Then the holidays arrived. Because the ranges were quiet, I was granted time at home without taking leave. I asked a neighbor to take a Christmas photo of my family standing in the front yard, snow on the ground. I was erect in my class A uniform; Kim stood at my side in her white hanbok holding a red-clad Simon; and Zachary stood in a cute little sports coat holding a toy camera. That served as the Foreman family 1977 Christmas card.

For my birthday, Kim baked a skewed chocolate cake. I put two large house candles at center mass and surrounded them with eight birthday candles. The next day was Simon's first Christmas. He celebrated by bouncing in the Johnny Jump-up. As the new year approached, I gave thanks to God for the wife and children He had entrusted to my care. Perhaps I never excelled as an army officer because I considered by primary duty devotion to Kim and to my two sons.

## 1978

In January, I learned that Drury College had just opened several masters level courses at the nearby education center. One of their offerings was a master in education (MEd). The curriculum was designed with soldiers in mind. All classes were held in the evening with college faculty driving the fifty miles from the Springfield campus. I began my first class before the end of the month.

Kim was anxious to get out of the house and to begin her career. She applied to teach ESL for the Waynesville school district. With her BA degree and considerable pluck, she landed the job teaching four hours per day. It was a good fit. Many of her language-learners were Korean.

Kim's employment necessitated two changes. First, I bought a 1970 Ford Maverick to drive from range to range. Kim became the sole driver of the Toyota. Also, we employed babysitters. It wasn't too hard to find young military wives who wanted a part time job. We rotated between two local army wives that got along well with the kids.

With her first pay check we drove to a place in Rolla called *Barrel Furniture* and she bought a dark oak bedroom set: king-size head board and base board, one upright dresser, one long dresser with mirror, and two end tables. We donated our pressed-board cast-outs to the furniture pantry.

In February, we took a long weekend to visit Jim and Charlotte Francis in Whiting. I hadn't seen my buddy since 1970 so there was a lot of catching up to do. He explained the collapse of his marriage to Peggy, his adventures in Canada, and his courtship of Charlotte. His two sons, Jason and Ryan, were with him for a week-end visitation. With my two boys, Charlotte's two boys, and Jim's two boys we went to visit Mr. and Mrs. Francis on Lake Avenue. It was a pleasure to gab with them.

About that time, Kim and I decided to commit to a church. We had been hopping around for nearly a year, sometimes going to the on-post chapel, sometimes to a Korean church in Saint Robert, and sometimes not at all.

Agapé Chapel was a congregation of about thirty that met in a Waynesville real estate office. Desks were pushed to the wall and folding chairs were set in rows. Brother Bob led the charismatic service. The music team were professional-caliber country singers and about half the people were military.

Kim missed her family, especially her mother. She realized the only route for her mom to come to America was for herself to become a US citizen. When my wife focused, she could accomplish amazing things. For two weeks she studied the citizenship book day and night, asking me to quiz her on presidents and the constitution.

On March 9, 1978, I went to Springfield to witness her swearing in as a US citizen. She held up a certificate and waved a flag as I snapped a picture of this newly minted Korean-American. The certificate also legally changed her name from *Hyun Deok Foreman* to *Kim Hyun Deok Foreman*. Of course, the first thing this new citizen did was to invite her mother to America. I signed an affidavit vouching for the character of my mother-in-law.

In March I was transferred. I was still working for Training Group but now overseeing drill sergeants in Company A. This special unit was for hold-overs, what were called the *sick, lame and lazy*. Trainees with broken bones, failed PT tests, or mental issues, reported to our First Sergeant. From this limbo, young soldiers were either discharged into civilian life or re-cycled into BCT. The need for my oversight was minimal. The NCOs carried out the real grunt work as I appeared here and there as quality control.

A day after Easter, Kim sat impatiently on the front steps. She was looking up the street for her sister. Hyun Ok had married a GI in Korea named Michael King and they had returned to the US for Sergeant King's assignment at Fort Bliss,

Texas. When Michael's Datsun 280z pulled into the driveway, both sisters ran to each other in excitement and embraced. It had been nearly four years since they parted at Kimpo airport.

Hyun Ok and Michael stayed with us a few days, most of which time the sisters sat side-by-side in conversation. Hyun Ok doted on her two nephews and let Kim know her first child was on the way. Michael helped me tune my misbehaving Maverick. I was so happy to see my wife so happy.

A month later, Char and Jim Francis dropped by the house, towing a U-Haul trailer. Accompanying them were Shelley, Chris, Dan, and Jason. Jimmy had graduated from high school and chose to remain in Whiting, while Ryan remained with his mother in Toronto. Jim had some job prospects in Longview and the newlyweds wanted to leave their troubles in Indiana for a fresh start in the Northwest.

Shelley agreed to stay with us at Fort Leonard Wood. She was a bit traumatized from the divorce and remarriage and was seeking solitude. Kim and I were seeking a baby sitter, so it worked out for all. Shelly was a joy to have in our home, reading to the boys and assisting around the house.

Kim had discovered water cress from one of her Korean friends and on a few occasions drove to a secret spot, waded knee-high into a spring-fed pool and plucked out a basket full of the fresh-water seaweed. Shelley's salary for staying with us was a one-way ticket to Portland a few months later.

My brother Frank dropped by the house a week after Shelly left. He had graduated from Dental School and did some additional training at Wichita Falls. He wanted to pay me a visit before going overseas. There is a great photo of Captain Foreman and Lieutenant Foreman standing shoulder to shoulder in class-A uniforms.

With summer came muggy Missouri weather. Our window air conditioner wheezed overtime with little effect. We lived on my salary alone. Kim sent much of her income to Korea, and made major purchases with the remains. She bought a living room set, heavily upholstered (child-proof) in a maize checked pattern. We set the new ottoman in the backyard grass for Simon's first birthday. My second son posed with bright Korean clothes.

Kim signed up for the MEd at Drury College. We sat in some classes together, but with my head start, she followed in my footsteps. I often lent her my notes. Her inspirational instructor was a woman named Ramona Agruso. Kim aspired to be a college professor just like this role model.

Dramatic headlines riveted my attention. Pope Paul VI had died, followed thirty-three days later by the death of his successor, Pope John Paul. On August 16 there was big news of the first Polish pope, John Paul II. I felt pride in my Polish heritage and wondered how my Polish community back in Whiting might

celebrate the occasion. Also, in the news was a mass killing at the Peoples Temple in Guyana, South America. Jim Jones and over 900 of his cult followers had died, many after drinking cyanide-laced Kool-Aid.

As the summer turned to autumn, Kim and I took the kids to hike in the woods. The maples and oaks showed their brilliant fall colors. We walked along an abandoned rail track and I began to collect wire insulators from broken-down telephone poles. Zachary sought after them like Easter eggs. Soon I possessed a dozen of the multi-colored glass doodads. I also acquired a tandem bike. Sometimes we traversed the neighborhood as a bicycle built for four. I pumped and managed the handle bars; Kim pedaled behind me; Zachary was strapped into a rear seat; and Simon was tucked into the front basket.

I was occupied throughout 1978 attending college classes at the education center. I was handling two per week, usually on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. The faculty was fun and there were only eight students in my classroom. Without much effort I earned A's and B's. The background music of study was purely classical, sometimes from vinyl LPs but mostly from cassettes. I began to favor two of Braham's Piano Concertos, 1 and 2. Sometimes for a change of pace, I spun my old 78s.

Around the anniversary of my father's death, I remember sitting in class, writing an ode to my father with the beginning stanza: "The house my father lived in is empty now a year."

My duty at Company A was not strenuous. On most days I filled out recommendations for the disposition of my sick, lame, and lazy soldiers—either back to Basic Training or back home. However, in September this desk-bound job came to a sudden end. There was a unit on post that would soon be heading to Germany, and they were in need of Engineer officers to achieve full strength.

In October, orders were cut reassigning me as a Platoon Leader to the Fifth Engineer Battalion. This was my first combat position. Sergeant First Class Snyder was my chief NCO and under him were four squad leaders. In all I led about forty men. I was fortunate in that 11 Pick Place was only two blocks from my workplace. Also, at the two-year mark of my commissioning, October 19, I was promoted to First Lieutenant.

In January we would be deployed on something called REFORGER-79 (Return of Forces to Germany). The Fifth Engineers would support an infantry division as it conducted war games across the breadth of West Germany. The last few months of 1978 were hectic. My platoon spent days in the field honing our engineer skills, especially erecting floating bridges. Our military greeting became: "fit to fight" with a response of "can do". Finally, we had a week-long breather just before Christmas.

Kim was excited. After nine months of effort her mother was emigrating to the States. A week after Kim's mom arrived in our house, my mom also flew east for a visit. Kim interpreted as the two grandmothers conversed. Their common grandchildren got lots of tender loving care.

Six of us celebrated my birthday then Christmas. Yet the time was bittersweet. Three days after Christmas, I reported to the Fifth Engineers prepared for a five-week deployment to Europe. I spent one night with my platoon in barracks, then boarded a C-130. We stopped in Halifax to refuel, then traveled on to Iceland where we deboarded for a few hours.

Wet snow greeted our arrival in Germany. Our tents sagged with the weight. I melted snow in my steel pot and managed to shave. We spent a week in tent city to toughen up and drill while our battalion commander plotted a campaign with the generals. I found it difficult to sleep on New Year's Eve. Most of my platoon was outside drinking hooch and partying past midnight.

## 1979

The army certainly lived up to its reputation of *hurry up and wait*. We didn't begin maneuvers until January 4. My Fifth Engineers were part of a defensive team that guarded the Czech border as mock Soviet troops advanced from the Fulda gap. The magnitude of the exercise was so large and my platoon's role so minor, that I never grasped what was going on. I just followed orders as we passed from German village to village, never glimpsing the big picture.

My platoon convoyed in four Deuce-and-a-Half cargo trucks. I sat in the shotgun seat of the lead truck with SFC Snyder and a driver. The others followed as we traversed the countryside. I was amazed at the ability of our drivers to wind their trucks through tiny downtown streets. I was astonished to see Sheridan tanks making the same maneuvers over cobblestone.

We did not mix much with local Germans. Since I was acting as an unofficial photographer for our company, I stopped at a photo shop and bought slide film. The few guys who entered the shop with me were surprised at my facility in German. I was amused. A Korean word would pop from my mouth whenever I forgot a German word. I joked, "I can speak two languages, English and foreign."

The two-week REFORGER was cut back to ten days after road damage reached its financial maximum. We must have driven in circles three hundred miles without ever building our bridge. Nevertheless, our battalion commander commended us for a job well done. I remember standing at attention when a staff captain won an award for air-lifting six porta-potties to battalion headquarters. Such was the army.

The early end of the exercise meant we had extra time on our hands. We billeted in an abandoned apartment complex. I remember one of the privates asking me what that object was protruding from the porcelain toilet. He had never seen a

bidet. The army was sponsoring tours of the area as we waited for our return flight. I opted for a short bus tour of France and Luxemburg, taking pictures at the WW1 memorials. Those were the ninth and tenth countries I had visited.

I also focused on Bible memorization. Over the previous few years, I had committed to memory the New Testament books of Matthew, Ephesians, James, and Revelation. I struggled to keep these words fresh in mind and decided to pause further memorization until such a time as I could recite what I had already stored in my head. I knew the Gospel of John best and in times of reflection, thrilled to the self-spoken words of the beloved apostle.

When I returned to Fort Leonard Wood, Halmoni (Korean for *grandmother*) was the caregiver for my sons. Zachary marveled at the mustache that now appeared on my face. Kim was busy both teaching ESL and studying for Drury college. I was able to re-join my classes at week three by completing extra homework. It looked like I could graduate in June.

As Halmoni was bathing Simon she noticed a bulge near the base of his belly. Sure enough, it was a hernia. Little Simon has surgery and spent a night in the hospital. Kim wanted her mother to stay with us, but Halmoni wanted to be independent. She had a friend who now lived in Santa Clara, California, and soon she left for the west coast to find work in Silicon Valley.

I was platoon leader for a few more months after REFORGER and kept weekly notes. This was my platoon schedule for 30-April to 04-May, 1979:

Monday a.m. —Engineer Tools – SGT Picotte – Tool room  
Monday p.m. – Pay Day activities  
Tuesday a.m. – Star hour – Bio Classes – Baker Theater  
Tuesday p.m. – Standard Pattern Minefield SFC Snyder – TA 148  
Wednesday all day – SERE training – Training Area 148  
Thursday a.m. – Duty company AGI prep  
Thursday p.m. – PRT barracks check  
Friday a.m. – Human Relations BN classroom  
Friday p.m. – Command Maintenance

After REFORGER, officers were being shuffled. The battalion communications officer was court marshalled after military police found a cache of army ammo in his private residence. It was an upward move for me. I was fortunate in that my new office was just a short walk from home. On most days I ate lunch with my family.

I was not branch qualified in the signal corps, but my six NCOs were competent. I pretty much let them run the show. Our job was to maintain twenty AN/PRC 77 radio sets. These manpacks provided short-range, two-way voice

communication within the battalion. Our home base was a commo truck full of electronics parked in a barbed wire enclosure. I studied the manuals and became proficient enough to coordinate communication. Every unit, down to platoon level was allocated a *prick-77* during a field exercise.

I was planning a vacation for the summer and wanted to travel in a station wagon. Kim was reluctant to part with her Toyota, but agreed to trade it in for a Buick Estate Station Wagon. This slightly-used vehicle was cherry red with pushbutton windows. Our first expedition was to Lake of the Ozarks, where we rented a motorboat and sped to an island for a picnic.

My final two Drury classes were in the summer. In one I studied Lawrence Kohlberg's stages of moral development. This concept fascinated me combining my interests in education and religion. His three stages were preconventional, conventional and postconventional, that is, what is externally imposed; what is imposed by society; what is understood through abstract reasoning.

I wrote my Master's thesis about these stages of moral development, giving them a Christian twist. The paper was accepted and I graduated with a Master of Education degree from Drury College on August 11, 1979. The MEd was not so difficult for me and the idea was planted for me to pursue a PhD.

I had finally accrued enough leave to take a long vacation. We packed into the Buick and headed to the Northwest. I coordinated with Frank so we could have a family reunion. I took a wonderful line-up photo of eight kids in Zelen's backyard, all born between 1974 and 1977: Heather, Zachary, Joshua, Stephanie, Ben, Nate, Simon and Lucinda. It was a wonderful get-together. I did miss my brother Jack. He, Barbara, and Patrick had moved to Dallas, Texas. Alan stayed behind in Eugene. No one was surprised when this eighteen-year-old ran into difficulties.

Of all dad's children, Eileen was the one who picked up his spiritual mantle. She continued to be active in Women's Aglow Fellowship, serving on the Southwest Washington Area Board and speaking at conferences.

During my stay in the Northwest, we visited Fort Vancouver, and the Astoria Column. On the return trip we stopped off in Santa Clara to visit Halmoni.

On a late summer day, I was flipping burgers on a backyard grill when I saw an unusual sight. It was a tiny vehicle whizzing down Minnesota Avenue. I spied the same car a few days later parked in the hospital lot. I examined it and discovered the wedge-shaped vehicle was an electric car, something like an oversized golf cart but street legal. I discovered the City-Car was owned by the commander of the hospital and was bold enough to look him up in the hospital office and ask him where he had purchased such a cool vehicle. The colonel was enthusiastic and said he had just bought his for \$3000. The model was one of seven at an obscure location near Springfield.

I had to have one! I sold my Maverick and Kim drove me to the dealership. I learned City-Car of Florida had gone bankrupt and sold off its inventory. This lot of 1976 plug-in cars ran on deep-cycle marine batteries. They were constructed of light-weight fiberglass, reached a maximum speed of 45 MPH, and could-recharge overnight. Kim thought I had lost my marbles, but she loved me and put up with my eccentricities.

My powder-blue flying wedge was perfect for on post driving. The cantonment area was flat, military police enforced a speed limit of 30 MPH. Plus, I did not pay an electric bill and never bought gas. I made it to the farthest ranges with ease.

We did run into a problem once. While I was in the field for a week, the Buick engine threw a rod. Motor oil covered my driveway. Kim had no choice but to drive the City-Car into Waynesville. She was embarrassed. The speed limit once out the front gate was fifty-five and at thirty miles round trip, the maximum range was challenged. I was scolded, but she did admit some of her school buddies thought the little car was cool. It cost \$1500 to have the Buick engine repaired.

In September, Zachary began attending pre-school and was soon counting to thirty. I worked with him to recognize the twenty-six letters of the alphabet. He was such an enthusiastic learner. Simon was so loving, clinging onto my leg whenever I was around. I have to say the best job I ever had was rearing my two sons. They were amazing.

I continued to work out of the commo section, but was mostly bored. I needed a project, so I re-wrote the Battalion code book from scratch. I typed it on to 8x12 paper then shrank it down to half size. I bound it with plastic covers. The battalion commander was so pleased with the result he wrote me a letter of commendation.

LT Foreman has become a most proficient battalion communications officer in a short period of time. His ability to adapt and learn quickly and pay close attention to detail in the many activities of his section was instrumental in quantum improvements in section performance. He responded to guidance and special requirements in a professional, mission-oriented manner. His ability to analyze complex detail and produce completed staff actions was exemplary.

In October, the shah of Iran fled his country and the Islamic Republic was born. After the shah re-settled in America, Iranians went berserk. On November 4, radicals stormed the American embassy in Teheran and held as hostage fifty-two US diplomats and civilians. This sent a chill through the army. We were put on a low-level alert.

Word came to us that war with Iran was not out of the question. My friend David decided it was time for him to leave active duty. He thought he had joined a peacetime military. I saw a hand-written note above our army toilet that read, "Flush twice. It's a long way to Iran".

Kim and I followed the news every evening. We were greeted with the words, "Today is day such-and-such of the Iranian Hostage Crisis." The days would eventually grow to be 444. Battle maps of the Mideast replaced maps of those of central Europe. Jimmy Carter seemed powerless. He later attempted a military rescue that failed miserably. That debacle marked the nadir of military prestige.

On December 24 I turned thirty years old. Did I really want to remain in uniform for another half lifetime? At thirty I also entered an age of enlightenment. Jesus carried out his earthly ministry from age 30 to 33. He had always seemed like a wise elder. Now I was Jesus's age at baptism. What would I accomplish? The year ground to an end with me wrestling with my mortality and with my future in the army uncertain.

## 1980 TO AUGUST

With the new decade, I entertained new thoughts. After consulting with Kim, I decided to separate from active duty. The army uniform seemed ill fitting both literally and figuratively. I was attracted to the military's sense of duty and its romance of honor. I liked staff work and statistics. I certainly enjoyed the security of a steady paycheck. However, I lacked military bearing; the comradery, aggression, and bravado necessary to lead men into battle. I recognized this shortcoming and decided to pursue a different course in life.

I made the official request through channels and on February 14 received a notice "Release from Active Duty", to be effective August 15. My life was at a crossroads once again. I wrote out applications to the law school at the University of Missouri, to the PhD program at the University of Oregon-College of Education, as well as the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. I cast my bread upon the waters, not knowing where my path might lead.

Meanwhile life continued. Halmoni visited for a few weeks. Zachary joked that she was a *dumpling making machine*. She demonstrated her grandmother love by cooking and knitting for her two grandsons. I noted the love-tension relationship Kim showed toward her mother. I considered my wife a *wonder woman*; she was plugging away on her Master's degree; she worked full time; she was raising two young boys; and she was active in church. She certainly seemed like a high achiever to me. Yet it was never enough for her mom. I know Kim loved her in theory, but in person, only in small doses. I wrote about this relationship years later.

The Asian Mother Paradox is this: Your mother will sacrifice everything for your success, and yet your mother will never admit that you are fully

successful. In other words, no amount of your success will fully satisfy her. The counterpoint of this relationship is the Asian Daughter Paradox which states: You will sacrifice everything to win the approval of your mother, and yet you recognize that no matter how successful you become, you will never win her full approval.

I stuck with the Fifth Engineers for the remainder of my time at Fort Leonard Wood, but since my supervisors understood I would not be a career officer, they re-assigned me to battalion headquarters and loaded me down with extra duties.

In March I had the duty of being an escort officer. This episode was unusual. A big news event had just occurred on the installation. Two soldiers were carrying on an adulterous affair. The man shot and killed the woman, then killed himself. I was selected to escort the parents of the woman from a bus stop to the hospital morgue. An attendant pulled open a cooler to reveal her corpse. Of course, the parents wailed. The father then demanded to see the corpse of the assailant as well. This was not authorized. Yet he insisted.

I asked him to sit in the waiting room, while I called the hospital commander (the other guy on post with a City Car). I explained the situation and he rushed over. He calmed the grieving parents. I was concerned about contacting the colonel, but he assured me my action was appropriate. I set the parents up in billets for the night, then drove them to Saint Louis the following morning.

I learned I had been accepted at all three of my educational institutions. I agreed with Kim that the University of Oregon was the best option for us. Family also pulled me to the west coast. A dozen relatives now clustered around Don and Jeanne in Eugene. We made plans to relocate to Oregon. Jeanne offered to house us for a few weeks until we found our own place.

A sad event occurred at our little congregation, Agapé Chapel. As the musicians transitioned from praise and Brother Bob opened his Bible, several ladies suddenly and unexpectedly put caps on their heads—little bonnet-like things that they tied under their chins. Bob stared at the women and their husbands, asked some questions, then walked down from the pulpit and out the front door. One of the instigators took his place and explained how the new policy was for women to keep their heads covered in accordance with First Corinthians. Kim never donned a bonnet and I never returned to that church.

For my next extra duty, I was selected to teach something called the Leadership Management Development Course (LMDC). This curriculum seemed right up my alley, addressing inter-communication, leadership styles, management techniques, and personality tests. It was disparaged by many as too *touchy-feely* for

macho military types. I first had to attend the five-day course as a student, then sit through two weeks of intensive teacher-training. After this I teamed up with an NCO to co-teach four back-to-back sessions. That consumed the three-month tail end of my military career at Fort Leonard Wood.

As a teacher, I mastered the material, using portions of it for many years to come. I administered the Myers-Briggs many times. I turned out to be: Introverted-Intuitive-Thinking-Judging or INTJ. In the top right corner of sixteen personalities, my type was dubbed a mastermind because of its strategic logical way of thinking. When I gave the test to Kim, she turned out to be an ESTP. We were different in three aspects, but alike in *thinking*.

In mid-May a major event occurred near my home-of-record, Longview. That magnificent mountain called Saint Helens blew its top, spewing ash for counties around. The mountain had lost its gorgeous symmetry and two-thousand feet of summit.

I wrote a story years later about this volcanic eruption calling it “The Permanence of Men and Mountains”. I described how in 1972, my dad, Frank, and I strove to attain the 9000-foot summit of Mount Saint Helens. We turned back about half way up. My father told us as we began our retreat, “That’s okay. We’ll do it another time”.

Unfortunately, there was never another time. My dad passed away in 1977 and just to make the point emphatic, my mountaintop passed away in 1980. As the preacher of Ecclesiastes proclaimed, “Vanity, vanity all is vanity. It is all chasing the wind.”

When I flew to Portland on May 28, my jet made a westward detour to avoid volcanic ash. I was in town to witness the wedding of my niece Nancy Zelen to Brian Ament. I have a picture of the couple in wedding attire adorned with face respirators. There’s also a great photo of Frank and me decked out in our dress blue uniforms standing with the bride and groom.

My last day of active duty occurred on July 11. I attended a Hail and Farewell where all my Fifth Engineer buddies toasted my departure. I mentioned to a few that during my time in the military, I felt like a fish out of water.

The summer was hot and I drove Zachary and Simon to the pool most every day. Little Simon said he could swim like a “fith”. Meanwhile, Kim was in full-crisis mode pounding on our bulky manual typewriter, striving to complete her Master thesis in the allotted time. She was losing weight, now down to 113 pounds.

On August 2, I cleared quarters at 11 Pick Place. I had rented a trailer at Lake of the Ozarks for two weeks, enjoying the pines and lakeside. Kim spent a few of those days with Zachary, Simon, and me, but mostly she stayed with Deena at her big house in Saint Robert. This isolation allowed her to focus on school

work without distraction. We never spoke of it, but this Korean friend of hers ran a massage parlor just outside the installation. Kim's heart was big and generous. She made friends with all kinds of people. I told her it was her ESTP personality.

We gathered outside the Education Center to see Kim graduate on August 10. She was so pleased to wear her cap and gown and be surrounded by classmates, friends, faculty, and family. She received from the trustees of Drury College the degree of Master in Education.



I had prepared our Buick Estate Wagon for travel a day earlier, hitching a wooden trailer to pull my City Car all the way to Eugene. We filled the wedge-shaped car with our suitcases. After spending one night with Deena, we set off with the rising sun in our rearview mirror.

I had received a decent separation allowance, so we took our time, driving for eight hours, then cooling off at a hotel with swimming pool. We shot northward to Mount Rushmore then headed west. We drove through Yellowstone where a light rain turned into snow flurries. I was amazed to see flakes on the windshield in August. Then the weather turned hot—into the nineties. My Buick began to overheat and I had to pause every hour or so to let the big engine cool. We drove through one night just to avoid the heat. After spending a day and night in Bend, we drove over the Cascades into our new home city of Eugene, Oregon.

## Chapter 15

# HIGHER-EDUCATED

August 1980 to December 1983  
Eugene, Oregon

*Then I applied myself to the understanding of wisdom, but I learned that this, too,  
is a chasing after the wind. For with much wisdom comes much sorrow;  
and much study is a weariness of the flesh.*  
(Ecclesiastes 1:16-17 & 12:12)

Our years in Eugene were a time of family and friends, growth and academic achievement. Kim and I had hoped to settle in this university town, raise our boys to maturity, and retire in its environs. But this was not to be. We proposed, but God disposed.

### AUGUST 1980

My family arrived in Eugene, Oregon, on August 15, 1980. I found my way to the Zelen residence where Jeanne opened the door saying, “Welcome to my abode”. I told Zachary that the digits of the house number indicated the year in which Zelens had moved into the house and in which direction the backyard faced: 1976 Sunrise.

Jeanne’s three daughters were married and out of the house. Don John was a fifteen-year-old attending Churchill High School. Nate was a year older than Zachary and Ben a year older than Simon Peter. We shared space for about five weeks. Kim and I slept in a downstairs bedroom while the boys slept on couches in the family/TV room.

A large backyard faced east, overlooking the Willamette Christian Center. This nearby location served both as grade school and church. Murray McLees was the senior pastor when we attended this Assembly of God.

Also in Eugene were Debbie and Denny Necker who lived across town with Stephanie and Heather. Susie and Don Davis lived down 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue in an apartment. At twenty-one years old, Jimmy Walker studied philosophy at the university and raced twelve-inch radio-controlled cars. Alan Foreman was just out of high school, staying with friends, roller skating his days away. Nancy Jo lived with Brian in nearby Portland, dropping by on a few occasions.

It was good to be around family again. Kim and I sat in folded chairs as DJ led a backyard circus. Nate played ringmaster and Ben a padded fat man. Zachary posed as an acrobat walking a tightrope laid upon the grass. Simon was a Siamese Twin with cousin Ben; the two of them wearing DJ's big coat, each with an arm stuck through one sleeve. We cheered and whistled as the cousins performed their pseudo-stunts.

After three weeks of Zelen hospitality, Kim focused on house hunting, enlisting the help of new Korean connections. We had only a few thousand dollars to our name so purchasing a home would be a challenge. We had hoped to relocate before the onset of the school year, but we had to enroll Zachary at Westmoreland elementary just down the street.

I began my doctoral studies at the University of Oregon on the day after Labor Day, September 2. The PhD was a three-year post-graduate program. I was credited with fifty-four quarters from Drury College which reduced my university stay to two years. I spoke with the department chair and consulted with a few of the faculty.

My interest lay in soft areas of higher education like philosophy, anthropology, and sociology. Together we worked out a plan to earn the doctor's degree in two years. My first load of classes was: Educational Psychology, Policy Seminar, History of Higher Education, and Philosophy of Education. Academia seemed like home. I was a fish in water.

Without jobs and a down payment, it was miraculous we were able to buy a house. Yet Kim finagled it. We *assumed* a bank loan for \$26,000 at nine percent interest—no cash required. There would also be a \$9000 balloon payment after five years. On September 21, we moved into 4028 Josh Street. Our small three-bedroom place was down 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue, ten blocks west of Zelen's house and a straight shot to the university.

On move-in day, Kim and I were so pre-occupied with unloading and arranging that we lost track of Zachary and Simon. Just when we realized their absence, a car pulled up. A woman escorted my two young sons from the car and asked, "Do these belong to you?" adding, "I drove them around several blocks until they recognized your station wagon."

I made a couple upgrades on our house. I stuck faux brick to the kitchen wall and transformed the garage to a play room with bookshelves, washer-dryer, and just enough room to park and plug in my City Car.

We also bought our first telephone. This was a new experience. Hitherto fore, phones were property of the Bell Telephone monopoly and were hardwired into the house. We chose a pushbutton, long corded, Princess phone: 503-484-9388.

Don Zelen owned and managed a hardware store called U-Can located on 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue. I saved my trash disposal cost because he allowed me to dump my compacted garbage into his large containers.

Kim and I both needed to earn money. She found a decent job at Lane Community College, working in a place called a *computer lab*. I was able to do work-study at the university which covered about half of my tuition expense. I also found a job with my previous employer—the U.S. Army.

I looked at positions with both the Oregon National Guard and the Army Reserve. The Guard appeared too political and I seemed a better fit working with drill sergeants at the Army Reserve Center. I signed up with the Third Battalion, First Brigade, of the 104<sup>th</sup> Training Division. The Reserve Center was located on Chambers Boulevard, about halfway between home and the U of O. I would be in uniform one weekend per month and two weeks in the summer. This part-time job fetched me about \$200 per weekend—not shabby.

Zachary transferred to Bailey Hill Elementary school, not far from Josh Street, attending four hours per day. Two of my college classes were in the evening but three were in the morning. We hired baby sitters for the eight hours per week when both Kim and I were out of the house. I typically studied from the hour the boys were asleep to way past midnight. I saw Kim out the door about 7:30, then looked after Zachary and Simon until she returned. I had no issue with being a stay-at-home dad, although I did allow the boob tube to do too much babysitting.

I was driving my City Car to the university. It was a perfect flat commute of about five miles. Kim considered the Buick Estate Wagon to big and gas guzzling, so she traded it in for a brown 1978 VW Rabbit. This vehicle became her long-time commute car.

Just before dark on Halloween, Sue joined Kim and me to go trick-or-treating. Our cul-de-sac was ideal for such activity. We followed Nathan, Ben, Stephanie, Heather, Zachary and Simon as they shuffled from door to door. Simon wore a spiderman costume with a string-held mask. Ben asked him with some worry, “Simon, is that you?”

He lifted the mask, “Yep. Here’s my Simon face”.

On November 4, Ronald Reagan was elected fortieth president of the United States. It seemed odd to mark the occasion by watching “Bedtime for Bonzo” on Zelen’s TV. Zachary cheered the election results, but later confessed he thought the USA had elected Ronald McDonald as chief executive. Could he get free hamburgers?

Zelens sponsored a big Thanksgiving get together. Terry and Eileen, Jim and Charlotte, along with numerous nieces and nephews packed the house. (Jack had relocated to Texas and Frank was stationed in Japan.) Mom held the position of matriarch while Don Zelen presided over the prayer and turkey carving. These family assemblies always gave me a sense of belonging, continuity, and accountability. I knew who I was in the presence of others who knew me even before I became who I am.

Being on the quarter system, the Fall term ended in December. I earned three A's and a B without too much hassle. My winter term began with Research Methods, Policy Seminar, Academic Governance, Educational Institutions, and Educational Anthropology.

Kim enjoyed watching TV dramas. She said it helped her learn English. The catchphrase throughout 1980 was "Who shot J.R.?" As a big fan of *Dallas*, Kim sat in front of the TV on November 5 for the answer. She was thrilled to learn it wasn't Sue Ellen.

As I was exiting a morning class on December 8, I overheard someone saying, "John Lennon's been shot." I raced home in my City Car, turned on the TV news, and learned that my favorite Beatle had died at forty years old. It hardly seemed possible.

The university paused for two weeks over the holiday season. We celebrated a cozy Christmas in the first home of our own. As Christmas music sounded on my stereo, Kim squatted Korean-style smiling as her sons ripped open gift after gift. The boys received mostly educational books and action figures. Zachary's special gift was a Little Professor calculator; while Simon's was a squawking Woodstock the Bird. When the celebrating ended, I gathered the wrapping paper as starter for the wood in our brick fireplace.

1980 ended with hope. Kim and I owned our home, attended a large church, enjoyed two healthy sons, cavorted with extended family, and were pursuing our dreams.

## 1981

Kim caught the bug to study computers. She enrolled at Lane Community College to pursue an Associate of Science in computer programming. At home she studied the languages of Fortran and Cobol. Kim was incredibly self-motivated.

On the day of Reagan's Inauguration, forty-four American hostages returned from Iran. At the Reserve Center our Battalion Commander spoke about the military threat moving from the Soviet Union to the Middle East. On that day, I turned in my Officer Evaluation Support Form.

In my six months as training officer, I have contributed to the Training and supervision of A Company personnel. I have evaluated Drill Sergeant led classes, going to sites in order to observe and evaluate sessions. I have reviewed records of individual training. During the Field Exercises, I participated in and observed all aspects of training. My extra duties included mess officer, supply officer, maintenance officer and Nuclear-Biological-Chemical (NBC) officer.

About this time, Hyun Ea arrived at our house. Kim's twenty-three-year-old sister assumed the name of *Pam*. She occupied our third bedroom for a couple months. With a student visa *Auntie Pam* began taking classes at Lane Community College and helping with the kids.

Pam was also into wicker crafts and kept supplies in her room. One afternoon Zachary peered under her pillow and discovered her sharp knife. Zach ended up in the emergency room with three stitches in his finger.

Pam was fascinated with cars and Kim helped with driving lessons around the High School parking lot. When Pam acquired her license and a used car, she moved into her own place. However, she soon relocated to be with her mom in Santa Clara, California.

About the same time Valerie Olson waltzed into our life on the arm of Jimmy Walker. This winsome lady was beautiful both inside and out. I couldn't figure how my under-performing nephew attracted such an over-the-top woman. The couple became threads in the fabric of our lives, attending parties and dropping by our house on occasion. Sometimes Valerie baby-sat our boys.

I was sitting at home writing a paper on March 30 when Jeanne phoned me. She said breathlessly, "Are you watching the news? President Reagan's been shot."

I replied in the negative, hung up the phone, turned on the tube, and followed the breaking story. I was a bit miffed because I had always prided myself in being the first to shout the news. The president survived the attack and John Hinkley was later found not guilty by reason of insanity.

On a related note, one of my boys' favorite TV shows was called *The Greatest American Hero*. The hero in question was called Ralph Hinkley. Zachary noticed his name quickly changed to Ralph *Hanley*.

I flourished in the intellectual atmosphere of the university, typing out one or two papers per week. For my class *Education in Anthropological Perspective*, I wrote a seven-page term paper called "Language Acquisition of a Mother and Child." The opening paragraph read:

The thought occurred to me even before my first child was born. In a reflective moment, I asked my expectant wife, "Do you realize that in only a

matter of four years, this unborn child will be speaking the English language better than you?” My Korean-born wife smiled in tacit agreement. As it was spoken, so it came to pass. Today our three-year-old son makes fewer English language mistakes than his thirty-year-old mother.

Infused with academic jargon, I compared and contrasted how Zachary and Kim acquired the English language. I received an outstanding grade, although the professor suggested I find someone to proof my spelling.

When the spring term began in April, I was taking classes in: Policy Research, Policy Seminar, Thesis Seminar, Current Issues, Practicum, and Administration. A concept that has stuck with me since that time was the conclusion of the Coleman Report: “The number one predictor of academic success in school children is the involvement of their parents”. Over the years, I have spoken that wisdom whenever the topic of educational reform arises.

I took joy in being a scholar, a soldier, but most of all in being a father. I colored eggs with my sons before Easter and hid a few dozen on Easter morning. What fun to search for them inside the house and in the backyard. I had to assist the younger son because it was imperative that each ended up with the same exact number of eggs in a basket; otherwise, tears ensued.

After a whirlwind courtship and engagement, Jimmy and Valerie married on May 8. Val’s family lived in Springfield, Oregon, and the couple remained local. She was a pleasant addition to our extended family.

The summer was crammed with personal, college, and military events. First, Zachary celebrated his sixth birthday on May 22. Five of his guests were family and four were school mates. His mom had bought him a special superman cake. Zach’s favorite gift was a combination safe to keep special things locked away from his brother.

In June we drove the VW Rabbit down to Santa Clara to visit Halmoni. She and Pam shared a small Silicon Valley apartment. Halmoni was among the first to work in a computer chip-making facility. She explained how she had to dip her gloved hands into toxic solutions. We traveled to the coast one afternoon, frolicking at the boardwalk in Santa Cruz. The boys loved to chase the waves as they retreated then dash from them as they swelled.

Simon’s birthday was a family affair at the Zelens. All cheered as he managed to blow out all four candles. I continually marveled at how well Zachary and Simon, Nate and Ben, Stephanie and Heather, all got along together. It was a singular time in the life of these six cousins.

My extended family was into something called *Basic Youth Conference* headed by Bill Gothard. Kim and I attended one of his seminars in Portland. It wasn’t held in a church but a sports stadium, with Bill’s visage appearing on giant screens.

Several thousand were in attendance. I liked his seven basic life principles, but considered him to be a bit legalistic. I thought his reasons for rejecting rock music were just plain silly. Lelia's sister and her husband took his teaching to heart—especially the full quiver principle—and produced three additional offspring.

In June-July, I enrolled in two university classes: Statistical Research and Sociology in Education. I was in the habit of driving my City Car to park on the street then walk a hundred yards through the beautiful campus.

Don John's dad had bought him a sports car, but when he really wanted to impress his High School chums, he borrowed my flying wedge. He called his high jinks *cruising the gut*.

In August, my army battalion held its two-week summer training at Camp Rilea near Astoria. Kim took time off work and my family of four stayed with mom in Longview. We visited Eileen and Terry who still lived in the Pondarosa development. Jim and Charlotte had purchased a house at 800 Academy in Kelso.

My battalion, a part of the 104<sup>th</sup> Division, was busy molding recruits into soldiers. It was a strange time to be in the army. Since the end of the Viet Nam war, army standards and morale had plummeted. I think the bottom had been plumbed. Half of our trainees were high school drop outs; One drill sergeant wore a wig to disguise his long hair; and the PT requirement sunk to include something called the *two-mile run-walk*. My hope was President Reagan could re-energize the military.

In the Fall of 1981, I returned to the U of O for more coursework. For a class called Ideology and Education, ten students car-pooled in a caravan to the University of California at Santa Cruz. Our professor loved this place. UCSC was founded in 1965 with an intention to showcase progressive undergraduate education; innovative teaching methods; and contemporary architecture. We sat in on several seminars as campus leaders extolled the virtues of such liberal concepts.

I sat as a passenger on the long ride back to Eugene. With flashlight and note paper in hand, I sketched out an idea for my doctoral dissertation. I determined to answer a percolating question, "Why do parents enroll their children in Christian schools?" As preliminary to this investigation I devised a model with three clusters of reasons: religious, social, and academic.

Over the next year, I would flesh out this R-S-A model, develop a questionnaire, interview parents, produce a dissertation, and receive my PhD in Education.

I also enrolled in a class outside the College of Education. Philosophy of Religion provided me with a larger outlook of worldviews. I wrote a thesis paper that impressed my professor, assessing church life in Oregon. I compared *official religion* with *actual religion*. From the "Atlas of Oregon" I extracted church statistics. The six top faiths listed in the state were Catholic, Methodist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Mormon, and Baptist.

The university housed all thirty-nine phone books published in the state of Oregon. I examined the yellow pages. According to my research and approximations, Baptists had the most adherents, followed by Pentecostal. I also uncovered 272 unaffiliated evangelical churches. Truly, conservative Christians were undercounted. This research was preliminary to the dissertation I was planning.

Also, in anticipation of Christian school research, I moved Zachary from Bailey Hill to Willamette Christian Center for first grade. I figured this placement would give me more understanding as I interviewed Christian-school parents. Zachary was an adaptive child and thrived in his new environment.

Simon began to attend half-day preschool. On his first day back home, he was crying because a few classmates teased him with the moniker *Simple Simon*. I asked if he would like to use his second name. He nodded yes. I spoke to his teacher the next morning and my second son was known thereafter as *Peter*. Dick and Bob, Asian twins, became his best friends.

Frank and Lelia were enjoying military life in Japan. I received good news and bad news from my brother. His third child, John Foreman, was born on September 22, 1981. The bad news concerned Lucinda. She wasn't communicating at four and a half years old and showed signs of severe autism and perhaps mental retardation. Frank told me the official diagnosis was *autistic behaviors*, because the doctors were reticent to diagnose autism which might indicate bad parenting. My brother and his wife were devastated. I upheld them in prayers.

The year passed quickly with hours of university coursework, writing, and research. Kim and I attended WCC every Sunday always mingling with Don and Jeanne, Sue and Don, Jim and Val. Peter reported that Valerie was his Sunday School teacher.

We spent a few days with mom over Christmas. From that year, the holiday seemed to take on an ethnic hue. Charlotte, Jeanne, and Eileen prepared a feast of Polish sausage, sauerkraut, and various old-world desserts. Eileen remarked, "We're getting back in touch with our *root-skis*".

At the last drill weekend of the year, Captain Endicott handed me my Evaluation Report:

1LT Foreman served as Executive Officer for the unit during the rating period. While besieged with requirements, he consistently accomplished high-priority tasks. He was able to update unit requirements, handle day-to-day activities, and establish effective working relationships with all company sections. He is a calm, thoughtful officer, thinking through a task or problem before acting. He offers advice and opinion freely, and his opinion is respected. 1LT Foreman is competent and has served this unit well.

## 1982

As the new year began, my university coursework came to an end. I was still earning credits, but they were strictly *thesis hours*—five in the Winter quarter and four in the Spring. I projected six months to finish up my doctoral studies at the University of Oregon.

I learned that earning a PhD is equal parts aptitude, perseverance, and strategy. I memorized the doctoral handbook, clarifying the finer points with the department chair. I knew what hoops to jump through, when to hop, and how high to leap. I penciled out a diagram of goals and objectives, step-by-step, week-by-week. A critical step was acquiring a three-man advisory team who could assist in writing my dissertation and championing my cause.

While interacting with faculty over the previous sixteen months, I had noted those professors who might sit on my advisory committee. I made a point to impress them so they wouldn't forget my face or name. I sought them out in January and all three agreed to advise me. Benton Johnson knew history and religion; Phil Runkle was a great editor; and Robert Bowlin held clout in the College of Education. I thought we were a great team.

A dissertation in education comprised five chapters: introduction, review of literature, methodology, findings, and conclusions. I went to work immediately on chapters one, two, and three.

To help with computer programing Kim bought a Commodore 1530 with data-cassette and keyboard. She hooked the pieces up to the TV, and voila, we had our first home computer. Kim used it to practice Cobol and Fortran. I was astonished. I was able to type in the first chapter of John and the next day able to retrieve it from the data cassette.

Zachary and Peter were active and enjoyed racing around the cul-de-sac on their bikes. Zach owned a banana seat high-riser and Peter a Big Wheel Spin-Out racer. A few other kids lived nearby and after school marked bike time.

Zachary also began to play soccer with the American Youth Soccer Association (AYSO). Coach Ortiz lived nearby and would pick up Zach to drive him to the high school fields. Oliver was the coach's son and Zach's friend. Zachary was certainly a type-B personality. He played defense and when the ball was on the far side of the field, he would pluck blades of grass, toss them in the air, and watch as the wind caught them in a breeze.

I had such a ball raising my sons. I remember once it was past nine o'clock and the boys weren't in bed yet. Rather than nag them to flip off the TV, I walked out the front door barefoot and crouched under the TV-room window. I spoke in a growling voice, "This is the Boogie Man. It's time for you to go to bed. Ha, ha, ha."

Simon was frightened and said, "Who is that?"

Zachary laughed, "It's just dad."

It was then I stepped on something squishy. In my Boogie Man voice, I shouted, "Just stepped on a slug. Gotta go." Then I raced through the door, wiped off slug slime, and casually rested on the couch.

The boys entered the living room to examine me. Peter said, "Daddy, can I check out your foot?"

There were four parts to earning my PhD. First was the coursework. By 1982, that was behind me. I had met the requirement by completing ninety-six hours—mostly A's and a few B's. However, grades didn't matter much. The fourth part was the published dissertation complete and signed-off by my faculty advisors. Two hoops lay in between: written comprehensive exams (comps) and a public oral defense of my dissertation proposal (orals).

I took my comps with a dozen other graduate students. A panel of six faculty read and graded responses. I needed to score 70% on all eight questions. Results of the comps were posted on the official bulletin board. I was among the one half who managed to pass all eight questions. I was surprised that a few of my comrades, who were smarter than I, didn't meet the mark. In conversation with faculty, I learned that the biggest shortcoming involved not actually answering the question as written, but pivoting into a direction where the writer was knowledgeable. Professors recognized this ploy and a few erudite students failed because their brilliant answer did not engage the simple question.

My committee accepted my proposal in April. I would address the question, "Why do parents in Oregon enroll their children in Protestant Christian schools?" I composed a ten-page questionnaire that would cluster parental responses into three groups of reasons: Religious, Academic, and Social. My submitted proposal was only twenty pages long in order that faculty who chose to read it would not be over-taxed.

On the big day of my orals, I sat in front of a classroom with my notes at hand and three advisors in the front seats. Kim was present as were a few of my graduate-school colleagues. I hoped to keep the atmosphere non-adversarial.

My advisors had read the proposal and peppered me with clarifying inquiries. I answered with aplomb. They also tossed me a few softball questions. My colleagues were annoying. They hadn't read the proposal and so asked oddball questions. A problem arose when a few irreligious, contrary faculty dropped in. They thought my proposed dissertation was not sufficiently rigorous and threw hardballs.

These contrarians sparred with me, then with my advisors. Finally, a compromise was reached. Yes, I could pass my orals, but I would have to conduct a pilot study in order to demonstrate my process was workable. If this were done, and my advisors accepted the pilot study, then I could complete the dissertation

by writing chapters four and five: findings and conclusions. This delay meant that I could not graduate in June, but had to wait until September.

I developed an interview guide consisting of seventy-one questions all designed to gather information about parental motive. Why are parents enrolling their children in Christian schools? I would ask questions and check the box or fill in the blank. Parents also completed a one-page sheet of demographic information.

Life happened outside academia as I juggled responsibilities to my family, my church and the army. On April 6, Captain Endicott was promoted to major, and I became commander of company A. I led one second lieutenant, a first sergeant, several NCOs, and a few dozen enlisted. I strove to do the best for my company and for my Battalion commander, LTC Root.

Zachary held a festive birthday party at Ferrell's Ice Cream in Portland. A few friends from Eugene attended along with four cousins. My son was really into science and received a telescope and globe. The special treat for the birthday boy was something called *The Portland Zoo*, a trough with five scoops of ice cream, sprinkle, sauces, strawberries, and a split banana. He had some help, but Zach earned the ribbon that read "I made a pig of myself at Ferrell's".

A few days after Zach's seventh birthday, Nancy Jo gave birth to a daughter. Melissa Ament was born on May 29, 1982.

On June 11, I sat in the sun at Lane Community College. When her name was called, Kim walked to the platform to receive an Associate of Science degree in computer programming. With diploma in hand, she also received a promotion. She was now the assistant to her friend, Marie, who ran the computer lab. To celebrate her new position, Kim bought a TRS 80 (trash-eighty) computer from Tandy/Radio Shack. This machine came with its own integrated screen and little keyboard.

In July, I returned to Rilia for my second summer camp, but this time as company commander. BCT worked like this: the 104<sup>th</sup> Division was responsible to qualify one cohort of trainees from the states of Oregon and Washington. My four platoons of drill sergeants looked after thirty trainees in the third and fourth weeks of training. My role was as leader, quality control, and coordinator with battalion HQ. The two weeks passed quickly, especially since any free time was devoted to writing my dissertation.

My pilot study took place at Willamette Christian Center and Salem Christian School. At each location I interviewed ten parents using my seventy-one-question guide. I collated results then met with my advisory team. With their input, I tweaked the questionnaire, and gained approval to move forward with the main study. I ended up interviewing twenty-two parents in three primary schools and eighteen parents in two secondary schools.

I hired a typist to transform my rough-hewn notes into a 139-page document. I bound four printed documents, giving the signed copy to the university. When she handed me the manuscript, the typist showed me a piece of plastic, asking if I wanted to pay an extra ten dollars for it. I asked her what it was. She said, "Oh, it's a floppy disc that contains the words of your dissertation." I turned down the offer, not knowing what a floppy disc might be.

The abstract of my dissertation read as follows:

This study surveyed parents in Oregon who had enrolled their children in Protestant Christian schools during the 1981-1982 school year. Forty parents of children in kindergarten through twelfth grade were interviewed in depth, using both structured and open-ended questions.

The results of the survey provided a bounty of demographic information about Protestant-school parents and in a variety of ways answered the question, "Why do parents in Oregon enroll their children in Protestant Christian schools?"

Special attention was given to the religious, social, and academic reasons for enrollment. The study concluded by suggesting ways in which public schools can retain students and thereby meet the challenge of emerging Protestant Christian schools.

Overall, twenty-five parents cited mostly religious reasons for switching to Christian schools, seven social reasons, and eight academic reasons. My most interesting result showed religious commitment to be consistent across all grades. However, in primary school, parents tilted toward academic over social, while in high school, social ranked over academic.

My four suggestions for retaining children in public schools were: 1. Stop being hostile to the religious convictions of children; 2. Provide a decent learning environment for all children; 3. Return to basics; and 4. Listen to parents.

My committee met with me in late August to sign papers. I just made the deadline to graduate on September 3. On that propitious day I wore my cap and gown along with a gaudy neck tie to project an aura of non-conformity. A platform was erected on the grass outside the administration building flanked by hundreds of folding chairs. Kim, Zachary, Peter, mom and the Eugene contingent were present for the occasion. This post-summer ceremony was low key and speeches were short. When my name was called, I walked on stage to receive *The Degree of Doctor of Philosophy*. Kim took pictures of me with my mom, then Jimmy Walker snapped photos of my proud family posed around me.

Like Caesar in Gaul, I had accomplished my mission. I came to Eugene; I saw the challenge; and I conquered academia. But like Alexander at the Indus, I also felt empty. There were no more academic worlds to conquer. For me, the PhD had been more of an end in itself than a means to an end—like a real job. Perhaps I could find employment on campus?

In the following weeks, I searched everywhere at the university for a job, but 1982 was a recession year. I nearly landed a few post-doc positions, but they didn't pan out. I discovered an opening for Peace Corps liaison and became one of two finalists. I didn't get it. As proficient as I had been in attaining the degree, so was I deficient in follow-up employment.

Although I was still filling carrousel with slide transparencies, I bought a used black & white video camera from a friend on campus. The camera recorded to a device housing oversized cassettes. My first recording was of Zachary and Peter in a karate fight. They tussled in our living room for a few minutes knocking over a lamp. Kim was referee and judged Zachary to be the grand winner and Peter the super winner. We could not have real competition without Peter tears.

Frank had returned from Japan in August and was furthering his dental education in Portland. His family was in town so Joshua and Baby Johnny made video appearances. Zachary and Peter recited books of the Bible. Number-one son named all sixty-seven. Number two got through the New Testament and recited the Old Testament up to the book of *Jones* (Job).

Kim and I had to make a decision about schooling. Although we liked WCC, it was too expensive for both Zachary and Peter to attend. We opted to enroll them at Bailey Hill. We accompanied our boys the first day, walking Zach to second grade and Pete to kindergarten. We told them they could walk by themselves on the second day. The distance was about three blocks. There were a dozen school age-kids on the sidewalk and crossing guards along the route. Kim snuck behind the boys to make sure they could find their way.

In the fall I enrolled in two undergraduate classes to acquire my Oregon teaching credential. One class was titled the *History of Oregon* and the second was a Political Science class. I was inspired to write a term paper for poly-sci, seeking to discover where I stood politically. My muse was C.S. Lewis who described himself as culturally conservative yet economically liberal. I devised a chart outlining my view that a political spectrum cannot be measured along a linear continuum but must be plotted along an x-y axis. In 1982 I plotted myself to be centrist-liberal. Over the years, I've crept toward the conservative corner.

Life continued to happen while I insulated myself in the ivory tower. Alan Foreman ran into problems with the Lane County sheriff. I visited him in the county jail, ministering as best I could. To avoid further jail time, Alan left Oregon and reunited with Barbara in Euless, Texas.

I ran into problems with my City Car. Driving up the steep grade to visit Zelens blew fuses on the deep-cycle batteries. Related electrical problems developed and soon

my flying wedge sat for days in a repair shop. Because Kim needed the VW Rabbit for work, I struggled with transportation. I began looking for a reliable third car.

In national news, an odd series of murders took place in the Chicago area. A person unknown had tampered with Tylenol containers, inserting a lethal dose of cyanide poison inside the capsules. After several unknowing victims died, all Tylenol products were pulled from store shelves. In short order, all medications were sold in *tamper-proof* containers and in the long run all processed food products were likewise sealed.

At the five-year mark of my army commissioning, I was promoted to captain. My pay and prestige increased marginally. I was proud to serve my country and volunteered for any extra duty or military school. Admittedly, part of my motivation was to generate additional income.

I discovered the McKenzie Study Center near campus, where free Bible classes were offered to U of O students. I began learning Greek with the help of one-thousand flash cards. I sat in on apologetic lectures provided by a Bible answer man. Question: "Can God create a stone so heavy He can't lift it?" Answer: "Assume God created such a stone. Now your question becomes, 'Can God lift a stone that God cannot lift?' Omnipotence means God can do all possible things. One thing He does not do is nonsense."

Often times, I turned off the TV and turned on the radio. KLCC provided National Public Radio and KPDQ-AM was the go-to place for Christian Radio. I enjoyed listening to both *Prairie Home Companion* and *Focus on the Family*.

I occasionally flipped through the fire-sale books offered at the U of O bookstore. I latched on one called "Sunset in a Spider Web: Sijo Poetry of Ancient Korea." I shared it with Kim who was surprised to see the poems in English version. She could recite many of the poems in her native tongue. Our favorite was by Chung Chul:

I'd like to carve a moon  
Out of my heart  
And hang it ninety thousand miles  
High in the sky  
So it would shine on the place  
Where my love is tonight.

Eugene, Oregon, was the epicenter of the jogging craze. Kim and I bought sweat clothes and joined in. Together we jogged the neighborhood sidewalks and the track at Churchill High School. I ran as part of my army training as well, while Kim ran the track at Lane Community College during her lunch hour. The University of Oregon boasted the premier runners in the nation and often I would see Olympian Alberto Salazar blazing down Eighteenth Street.

I enjoyed filming videos at family events. During the Zelen Thanksgiving gala, Don led in prayer, voicing the blessing inherited from my dad. After the prayer Eileen led in singing the doxology and “We give the sacrifice of praise”. Then Frank spoke from memory the 103<sup>rd</sup> Psalm: “Bless the Lord, O my soul”. Mom stood back loving every moment of it. Auntie Pam and her boyfriend were bewildered at this spontaneous praise to God.

On Christmas morning, stockings were hung to the sides of the fireplace with little gifts inserted. I video-taped the ritual gift unwrapping. While in pajamas, Zachary and Peter collected gifts from under the tree and set them on the coffee table. To accommodate the camera, each son opened his gift one-at-a-time and told me his prize. The boys shared a walkie-talkie set, passing Christmas day in military-like conversation. A Christmas memory was preserved for future generations.

At church the next day, I dropped a note into the offering plate addressed to Pastor Murray McLees. I asked him if there were any way I could use my higher education to help Willamette Christian Center proclaim the Gospel.

## 1983

On New Year’s Day my extended family met in a little Quaker church near Frank’s house in Portland. As I anchored in place thirty-six people strutted past my video camera: ten Foreman, five Zelen, five Walker, four Zimmerman, four Necker, three Ament, three Francis, and two Davis.

My top priority for 1983 was to find a job. Kim and I both loved Eugene, Oregon, and hoped it would become a place we could plant roots. Pastor McLees called me into his church office. He explained there were no jobs at present, but I could volunteer, maybe work my way into a position. I dropped by the middle school a few times and taught a few classes, but nothing seemed to gel.

After I received my Oregon teaching credential, I signed up with the Eugene School district to substitute teach. This avenue appeared more promising and I was working a few days per week. I did enjoy the kids, but without the continuity of a regular workspace, curriculum, and pupils, it was challenging. I was earning a few hundred dollars per month, but hoped my part-time work would expand to full time.

In the Spring we drove south to California to visit Halmoni. I was surprised to see Dong Hyun, now twenty-three years old. Kim did most of the talking while I looked after Zachary and Peter. I learned Q-Nam also wanted to immigrate to America, but he could not get a Korean visa until he had completed two years of required military service.

After a few months, Dong Hyun showed up at our door along with Pam. We hosted them for a week as they both looked for employment. They couldn’t find work in the area so they returned to Silicon Valley.

As Spring passed into summer, Kim enjoyed a TV miniseries called “Thornbirds”, Peter signed up for AYSO soccer, and Zachary won a second-grade science project.

My video camera proved to be a hit at Bailey Hill kindergarten on parent’s day. I hooked the gadget into the classroom TV, then focused on each of the five-year-olds as they spoke their names. They sang a few songs and mugged for the TV. All were amazed to see their faces on the screen. It was a first for most adults in the room as well.

I remember Peter was learning the alphabet and sounding out the twenty-six letters. One day sitting in the Rabbit he looked at the letters next to the gear shift. I quizzed him on the letters, P-R-D-L. He looked puzzled. “Where’s the J?”

“J?” I asked with interest.

“You know, the J for Jrive.”

Kim and I volunteered to teach a fifth-grade class at WCC. Both of us were needed. I would speak for ten minutes while Kim walked the floor calming rambunctious kids. Then we would switch roles. All students were enthusiastic and a few were eager to learn about Jesus.

My sons became *Star War* fans after I brought them to a theater to see *Return of the Jedi*. They especially identified with the little Ewoks. I bought them light sabers and action figures to live their fantasies.

To my astonishment, Kim earned a second Associate of Science degree, this time in Data Processing Computer Operations. On June 10 she walked on stage to receive her diploma. Kim was promoted to head of the computer lab. She genuinely liked people. In turn, they liked her and helped her climb the ladder of success. Networking came second nature to her. At times I envied my wife’s ability to schmooze and acquire jobs. I wished I had half of her facility.

My City Car was becoming less dependable and I began planning a road trip to the East Coast. A third car was in order. After shopping around, I bought a 1974 VW 412 wagon. This mustard-colored beauty featured a rear air-cooled engine. The kids thrilled when I drove them short distances locked in the front trunk. I loved its novelty.

Pam and Dong Hyun drove up to Eugene in mid-June. She kept company with Kim while we four guys prepared for the cross-country trek. I bought a top carrier for the VW wagon, a tent, camping gear, and mats. With my brother-in-law to assist we made great time, driving non-stop 1200 miles to Denver. Debbie Necker now lived in the Colorado capitol so we crashed there for the night. Zachary and Peter hung out with their second cousins, Stephanie and Heather.

The next day we drove another thousand miles into Indiana. I wanted to rest more, but Dong Hyun was a driving demon. The boys didn’t seem to mind. We’d pause at rest stops and for fast food. I even napped on the back mats as the miles

zoomed by. We finally set up the tent at a campground near Terre Haute and rested for about twenty hours. The final leg of our sojourn was six hundred miles to Petersburg, Virginia. The excuse for our long journey was to visit Hyun Ok and Michael, now stationed at Fort Lee.

Our stay was pleasant. I hung out with Michael; Zachary and Peter with little James; and Dong Hyun with his sister. We were in Virginia for Peter's sixth birthday and celebrated the event with cake and paper streamers. James took a polaroid picture and gave it to him as a present.

We paid a day-long tour to the U.S. Capitol, strolling from one end of the mall to the other. In the Capitol Building, I lost track of Peter. I was engrossed in looking at the statuary, noting the contribution from each state. I panicked until I made my way to the courtesy desk. Peter was in tears, a policeman talking with him. My son kept saying, "The man said 'I wasn't lost'. It was you that was lost."

We also stopped by the Shenandoah Caves with the kids. That location is remembered as the place Peter lost his Ewok named Wicket. We posed for a photo next to a stalactite with three boys and two furry friends. The next day we noticed the Ewok went missing. We later joked about the doomed creature wandering the caverns forever.

Soon we were on the road again, heading southwest. We camped more on the return trip—the boys in the car; Dong Hyun and I in the tent. We stopped in the Great Smokies one night and the Ozark Hot Springs the next. Arkansas was my fortieth state. At a convenience store in Texarkana, I left my wallet behind when I made a purchase. I didn't notice it missing until the next fill-up. Rather than drive backwards a few hundred miles, I phoned and the manager agreed to mail the wallet to the address on the driver's license. One week later I received it in Eugene, minus five dollars for the shipping.

Then we rested two nights with my brother Jack in Euless, Texas, splashing together in their backyard pool. My two boys mixed with cousins Patrick, Alan, and his new girlfriend.

We continued on, pausing at the rim of the Grand Canyon. Next, we spent a day exploring Disneyland. Zachary wore a pirate hat and Pete was Peter Pan. I was amused that the boys preferred the fake *Grand Canyon boat ride* to the real Grand Canyon of a few days earlier. We stopped a day in Santa Clara to visit Halmoni, then we arrived back in Eugene, altogether putting six thousand miles on the VW.

The remainder of summer 1983 quickly passed. I attended my third Army summer camp at Rilea. I talked with the two-unit administrators and decided to apply for an Active Guard/Reserve (AGR) position. The more time I spent underemployed, the better the army option looked. I gathered references, filled out forms, and stood at attention in my Class A uniform for an official photograph.

Peter tagged along to the photo shoot and volunteered to pose for an unofficial picture draped in my green army jacket. The tag board read *17 June 1983*.

Every time I dropped by the reserve center; I'd ask the unit admin if I had received a response. He told me positions were easier to come by for NCOs. There were few slots available for captains.

Kim and I grew weary of Pastor McLees and his name-it-and-claim-it theology. We eventually switched to God's Freewill Tabernacle, a foursquare church. Although still Pentecostal, the pastor seemed less Bible thumping and more Bible proclaiming.

I continued to look for work, re-visiting Christian schools that were part of my doctoral studies. I nearly landed a job as assistant principal in Salem. I was assured of a position as principal in Canyonville. I returned home to Eugene believing that job was in my pocket, only to learn on the following day the founders of the school had handed the position to their son-in-law.

Kim loved her work and colleagues at LCC. She was running laps round the college track and figuratively running laps around me. Her career was in ascent while mine stagnated. Depression led me to watch too many re-runs of MASH and assemble too many 1000-piece puzzles.

We took the VW 412 on a vacation to Crater Lake. Josh Foreman accompanied us. The sights and mountain air were fantastic. Then Peter complained about his hair. He said it was itchy. As Kim examined his scalp, she discovered head lice. My wife was grossed out. Upon further examination, all three boys had cooties. Once home, all were treated and cured. It made for a memorable outing.

In October we paid a visit to Zelens. Brian and Nancy Ament dropped by and we cuddled their new bundle of joy named Crystal. Brian was successful in his dad's construction business and Nancy flourished as a doting mother.

In November, a frightful TV movie sent shock waves across America. "The Day After" dramatized the aftermath of thermo-nuclear war. Our Pastor devoted an entire Sunday morning to discuss the film and calm the fear. I admired the pastor and liked our new church home.

My wife and kids lifted me from the doldrums. I would have sunk beneath the waves without them. Kim hosted a surprise birthday party for me on December 24 with the Eugene family contingent in attendance. On Christmas morning, the boys were most pleased with their "Dukes of Hazard Race Track." We bought additional hot wheels track and the General Lee raced during the entire Christmas break. I took my last home movies with my video camera. The contraption broke down beyond repair.

I felt inadequate as head of the household. I figured I should be the principal bread winner, but Kim brought home the bulk of bacon. End-of-the-year tax records revealed I had earned just \$866 in 1981, \$1572 in 1982, and \$2267 in 1983. I continued to descend into a no-job funk. What would the next year bring?

## Chapter 16

# EXILED

January 1984 to June 1984  
Eugene, Oregon & Chun-An, Korea

*And the LORD said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing."  
(from Genesis 12:1 & 2)*

It was the toughest decision I made in my life; to leave my wife and sons in order to prosper in a foreign land. Yet, I felt this was God's will for my life. I had always viewed myself as family man first and working man a distant second. I confessed to Kim I would do anything for Zachary and Peter. As things turned out, *getting a job* fell under the heading of "anything".

### JANUARY 1984

The year 1984 had always brought to mind the dystopian future painted by George Orwell. In high school when I had read his novel, the year seemed unimaginably distant. Now with Reagan in office, many of my contemporaries wondered if the prophecy might come to pass.

The year began with a glimmer of good news. Kim knew someone who knew someone who might offer me a professor position in Korea. Kim was hesitant to tell me because she had no desire to return to her home country.

I met with Dr. Kim Jung Ae who was the education director at the Korean consulate in San Francisco. He happened to be a graduate of Dan-kook University in Seoul. He had just returned from his alma mater where the college president informed him the English Department was searching for a native speaker with both a PhD and familiarity with Korean culture. I seemed to fit the bill.

After a flurry of letters between my wife and Dan-kook University, I signed a one-year contract to teach in Korea. Together we arrived at a difficult decision. I would go to Korea alone while the family would follow at the end of the school year. My heart was broken at the prospect of family separation, but what could I do? Kim was concerned about being a single mother for five months, thereafter leaving a town and job she loved. Becoming a college professor in Korea would be a sacrifice for all concerned.

In the weeks before my departure, I learned that the Eugene School District was about to offer me a full-time position. The pastor a God's Freewill Tabernacle asked if I'd consider being a deacon. With troubled heart, I declined both offers. If only this had happened in 1983. I stopped by my Reserve Center to resign my company commander position. That too was difficult. There was still no word on my AGR application.

I remember sitting at my going away party at Zelen's home. I asked Jeanne heart-to-heart to look after my family. Michael Jackson was on TV singing *Beat It*. Zachary, Peter, and their cousins were testing break dance spins on the linoleum floor. I hated to leave all this joy. My boys were very attached to me. Most especially I hated to leave Kim. She was the love of my life. She was my rock.

I bought a one-way ticket to Seoul, filled two fifty-pound bags, and on February 12 headed to Seattle-Tacoma Airport. With resolve and resignation, I hugged Zachary and Peter. "I can do this," I fortified myself. Tears filled in our eyes as Kim and I kissed farewell.

## CHEON-AN, KOREA

I arrived in Seoul the next day and was met by a delegate from Dan-kook University. My sponsor held up a placard that read *Dr. Foreman*. Dan-kook was headquartered in Seoul and had just expanded with a satellite campus fifty miles south in a city called Cheon-An. The centerpiece of campus was a brand-new dental school, but the university also offered an undergraduate degree in liberal arts. I became part of the English department.

I stayed in Seoul a few nights meeting with university officials and signing papers. I then travelled with my sponsor to Cheon-An and was boarded in a newly-constructed dorm room, sharing space with a Korean lecturer. A toilet and shower were at the end of a hall. I discovered the urinal leaked and the floor slanted. The first time I peed, my slippers got the back-wash. I was underwhelmed. My meager office space wasn't much better. I sat in a common room with six other English-language faculty. I was the lone native speaker.

I felt the victim of bait and switch. The department chairman handed me a college-level text and I was on my own with three classes of freshmen. Most of my instruction proved to be drill and practice. I felt like somebody's talking parrot; a bauble in the English program. I grew isolated. It was similar to my days in the Peace Corps. After colleagues understood I would not socialize with them—that is, carouse, smoke, get drunk on soju—they left me alone.

I did get along with some of the students. We held informal rap sessions where I taught them songs and answered questions. At the time, many students had the nervous habit of twirling their writing pen on the back of their hands. I tried flicking the pen, but could never manage it.

I was surprised to see several non-Korean undergraduate students strolling the campus. I learned they were Moonies—followers of Sun Myung Moon. They were pleasant enough as long as you didn't question their cult.

I awoke one night to find my roommate dead drunk, standing next to his bed, and peeing against the wall. The splash sound woke me up. I raised a stink with my bosses and soon I had the room to myself.

I had a lot of time on my hands and determined to learn Korean. I flipped through vocabulary cards, studied a grammar book, and conversed daily with Korean faculty and students. I wanted to learn the colloquial language and began to read through comic books. I wrote a story about that experience.

One Spring day I was struggling through a Korean comic book. A female character shouted at her boyfriend *Kea sori ha ji ma*. As I translated the words to myself, I chuckled. The words meant “Dog sound don't make”. I repeated the words a couple times. *Now there's a useful phrase*, I thought.

The next day was hot so I went outside wearing a short-sleeve shirt. While standing in line to board a bus, I heard giggling behind me. I turned to see two girls pointing at me. One was whisking her fingers up and down her arm saying “Monkey, monkey”. I realized I was the hairy beast in question.

I remembered the comic book and shouted at them in my best Korean “Kea sori ha ji ma”. One of the young ladies gulped an involuntary “Eu Ma” (meaning *mother*) and the other blushed red. An old man standing next to me grinned. As I sat down in the bus, I thought to myself *Thank goodness for comic books*.

My regular salary for Dan-Kook figured to be about \$1500 per month. I was able to augment that by earning another \$500 teaching English at a local high-tech firm. I learned they were exporting floppy discs to America.

As in the Peace Corps, I felt like a square American peg fitting into a round Korean hole. For instance, once I asked my boss about deductions from my pay

check. I was told ten percent of my salary was deducted for *social security*. I then asked when I might see that money again. My sponsor looked perplexed, saying I could never collect because I was not Korean. I asked, “Then why is it deducted?”

I spent many evenings working on a Korean pronunciation guide based on minimal pairs; that is two phonemes in English that cause confusion in the Korean ear. I used my learning guide in my English classes to train Korean students. That exercise kept me busy and my mind off home. Parts of my introduction ran:

The purpose of this book is to teach English pronunciation to native Korean speakers by isolating some of the arbitrary vocal symbols used in English language communication. By investigating certain English words which have little difference in sound but big difference in meaning, non-native speakers will learn to differentiate between English sounds. The sounds—phonemes—under investigation are those particular ones that give Korean speakers the most trouble. By learning to distinguish between similar-sounding phonemes in both speaking and hearing, Korean speakers will learn one important part of the English language.

Finally, language learning should be enjoyable. One of the more amusing ways to point out difference in English sounds is to chuckle at the resultant meaning when two similar sounding phonemes are confused. This guide is chalk full of them and should be entertaining to use. Koreans who can pronounce their way through its pages should have fun as they learn their way to better English pronunciation.

My favorite sentences with proximal pairs were: “Itch each ear each year” and “Red led Blue; four to two”. Two sentences with minimal pairs were: “Let us pray” and “Let us play.”

A Zoo-ful of Z’s became “Zany zebras zip zestfully in the Zanzibar zoo.” A double-dose of double-you’s read: “War-weary women would wind World-War-one wounds with wide white wool.”

I typed out about twenty pages of such playful sentences with explanations. I had hoped to publish my work. Of course, I got distracted and nothing came of it.

I was in continual correspondence with Kim, sending her one letter every three days. My poor wife was under extreme stress. She was looking after two boys; working full time; trying to sell two cars; rent out our house; and store our goods. She was torn emotionally. She loved me and wanted me to be a professor. However, she favored her American way of life.

Kim had a true love-hate relationship with Korea. In one letter she’d write about hooking up with her sorority girlfriends, while in the next she’d say we

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should live separate lives on distant shores. I asked Jeanne to talk with her and our church pastor to counsel with her. I sent all the comfort and humor I could muster, but at eight-thousand miles distance, I felt helpless and hapless.

I also received a letter from Peter that brought forth a stream of tears. He illustrated four pages in pencil.

Page one: "The day without dad."

Page two: "Once upon a time a family didn't have a father." There appeared a map of the Pacific Ocean showing Oregon, Korea, and an airplane in transit.

Page three: "The two kids were sad." A stick figure was drawn with head slumped down and an unhappy face.

Page four: "Dedicated to Dad, by Peter."

I missed my two sons!

I paid a visit to Mukuk, but all the people I knew as a Peace Corps volunteer had moved on. Just a few people in the middle school remembered me. Ten years had brought massive change to my little village. I also visited many local sights, mostly in the company of a ten-person English club that I started.

I took advantage of my military status. With my army I.D. I could visit Yongsan Army Base. One Saturday I wore a wrinkly army uniform onto Yongsan to see what might be available to me. There was no USAR unit on post, but there was an Army Reserve club where inactive soldiers could congregate to help each other earn retirement points through classroom attendance. I did that twice.

I also stopped at the Ministry of Education building to check out the Peace Corps office. Was there anyone I still knew? I learned to my surprise that the Peace Corps had left Korea in 1978, the last class being K-36. I was told the presence of Peace Corps volunteers indicated poverty and Korea wanted to show itself to the world as prosperous. I was sad about that.

In 1984, Korea was striving at double speed. Signs of new construction were everywhere. Posters and propaganda universally proclaimed the 1988 Summer Olympics which Seoul would host. The Hermit Kingdom of Korea considered this upcoming event to be its coming-out-to-the-world party.

While in Seoul, I experienced an amusing clash of culture, about which I later wrote.

Some events in life only become clear in retrospect. One of these events centered on a visit to my sister-in-law's house in Seoul. In 1984 I was in Korea teaching English at Dan Gook University. My wife was still in America and I was obliged to visit my wife's sister, Hyun Hee, to eat dinner at her house.

We enjoyed the time together. I showed her pictures of her sister and nephews. Then she said "My husband and I have already eaten, so you can

eat alone as much as you want”. That seemed odd to me but I understood that I was an honored guest.

Hyun Hee served a full Korean meal: a big bowl of rice and lots of little side dishes. The meal included a side dish of bul-go-gi (BBQ beef). I finished it off pretty quickly. After a while, Hyun Hee opened the sliding door and popped her head into the room. She saw that the first dish of bul-go-gi was empty so she took the empty dish and quickly returned with it re-filled.

I like bul-go-gi so I soon finished off the second dish too. Hyun Hee looked in again and saw that the bul-go-gi was gone. As she went to pick up the dish, I told her “No, no I’ve had enough”. She took it anyway. This time I heard some conversation and commotion in the outside room. Hyun Hee was sending her son, Sung Kyung, to the market to buy some more beef! I couldn’t believe it. I had told her that my stomach was full.

After 30 minutes or so, she entered the room and presented me with a third dish of bul-go-gi. I was sick of the stuff, but I didn’t want to insult my sister-in-law. My parents taught me to finish everything on my plate. They would say “Just think of all those hungry people in China”. So, I just managed to finish off my third bowl of meat. I was really stuffed.

But when my sister-in-law saw that the bul-go-gi was gone, she gave me a fourth bowl. This time I couldn’t eat a bite (even if I thought of the hungry people in China). I just pushed the table away and said, “My stomach is full. I’m gonna die”. That ended my big meal. We talked some more and then I left.

At a later date my wife came to Korea and together we visited Hyun Hee. I understood enough of the conversation to catch that Hyun Hee was laughing and telling my wife how much bul-go-gi I ate. I defended myself by saying “I only ate what she gave me. I thought I was supposed to do that”.

As the two sisters talked and talked, a light bulb went on in my head. *It was a battle of ethics* I thought. My deep-seated Protestant ethic told me to finish all my food and not be wasteful. This clashed with her Confucian ethic to give me as much as I could eat. I was only completely full when I left a morsel uneaten on my plate. With 20/20 hindsight I could see that I ate and ate and nearly got sick in order to be polite and that she sent her son to the market to buy more food in order to be polite. I chuckled to myself “That cultural lesson added an inch to my waistline”.

After Kim informed me that she had purchased three one-way tickets, I felt relief. I knew my wife was coming, but I didn’t know what mood she might be in. At first, I was gung-ho about spending a year at Dan-kook University. Now I was wishing I could return to the States.

Kim also telephoned me about the Eugene USAR contacting her. The Unit Admin reported there might be a position for me in the Active Guard/Reserve. I found that information both complicating and intriguing. Kim sent me this aerogram a week before her departure to Korea:

I received all three of your letters today. I cried after I read each one because I am so blessed with my husband. God must really love me so much that he brings you into my life.

Chris, I was confused very much after I talked with you on the phone. I realized suddenly I cannot handle things here. Only with God's help can we make a decision. Frank called a little while ago and we talked and prayed over the phone. I must let you know I will do what God wants you to do. Let's pray about it. We don't know if God wants us to be in Wisconsin or Korea.

I want to make it clear to you that the letters I wrote in my depression shouldn't be the sole factor in your decision. Evaluate every aspect and decide whatever is best for our family. I miss you as much as you miss me. I will follow you wherever you go if you seek the Lord. I feel so empty without you. Nothing is very important anymore but you and the kids. I don't ever want to be separated from you again. I will be in Korea on June first no matter what.

I want to tell you about my stressed and distraught letter. I was in deep depression just before my monthly period. You know how erratic I can be and touchy during those times. I am sorry. Already I told you I am going to yield my will to the Lord and will support you 100% whatever you decide—to stay in Korea or move to Wisconsin. I want you to be happy because seeing your spirit soaring like an eagle makes me happy and very proud of being your wife. Bye, my sweetheart.

What a wonderful wife! Yes, we would decide together, but unless she insisted on Korea, I figured we would soon be returning stateside.

I took advantage of my military status to shop at the Post Exchange. An expensive item caught my eye. It was a high-end color video camera cabled to a VCR recorder. I had been saving my money, had a passion for gadgets, and loved taking videos of my family. At one thousand-five hundred dollars, I immediately transformed from a photographer to a videographer.

I located a place for my family to stay in Seoul at the Faith Christian Center. This was an outreach to the American military sponsored by the Church of God. Roy Humphrey, the director, said my family was welcome to stay a few weeks while in transit.

On June first, with video camera in hand, I met Kim, Zachary, and Peter at Kimpo Airport. One hundred-eight days had elapsed since I saw them last. It was a joyous raucous occasion. Hyun Hee and family accompanied me as part of the welcoming party. Peter spoke of an upgrade to first class. Zachary showed me a new watch he had received for his birthday. I couldn't keep my eye off my beautiful wife.

We split the next twenty-six nights, staying at the Christian Center, Hyun Hee's house, and Cheon-An campus. Kim was surprised when she visited the education center on Yongsan. Her Master's degree, computer diplomas, English ability, and American citizenship combined to make her a red-hot commodity. They offered her a high-paying job on the spot. She also talked with officials from Dan-kook who offered her an immediate faculty position in data processing. Ten years after losing her middle-school job in disgrace, Kim returned to Korea a conqueror. My wife was being offered positions she once treasured. Would she take them?

We all traveled to Cheon-An so my family could see my workplace. The next day we went on a long walk to Gak-won-sa Temple, site of the largest sitting Buddha in all Korea. As we climbed staircase after staircase, the boys were fascinated with the foreignness of Buddhism. When we reached the massive Buddha, devotees were lighting incense at the statue's base. Peter asked if we would do that. I said, "No, we are Christian. They are Buddhist."

Simon was puzzled; Zachary was introspective. As we sat and talked, the subject shifted to baptism. I asked if they wanted to be baptized as Christians once we returned to America. They both assented. My two sons didn't grasp what a Christian was, until they actually saw people practicing a contrasting religion.

Kim and I decided to visit Panmunjom, while the boys stayed with Hyun Hee. We boarded a military bus in Seoul and headed north into the mountains. Officials checked our passports and gave us instructions like "don't make inappropriate gestures to the North Korean guards".

At the DMZ we looked at Northern guards who were peering back at us. Kim and I entered the meeting room where peace talks are held. A painted line ran across a long table separating the nation in two.

Before we exited the room, the guides invited us to walk around the table and thereby step into North Korea. I was happy to visit the north, but surprised at how frightened my wife was. Just the thought of stepping foot into the land of Kim Il Song disquieted her. She half-joked that she might be kidnapped. However, we made it back to Seoul just fine.

My family often traveled around town on crowded trains. As a foreigner, I tended to be the focus of attention. I was uncomfortable with this, but Peter loved

it. He would entertain passengers with Michael Jackson impressions. Wearing his multi-zippered black jacket, my son would strut the aisles, lip-sync into his fist, and demonstrate the moon walk. He was quite the entertainer.

While I was in Cheon-An, Kim decided to take her sons to her hometown on the south coast. She preferred I not go along. I continued to be a point of family disgrace. The boys were able to meet their haraboji (grandfather) and a host of other relatives. Peter reported back to me about the rustic home mostly empty except for a giant TV. He held his nose as he spoke of a refrigerator filled only with fish.

Kim brought with her correspondence letters from Mary Casey, an AGR captain stationed at Fort McCoy, Wisconsin. Captain Casey suggested that with a few phone calls I might be able to finagle her slot. I placed a call to the commander at the Army Ready Reserve Training Center (ARRTC). We struck it off and we struck a deal. Colonel Smith could cut orders for me and I could report to Fort McCoy in July. I asked for a few days to discuss the matter with my wife.

I talked with Kim and she agreed it would be best if we returned to America. She was surprised at her own reluctance. She hated living in Korea. Yet, with such good job prospects, she hated to abandon them.

So, our lives once more took an unexpected turn. I had figured my family would live in Korea for at least one year, but I could see God's hand behind the scene. My exile was relatively short. Korea was not a destination, but a weigh-station. God had other plans for me and my family. I called the ARRTC on June 15. Army orders were cut and forwarded to Yongsan.

A few days later, I returned to Cheon-An. I was embarrassed to talk with my sponsor and department chair. They were shocked and a bit angry at my early and sudden departure, but there was no changing my mind.

Often, I'd walk with my sons several blocks from the Christian Center onto the Army base. Peter would whine, "Are we there yet?"

I'd respond, "How old are you now? Well, when your seven years old we'll get there".

On June 21, Peter did turn seven and we held a birthday party for him at the Faith Christian Center. About a dozen military dependent children showed up as he blew out seven candles. He received a cartload of plastic toys, so plentiful in Korea.

My brother-in-law, Dong Hyun, was in negotiations to marry a Korean girl. He had earlier traveled to Seoul to court her. As I later found out, Dong Hyun mis-presented himself as a rich entrepreneur. The girl's family was also skilled at deception. They rented a giant house for one week to impress a potential husband from America with their wealth. On this double-duplicity, the two were married in Seoul on June 23.

His father, brother, and two sisters were in attendance. My boys were intrigued by the exotic and elaborate ceremony. Peter tried to peel off a decorative red circle from the bride's cheek. We were all stuffed with Korean delicacies.

We spent the day before departure in the shopping district of Itewon. The boys got monogrammed jackets. I bought brass figures and Kim bought bedwear. To pump us up for Wisconsin living, we each bought complete snowsuits with our names embroidered on the pockets.

We taxied to the airport on June 26. Hyun Hee, her husband, and son accompanied us. As I was video recording, I asked the boys about their most memorable event. They responded, "Sung Yung's pyun-so"; that was their cousin's stinky outhouse.

We spent five busy days in the Northwest boarding at mom's house, visiting as many relatives as we could squeeze in. Kim and I paid a visit to her friend Marie. My inoperative City Car sat in her back yard; never to whiz again. We also dropped by 4028 Josh Street to meet with the new renters.

I became a videographer par excellence. My record of nine clips provides an outline of our short stopover:

1. Welcoming at mom's house. Terry, Mom, Peter, Zachary, and Kim in the kitchen; Jim Francis, Char, Jason, Shelley, Frank, Lelia and Johnny in the hallway. Eileen pulling up in front of the house.
2. Mom's front yard. Zachary and Peter talking with baby Johnny.
3. Visit to Florence. Four of us running on a sandy beach.
4. The Oregon coast. Trees, drift-logs, and crashing waves.
5. Picnic at Orchard point. Don John joking with Valerie, kids playing on jungle-jim, Frank leads kids in game of follow-the-leader. They can't manage his back flip.
6. Rafting at Orchard Point. On the rubber raft with Nate, Ben, Zach and Peter, all mugging for the camera.
7. Visiting Zimmermans. Eileen's extravagant hall display and Jennifer's more extreme bedroom wall. Laura and Shannon make an appearance.
8. Visiting Zelens. In the nook with Valerie applying make-up; DJ bearing his awesome chest; Frank and Jimmy chatting; Nathan drawing Garfield; Kim giving Korean-bought underwear to Pam.
9. Leaving Eugene. In the Zelen Driveway, with Joshua, Kyu Nam, Pam, Jeanne waving goodbye to us.

Goodbye treasured family. I thank God for each of you.

# Chapter 17

## REDEPLOYED

July 1984 to June 1988  
Mauston and Tomah, Wisconsin

*He shall eat the fruit of the labor of his hands; he shall be happy,  
and it shall be well with him. His wife will be like a fruitful vine  
within his house; his children will be like olive shoots around his table.*

*(Psalm 128:1-3)*

The four years of my redeployment to Wisconsin were fruitful and happy. I was gainfully employed and physically fit. Kim was pursuing her dream of becoming a professor. Zachary and Peter grew from childhood into adolescence. God was surely blessing my family of four.

### JULY 1984

On July 1, Kim, Zachary, Peter, and I flew at government expense to Minneapolis, Minnesota. Thus, I entered my forty-first state. I rented a car and drove three hours southeast to Fort McCoy. It was a Sunday and after locating my headquarters, I reported with a copy of my orders. I met the adjutant, Don Carlson, who became a friend during my tenure on post.

Fort McCoy, Wisconsin, was situated between Sparta to the west and Tomah to the east. The installation was designed in a large isosceles triangle with parade fields in the center space. Fort McCoy was a mobilization site intended to *expand the base* in case of war. Training took place year-round and a contingent of civilian maintenance workers kept hundreds of vacant barracks in readiness.

I was a soldier in the Army Guard/Reserve (AGR), on *active duty* but not in the *active component*. This sleight of hand was done so that AGR would not count against the end-strength of the active army, then capped at about half a million. The sole function of AGR was to support soldiers in the Army National Guard and Army Reserve.

The Army Reserve Readiness Training Center (ARRTC) was the designated site for all AGR training. Instruction was divided into three teams: Logistics, Personnel/Admin, and Training/Management. As Evaluation Officer, I worked in a small branch of ARRTC called Training Design and Evaluation (TD&E). I was the only uniformed team member in my seven-person branch.

The first weeks were busy getting established. We stayed in guest housing—a mobile home—and I hung on to my rental car. I dropped into my workplace, but Al White, my supervisor, advised me not to occupy my desk until July 5.

Al was a great story teller. He told me he was stationed in Germany in the 1950s and had married a German national whose first husband had been a Nazi officer killed in action. Al explained how he had served twenty years in uniform, then twenty years as a civilian. He added with a sly grin, “I’m just like George Washington. First in war, first in peace, but second in Martha.” That was Al’s humor.

Colonel Smith, the commander of ARRTC, invited my family to a barbeque on Independence Day and that’s when I was introduced to employees of ARRTC, about half military and half civilian. I also met Captain Mary Casey whom I was replacing. I thanked her for the kindness she had shown in corresponding with Kim.

The next day I formally met my work mates at TD&E. Al White sat in a private office as did the clerk steno, Diane Pitel. The rest of us sat in cubicles sectioned off by room dividers. Rose Kimberly sat to my right as my evaluation collaborator. Phil Zeps, Ralf Zielinski, Mike Christianson, and Patrick Houlihan rounded out the second-floor occupants of building 440.

I was permitted to work half days until I fully settled my affairs. I got a good deal on a VW Diesel Rabbit and returned the rental car. For the three Sundays we lived on post, we attended the post chapel. There was no family housing on the installation and most military personnel lived in either Sparta or Tomah.

Kim shared her heart with me. She had made an extraordinary sacrifice in leaving her job, her community, and her friends. She reluctantly followed me to Korea then dutifully back to the States. She had served as the primary breadwinner during our four-year stint in Eugene while I pursued my dream of a PhD. Now it was her turn to dream and my turn to earn money to support her vision. How could I disagree?

Kim’s dream was to enroll at the University of Wisconsin in Madison and earn her own PhD. She suggested the four-year duration of my army tour was just about right. However, Madison was a 120-mile drive from Fort McCoy.

I traveled with her to Madison and she loved the campus. With her MEd from Drury College and two AS degrees in computers she enrolled in the UW College of Education. A new field was opening up called *Educational Technology* which

combined her two passions. It was a perfect fit for her. After she was accepted into the program, we sought out a suitable place for us to live and a reliable car for Kim.

To help with her commute we agreed to live about one-third of the way to Madison along Interstate 90. We settled on the town of Mauston. That would make my daily commute to Fort McCoy about forty miles and Kim's occasional commute to the UW seventy-five miles. She required a dependable car and chose a two-year-old Ford Escort. I desired to accommodate my wife in every way possible.

## MAUSTON

Kim and I conducted an extensive housing search in Mauston. By mid-August, not finding much, we settled for life in a mobile home park. Our address for one year was Route 3, Kouny Aire Estates, Box 36. Forty-five mailboxes were clustered under a shelter at the entrance next to a large pond.

Our unit was only 1100 square feet renting for just \$300 per month. We borrowed kitchen utensils and bedding from the installation pantry and I bought a bunk bed for the boys. When our household goods arrived from Eugene, I had to buy a backyard shed to store overflow items that would not fit into our tiny space.

The trailer was set on an idyllic lot surrounded by oaks and farmland. We purchased a cord of firewood—stacked against the aluminum siding—to augment space heaters. The structure was a bit worn and shabby. Our single toilet sunk into the floorboard and a few windows didn't shut tight, but we accepted our situation as transitional. In any event, Kim focused on academics not home life and I was an army man; primitive suited me. Looking back years later, Peter couldn't believe we lived for a whole year in a trailer.

We checked out the Mauston Assembly of God, but the church lacked young people. We then visited the Tomah AG and found a home. We both liked Pastor Gast; many couples like us were in their mid-thirties; and there was an abundance of children.

I remember attending an ARRTC planning session. Colonel Smith chaired the group while Frank Struble, the Director of Training, moderated. Al White sat next to me. The colonel introduced me as the new Evaluation Officer and began to stress the importance of evaluation. After a few minutes of generalities, I raised my hand and impertinently asked, "And how are classes being evaluated now? How do you distinguish between good and bad instruction?"

Mr. Struble looked at Mr. White. Both hemmed and hawed. Finally, the colonel broke in to say, "There is no classroom evaluation at the moment. We studied your resume and hoped you could develop something. That's why we invited you to this meeting."

I then waxed elegant, speaking of my love for statistics. I emphasized the importance of objective and measurable criteria. I spoke of evaluation as both the means of setting a standard and then assessing its accomplishment. My passion caught the group by surprise.

The colonel, the director, and my chief were impressed. Colonel Smith remarked, “The fiscal year begins in six weeks, October first. Can you have an objective and measurable evaluation system in place by then?”

Al White spoke in my behalf. “Yes sir, we can. I’ll put Captain Foreman and Rose Kimberly on it right away.” On the way out the door, Al slapped me on the back. “Way to go. Now get to work.”

In August I discovered the Fitness Center. With the proximity of my workplace to the military gym, I determined to whip myself into shape by noon time workouts. Over the summer, we attended a few army picnics and made a trip to Wisconsin Dells where the boys enjoyed the amusement park rides.

Soon it was time for school to start. We enrolled the boys at Westside Elementary, Zachary in third grade and Peter in first. When I first visited their classroom, I entered from the back. I located my sons right away. Their hair was black. All other students were either blond or brown-haired. In fact, my boys were the only minorities in their classrooms. Most others were of German or Scandinavian extraction.

Kim began her commute to Madison. She planned the first term in a way that she only commuted on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. After making acquaintance with the campus and students, she began staying overnight in Madison once a week. I supported her as best I could.

I didn’t want Zachary and Peter to miss out on pets, but neither Kim nor I had a fondness for dogs or cats. I decided upon hamsters. The first time Peter heard this word, he said, “Oysters? You’re going to get us oysters for pets?” Soon, Zachary was playing with Big Mac and Pete with Blackie. These two rodents kept the boys occupied for a few years.

Television kept the boys entranced. For the first time we were hooked up to cable TV—with 60 channels. Saturday morning meant *Smurfs*, *Muppet Babies*, and *Chipmunks*. The boys were singing all their theme songs.

A few months after arriving in Wisconsin, I visited the installation dentist. He gave my teeth a thorough looking over. Then he closed my mouth and shook his head, as one might slam the hood of a car when the engine had blown. He said nearly all my teeth were flattened through bruxism and he recommended I have all but four of them crowned. On September 7 the ARRTC adjutant submitted an official request for the four-month treatment.

Over the following months, I traveled forty miles to the Gunderson Clinic in La Crosse, Wisconsin. First, I underwent major gum surgery. I lost ten pounds, unable to eat. Then when my gums had healed, a specialist filed down twenty teeth into stubs. I wore plastic teeth for a while until my permanent crowns were cemented into place. The total cost was \$7,206.70 which the Army covered. I received a thank you letter from Dr. Drago, DDS, for my “excellent cooperation throughout the course of your prosthodontic treatment”. I loved the result, but the process was long and painful.

Before October first, Rose and I completed an Instructor Evaluation for each of the twelve courses offered by ARRTC. I had a lot of fun developing this one-page two-sided evaluation form. It was a skill I had acquired at the University of Oregon and I excelled at it.

The classroom evaluation was broken into three parts: instructor’s presentation (nine statements), course content (eight statements), and classroom environment (three statements). For each of the twenty statements, students marked one of five check boxes; five points for *agree very much* down to one point for *disagree very much*. There were four open-ended responses. Five options times twenty questions meant a perfect score was one hundred.

The director of training marveled at the simplicity of the evaluations and insisted instructors distribute them at the end of every class. The form was intuitive for teachers and enlightening for their supervisors. Most of my work hours were taken up in grading evaluations, plotting results on a grid, and awarding each instructor with an overall class grade. Within three months I had become an indispensable and well-respected part of the ARRTC team.

Kim thrived in her academic environment. From a friend in Madison, she bought an IBM Portable Personal Computer. The bulky machine weighed about thirty pounds; so rather than *portable* people called it *luggable*. She lugged it to campus while I lugged it into and out of the trunk of her Escort. We attached a dot-matrix printer and soon she was printing out her college assignments from home. Kim spent hours a day in intensive home study.

Autumn in that part of the world was spectacular. Surrounding oaks, maples, and sumacs turned from green into a palette of red and yellow. On October 14, I set up the video camera to record the first annual *leaf catching contest*. In the midst of a dozen tall trees, a golden leaf would float downward every few seconds. I recorded Kim and the boys as they scurried trying to catch a leaf before it drifted onto the grass. They placed a few legitimate leaves into the bucket before I noticed the unauthorized stuffing of surface leaves.

As the weather turned cold, I wanted Zachary and Peter to learn a new sport. The town of New Lisbon lay down the road a few miles and I enrolled them there in a gymnastics class. I video-taped their antics as they practiced floor exercise, pommel horse, and parallel bars. That activity only lasted to the end of the year.

With the frequent snow came a variety of outdoor activities. The Korea-purchased snowsuits became invaluable that first winter in Wisconsin. Snowball fights occurred nearly every time we left the house and an on-going, always morphing, snowman graced a side yard. It also seemed that every family in the trailer court owned a snowmobile. Our neighbor tied a rope to the back of his machine and pulled my kids on a round sled until frost nipped their noses. Kounty Aire Estates made for ideal snowmobiling.

A few days before Christmas, Kim was baking cookies in the oven. She twisted the dough into various shapes. The boys formed dough into letters that spelled their names. Munching their delicious names was a memorable way to shelter on a dark, cold, winter day.

For Christmas, the boys received mostly transformers—large and small. Kim bought herself a rice maker, and I bought a bargain-basement snowmobile. The seller admitted the engine was shot, so he only charged me fifty dollars. I figured I could drive it one winter and if the family enjoyed snowmobiling, I could repair it over the summer. We drove it un-licensed and off-road five or six times before the engine conked out.

I debuted our snowmobile on Christmas afternoon. The sun shone bright on the fallow cornfield next door. Each of us motored the machine over acres of foot deep snow. Kim puttered; Peter thrilled at full throttle; Zachary raced around the perimeter; while I videotaped. What a memorable Christmas day it was!

Of course, December 31 was the last day of 1984. It also marked the close of the first quarter of the military year. I had a big job ahead of me: create the first ever *Quarterly Evaluation Report* for ARRTC.

## 1985

I believed my biggest contribution to ARRTC was my *Quarterly Report*. With the help of Rose Kimberley and newly-hired Rose Prell, I churned out fifteen of these volumes over the course of four years at Fort McCoy. Each report was a collation and distillation of the twelve ARRTC courses. Some of these courses were offered ten times per quarter and others just once.

Al White joked I was the thorn who sat between the two Roses. We three worked our tails off to complete the first Quarterly Report before the end of January, which looked back upon training during October-November-December 1984. Our efficient stenographer, Diane Pitel, typed out a polished fifty-page report taken from handwritten notes interspersed with pasted student comments.

The *Quarterly Report* provided the basis upon which fifteen military instructors and fifteen civilian instructors were evaluated. Colonel Smith met with Rose, Rose, and me in Al's office to congratulate us for such an outstanding product. I asked Diane to join us to get her share of the accolades.

I was summoned into Al's office a few weeks later for a scolding. Rose Kimberly was standing at his side. Al explained that her position was the civilian counterpart of mine. We were equals, yet I had treated her as a subordinate. Al said "You're acting like a college professor treating Rose like your graduate assistant." I agreed; apologized to Rose; and strove to become more collaborative in the future.

I did teach a few workshops for ARRTC instructors. The method at that time required an overhead projector and a stack of eight-inch by ten-inch acrylic transparencies. It was a good system. The slides were easy for teachers to create on a copy machine and easy for students to read on bright white screens.

On a snowy day in January, I received a phone call from a hospital in Middleton, near Madison. Kim had been involved in a car accident. I grabbed the boys and rushed to her bedside. The good news was that Kim had only received superficial bruising. The bad news involved her Ford Escort which she had totaled. As Kim explained, she was driving down a steep hill slick with ice. She braked as best she could, but the car slid and rammed into a stop sign, then a utility pole before coming to a halt. She was not issued a driving citation, but we did pay \$120 for a new stop sign. On all subsequent drives to campus, she would point out that stop sign as her own.

Kim was anxious to buy a replacement car and acquired a Dodge Omni for \$1000 from a university acquaintance. Just after that, the weather turned bitterly cold and the Omni refused to start, even with a heating pad on the engine. I couldn't assist much because my diesel Rabbit proved difficult to start in sub-zero temperatures.

Fortunately, the seller of the Omni felt sorry for Kim and returned the money after she had returned the car. Since I had a good job and she had a long commute, we decided to buy our first new car. It was Kim's choice. She decided upon a 1985 Pontiac Sunbird, purchased for \$6000 at a Mauston dealership. My wife loved her new red vehicle and hung onto it for seven years.

Bone-chilling winter months continued. I bought a second cord of wood to feed the pot belly stove. My habit was to fire it up before bedtime and let it burn until morning. Confined to the warm interior of the trailer, my family developed our own entertainment. After a church party, I brought home three helium balloons and asked my boys, "Do you want to see me talk like Mickey Mouse?" I gulped down half a balloon, and my voice sounded adolescent. After the second

dose, Kim and the boys wondered at the magical effect. My video shows Zachary and Peter in high-pitched laughter.

In February, Zachary joined the Cub Scouts. He liked the blue uniform and snacks, but there was not enough to hold his interest. He earned a few awards but when we left Mauston, he was done with Scouts. Peter's uniform remained the multi-zippered Michael Jackson jacket we had purchased for him in Korea.

As a member of the AGR, I was obliged to attend ARRTC training. From March 11 to 15, I attended the Basic Supervisory Development Course. I could see why Captain Jon Robinett and SFC Mike Wilson earned such high marks in evaluations.

Over Spring break, my family drove the Sunbird to Virginia. We paused along the route in Whiting to meet with Shelley and Chris Walker. They were surely growing up. At Hyun Ok's house were gathered Halmoni with five of her six children. Kim had such a great time, talking and eating with her mom, two sisters and two brothers. She loved to be around her family as much as I enjoyed being around my own.

After that morning church service, I used my video camera in support of a university project for my wife. She was to conduct a special project for a childhood development class. She suggested we video-tape Peter as he performed tasks, then ask him to relate what he had done. I had hidden five Easter eggs which he then went on to discover. I video-taped him as he rummaged for the eggs then explained where he had found them. The project turned out great. Unfortunately, her professor didn't like Peter's cuteness as much as we did.

After her first school year ended, Kim focused on buying real estate. She told me that since she could stay overnight in Madison, a longer commute was okay. Her house-hunting centered in Tomah. I figured that whatever property met her standard, would also meet mine. I trusted her judgment.

We celebrated Zachary's tenth birthday in Mauston. A lot of kids lived in Kounty Aire Estates and the trailer was packed. After the party, the boys performed karaoke on the front lawn. I laid down cardboard as a stage, posting a sign "Putting on the hits". I video recorded the boys as they sang Chipmunk songs. Zachary performed *Greatest American Hero*, while Peter lip-synced *Fame-I'm Gonna Live Forever*.

## TOMAH

We purchased a house in Tomah on June 2 for \$47,000. The address was Route 1, Box 272. I loved this place. At 2500 square-foot with five levels, our new home rested on an acre of land. The rural house was supplied with well-water, a propane tank, and a septic system. The first floor of the split-level home was a two-car garage, which stepped up into a lower bedroom and utility room, which

then stepped up into the main floor—kitchen, living room, and dining room with enclosed back patio. A stairway then led up to two bedrooms above the garage. We also had a full unfurnished basement with oversized furnace. Adding the garage, basement, and patio, our actual living space was about 4000 square feet. A patriot must have occupied the house before us because a pole with hoisted American flag flew in the breeze just outside the front door.

We scrounged \$5000 of our own money and I borrowed \$10,000 from my co-worker, Rose Kimberley. She offered and I accepted. We maintained a close personal yet professional relationship. Rose was recently divorced with a small child and—I think—attracted to me. I once asked her, “So many men are asking you out to dinner. What kind of guy are you looking for?”

“A man just like you, but not married,” was her response. Kim and I made a point to repay Rose’s loan over the next year. We also carried a \$32,000 mortgage from a local bank.

We celebrated Peter’s birthday a day late, because I was in the woods on an army exercise. On June 22, Kim baked Peter a chocolate cake with the words, “Just for You”. His big gift was a much-desired boom box. I had purchased the cheapest Chinese product at Walmart. After he inserted batteries and a cassette tape, he ran with it outside. As he dashed across the lawn, the handle pulled loose in his grip. I felt bad. He was old enough and worthy enough. I should have bought my special son something special.

On July first I received the best Officer Evaluation Report (OER) I had ever received. Al White wrote this:

Within 30 days of assignment, Captain Foreman developed a unique comprehensive evaluation plan for both resident and decentralized courses. He designed and developed seven surveys which measure student learning. He trained his subordinates so well that they are preparing the Third Quarter Report with minimum guidance while he is working on a FORSECOM IRR Study. He was not required to instruct any classes but did perform on-site evaluations of nine decentralized classes. On numerous occasions he demonstrated his ability to address senior officers to outline the ARRTC Evaluation Plan

Mr. Struble wrote:

Captain Foreman is an educator. He excels at detail work and enjoys innovation. He has done a superb job at applying his extensive background to real world problems. I am confident that his clear input, abilities to quantify the seemingly unquantifiable, and courage to stand up for what he considers correct will continue to serve ARRTC well in the future. This officer’s potential for future development knows no limitations.

Colonel Smith wrote:

Captain Foreman has performed his duties as evaluation officer in an excellent manner. He developed a comprehensive program to evaluate the totality of ARRTC functions. The evaluation has proved to be an excellent vehicle for making needed changes in curriculum and operating procedures across the board. His expertise in this area, in my view, is unsurpassed in any TRADOC service school. He would make an excellent staff officer at MACOM level.

The summer passed warmly as we adjusted to our new house. I bought a bicycle and began to bike into work every second day. The distance was about ten miles and took me about forty minutes. I kept up my bicycle commute as long as we lived in Tomah.

The city of Tomah sponsored swim teams and Kim drove the boys downtown most every summer day. Our city was growing. Two establishments of note opened their doors about the same time we bought our house. At the crossroads of Highway 21 and Interstate 94, a Walmart held its grand opening. Next, a few blocks away a new McDonald's debuted. We had the essentials of civilization just out our front door.

With Kim busy in summer school, I determined to take Zachary and Peter on a road trip across America. I switched cars with Kim and drove the Pontiac north to Minneapolis, then northwest to Fargo, North Dakota. I thus gained my forty-second state. We drove along Interstate 94, stopping to gaze at herds of buffalo and the Little Big Horn battleground.

At one of the fuel stops, we grabbed fast food. Peter noted our soft drinks and quipped: "How come you're a dad, but you drink Squirt; and I'm a squirt but I drink Dad's?" I could only smile at my son's wit.

With only two week's leave, the road trip was rushed. We stayed a few days in Longview, a few in Eugene, and then returned home along Interstate 90. I enjoyed the time cooped together with my two boys. Kim was happy to have few weeks to focus on her school work then even happier to get her red car back.

As school began after Labor Day, Zachary and Peter attended Lemonweir Elementary. The boys caught a yellow school bus at a nearby corner. They could always wait to the last moment. The bus roared on a street behind our house before looping to the school bus stop. The roaring bus was their signal to stop whatever they were doing to rush to the corner.

Kim also got into a rhythm at the University of Wisconsin. Her usual schedule was to sleep at home five nights a week, leaving for Madison on Tuesday morning and returning on Thursday night. She was determined, telling me of her exploits, staying overnight with classmates and sleeping on couches. Her oddest experience was spending one night on a couch sacked out next to a large snake in a terrarium.

The boys flourished in Tomah, riding bikes, shooting basketballs into the driveway hoop, and throwing footballs across the extensive lawn. They also built their own go-carts, using wheels from wagons and carts. They roped wooden planks and other objects to assemble their creations.

I also made a project of our basement. It had naked concrete walls and floor. I installed paneling and carpeting with the boys providing some help. We moved our old plaid couch, chair, and ottoman downstairs while Kim bought a new blue sofa for our upstairs living room. We kept the TV in the basement to create a playroom for the boys. In cold months, a kerosene heater kept the subterranean space warm.

Our family faithfully attended the Assembly of God, just a few miles away. I began to lead a Sunday School class focusing on the Gospel of John. On the drive home we passed a few family restaurants. On most Sunday afternoons, we stopped to treat ourselves and the boys.

After the first frost, I decided the time was opportune to unload my diesel Rabbit. I hadn't known when I bought this car that diesel fuel and extreme cold don't mix. I purchased a new Chevy Sprint for \$7000. This Suzuki-made hatchback ran on three cylinders and got about fifty MPG. I drove this gas-saver for about six years.

Soon after I bought my Sprint, the temperature dipped below zero degrees Fahrenheit. I was thankful both Kim and I operated new cars on cold nights and slippery roads. Snow was plentiful and Zachary and Peter helped to keep the sidewalk and driveway clear.

In early December, a thirty-six-hour blizzard dropped three feet of white fluff. Work and school were shut down while plows cleared the roadway. The boys loved trudging in waist-deep snow and equally loved returning to the house to defrost. Kim enjoyed play-acting with Zachary and Peter. In one instance, Pete acted as a quiz-show host and Kim as the contestant. Another time numerous stuffed toys conducted a skit for Kim and me.

Without an extended family and with a few feet of snow on the ground, Christmas was a home-bound family affair. Kim and I both relished this cozy holiday season and thanked God for His grace showered upon us.

## 1986

We marked the new year of 1986 in our refurbished basement. I video-taped the moment as Zachary and Peter whooped it up. We began our tradition of making New Year's resolutions patterned after Luke 2:52: "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." Each of us told of our plans to grow mentally, physically, spiritually, and socially.

I acted on one aspect of my resolution and began to spend more time at the fitness center. I informed my co-workers this was not *time off* from work. Rather, since the army required me to stay fit, it was indeed my work. My effort paid off as I maxed the army PT test three times with eighty-plus push-ups, one-hundred plus sit-ups, and a sub-sixteen-minute two-mile run. I joined a fitness program called *Run for your life*, jogging five miles distance three times a week. I logged my miles on paper and earned six patches all the way to 750 miles.

I was working in my cubicle on January 28, when Rose interrupted my concentration. She said one of the space shuttles had exploded. The folks in TD&E gathered around a TV to watch news about Challenger, a rocket that had broken apart 73 seconds into its flight, killing all seven crew members aboard. The death of Christa McAuliffe was especially sad because she had been all over the news as the first school teacher in space.

In February, Zachary and Peter joined Bible Quizzing, a national program sponsored by the Assembly of God denomination. Kids from our church would compete against kids from another AG church. The competition included a briefcase with three push-down buzzers for each team.

At ten and eight, my boys were *Junior Bible Quizzers*. I bought a pack of one-thousand flash cards. White cards were easy (10 points); Pink was medium (20 points); and Blue was difficult (30 points). During a contest, a judge would read a card question and a competitor would hit the buzzer.

We fielded a team of five, Zachary specializing in thirty pointers, many of which were quotation questions. Peter specialized in ten pointers. We practiced a week before our first competition against a church in Sparta. Peter was quick-handed but lacked confidence. He proved to be a premier quizzer:

Reader: "Question one for ten points. 'What giant ...' [buzz] Interruption Red Three."

Peter: "'What giant did David kill?' Answer, 'Goliath.'"

Reader: "Ten points for Red Team."

Later in February, we drove up to Minneapolis to see the magic of the Ice Palace. We walked through ice cathedrals, watched blocks of ice being chiseled into human form, and voted for our favorite ice animal. The boys had a wonderful afternoon throwing snowballs clad in snow suits—Zachary now promoted to Kim's and Peter to Zach's.

About this time, the AIDS epidemic began to impact the military. All service members had to attend lectures and be tested for HIV. I was found negative just before my departure to Fort Belvoir. For two weeks in March, I attended my EOAC (Engineer Officer Advanced Course). I dropped by Woodbridge to visit Michael, Hyun Ok, James, and a new addition to the family, Megan.

With Kim away in Madison three days of the week, much child-rearing devolved to me. I enjoyed an exceptional closeness to my sons. The kid's school schedule worked out well. As the yellow bus pulled away, I headed into Fort McCoy. The same bus dropped them back home about four and I was home by five. At nearly eleven, Zachary was mature enough to monitor his little brother during my one-hour absence.

At Lemonweir Elementary, Zachary performed as a magician doing magic acts with a pair of twins. His teacher was Miss Elmlade. Peter roared in a school play as a lion resplendent with a yellow construction-paper mane.

Soon it was summer and we embarked on another vacation to Virginia. Kim was delighted to see her first niece, Megan King, who was just a few months old. My sons were big fans of the World Wrestling Federation (WWF) and called the baby girl Megan King Kong Bundy, referencing an overweight, oversized wrestler. Her dad was not amused. Likewise, we were not amused by Mike's treatment of James. We witnessed a continual battle of wills and subsequent punishments.

After a few days we headed home, stopping off first at the Gettysburg Battlefield where the boys climbed over the many Civil-War era cannons. We then paused in Whiting. Don Zelen was hanging out with his mother and two sisters at Forsyth Park. We joined the picnic which included Jeanne, Nate and Ben along with Don and Sue Davis.

I had been in conversation with Pastor Gast since the first of the year. He and I had met privately with Zachary and Peter to talk about following Jesus through baptism. Both of my sons understood the significance and seriousness of this Christian commitment. On June 1, 1986, Pastor Gast immersed in water Zachary and Peter in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Kim and I rejoiced that Zachary and Peter, who were born into our natural family, had been promoted into God's heavenly family as well.

On July first, I received my second Officer Evaluation Report from ARRTC. It was just as positive as the first one, addressing in glowing terms my accomplishments in classroom evaluation. Frank Struble's first sentence read, "Captain Foreman is an educator." That was true. However, he made little mention of soldierly qualities like leadership or military bearing. Perhaps he recognized me as a professor in an ill-fitted uniform. If so, his perception was correct.

Colonel Smith mentioned “He thrives on innovation”. This was also true. However, after two years in my position, drudgery was replacing innovating. I continued to go through the motions at work, but I was looking for alternative outlets of expression.

I returned to Bible memorization and explored philosophy. I learned that Greek philosophy was divided into five parts; Metaphysics, Ethics, Aesthetics, Politics, and Logic. I looked into all these corners, especially metaphysics and more specifically questions of cosmogony—the origins of the universe.

My brother Frank was stationed in San Antonio when Joshua came alone to visit for a few weeks. He fit in well with Zachary and Peter and provided a spark to produce imaginative skits. The three boys would stand behind the basement couch with stuffed animals and other props, voicing and acting various roles. I filmed many of these plays, most notably *Riddle Me*.

Kim and I fellowshipped with many couples from church especially parents of Bible Quizzers. Many invited us to luncheons and in turn we invited them to picnics in our backyard. Their faces remain a cherished memory, even as their names have vanished into mist.

At the end of August, I asked the boys to mow our extensive lawn. Zachary did the back and Peter the sides and front. One of my favorite videos is of Peter struggling to push the gas mower through the high grass. Then on Labor Day we hosted a picnic with twenty adults and kids in attendance. Frisbees and footballs flew through the air as adults knocked croquet balls through hoops on the newly mowed lawn.

Soon school was back in session. Once again, Kim was making the long drive to Madison and the boys were catching their yellow school bus. Zachary entered fifth grade; Peter third. We also re-engaged with Bible quizzing, this time as coaches. We had enough kids to break up into two teams. Peter was on the Hawks and Zachary on the Eagles. Together our teams were termed the *Birds of Pray*.

I had known for a while that Frank and Lelia were planning to adopt a newborn child. In September, I learned their adoption agency had contacted them about a baby boy in El Paso, Texas. They flew out, fell in love with the guy, and brought David Carver home the next week. A month later the adoption agency called them again, informing them a two-year-old girl was available. So Amber was adopted in October. I marveled at hearts so spacious.

When I spoke with Lelia, she told me the adoptions stood as a pro-life statement. Both babies were conceived in rape and were biracial. The two might have been aborted because such babies were deemed “un-adoptable”. When I spoke with Frank, he told me he had adopted Amber so David would have a sibling that looked like him and so they could have a daughter that talked.

Also in September, Kim decided to fix her teeth. For years she had been self-conscious of her smile, because her two front teeth crowded in on each other. She told me the deformity happened when her wisdom teeth grew in at about twenty. I sat in a waiting room in Madison as all four wisdom teeth were extracted in one procedure. She hurt for a week and I called her *chipmunk* because of her swollen jaws. A month later, she was fitted with braces to realign her upper bite. She had them in her mouth—on and off—for a few years.

In October, we attended a harvest festival at church, an alternative to the excesses of Halloween. We dressed as historical characters and carved a large pumpkin. One of my favorite photos portrays Halloween as it transpires in Wisconsin. The large jack-o-lantern on our front step, collapsed with age, sat encrusted in a heavy layer of snow.

In November, Kim became overburdened with college work. She had been writing hundreds of pages per month with me serving as her initial editor. Two weeks before Christmas, on the final day of the semester, she had to pass a preliminary examination on the road to her doctorate. To inject humor into her anxiety, I made a video documentary titled “Basket Case”. Kim’s stress extended over the holidays because she did not learn she had passed her prelim until the following year.

At Christmas, I video recorded the recitation of gifts. Peter got a megaphone with programmed tunes. His favorite was *Dixie* as played on *The Dukes of Hazard*. Zachary got a wooden chess set and his usual Almanac. Kim peddled on a new stationary bicycle; and I listed off five Christmas books: *The Joyful Christian*; *The Visionary Christian*; *Space, Time and Gravity*; *Einstein’s Space and Van Gough’s Sky*; and *In Search of Schrödinger’s Cat*.

## 1987

Kim, Zachary, Peter and I waited in the basement for the arrival of 1987. Pete stood on his head at the transitional moment and boasted, “See, I can stand on my head for a year!” He then played “Auld Lang Syne” on his megaphone. Zachary clasped and unclasped the hand cuffs he had received for Christmas as I planted a kiss on my beautiful wife.

In the depth of dark and cold, I developed a twilight game. “Let’s get the stink blowed off,” I told the boys. All four of us bundled up, rushed to the street, and took turns booting an old soccer ball. We counted the total kicks for a quarter mile down an icy road all the way to the Interstate 90 underpass. The back and forth usually took about thirty-five kicks as we flailed at the ball for half an hour.

In late January, Kim arrived home from the optometrist with three pairs of glasses. She had to pick one pair and return the other two. I suggested I videotape her modeling each pair. She giggled as she donned the first, but by the third her entrepreneurial mind kicked in, “Really. You could make money doing this. It’s a good idea.”

Video games were becoming popular and prices were falling. I bought the boys a Mattel Electronics Intellivision. I was never good at such hand-eye coordination, but the boys and their friends spent hours in the basement playing games like *Burger Time*, *Tetris*, and *Centipede*.

My work at ARRTC continued its rhythm of weekly classroom evaluations. Monday was a day of gathering and sorting for classes completed in the previous week. Tuesday and Wednesday were compilation and composition days. On Thursdays, we gave our drafts to Diane for typing. On Fridays, we'd return corrected copy to Diane and by noon pass our reports up to Al for outward distribution.

In March Colonel Smith spoke to me about a special assignment from which he had just returned. He confided he was one of five colonels to sit on an AGR continuation board. He joked that when my name appeared for consideration, he urged his peers to approve it on the strength of his own strong recommendation.

Zachary sang and acted in a school play called *You Can't Trust Boys* and recited a book report about parachutist Roger Reynolds, who fell 3,600 feet from the sky and later ran in the Boston Marathon. At my urging, Peter joined the Cub Scouts just long enough to receive a Bear badge. Over six months, he was active, then excited, then apathetic, then absent.

Over Easter, our church hosted a traveling Passion Play. About a dozen actors performed on stage the events of Good Friday and Easter. A charismatic twenty-year-old portrayed the figure of Christ crucified to a cross. A few days after Easter I learned that the sixteen-year-old daughter of a church elder had run off with *Jesus*. It was a scandal.

The area was ideally suited for bicycle forays into the hinterland. Monroe County, Wisconsin, was on the boundary of continental glaciation. I'd leave my house in rolling farmland and soon pass by rocky landforms which were created by ancient moving ice. I began to fancy myself a bicyclist and so purchased a fancy bike for four hundred dollars—a lightweight and teal-colored *Trek*. I peddled my mountain bike nearly every day.

In late April I traveled to Virginia to complete my EOAC. My certificate read, "Be it known that Captain Chris A. Foreman has successfully completed the Engineer Officer Advanced Course and is therefore entitled to receive this diploma. Given at Fort Belvoir, Virginia this 8<sup>th</sup> day of May, 1987."

In late May, I bought a plane ticket for my mom to visit us. I hadn't seen her in two years. Mom flew into Minneapolis where we picked her up. She sat in on a Bible quiz meet, sang with us in church, and peeked in at my work place. I felt it important that she recognized her fifth child was healthy, successful, and faithful.

Joshua dropped by for a second summer both to escape the stress of his home in San Antonio (two babies and a special-needs sister) and to frolic with his

cousins. Once again, I video-taped their skits including, “Riddle Me Two”. Joshie-squashie, as he was known, also taught my sons some tricks on their video games.

In July the health of my supervisor, Al White, deteriorated. One afternoon he summoned the second floor into his office to announce he suffered from terminal cancer and was retiring that same day. ARRTC held a party for him the next week but he was too weak to enjoy it.

Oscar Wilson replaced Al as chief of TD&E. To make his mark, he changed procedures and rewrote manuals. Oscar asked me to remove a Korean-made name board that sat on my desk: “Dr. Chris A. Foreman, PhD”. Kim had bought the plaque for me in Korea, but Oscar said instructors considered it off-putting. We butted heads to the discomfort of us both. My champion, Colonel Smith, also moved on and my job satisfaction sank.

The farmland area around our house was set off in rectangular grids. Kim and I got into the evening habit of biking these squares. One day with me in the lead, her hat began to blow off; she reached to straighten it; and she crashed to the ground. Kim was shaken and bruised. I drove her to the emergency room and she returned with bandages on her hand and knee.

Doyle and Rita from church became regular visitors. I was a mentor for him. Doyle video-taped my family of four cruising past our rural home. We also biked with church friends on the Elroy-Sparta State Trail. The sign read: “This 37-mile state trail was formerly the mainline of the Chicago and Northwestern Railway. The conversion from rail to trail represented a new concept in recreational development.” As summertime bikers, we especially enjoyed the cooling tunnels.

When the school year began in September of 1987, I enrolled Zachary and Peter at Crossroads Christian Academy. The two sat in the same classroom. It wasn't that I was unhappy with the public school, but I wanted to rear my sons in the “fear and admonition of God”. Zachary now had the opportunity to participate in soccer and basketball, although Peter had to wait a while.

With a mix of philosophical and Christian fervor, I began to write articles in defense of seven-day special creation. One was published in *Omni Magazine* and a few others in Christian periodicals. I bought for my own use my first personal computer: an IBM AT.

With my army tour at the three-year mark, Kim recognized she had just one more school-year to complete her doctoral studies at the University of Wisconsin. She threw herself into researching and writing. Sometimes she was away seven straight days, renting a small room at a woman's house named Molly. I explained

to the kids we were *batching it*. Zachary, Peter, and I drove down to campus about once a month to encourage her.

Seasons of life happened around me in the month of October. Jennifer Zimmerman married Jeff Brotherton; Debbie Necker divorced Denny; and Al White passed away. I attended his funeral and spoke words of tribute. He once complemented me, saying my calm religious demeanor reminded him of his own father.

My sons remained active in Bible quizzing. Zachary was now a senior Bible quizzier focusing on books of the Bible rather than flash cards. He was responsible for mastering chapters 1, 5, 10 and 13 of the Book of Hebrews. My video recorded his reciting all of chapter one: “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by a Son.”

At one Bible quiz meet Kim’s integrity was sorely tested. She had intended to be a mere spectator, but was coaxed into being a judge. This meant she sat with quiz officials to consult if a child’s response was in doubt. As it turned out, Peter hit the buzzer first and responded to a quotation question. Was it word-for-word exact? As I looked at my son and my wife, I could see she was in agony. Should she rule for him or against him? Unfortunately, Peter lost his thirty-pointer.

My family remained active in church. Pastor Gast retired from his position and the Tomah Assembly of God elected Jimmy Blake as his replacement. As a deacon of the church, he was not my first choice, but on the night of the vote, I was on military duty. Some of his changes were good; He invigorated the youth group. However, others were divisive; His wife took over as worship leader. Zachary and Peter took part in a Christmas play, donning the customary bathrobes as Biblical costume.

I recall two notable car rides to church. Once we left the house, me driving and Kim to my right. The backseat boys would not stop bickering. I stopped the car once and scolded, making them sit staring out their respective windows. But then they went at it again, hitting and screaming. I got so angry, I pulled into the Walmart lot, grabbed each boy and whopped him on the butt. People began to stare. I told my wife. “Let’s go home. This is not the proper spirit to attend church”.

On another occasion, as we were returning from church, I noticed a state trooper close behind me. This was just at the time when a federal seat belt mandate was put in place. I said, “Okay everyone. There’s a cop behind us. Buckle up.”

The cop pulled me over and said, “I appreciate that you put your seat belt on, but that law isn’t enforced yet in Wisconsin. However, I did see you swerve. Please drive safe.” Then he let us go. We were pretty good about seat belts after that.

Halmoni dropped by for a few weeks over Christmastime and we celebrated her fifty-ninth birthday. She became a dumpling-making machine. Kim was happy with home cooking, but after every meal of kimchi, she had to pick vegetable fragments from

her braces. For my thirty-eighth birthday, I bought myself a CD Player—my first. I also bought a few classical CDs. After hearing the quality of sound and recognizing the simplicity of the disc, my 180 cassette tapes suddenly became obsolete. My obsession over the next year was to replace my classical cassette collection with equivalent CDs.

This is the New Year's letter I mailed out on December 30:

Dear Family and Friends, I have discovered anew tradition: the sending out of New Year's cards! Actually, the tradition is a cover-up born of procrastination. I always approach the year's end with a mixture of thankfulness and hope; thankful to God for looking over our family for the year past, and hope that the year to come will bring us closer to His Son whose birth we celebrate during this season.

The year, 1987, has been good to us. I have been busy at work, evaluating army training. My evenings have been spent writing articles about God's Special Creation, and even getting a few published. Last April I was elected deacon, and have been involved in Junior Bible Quizzing (Peter), Senior Bible Quizzing (Zachary), and Wednesday Bible Study (first Job, now the parables). All this keeps me hopping. My army tour ends in June and in a few months, I should know where our next home will be. We ask your prayers to continue in God's will.

Kim has led a dual existence over the past year, living two days in Madison as a scholar and five in Tomah as a wife/mother/worrier. She enjoys the challenge and looks forward to the fruit of her effort, a PhD in Educational Technology. If things go as planned, she should be finished just before we move. Our church supports two junior Bible Quiz teams. Kim coaches the Eagles, and I coach the Hawks. This is an extra-joyful time since Kim's mother is visiting with us for a couple of weeks.

Zachary and Peter continue to grow and continue to be a source of joy in our family. At Crossroads Christian Academy, both are in the same classroom. They have enjoyed their 2-week Christmas break, but the boys are ready to return to school. Zach has played soccer and basketball, but Pete has to wait a while yet. They received a Nintendo video machine and have played Super Mario Brothers non-stop for the past several days. Zach also got a water bed, though both sleep in it. Both are doing well in school and in Bible studying. Thanks for all the cards and gifts you sent to us. We love you all. A belated Merry Christmas and happy New Year. ~ May your life be a sermon.

## 1988 TO JUNE

In early January an old friend dropped by the house for a visit. I hadn't seen Jim McGuire since my Peace Corps years. He hung out with us for a week, visiting local sights and talking about old times in Korea. To my sons he became *Uncle Meng*. Later in January, I sat through another one-week ARRTC course.

Kim was home for her thirty-seventh birthday. She bought herself an upgraded computer, selling the IBM luggable. Her favorite moments occurred when her two sons presented her with gifts. They hopped around in excitement as she pulled away the wrapping paper. Then they squirmed with joy as she embraced them in a hug. Approaching thirteen, Zachary was just about her height with a voice at the yodeling stage.

The boys were still involved with Bible quiz and at times it proved difficult to induce them to study. Peter would sometimes hide under the table as we practiced a handful of flash cards. Zachary was better. Yet I had to sit him in the quiet living room and put the Hebrews study guide in his hand. During a competition in La Crosse, Zachary *quizzed out*, that is he correctly answered five questions and a team mate had to take his chair.

Pastor Blake's two boys were about the same age as my two. Sometimes they would come by the house to play video games indoors and play two-on-two football in the back yard. It was fun to watch as they made up rules on the fly. The strategy of the two older boys was to win the game without making the two younger boys cry.

I was into Special Creation in a big way, becoming a member of the Institute of Creation Research. I was invited to speak at a forum sponsored by the University of Wisconsin-Platteville. A Jesuit priest spoke about Darwinian evolution as proven fact, not worthy of debate. He blessed science and belittled Scripture. Then it was my turn to take the podium. Zachary was on hand to flip transparencies on an overhead projector.

One hundred people fell silent as I mounted a rigorous defense of Special Creation. I didn't think they expected my strident words. I compared side-by-side the two models of Evolution and Creation along ten lines of argument:

1. Continuity – continuous process or discontinuous episodes?
2. Cosmogony – natural or supernatural?
3. Thermodynamics – creative/upward or conserving/downward?
4. Biogenesis – inevitable or impossible?
5. Probability – favors life or hostile to life?
6. Design – secondary or primary?
7. Mutations – helpful or harmful?

8. Homology – common ancestor or common designer?
9. Fossil Record – uniform column or systematic gaps?
10. Age of the Earth – billions or thousands?

I spoke of specified complexity, the argument from design, and the tragic legacy of Charles Darwin. The listeners seemed aghast as I left the platform. Many questioned if I were really a PhD. However, a few cornered me and thanked me for presenting a truly contrary point of view.

On Palm Sunday, March 27, a tragic event occurred. Kim, Zachary and Peter had gone to church without me. I was at Fort McCoy spending twenty-four hours as the ARRTC CQ (Charge of Quarters). About ten in the morning, I received a phone call from Don Carlson, the adjutant, telling me one of my sons had been injured in a car accident. He said he would fill in for me but I should rush to the hospital in La Crosse. I asked him which son, but he didn't know.

I raced in my Chevy Sprint toward Saint Joseph's Hospital. My thoughts tormented me during the thirty-minute drive. How bad was it? Was it life-threatening? Would I rather it be Zachary or Peter that was injured?

When I arrived, I heard this story: As soon as the church service ended, Peter and other boys rushed out the doors to play catch. They were tossing a ball near the parking lot, under overhanging eaves which were supported by large wooden beams. Suddenly a parked car lurched from the lot toward Peter. The man behind the wheel, waiting for his wife, had passed unconscious due to a diabetic shock. Peter dashed to avoid the on-coming car and nearly did. However, his left foot was pinioned against a support beam by the car tire. The wheels continued to spin on Peter's ankle, giving him a severe friction burn.

A group of nearby teenagers surrounded the car and lifted it off his leg; Pete was now wailing in pain. His brother, mother, and Pastor Blake comforted him until an ambulance arrived and rushed him to La Crosse.

I was at Peter's side as a doctor examined his leg. Nothing was broken or bruised, but the flesh above his ankle bone was shredded and blackened with tire rubber. The doctor's first job was to scrub the wound with a stiff brush to remove all the embedded grime. This could not be done gently and my poor son howled in agony. I felt helpless as I squeezed him tight for five minutes.

The doctor administered pain meds, bandaged his wound, and set him in a hospital bed. I stayed with him until dark after which he was tranquilized to help him sleep. The doctor said there would be no debilitating effect, but scarring would be severe, just like a fire burn.

Kim or I sat next to our son over the next week as Peter stayed in the hospital. We agreed to have a patch of skin removed from his hip to cover the ankle wound. This grafting procedure was also painful and extended his stay in the hospital.

Many of Peter's friends dropped by to visit him with balloons and get-well cards. He watched hours of TV to pass the time; his favorite show being *Mister Ed*. Peter also received a box-full of gifts. He especially liked the plastic replicas of the California Raisins, an animated musical quartet: "I heard it through the grape vine."

Peter was discharged a few days after Easter and walked on crutches for a few weeks after that. The military covered all expenses and we contacted the insurer of the driver—State Farm—to recover monetary damages in Peter's behalf.

Zachary took a skills test at Crossroads called the *Stanford 7-Plus*. On all sixteen tests he rated PHS (Post High School). His complete battery total ranked at the 99<sup>th</sup> percentile. In Math applications he scored 40/40, in Social Science 60/60, and Science 58/60. His Principal gave him a special award. Of course, his mother was supremely proud of her boy genius.

It was time to arrange for my Permanent Change of Station (PCS). Kim was frantic, because she was behind in her doctoral studies. I requested an extension of my ARRTC tour so Kim could study in Madison longer. Oscar declined that request. I then asked to be assigned to Milwaukee, but there were no slots available. I was finally assigned to a USAR Center in Miami Beach. We didn't mind that, but soon that position fell through.

Frank Struble, Oscar's boss, knew somebody in California who might have a slot available for an AGR captain. In May, orders were cut assigning me to the 91<sup>st</sup> Division in Sausalito, California. My report date was set for July first. At the time we were disappointed. Kim and I had preferred Florida to California. I told Peter about our future home and he quipped, "*South Toledo*. That doesn't sound like a good place to go!"

I took the boys to a State Bible Quiz meet in Eau Claire on May 7. Poor Peter bombed on the first question, misstating a Bible quote. But that was okay because we had a camping trip planned. My sons had never set foot in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and I wanted them to visit the U-P before we left Wisconsin. We drove across the state stopping in Green Bay, then headed north to Wells State Park on Lake Superior. Zachary and Peter especially enjoyed dancing around the campfire with flaming marshmallows on their sticks.

May was a busy month for all of us. Kim managed to get her dissertation approved and was thus set to graduate in July. She was living full time in Madison, having packed all her important items in the Pontiac.

I began winding down at ARRTC, boxing up my papers. I attended a Hail and Farewell, leaving at the same time as a guy named Captain Julius. I had known this instructor casually as a likeable soldier, but a poor instructor. (After all, I had read two years of his classroom evaluations.) People made such a fuss over his departure. In contrast, they simply grasped my hand in farewell. I observed that

over my four years at Fort McCoy, I had gained much respect but little affection. Whereas few respected Captain Julian's academic prowess, yet he held a special place in the hearts of many. Love or respect, which was preferable?

In the absence of Kim, I cleared out our Tomah house, sorting and putting our things in storage for transport to California. My sons were not only leaving Wisconsin, they were also leaving behind childhood. As we sorted through their toys, stuffed animals, and school papers, I explained to them we would create a memory box for each. I bought two metal foot lockers and asked them to stuff the boxes with memorabilia. That accomplished, we sealed the containers and marked each with the words, "Do not open until the year 2000". The turn of the millennium seemed so distant at the time.

I hired house cleaners, landscapers, and made a few repairs. I then advertised the place as a rental. A Master Sergeant, stationed at Fort McCoy, signed a lease agreement on May 25. I felt good about this contract, because I knew I had leverage over him. His company commander was an acquaintance of mine.

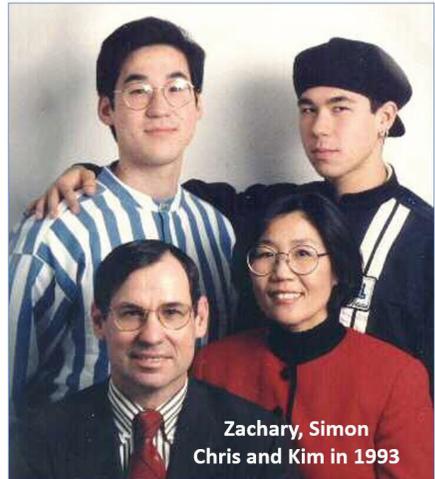
On May 27 I attended a graduation ceremony at Crossroads Christian Academy where Zachary garnered a few awards. Both boys were out of school and it was time to follow the sun.

When June arrived, Kim and I devised complicated plans for our move to California. I would drive the Sprint with the two boys to Longview and leave them with Eileen for one month. Kim would stay behind in Wisconsin to finish her doctorate, while I began my job in California. In July I would fly back to Wisconsin to drive the Sunbird to the west coast. Kim would use the return half of my air ticket.

On June 4, Zachary, Peter and I stayed with Don Carlson for a night, then on June 5 we hit the road for California. All we carried in the little Sprint were three suitcases and camping gear. I told my boys, "Get ready for a new chapter in life."



Mom, Charlotte, Eileen Jeanne,  
Jack, Chris, and Frank in 1988



Zachary, Simon  
Chris and Kim in 1993



## Chapter 18

# DERAILED

June 1988 to May 1989  
Fort Baker, California

*Whoever digs a pit may fall into it; whoever breaks through a wall may be bitten by a snake. Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?*

*(Ecclesiastes 10:8 & Proverbs 6:27)*

For Kim and me, moving to the Golden State was like arriving in the promised land. For fifteen years we had wandered in the wilderness, setting up our tabernacle first in Seoul, then in Longview, Fort Benning, Fort Belvoir, Fort Leonard Wood, Eugene, Mauston, then Tomah. Our new home, nestled near the base of the Golden Gate Bridge, promised to be Paradise. And as in the paradise of Eden, a serpent lurked—this one crouching in my heart.

### JUNE 1988

Zachary, Peter, and I left Tomah on June 5, 1988. Our first stop was at Ellsworth Air Force Base to visit Jennifer Brotherton and her new husband Jeff. We stayed in her mobile home one night, then went to Mount Rushmore to view the granite images of four presidents. We continued west angling up highway 212, through Deadwood and Missoula, to Spokane. At Mount Rainier we headed south to Longview.

We stayed with mom for a few days, then I dropped off Zachary and Peter with their Auntie Eileen. She and Terry had earlier agreed to look after my boys while I reported for military duty and while Kim completed her studies. This aunt was a favorite; So much so that when Kim and I wrote our will, Eileen was custodian of our boys in the event of our deaths.

For the next month the four of us were scattered—Kim in Madison, the boys in Longview, and me on army duty in California. I headed down Interstate 5, stopping one night in Eugene to visit Zelens. Debbie dropped by the house where I met Thom, whom she would marry in July.

The drive south was scorching as I passed through the Central Valley of California. With an outside temperature above 100 degrees, I was shocked to feel a cool breeze blow through my down-rolled windows. I noted the location as Richardson Bay in a town called Mill Valley.

A few exits later, I turned right, passed under the Golden Gate Bridge and pulled into Fort Baker. I found the Headquarters of the 91st Division and reported to the adjutant with my orders. He signed me in, then directed me to the Presidio for bachelor billeting. Soon I was ensconced in a comfortable room situated near the magnificent parade ground.

The next day, on June 14, I reported into the G3-Operations building. I met Dan Cherrick, my day-to-day supervisor. He was about ten years my senior and held a GS12 position in the civil service. Dan and I maintained a cordial but cool relationship. He occupied a private office with me sitting just outside his door. Master Sergeant Simons also shared this large space, seated in a desk across the room from me.

Designated as a sub-post of the Presidio, Fort Baker was an amazing site. The sturdy brick buildings were constructed in 1915 to support a battalion of coastal artillery. On the nearby hills, overlooking the San Francisco Bay, sat abandoned artillery batteries. Murray Circle formed the heart of the sub-post with a dozen grand buildings encompassing a large parade field. Eucalyptus trees, massive in girth, lined the streets and a stiff foggy breeze kept flags and banners in constant flap.

I resided at the Presidio for a few weeks commuting across the bridge every day. Since my room was near the parade grounds, I remember waking every morning to Reveille and turning in at night to the mournful sound of Taps. In mid-July, the bulk of my headquarters unit was in the field, so I spent the time looking for quarters at Fort Baker.

Jimmy Walker dropped by for a visit with little James. Valerie was pregnant with number two. They loved the stroll around the Golden Gate. My nephew and family had moved to Auburn after he completed his law degree in Los Angeles.

I discovered I was one of twenty AGR soldiers who worked alongside of twenty civilians; many of whom donned a Reserve uniform two days of the month. For Example, Dan Cherrick was a Chief Warrant Officer during weekend drills. My situation was difficult. As a fulltime worker, much was expected of me. Yet I remained a lowly captain sharing a headquarters with two generals and a dozen superior officers; having much responsibility but little authority.

My duties as Operations Training Officer were ill-defined. "Represent Division G3 in Key Trainer matters, collecting and reporting Key Trainer information. Organize, maintain, and present Command Slide Briefing. Coordinate all activities between Division and the ARRTC. Monitor training activities within Division. Organize and maintain division Historical records. Act as special projects officer."

At Fort McCoy, the prescribed uniform had been comfortable Class B, but now I wore battle dress. I bought three sets of army BDUs at the PX. I also bought

a few household items in anticipation of our move to quarters. I kept in contact with my wife and kids and our complicated plans were falling into place.

I struck out north on July 3 and celebrated Independence Day with the Zelens in Eugene. The next day I arrived at Zimmerman's with a mission. Peter was going to purchase a pet cockatiel with the assistance of his aunt. Eileen kept parakeets, but Pete wanted a bigger bird with a bigger personality. I went shopping with my sister and my son *adopted* Wilbur—named after a character from *Mister Ed*. We bought the necessary cage and other paraphernalia. Eileen helped Peter create perches from branches taken from a corkscrew willow in her backyard.

My sister helped to civilize my little savages. Neither Kim nor I had ever taught our sons how to set a table with plates and utensils, or make a bed, or vacuum a carpet. She also instructed them in many crazy songs she had taught her daughters. I have always appreciated how my sister loved on her nephews for the month she looked after them.

The next day, I flew from Portland to Chicago, rented a car, and drove the three hours from O'Hare Airport to Madison. Kim was all smiles. She showed me her PhD diploma and her hardbound dissertation. The title of her thesis was: "Cognitive Style, Cognitive Ability, and the Acquisition of Initial Computer Programing Competence."

The front pages gave thanks to Vere Devault, her major professor, and Michael Streibel who helped her with research. She dedicated this volume: "For my best friend and husband, Chris, who believed in me. For my sons, Zachary and Peter, who lost their mommy to this study."

We dined out that evening with a few of her friends and the next morning bid farewell to a few of her professors. Kim was both sad and happy to leave her place of learning. Then we headed out, Kim in her Pontiac and me in my rental. We had a big event ahead of us.

On the afternoon of July 9, Kim and I attended my twentieth high-school reunion. My class of 1968 rendezvoused at noon on the front steps of Clark School. I faced this reunion with trepidation. I did not want to come face to face with Arlene. After two decades, I still felt a pang in my heart. I conversed with many of my old acquaintances: Eric, Reinhard, Lloyd, Sandy, Sharon, Faye, and Bob. I breathed a sigh of relief, when I realized Arlene was not among the thirty people present. At a gathering in the cafeteria, Jim and Charlotte Francis won the award for most kids: six. I joked with Steve Hurley, "You know, the older I get, the better I was." Eric Tangelos was now a gerontologist at the Mayo Clinic. He told me he was attending a convention in San Francisco in August and I invited him to drop by Fort Baker to visit me.

As well as talking with classmates, we spoke with several teachers who joined the group. I learned that my old track coach, Mr. Powell, had spent time in prison for embezzling funds. I also happened to run into Mrs. Chambers, my third-grade teacher. We spoke on the street for a few minutes. I told her she had inspired me to get a teaching credential.

With my video camera in hand, I paid a visit to my old residence on Lake Avenue and to Jim Francis's parents who lived down the street. I ran into Jim's youngest brother, Brian, who was born in the year I graduated from high school. He was a feral youth and within a few years of our only encounter he would die of a drug overdose.

Kim and I stayed the night in a Whiting motel and left early the next morning. We drove our cars to O'Hare Airport where I returned the rental. In 1988 it was possible to purchase a single round-trip air ticket and for one person to use the arrival flight and another the departure. No one scrutinized the manifest at take-off and "Chris" passed as a female name. I waved good-bye to Kim a.k.a Chris and headed west with the Pontiac.

I drove straight to Portland, sleeping in the car in the Black Hills of South Dakota then in a motel near Billings, Montana. Along the miles of Interstate 90, I meditated upon my high school reunion, the Francis Family, my Whiting home, and my three-year romance with Arlene. My mind was conflicted. At the same time, I was glad I had not bumped into my old flame, yet disappointed at her absence. Maybe our paths would cross at the thirtieth reunion.

I drove into Portland on July 12. Pam, Dong Hyun, and Kyu Nam now lived in the area, and I found Kim in their midst. Hyun Ok was also present with little Megan. I greeted my wife with a forehead smooch and my boys with twirling hugs. I joined in a Kim family reunion with Halmoni as matriarch.

Kim had been driving my Sprint for a few days and I switched cars with her. Then we headed south. Kim drove the Pontiac still filled with her university possessions. My Sprint contained Zachary, Peter, and Wilbur the cockatiel. We paused by the roadside at an exit arrow named *Wilbur*. Peter held up his bird in front of the sign. We paused the night in Ashland, then continued to San Francisco.

The four of us checked into temporary family housing, just a short distance from the Golden Gate view point on Presidio. It was a million-dollar location, but the suite was a tad run down. Peter dubbed it "the Fleabag Hotel".

The environment of urban San Francisco loomed in stark contrast to the small Wisconsin town we had left behind. Diversity is what struck me first. My wife and kids were no longer oddities. Half the population looked Asian. Politics were liberal; Culture permissive; Religion marginalized. There was not a burger joint on post, so I drove the family to Lombard Street and parked at Clown Alley. Peter marveled at the gritty neighborhood. The chef laid aside his cigarette before flipping four burgers.

The wonders of Presidio charmed Zachary and Peter. It was so obviously urban yet so wild that skunks got stuck in the dumpsters behind the fleabag hotel. The boys tramped through the bayside woods and explored abandoned military bunkers.

## FORT BAKER

On August 1, we finally moved into a duplex at Fort Baker. Our new address was 521B Fort Baker, Sausalito. The place was not spacious, so we shed some of our furniture. The home was single story, two bedrooms, about 1300 square feet. I appropriated an over-sized storage room as my home office. Kim bought a piano from a departing neighbor, hoping our boys would take lessons.

I counted my steps on a few occasions. My commute was just 120 downhill paces as measured from my back door to the entrance of my workplace; So close, in fact, that sometimes I arrived late.

Lieutenant Sconce, his wife Kim, and two boys lived in the other half of the duplex. She began to give Zachary and Peter piano lessons. The post seemed idyllic to raise children, an enclave of tranquility with a view of the bridge from our picture window. A few dozen military urchins caught a local bus into nearby Sausalito.

Kim's brothers dropped by a week after we arrived. They set crab cages off the pier near the Coast Guard Station. Kim prepared crab for dinner. Not partial to seafood, I let the Koreans consume my share.

We found a church home in nearby San Rafael. Pastor Will Nelken welcomed us to Trinity Community Church which was affiliated with the Assemblies of God. On most Sundays we drove there as a family, although on drill week-ends we joined a small group at the Fort Baker Chapel which was just across the street. Kim Sconce played piano.

After finding a place to live and a church to attend, Kim's next priority was finding a place of employment. Her first opportunity was at City College in San Francisco. She signed on as an adjunct as the Fall semester was starting. With only a part-time position she continued seeking something better.

We hosted Josh Foreman for a third summer. This time the boys' interest lay in skate boards; building ramps, posing, and performing stunts. Josh also introduced my sons to Weird Al Yankovic and soon the trio were lip-syncing his parodies. I shot plenty of video of the three guys rumbling down hills and pseudo-singing.

Both sons enrolled at Bayside/MLK school in Sausalito; Zachary in eighth grade, Peter in sixth. I dropped by for an open house and was surprised to see that half the students were African-American. This appeared odd because most residents I observed were either White or Asian. I learned this circumstance was due to a childless population in Sausalito described as DINKS (dual income no kids) and the enclave of Marin City, home to most of the county's Black

population. After a few days in sixth grade, my second son announced he had introduced himself not as *Peter* but once again as *Simon*.

Doctor Eric Tangelos dropped by Fort Baker and we walked Murray Circle a few times talking about high school days. I quired him about Simon's skin grafts which had turned into ugly scars. Should I sue? He advised against it by saying large skin grafts are unpredictable. That's why the graft was taken from the hip, a place usually clothed.

September 6, 1988, marked the day when my life began to derail. I remember spading weeds by the front driveway when Kim approached from our mail box. I stood up and she placed in my grubby hands a letter from Arlene T. She recognized the sender as my old girlfriend. I put the envelope in my pocket, rushed into the house, washed my hands, and read the words. Her letter began something like: "I'm so sorry I missed the high school reunion. Sharon told me you were there. If I had known, I would have been there too."

I noticed Kim's eyes were reading my face as I read Arlene's letter. I handed it over to her and she perused it. I asked, "What do you think I should do?"

Kim responded, "Do what you think is right. If you want to answer her, that's okay with me." Was Kim testing me?

In clear-eyed retrospect, I wish I had asked Kim to compose a reply, telling Arlene to bug off and never contact me again. However, curiosity about her present situation combined with a failure to adequately close our old relationship, compelled me to respond with a five-page missive. I poured out eighteen years of gall and regret. I asked her, "Why did you betray our love? Why did you abandon me?" There the issue sat until I received her response.

Kim and I agreed to an insurance settlement for Simon's ugly auto injury. After negotiating with State Farm Insurance, we signed papers that allotted Simon \$3000 upon his sixteenth birthday, then \$8000 upon his birthdays 18 to 21, finally a \$25,000 payout at age twenty-five. We concurred that since Simon did the suffering, he should spend the money however he saw fit.

Kim had a bad experience while teaching at the SF City College. While lecturing in front of her class, a college official interrupted her and abruptly escorted her into the hallway. She was forbidden to re-enter the classroom. As it turned out, her TB test had come back positive and she had neglected to attach documents showing her disease had been successfully treated. Kim felt humiliated.

The next day, I accompanied my wife on a job-seeking visit to San Francisco State University. Without an appointment she entered the computer lab and engaged the lab manager in conversation. The discussion was going nowhere. As she sputtered, I noted a wall poster adorned with the University of Wisconsin badger. I addressed this guy who was fiddling with a computer, "Hey, did you

graduate from Wisconsin? Oh yeah, so did she". The ice broken; Kim was able to schmooze her way into her first position at SFSU.

In late September, Korea was constantly in the headlines. The 1988 Summer Olympic games were held in Seoul. The Korean government had spent massive amounts of money to improve infrastructure and athletes from 159 nations participated in the games. Korea won few medals but the event marked an international *coming out* for the Republic of Korea. At one point, I had considered attending the Olympics, but the dream never materialized.

Kim was away most days of the week, teaching at colleges in San Francisco. I sat at my work desk, looking out the window for the mail truck. After seeing it pass, I walked home and emptied our mail box. I stuck a letter from Arlene into my pocket and returned the rest. My deceit had begun.

I read a long letter about our romance and her reasons for dumping me. She said I was unstable, radical, and likely to move to Canada. She encouraged me to continue our correspondence and work through our issues. I wrote back asking her to use my military address: Captain Chris Foreman c/o 91<sup>st</sup> Division. My deceit expanded.

A few more letters changed hands, then I decided to telephone Arlene. I dialed her number from the pay phone outside the building. She was shocked to hear my voice. I retorted, "You were bold enough to initiate the written correspondence, so it's my turn to start the phone calls." I made fun of her parochial accent and she called me a California yuppie.

Something evil hatched in my heart; something hard to explain. Arlene infatuated me. I had no desire to hurt Kim, or Zachary, or Simon, yet I felt my soul pulled in an alien direction. I knew my actions were sinful, yet I felt powerless to resist. I anticipated a train wreck, yet knew not how to avoid it.

Arlene and I exchanged a dozen letters over the next month. I expressed words of affection, regretting our separation, confessing I wanted to be with her. I sent her poems and we exchanged pictures. I kept her photo inside my wallet, hidden behind Kim's. My duplicity had progressed into infidelity. I had become unfaithful to my wife of fifteen years.

How was my mind so able to compartmentalize? I considered Kim to be my wife and Arlene my secret lover. I rationalized my illicit behavior, convincing myself Arlene was my first love and therefore had legitimate priority. I wanted to heal a long-bleeding wound, half-knowing that its cure might kill a marriage. Sad to admit also, these stolen waters tasted sweet.

I had scheduled myself for an ARRTC class at Fort McCoy and on October 23 flew to Chicago. I rented a car and made arrangements to meet with Arlene on November 5. The twelve-day Training Management Course passed excruciatingly slow. My mind could not focus on my studies, neither on my Wisconsin friends whom I visited in the evenings.

I shared with Rose Kimberley a bit about my extra-marital plans. She was startled, then quoted from a popular song: “If you can’t be with the one you love. Love the one you’re with.” At that time, nothing in the world seemed more important than my rendezvous with Arlene. Was this obsessive behavior infidelity or insanity—or both?

I remember on the night of October 22 I could not sleep. I thrashed in bed until 1:00 a.m., then decided to drive to Whiting. My mind was in turmoil. What would happen? I pulled into town about daylight—six hours before our appointed time. I dozed fitfully in the parked car, walked along the shore of Wolf Lake, then sat in a diner. I felt distant from God, but I did pray. I asked our Lord to work things out, to somehow allow me an affair with Arlene while keeping my family intact. Was God great enough to accomplish both?

Arlene had suggested we meet at the location of our first date on October 4, 1967—the Rupp Branch Library. When I arrived, I walked through the stacks without spotting her. I pulled a few books off the shelf that I remembered reading in grade school.

While sitting, thumbing through a magazine, Arlene approached me. We hugged for a moment and began to plot the day. She had told her husband not to expect her home until eight. That was fine with me. My flight from O’Hare didn’t leave until five the next morning. We left the cars parked at the library and went for a long walk, past my old house on Lake Avenue, then down to Clark School.

We chatted about our lives unable to keep our glances from each other. I told her about Kim and our two sons. She shared about her husband, son, and daughter. The girl was named Lisa, a name we considered if we were ever to have a child. I explained I was unhappy in my marriage and she repeated the same to me. I was never sure about the truthfulness of her assertion, but it’s false to say my marriage was floundering—at least until Arlene entered the picture.

We reclined on the Clark School steps for a while, continuing to talk. When we returned to the library, she sat beside me in my rental car. We drove around a while, pointing out old haunts and laughing about the good old days. We entered a restaurant about four and conversed for two hours. I carried a Clark School yearbook with me and we talked about all the people we knew from the class of 68.

It was just getting dark when I asked, “So where do you want to go now?”

She giggled, “You know where, silly. Whiting Beach of course, where we used to watch the waves.”

We parked about sunset, then walked down the sand as we had two decades earlier. It was too dark to seek out washed fragments of colored glass; also, too late for town gossips to spot Arlene holding hands with someone not her husband.

It was getting cold on this November evening so I fired up the car engine and turned up the heater for a few minutes. I must have performed this action five times while we

snuggled side-by-side in the car. I remember there were cathartic tears; there were ardent embraces. However, by God's grace, there was not a single kiss nor any sexual activity. It's true I fell deep into infidelity, but God kept me from outright adultery.

Arlene glanced at her watch and gasped, "Past nine". I drove her to the library where she picked up her car, then I followed her home, pulling up behind her. As she slammed the car door and waved good night to me, I saw her porch light flick on and a male figure stand in the doorway. Her entry into the home marked my last view of Arlene.

I drove to the airport, trying to digest events of the day just passed. Arlene was still in my blood. My desire was to prolong our relationship. I returned the rental car then stretched out on a bench until boarding. When I returned home, Kim asked about my army class. I talked about the old friends I had met, keeping mum about my secret date.

Our romantic correspondence continued. We wanted to meet again, maybe after the new year. Momentous world events swirled around me, but my world orbited around one woman. George Bush defeated Mike Dukakis on November 8 to become the 41st president of the United States. Gorbachev promoted Gasnost and Perestoika. The Polish trade union Solidarity held independent elections. I remained oblivious to all.

In the midst of my infidelity, I wrote a song with a country-western pathos describing my predicament. I never forgot the words, even after the paper was burned. I pictured myself as a moth, fatally attracted to a burning love:

Like a moth to the flame, like a moth to the flame,  
We're flying in circles. We've come where we've come.  
Living in shadows, loving in shame,  
My fatal attraction, like a moth to the flame.

Like a moth to the flame, like a moth to the flame,  
I know that you're married. You know I'm the same.  
No winners, just losers, and no one to blame,  
In tightening circles, like a moth to the flame.

Like a moth to the flame, like a moth to the flame,  
I'm scorched with a fever, no tonic can tame  
Praying to heaven, my soul to reclaim,  
From burning desire, like a moth to the flame

Why can't I fly away to my home?  
Why won't you leave this poor heart alone?  
Can we escape this fiery deadly game?  
Will we soon be two souls caught in that flame?

Like a moth to the flame, like a moth to the flame,

We're flying in circles. We've come where we've came.  
Living in shadows, loving in shame,  
With smoldering passion.... like a moth in the flame.

My wife trusted me, never suspecting an affair. If she had been more observant, she may have noticed my odd behavior; writing and mailing letters, sneaking out for phone calls, and increasing inattention to herself and to my sons. It was sad but all too true.

As I later strove to fathom my unfaithful conduct, the best illustration I struck upon concerned *patriotic confederates*. These true believers in the Lost Cause shouted, "The South shall rise again." Their spoken wish continued to be that Robert E. Lee and the Confederate armies had won the Civil War and thereby destroyed the American union.

What was odd about these folks from Dixie was that on the back of their pickups they affixed both an American flag and a Confederate flag, proclaiming to be both nationalist and sectionalists. Were they so clueless as not to comprehend the absurdity of this position? How could an American-flag waving patriot embrace a traitorous cause, that if successful, would have torn that very flag in twain?

This incongruity I bore in my own soul. I was a believer in the long-lost cause (Arlene) and wished that things would have turned out differently. In fact, I wished I had married my teenage flame. Maybe yet, twenty years later, I could make my own lost cause come true.

At the same time, I was a true patriot, devoted to the preservation of the American flag (Kim). On the backend of life's pick-up truck, I affixed both a flag of Arlene and a flag of Kim, not accepting that an embrace of the former would affect the destruction of the latter. A battle was taking place in my soul; a war between the states of my mind.

From the outside, I maintained a façade of normality. I have video clips of Kim escorting Zachary and Simon to the school bus. Another video shows Kim sitting at our piano interacting with the boys. Simon was mastering *Ode to Joy* and Zachary *Morning Mood*.

On the inside I was falling to pieces. I was not practiced in deception nor gifted in secret-keeping. Yet every day I deceived my family and every letter from Arlene remained a savory secret. My life hung in suspension for several weeks, then began to unravel over the Christmas holidays.

We packed the Pontiac on December 22 and headed north. We first stopped to visit Halmoni in Portland. That woman must have had infidelity-detecting radar.

She looked me over, noted a change in personality, and told Kim in the Korean language, “What’s a matter with him? Is he having an affair or something?”

Kim was shocked at her mom’s observation and when she confronted me, I mumbled, “Certainly not.” Yet, Kim’s suspicions were aroused.

We celebrated Christmas in combination with my 39<sup>th</sup> birthday at my mom’s house. Pictures of that event reveal my forced smile and misty eyes. I remember trying to avoid Kim and jogging around Lake Sacajawea to postpone a confrontation.

Just before entering the car for our long trip home, Kim asked me point blank, “Chris, are you having an affair?”

With swollen eyes and quivering voice, I confessed, “Yes, I am.”

Her face contorted in pain. “Who is it with?”

“Arlene,” I said.

She hung her head in dejection then sat in the car seat next to me. Zachary and Simon took their places in the back, knowing their dad and mom were quarreling, but unaware of details.

The drive home seemed to last forever. We only stopped a few times along the twelve-hour route. I was in hell—mile after mile. I had betrayed the woman who loved me and she was forced to sit at my side. Sometimes she glanced at my tear-streaked face; sometimes she gazed out the window; on occasion a sob escaped from her lips, but she never spoke a word—mile after mile. She constrained her anger by looking at her sons in the back seat.

I was physically and emotionally exhausted when we arrived at Fort Baker. It was after midnight and the boys went straight to bed. In the living room, Kim wept bitter tears. She shouted, demanding details. I begged forgiveness and explained as best I could.

After an hour of howling pain, I took a blanket and pillow from the bed and slept on the couch.

As I had read in the Bible, I had dug a pit and I fell into it. I had broken through a wall and was bitten by a snake. I had taken fire in my bosom and my clothes were ablaze.

The next few days were charged with emotion. She stormed; I apologized. She was furious; I was contrite. I remember curling in a fetal position on the bedroom floor weeping like a baby. Kim took pity on my broken soul. She said she had called my mother. My family was lifting us up in prayer. I met this news with both satisfaction and mortification. My mom had called Frank and my brother was flying down to San Francisco to help in the rehabilitation of his wayward brother.

The next day I drove to SFO still in great distress. I parked the Sprint in the short-term lot and met Frank as he deplaned. We walked and discussed my situation. He

guessed it was bad but by God's grace not beyond repair. I could not find my car! I had no clue where I had parked it. We wandered for an hour before it was discovered.

My brother played a key role in the restoration of my marriage. I showed him all of Arlene's letters, which he read, and passed on to Kim. After I assured him the completeness of her writing, Frank and Kim watched as I burned the correspondence in our back yard. This destruction was not without discomfort. Part of me wanted to hold on to Arlene. The spell was broken, but still I walked in a mist. I cared for my teenage flame, but understood the righteous action was to cut the connection at the root.

We read from the Bible together, "But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell (Matthew 5:28-29)." I agreed that one-hundred percent amputation of Arlene was required.

Frank stayed for a few days. He walked Zachary and Simon around Murray Circle explaining the situation to them. He washed dishes as Kim and I talked things over. On December 31<sup>st</sup> my sons partied at a neighbor's house to ring in the New Year. Frank, Kim, and I were watching TV, waiting for the ball to drop.

## 1989 TO JUNE

At the stroke of midnight, the telephone sounded twice then ceased. I shouted in dread, "Oh no. That's Arlene's secret signal. If it rings again, she'll be on the line."

Frank said, "That's good. I'll talk with her." And so, he did. I left the room as my brother calmly carried on a ten-minute conversation.

After he hung up, he brought Kim and me together. "I think Arlene understands what she was doing was wrong. She claimed she was just trying to help Chris with marriage problems, but I read her letters. She was seducing him. Maybe she was as infatuated with Chris, as he was with her. I don't know, but I believe she is out of your life for good. I suggested she talk to her husband and meet with her priest. I'm praying that'll be the end of it."

Frank left us on January 2 with four suggestions: meet with our pastor for marriage counseling, listen to praise music, get out of the house and enjoy family fun, and attend a marriage enrichment seminar. His instructions became a roadmap.

We met with Pastor Will Nelken every Monday evening for five weeks. After hearing our stories, his first request was for me to write a one-page apology, admit my sin, and ask forgiveness from God and from Kim. He asked me to include a commitment to forsake all other women and remain true to Kim. Pastor Nelken

then requested Kim to read my letter and ask me clarifying questions. She was then to respond in writing, accepting my apology, granting me forgiveness, and promising to work through the difficulties as God enabled her.

At the next session, we read our letters to each other. I was in tears. I did not deserve such a wife as Kim. There were still bumps ahead, but through my contrition, Kim's forgiveness, and God's grace our marriage weathered a severe test.

One of Will's illustrations stayed with me. He held one pencil in each hand between his thumb and forefinger. He brought the tips together, saying, "Chris, imagine you are at the base of this pencil and, Kim, you are at the base of the other. God is at the peak. Notice, as you draw closer to God, you naturally draw closer to each other."

My nephew Jimmy Walker wrote me a long letter, voicing concern and asking how he might help. I inquired about the old praise albums so popular in the early seventies. He put me in touch with Calvary Chapel and soon I possessed six CDs of Maranatha! Music.

I set my classical repertoire aside and for months praise songs cycled endlessly in the background of our home. Songs like "In His Time", "Seek Ye First", "Father, I Adore you" and "As the Deer" provided a sonic balm to souls in recovery. I ramped up the volume for the "Spirit Song".

O, let the Son of God enfold you with his Spirit and His love.  
Let Him fill your heart and satisfy your soul.  
O, let Him have the things that hold you and His Spirit, like a dove,  
will descend upon your life and make you whole.  
Jesus, Jesus, come and fill your lamb.

I took a week off work and the four of us drove south to Disneyland. The boys were a bit old, but we enjoyed ourselves nonetheless. My favorite souvenir was a set of oval framed family profiles. Snipped from black paper, the faces of Zachary and faced to the right, while in a second Kim and I faced left.

I made a big deal of Kim's thirty-eighth birthday by presenting her with thirty-eight roses. I held back tears at this event. My comely wife was so joy-filled, so vivacious, so bubbly. And to think that my selfish sin brought our marriage to the brink of dissolution. How could I ever have been such a selfish jackass?

Zachary and Simon loved their enclave of Fort Baker. There were a dozen other military offspring in the neighborhood, room to explore, bike, shoot hoops, skateboard, and hang out in the old artillery bunkers. A playground abutted our quarters and, although the boys were too big for monkey bars, the picnic tables

provided a favorite gathering spot. The sub-post also supported a small 10-foot by 10-foot PX extension and an ancient gymnasium. As division historian, I learned that the two-lane bowling alley was still functional, although seldom used. It was purported to be the oldest on the West Coast.

A few of the Fort Baker *army brats* were Boy Scouts. Zachary decided he wanted to join Troop 14 which met at Calvary Presbyterian Church on Fillmore Street in San Francisco. That wasn't a logistical problem for me, since my son got regular rides from Fort Baker fathers.

Joe Ehrman was a strict scoutmaster, requiring uniform and commitment. His troop worked differently than mine in Indiana. There were no fourteen-year-old Eagle scouts. At fifteen, a scout could earn his Star; at sixteen his Life, and only at seventeen his Eagle award. I actually preferred this method. It kept the older boys involved.

Kim and I attended a lavish ball at the Division Headquarters just 200 steps from our home. One of my captain friends was jealous of our prime location, joking he had driven all the way from Fresno. The video shows Kim in a formal dress and me in a dress blue uniform. I was so pleased to see the return of Kim's giddy effervescence.

On March 23, our fifteenth anniversary, I presented Kim with fifteen long-stem roses. I wrote this poem in a card to her:

To my over-coming, ever-loving, always-patient, never grudging wife ~  
Fifteen roses for fifteen years;  
Fifteen roses nourished by tears.  
Some tears of gladness; some tears of pain;  
some tears of sweetness, but all tears of gain.  
Now fifteen roses; that's one rose per year;  
Just fifteen roses; may one hundred appear!  
Who would have thought back in seventy-four,  
that we'd make it past fifteen and still look for more?  
~ Your husband-that-loves-you, Chris

Kim gave a card the next day with this hand written on the inside:

My dearest husband and friend ~ Happy anniversary—our first and also our fifteenth. With all my soul and heart, I love you. I didn't know I would love anyone so deeply as I love you now. I think that we needed all these years to appreciate each other because this marriage is a gift from God and only works in His time.

Those fifteen roses symbolize our marriage; their lovely fragrance, noble and exquisite beauty are like our relationship that we have now. As we add one more rose to the bunch, our lives will be as sweet as the smell of the roses.

My love, I thank God for our union that seemed to be so odd fifteen years ago. Because our love was deeper than human love, we survived through bad times and we even can witness to others that God can overcome any barriers, even East and West can meet and have a happy life.

My life with you started out with the fragrance of roses. I think that thorns come with roses too. I cannot promise I will be a perfect wife from now on, but I sure want to be like a fragrance to you. I also know that you can handle thorns so you won't get hurt too often. Here are five different fragrances that you leave with me:

1. You are a godly man, listening to God's word and doing it.
2. You have the best pair of arms where I can be a woman, a little girl, or a playful tomboy.
3. You have patience. You stay up late to iron out my emotional turmoil.
4. You are loving and gentle—in your soul, mind and body to me.
5. You know how to express your love; constantly lifting my soul by kisses, hugs, and roses.

On Easter weekend, the boys and I traveled to Longview. I got to know a whole new bevy of great-nieces: Melissa and Crystal Ament, Kristina Davis, Alisha Walker, and Joanna Brotherton. My recent bout with infidelity passed unspoken. I made it a point to speak of Kim in the highest terms and voice her regret in not joining me.

Jimmy and Valerie dropped by for a visit on April 22. I thanked my nephew for his genuine concern in regard to my marital problems. They brought along a new addition, Josiah, now five months old.

On May 12 I video recorded a busy living room scene. Simon was at the piano practicing *the Entertainer* as Wilbur scooted around his shoulder. Zachary was in his Troop 14 Boy Scout uniform. His pup tent was displayed near the front door. Kim sat on the couch, dutifully stitching a patch on Zachary's neckerchief. I was grateful to God for this domestic scene. I quoted a praise song, "Oh God, what a wonder You are."

I continued to write poetry. I was especially fascinated by word play and homonyms. I wrote this petitionary prayer based on three words that sound the same.

Rain in my heart, Lord, rain in my heart!  
 Teardrops like rainfall seem not to depart,  
 Wounded and bleeding and broken apart.  
 Rain in my heart, Lord, rain in my heart.

Rein in my heart, Lord, rein in my heart!  
 Bridle my passions. Your grace please impart.

Guard me from sinning before I can start.  
Rein in my heart, Lord, rein in my heart.  
Reign in my heart, Lord, reign in my heart!  
Be Thou my Sovereign, my Savior Thou art.  
Fill me with Christ-joy and flood every part.  
Yes! Reign in my heart, Lord, reign in my heart.

During my six months of marital crisis, I neglected my military obligations. I'm afraid it showed. I was on active duty in body, but inactive in mind. I held a confidential discussion with Dan Cherrick and explained my marital situation and apologized for my dereliction.

On May 10 I was officially promoted to the rank of major, at least on paper. However, because I was an AGR officer I could not wear the rank nor earn the salary. Major had to wait until I filled an O4 slot. I soon became an over-ripe captain.

Kim excelled at SFSU. Not only was she a caring and competent instructor, but also a *two-fer*, meaning in regard to affirmative action she possessed a favorable ethnicity and gender. The day after I was promoted to major, Kim received this official letter:

Upon the recommendation of Eugene Michaels, Coordinator, Educational Technology Center, I am pleased to offer you a fulltime tenure track position as Assistant Professor in Educational Technology for the 1989-90 academic year. The salary for this position will be \$33,192 for the year. ~ Henrietta Schwartz, Dean, school of education.

Kim and I attended a marriage enrichment seminar called "Weekend to Remember" held at Santa Cruz hotel on a Saturday and Sunday. We sat side-by-side listening to speakers, watching videos, and taking notes. We circled in a small group where I shared parts of my marriage failure. Kim added her perspective when appropriate. It felt cleansing to share our trauma in this setting. No one condemned us and all appreciated our witness to the power of God. We were able to convert our pain into God's gain.

After a marriage-themed sermon on Sunday morning, our charge was to compose renewed wedding vows. Kim and I took this project seriously. As we sat knee-to-knee in lawn chairs I read my vows. She wept as I repeated three times the words "forsaking all others".

The damaging effect of my infidelity continued to ripple through the decades. It was mentioned occasionally, but over the years less and less. This story became a part of our biography, certainly a sad chapter, one that shook me to the core, and one that kept me one-hundred percent faithful to Kim until death did us part.

## Chapter 19

# RESTORED

June 1989 to October 1992  
Fort Baker, California

*Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.  
Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.  
Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.*  
(Psalm 51:10-12)

God upheld my family for the years we resided in army quarters at Fort Baker. He restored my soul and renewed our marriage. Kim flourished at San Francisco State University and I persevered in the ill-fitting uniform of an army officer. Zachary and Simon increased in stature and character. All four of us grew to love the Bay Area and plotted ways to plant our roots in the rich soil of California.

### JUNE 1989

In mid-1989, I began a book-writing project. This work began humbly enough. On June 12, I found myself at work with absolutely nothing to do. In sheer boredom, I calculated my precise age to be 39 years, 5 months, and 20 days. I had a World Almanac at my elbow and made a calculation. I figured that at 57 years, 2 months, and 6 days, George Washington was inaugurated as president of the United States. I made a few similar calculations involving politicians, sports figures, and celebrities. Next, I put these entries in order of age at accomplishment. Soon I had twenty single-line entries about people noted in the almanac. This was the genesis of an obsession.

Eventually I learned that at my exact age of 39 / 5 / 20, General Stonewall Jackson died of wounds sustained during the battle at Chancellorsville. I found his battlefield death to be an interesting juxtaposition to my chair-bound army life.

After a few years of compilation, composition, and typing, I bound 539 pages of dense text. I titled my work: “The Almanac of Comparative Biography: A Guide to Achievement at Your Exact Age in Years, Months, and Days.”

The introduction ran:

*The Almanac of Comparative Biography* concerns people, events, and ages. The central body of the work lists forty years of life according to the day-age of the event maker (year/month/day). Each single-line biography consists of the person's name, a notable event in the person's life, and the age of the person on the day of the event.

Biographic entries are presented day-to-day, starting 20 years / 0 months / 0 days and extending to 60 years / 0 months / 0 days. Grouped in one-month increments, the book lists 14,881 biographs (40 years x 12 months per year x 31 days per months, plus 1 day).

My introductory quote was by Satchel Paige: "How old would you be if you didn't know how old you were – at age ? / ? / ?".

The writing and expanding of the massive tome relieved the boredom of a mundane military job, keeping my mind engaged for a thousand hours. In Eugene I had created a statistical dissertation; and in Tomah a statistical evaluation system. Now I was creating a statistical almanac. My occupation remained soldier but my preoccupation became scholar and statistician.

My mother flew to California for a one-week visit. She was pleased to see my marriage on the mend and her grandchildren happy. We crossed the bridge to visit the Palace of the Fine Arts, just outside of Presidio. As we strolled the grounds, I remarked this Pacific exhibition was constructed in 1915, the same year mom was born.

On June 21, we celebrated Simon's twelfth birthday, gathering at the playground picnic table. The video shows a few of the local military kids and a handful of Bayside middle-school students. A girl named Twee flirted with my son. Grandma Jenny joined us in singing happy birthday. The *Simpsons* was a new TV hit and Simon got a Bart tee-shirt among his many gifts.

With my mom present, the boys preformed a piano recital on June 26. Kim Sconce presided over her two charges. The venue was classical with each son rendering a few short pieces. The boys shared the keyboard for the *Turkish March* by Beethoven. At the conclusion of the recital Zachary received a bust of Mozart and Simon of Bach. Of course, their mother beamed with joy as her children demonstrated their skills.

A few days after mom left, Frank arrived from San Antonio. He was relocating to Eielson Air Force Base in Alaska. He had just purchased a heavy-duty Chevy Suburban for the rigors of his new assignment. The video shows a family of seven: Frank, Lelia, Joshua, Lucinda, Johnny, Amber, and David. This was my first look at the two adopted children.

Jimmy Walker and family dropped by on July 4 and we all went to Muir Beach to frolic and to dig geoduck clams. I helped with the digging but not the eating.

Kim and some of her Korean neighbors enjoyed a feast of meaty bivalves. My brother continued his long trek north on July 5.

Kim and I encountered problems with the military renters in Tomah. The sergeant's wife was playing games, deducting money from the \$450 per month rent because "things weren't working right" in the house. I sent a letter to the Master Sergeant's commander and this problem was solved. However, we did not want the headache of a distant rental, so we sold that property. We had purchased the home for \$47,000 in 1985, sold it for \$55,000, but owed a \$22,000 mortgage.

Kim asked if she could invest the profit from the sale, \$33,000. She knew many Korean business women and offered this money in a Korean investment system, called a *key*. She got back \$40,000 at year's end and began the process again. Kim set aside this collection of cash for our eventual house purchase.

While I was adding names to my never-ending almanac, my wife was thriving at work. She loved the academic environment, the prestige, and the politics of university life. She began composing a *brag book* to document all her achievements. This would help her advance up the hierarchy.

The SFSU college of education was committed to Apple Computers and soon Kim brought home a Macintosh SE. This small desktop was the first time I viewed a Graphical User Interface (GUI) with something called a mouse. This bright interface was so much more playful than my dull DOS Computer. I joked with people at the time that we had a mixed marriage, "She was Apple and I was IBM".

Rather than watch TV, I acquired the habit of radio listening. I continued this practice for decades to come. On KQED public radio the day consisted of "Morning Edition", "Forum", "The World", "Marketplace", "All Things Considered", "Fresh Air", and the "BBC World Service". On weekends I looked forward to "Wait, Wait, Don't Tell Me" and "Car Talk".

On KFAX Christian radio, the day included "Through the Bible" with J. Vernon McGee, "Focus on the Family" with James Dobson, "Insight for Living" with Chuck Swindoll, "Grace to You" with John MacArthur, and the "Bible Answer Man" with Hank Hanegraaff. Of course, I didn't listen to all these shows all the time, but looking back, it is odd to consider how my waking/non-work moment were broken into sixty-minute segments. I knew the moment when these radio shows began and I was disappointed when the hour hand reminded me that I had missed a favorite listening pleasure.

In late July, my military position was under the spotlight. A division change of command was planned for August 20. This was a public spectacle. Brigadier General Hillhouse was replacing Major General Vukasin. These generals

determined what to do, the colonels decided how to do it, and I was responsible for carrying out day-to-day details. Over a few weeks, I made a hundred phone calls and sat in on a dozen meetings. This duty was awkward, reducing me to not much more than a glorified *go-fer*.

I video-taped the pomp and fanfare: a platform of VIPs in front of the headquarters, a few hundred soldiers in ranks on the parade field, the marching division band, three helicopters, and a cannon salute. It was professional, appreciated, and reflected well on me.

I also enjoyed my extra duty as Division Historical Officer. I spent several days sorting and cataloging a storage room filled with memorabilia. I got permission to set up a display at a turn in a staircase heading up to the General's office. I rotated items from time to time. Everyone seemed to appreciate my effort.

Just before school started, we headed to the Great Northwest for a visit. Kim saw some of her family, hanging out mostly with Pam. We enjoyed a picnic in Portland and I shot video at the homes of Jeanne, Susie, Eileen, and Pam.

When school picked up again, Zachary moved up from Bayside in Sausalito to Tamalpais High School in Mill Valley. My number one son gravitated toward geeks and nerds while cool number two was attracted to the new rap musicians like MC Hammer and Vanilla Ice. Kim reported that she loved her half-hour commute over the Golden Gate Bridge, down 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the far side of San Francisco. My commute remained at 120 paces.

When my family moved to the Bay Area, we realized we were moving into earthquake country. Since the day I had arrived in California, I had been feeling small tremors. It was odd. One time I sat studying at the dining room table with almanacs open and spread. Wilbur the cockatiel roosted on the chandelier above my head. Suddenly, Wilbur squawked and fluttered to the carpet. I thought to myself, *What is that crazy bird doing?* As fast as thought, the building quaked and dishes clanged.

These rumbles were prelude to the big event that occurred on the afternoon of October 17. Kim, Zachary, and I had just crossed the Golden Gate Bridge to shop at the new commissary. It was the grand opening. While in the rear of the store checking out hamburger meat, the floor tiles appeared to wave like water. Then I heard grocery items crashing to the ground. A few voices shouted "earthquake". Zachary was at my side, but Kim was standing in another aisle. My son pushed at a back door but it was locked, so we walked quickly out the way we entered. I remember the smell of pickle juice and the sight of scattered cereal boxes. Soon, Kim joined us outside, shaken. She said she had dropped a carton of pancake mix, tried to find us, then fled the store. We were able to re-cross the bridge to

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Fort Baker. Electricity was out, pictures had fallen to the floor, and the pendulum clock had stopped at 5:05.

At the moment of the quake, Simon reported he was in the back seat of a car cruising down Bridgeway avenue in Sausalito on his way to a basketball game. The driver thought he had blown a tire, when an oncoming car nearly front-ended him. He pulled to the curb and all had realized an earthquake had occurred.

At magnitude 6.9, the quake killed sixty-seven people and caused more than five billion dollars in damage. The upper deck of the Bay Bridge collapsed, buildings in the Marina district burned, and the Giants-A's World Series game was brought to a halt. A few days after the quake, a sergeant knocked on our door to hand us two boxes of ice cream. He said the stuff was about to melt and was told to pass it out to military residents. The Loma Prieta earthquake of 1989 was a singular experience for each of us.

A month or so after the quake, we drove the Pontiac to Reno, Nevada. We stayed the night in a casino hotel and poked our heads into a few of the gambling establishments. Simon snuck through the outside doors to look around only to have a security guard chase him out. Kim stayed inside long enough to lose a fist full of nickels.

On a Sunday afternoon, I drove Zachary, Simon, and a few of their friends to the Exploritorium, housed inside the Palace of the Fine Arts. The kids loved all the hands-on scientific exhibits. They also liked an item in the gift shop called a *Zube Tube*. This cylindrical object made a reverberating twang whenever struck. While the boys were playing, I purchased this noise-maker and smuggled it into the car. As we were driving home across the bridge, I said, "I bought you guys a gift and you'll never guess what it is."

At that very moment the car banged over a pothole and a twang emanated from the trunk. Zachary shouted, "We know what it is. We know what it is!"

Toward the end of the year, world-changing events were happening in Europe. On November 9, the Berlin Wall crumbled as thousands fled from East to West. This burst of freedom was a link in the chain of events that would downsize the U. S. Army and spell an end to Fort Baker as a military outpost.

I got the urge to drive north over the holiday school break. Kim wanted time to herself, so I headed up I5 with Zachary and Simon in the Sprint. I was glad I carried tire chains. A blizzard had dumped a few feet of snow on the Siskiyou Pass and without the chains we would not have made it into Ashland. We took advantage of the winter weather and rented snowmobiles in south Oregon. I celebrated my fortieth birthday at mom's house, blowing out a candle stuck into a carrot cake. Our Christmas visit was cut short by the snowy weather. On the return trip we headed south coastal Highway 1, stopping for the night in Eureka.

On New Year's Eve the four of us made our Luke Chapter Two resolutions; to grow physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually. At the clang of midnight, I thanked God for rescuing me from the sad day exactly one year earlier.

## 1990

On New Year's Day, my family drove to the summit of Mount Tamalpias as a farewell activity. From the fire lookout station, we gazed upon that amazing combination of seascape, mountain-scape, and cityscape. I spoke to Kim and the boys about my upcoming military duty and how much I would miss them all. On January 2, I packed my duffle bag and on the next day Kim dropped me off at the San Francisco Airport.

I was on my way to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, to attend the Command and General Staff College (CGSC). Up to this point in my military career, all training had been focused upon combat skills; basic, infantry, and engineer. At Fort Leavenworth, the aim was wider. It was a graduate school for soldiers. The college "educates and develops leaders for the full spectrum of operation; acts as lead agent for the army's leader development programs; and advances the art and science of the profession of arms."

At CGSC I learned how the army operates. My eyes were opened to its different branches and functions. I learned about G1/personnel, G2/intelligence, G3/operations, G4/logistics, and G5/civil affairs. I learned how to lead meetings and conduct briefings; to present my commander with a minimum of three options: one is do nothing, two is limited, and three is risky. As a staff officer, my function was to explain these scenarios, state my preference, but understood my commander decides.

I remember the long classroom days, the organized sports, and study sessions. I brought along my reference books and in the evenings added names to my growing almanac. The volumes were in two types: books of famous people with birthdays and chronological books of notable events. The former provided the start dates and the latter achievement dates. This detailed work helped pass the time while five weeks away from family.

I was overjoyed at my return to Fort Baker, remarking at how both boys had grown. In Building 533, my G3 section had also grown. Captain Ray Nagy was an AGR tasked to look after drill sergeants and Sergeant Butch Johnson performed as his enlisted counterpart. I began to focus more on command briefings—something I had learned at CGSC.

Kim and I became more active at Trinity Community Church. We did some investigating and discovered an Assembly of God Bible Quiz organization. For about one year we had a solid trio of Senior Bible Quizzers in Zachary, Simon,

and Peter Nelken. We launched the team at a church potluck when the youngsters challenged the Pastor and two deacons to a Bible-quoting contest using the briefcase buzzers. The quizzers were quicker and the congregation supported the team.

A few weeks after that, Pastor Nelken asked me privately if I wanted to serve the church as a deacon. He asked only one question, which struck me as odd: “Were you ever married before Kim?” After an assurance that I had no previous marriages, the congregation voted me a deacon of the church.

I taught an occasional Sunday class for teenagers, my two sons being semi-willing attendees. I tried to explain child-rearing options to them, giving this analogy: “There are three ways that you can raise a dog. First, you can keep it on a short leash—no freedom at all; second, you can keep the animal in the back yard within the safe confines of a fence; third, you can let the dog run wild in the streets.” After discussing the pros and cons of each option, every teenager voted he or she was definitely option one. And I was so confident I was an option-two dad!

My duties with the army continued. The evaluation system at the 91<sup>st</sup> Division appeared strange to me. My rater and senior rater were both part-time officers whom I typically saw only one week-end per month. My rater, Major Schmidt, wrote this about me in his annual report:

Captain Foreman is a highly intelligent officer and is capable of producing outstanding work. His performance during this rating period has been acceptable. He has performed his assigned duties in maintaining key trainer statistics, the Division Command Briefing, the Division historical files, and the management of the ARRTC school quotas in a competent manner. His report on drill sergeant attrition for TY 89 was excellent. He also did an excellent job in successfully writing the Letters of Instruction for the Division Change of Command. Although very capable, Captain Foreman is not a self-starter and usually does not seek out additional tasks or offer assistance to fellow members in the section even though he often appears to have time available.

My senior rater was Lieutenant Colonel Heil. He was a close friend with my day-to-day task master, Dan Cherick. I detected Dan’s voice in this evaluation.

Captain Foreman possesses the necessary skills to be a truly outstanding officer. His superior intellect and organizational abilities can produce exceptional results. He fails to demonstrate however, the initiative, enthusiasm, and drive necessary to sustain more than a satisfactory effort. He excels at setting up systems and initially organizing data but loses interest when tasked with routine maintenance and updating of those systems. Captain Foreman possesses both the competence and potential to be a significant contributor to the section and the AGR Program.

Ouch! This Officer Evaluation Report was difficult to read, but spot on. They were an accurate portrait of the soldier wearing my uniform.

On May 22, Zachary celebrated his fifteenth birthday. It was a quiet affair. His mom baked him a cake and adorned it with his name. I video-taped him opening gifts and also taped Kim as she showed off her first academic publication; “Cognitive Characteristics and Initial Acquisition of Computer Programming Competence.” That ten-page article held a prominent place in her Brag Book.

Simon’s birthday was only a month away and he wanted a special gift, a \$500 bicycle. I was startled at the expense, but agreed to pay half of the amount as a birthday present. I would *double-ate* whatever money he was able to raise. For the next month, my second son did everything he could to get \$250—doing extra chores, selling some old stuff, and even borrowing small amounts.

I helped him out in an entrepreneurial effort. Fort Baker was an ideal location for runners and bicyclists. The post sat between the beautiful city of Sausalito and the awe-inspiring Marin Headlands. (As a matter of historical fact, the mountain bike was invented to traverse these same headlands.) Simon agreed to sell cold water and sport drinks for one dollar per bottle. We went together to the commissary and I bought about \$20 worth of drinks. I then liberated a hundred pounds of ice cubes from the Division mess hall and used the top carrier of my car as a bathtub-cooler. Simon stood along the bike trail waving cold drinks at sweaty passers-by. After one weekend, my hard-working son stashed a hundred dollars in his pocket.

On his thirteenth birthday, we went to Odyssey Bike in Sausalito and Simon bought his Trek bike for \$480 plus tax. He paid his half in cash. My half I paid with a check. Sometimes Simon joined his mom and me on bike rides around Murray Circle and into the Headlands. Back in 1990 the underside of the Golden Gate Bridge afforded unrestricted access. I have a few beautiful pictures of Kim peddling her bike under the gorgeous bridge.

We whiled away the summer months. I continued to labor at my almanac and Kim taught summer school, putting aside as much money as possible for our future house. We strolled at Baker Beach in Presidio but left quickly when we spied nude sun bathers. We also dropped in at the Arts Fair in Sausalito, where Zachary was volunteering as a guide.

Kim’s sister, Hyun Hee dropped by with her son. When she left, Sung-yung stayed with us for a month. His mom wanted him to absorb American culture and learn the English language. Stephen, as he was christened, was three years younger than Simon. The three boys hung around the neighborhood and walked across the Golden Gate Bridge.

Before the start of school, five of us went on an outing to Lake Tahoe. The August temperature soared and my boys jumped off a pier into the chilly waters. Stephen was a bit timid and stayed on shore. When we arrived home, my nephew returned to Korea with his mom.

In the Bay Area, Fleet Week occurred over the Labor Day weekend. A highlight of this annual navy celebration was a flyover by the Blue Angels. The first thunder of a low-flying aircraft always caught me by surprise, but after hearing two or three of the sonic blasts, I said to myself, *Fleet Week is back*. While living at Fort Baker, the fly-over was a crowd-gathering event. Hundreds of folks flocked to the parade field to gaze into the sky and listen to the rumble. I had to show my army ID to MPs in order to reach my quarters.

September 4 was back-to-school day. Zachary talked about trying out for the water polo team and Kim sported a new, short, wavy hair-doo. Simon was playful. He bought a whole new eighth-grade wardrobe and spread the pieces on the floor. A paper plate with hand-drawn eyes, nose, and smile provided his head.

Just when I figured the U.S. Army was becoming obsolete, Sadaam Hussein sent his Iraqi army into Kuwait. President Bush and other world leaders railed against this aggression, but little seemed to happen. Then I began to notice subtle changes. In September, the 91<sup>st</sup> Division was ratcheted to a higher alert status. In October, the active army sought reservists with airborne training. I was qualified, but the army had little need of a forty-year-old captain. War preparations were afoot, but most was outside public view. For the remainder of 1990, sabers rattled across the Middle East.

Both of my sons were athletes. Simon was playing basketball at Bayside Middle School and Zachary joined the water polo team at Tam High. Kim and I attended some of their games to cheer and shoot video.

My sons also competed in Senior Bible Quizzing at Trinity Community Church. We traveled to four competitions in Citrus Heights near Sacramento. Peter Nelken dropped out and I couldn't recruit a third competitor, so we disbanded. In any case, Zachary and Simon lost interest and I didn't want to force them to study the Gospel of John.

Kim began to blossom as a Korean writer. She attended workshops and entered competitions. At one event, she participated as both judge and competitor. My wife won first place in creative writing. The certificate was written in Korean with "Kim Hyun Deok" as grand winner. In the judge's signature block, her name in English appeared as "Dr. Kim Foreman."

My fifteen-year-old son was certainly a good sport. Grade school kids at church put on a Christmas skit called *Psalty*. Zachary dressed as a book (Psaltery) and provided

the deep voice to accompany squeaky children. After the Christmas carols ended, twenty kids pulled on Psalty's fake arms until they accorded across the stage.

For my forty-first birthday, I bought myself a new computer system. It was my first color monitor, first mouse, and first CD ROM. I was so amazed to see color animations dance across my screen. For Christmas my sons received the video game *Where in the World is Carman San Diego?*

At the end of the year, my family drove up to Longview to celebrate my mom's seventy-fifth birthday. Jack flew in from Texas so all six of mom's children posed around her for a photo-op. It was a Polish-themed celebration with everyone wearing red sweatshirts on which was emblazoned "Jak sie masz? Dobrze" (How are you? Good). There was plenty of Polish food and polka, before forty of mom's descendants sang to her *Happy Birthday*. My two sons gave brief testimonials to their grandmother's love and care. We stayed New Year's Eve at mom's house, catching up with Jack and Barbara then left the next morning.

## 1991

When we arrived home on January second, I planned a second outing. This one to Hawaii. I had been investigating *space available* military flights connecting Travis AFB to Hickam AFB near Honolulu. The four of us packed and drove to Travis. As our wait time stretched from two to four to six hours. I asked the sergeant behind the desk what was going on. He was reluctant to tell me. Finally, he escorted me to a private room and whispered, "All available aircraft are being diverted to the Middle East to support coalition forces. Sorry, but you aren't going to catch a flight today."

A few weeks after our disappointment, I watched TV as Desert Storm commenced with Air Force bombers leading the way. I could sense a national pride as my U.S. Army helped liberate Kuwait. I became a fan of General Colin Powell. In a short time, battle dress uniforms switched from forest camo to desert camo.

I grew tired of my little Chevy Sprint and began looking for a replacement. I planned cross-country drives so I was shopping for something more comfortable. While passing through San Francisco, I spotted the car I wanted— a 1987 Peugeot Wagon. This heavy-duty vehicle looked like the more expensive Mercedes wagon, but at half the price. I closed the deal at \$5000. The *geot* had 90,000 miles when purchased and while in my service surpassed 200,000 miles.

Kim discovered the Korea Center in San Francisco. This was a non-profit organization occupying a large building in Japan town. Soon Professor Kim was a leader then shortly after a board member. Her motive for the greater part was to promote her home country, but to a lesser degree she was also building her brag book in order to attain Full Professor.

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In the Spring of 1991, I have videos of Zachary in high-school concerts performing both madrigals of the 1600s and doo-wop of the 1950s. I also recorded Zachary receiving his Star scout award at a Troop 14 court of honor.

I accompanied Zachary on a ten-mile hike through the Marin Headlands. He strove to memorize the poem *Gunga Din* by Rudyard Kipling and I tried to memorize *The Raven* by Edgar Allan Poe. For about a year I was able to recite all eighteen stanzas.

Simon proved to be a track star (like his dad). He was a leaper; setting middle school records in high jump, long jump, and triple jump. I loved to catch his motion in mid-air with my camera at ground level.

The 1991 Officer Evaluation Report I received in May was better than the one of 1990. Major Schmidt began "Captain Foreman's performance has improved significantly during this rating period."

LTC Heil added:

Captain Foreman has demonstrated a substantially improved level of performance during this rating period. He has personally chosen to become involved in section activities and duties and has actively sought additional responsibilities. He was assigned as the fulltime coordinator for MATC-92, the section's most significant mission, and has done an outstanding job. He has demonstrated both the competence and potential for assignment to increasingly responsible positions in the AGR Program.

Zachary was already thinking about college. For his sixteenth birthday, he requested money for his college fund. How could a parent refuse that? A picture shows him beaming as he holds a certificate of deposit (CD) for \$3000.

I didn't realize it was a big deal, but on June 12, Simon graduated from Bayside Middle School. He rented a tux with bow tie and gelled his hair. He was certainly looking sharp as I took pictures of him walking forward to pick up his diploma.

In mid-June we drove the Peugeot to Longview for a wedding. On the fifteenth, Laura Zimmerman married Jonathan Umfleet. Kim and I were onlookers, but Zachary and Simon were candle lighters bedecked in tuxedo and boutonniere. I joked with Simon about wearing two tuxedos within two weeks. The wedding was a reunion of sorts with three sisters and one brother present. Terry walked Laura down the aisle, the groom kissed the bride, and the celebration continued with picture taking by Lake Sacajawea.

While in town we also visited Auntie Pam. She was in the process of buying a business called *Verti-Burger* located in Portland. She was proud to show us around her potential place. Pam asked Kim to lend her funds to buy the burger joint. I was skeptical, mentioning we were saving money to buy a house. Kim wanted

to help her sister in some way. I gave in, but put the maximum at \$10,000. It may have been a Korean custom to lend money to family members, but to me it spelled unhappy entanglement.

For Simon's fourteenth birthday, we bought him a Sega Genesis. *Sonic the Hedgehog* was the popular video game. Simon also received an uncomfortable gift, a set of braces to straighten his teeth.

I remember the Walker family visiting us at Fort Baker on the Fourth of July. For this trip they brought a new addition, Jael, just two weeks old. We tried to grill burgers in the back yard, but gale force winds forced us inside. The fireworks were a failure too. Howling fog through the Golden Gate obscured our vision and reduced the spectacle to an occasional pop.

At that time, I was still taking photographs with my 1975 Pentax camera. Pieces of it began to fall off and break. Soon I placed this bulky camera into limbo storage. I never used it again, but it was too expensive just to throw away. I bought a smaller pocket camera and subscribed to Seattle Film Works to develop their special film.

A sad event occurred in mid-July. We lost a family member. Wilbur the cockatiel died from a malignant lump under his wing. Simon was heartbroken. The bird had brought such joy and whistles into the house. We placed Wilbur in a box and buried our friend on the side of a hill behind our quarters.

Boy Scout Zachary spent his first summer at Camp Royaneh, near Cazadero in Sonoma County. For ten days he canoed, rowed, built fires and earned merit badges. Simon went with me to drop off Zachary and we all spent one night in a cabin. On the return trip Simon and I stopped in Calistoga to buy another cockatiel. My son was reluctant, but I encouraged him. He named the yellow bird Chester.

During the summer, Zachary invited his Tam buddies over to play hours of *Risk*. The gameboard lay open for days at a time with color tokens covering the map of the world.

Kim continued to invest in her Korean Club. After her monthly meetings she would bring home a stack of cash. In August, Simon counted two hundred one-hundred-dollar bills, threw the currency in the air and let the Franklins rain down on his head. He then stacked and counted the money a second time. He loved playing rich.

I began to train for a marathon, running five miles every day before lunch. A long-distance run was on my bucket list and at forty-one years old, it was now or never. I did compete in a few ten-k runs, but the twenty-six miles of marathon was beyond my bulk. The closest I got was ten non-stop miles in one maximal effort.

Just before school started, Kim sent her two sons to *Korea camp*. This three-day event, designed for Americanized teenagers, put participants back in touch

with their Korean roots. Zachary and Simon particularly liked the physical games. They reported some of the youth were on the wild side.

On September 2, the boys returned to school, both to Tam this time. Zachary was a junior and Simon a freshman. Zachary earned his driver's permit, and sometimes would drive with a parent in the passenger seat.

I had always been fascinated by gadgets and came across something special while thumbing through a computer magazine. It was a digital Bible—King James Version. I special-ordered this handheld device which sported a small keyboard and a three-line display. Now I was able to search Scripture by chapter and verse, as well as by key word. I sat my paper Bible aside for the next several years and carried this device to church. I showed off my expensive toy to Jim Francis who was so intrigued, he bought his own immediately. At \$200, Kim was not so impressed with my purchase. She referred to my new toy as “Bible Junks.”

In September I learned that the Engineer Plans Officer was leaving the 91<sup>st</sup> Division. Major Curry held the position I sought. I was engineer qualified and an over-ripe captain who could only be promoted once in an O-4 slot. I petitioned the HQ for the re-assignment listing five reasons:

1. The person in the position now has accepted a slot elsewhere.
2. It is an O-4 position and I have been promotable to major since October 1989.
3. Because the division is scheduled for re-configuration in FY 93, it would be difficult for an outside AGR to PCS for a 24-month tour.
4. It is important to make the transfer soon to allow for overlap.
5. If Division inactivation takes place, dealing with property and buildings will be a top priority activity. I am already familiar with the Division, its property and its personnel.

I remember a drill weekend—October 19 and 20—when the sky at Fort Baker grew black, especially along the eastern horizon. Then I smelled smoke. Next ash fell to the ground along with pieces of blackened paper. We learned the darkness, smoke, and ash was caused by a major fire in the Oakland Hills. When the flames were finally doused, twenty-five people were killed and over three-thousand homes destroyed in a massive fire storm.

In November, I received a response to my request for re-assignment: “The 91<sup>st</sup> Division has concurred with Captain Foreman's reassignment to be the Engineer Plans officer.” Yippee! Finally, I was entitled to wear my major rank and receive major pay. As Engineer Plans Officer my job was as follows:

Ensure that the Engineer Section fully supports the Division mission. Carry out BASOPS function as Division Facility manager. Deal with work orders, maintenance, and new construction. Plan and prepare for the excess Division facilities due to Reorganization. Plan and prepare for the acquisition of Division facilities at stations sites. Oversee programs that are facility related such as environmental compliance and energy conservation. Supervise the two enlisted soldiers in the Engineer Section.

Personally, I felt better suited as a classroom trainer than as a facility manager, but I needed the promotion for three reasons: the prestige of rank, the bump up in salary, and the opportunity to acquire better quarters.

With promotion orders in hand, I visited family housing at Presidio. I knew of a single-family dwelling that was newly vacant just up the hill from 521B. This new place at 525 Fort Baker tripled my commute from 120 steps to 360 steps, and was certainly a step up in quality. We now had a third bedroom, separate dining room with chandelier, and more privacy. On December 10, I enlisted my army friends to hand-carry furniture and boxes up the hill into our new digs. Kim was delighted with my new rank, new pay check, and especially our new surroundings.

A week before Christmas, I met with my new boss, Lieutenant Colonel Savage. The Division Engineer and I spoke of the uncertainty surrounding the 91<sup>st</sup> Division. With the Soviet Union in collapse, the end of the cold war seemed at hand. Therefore, the future of the 91<sup>st</sup> Training Division also appeared in doubt. All reserve properties from Fresno to Ukiah would have to be evaluated and their property scrutinized. That job would fall to the Division Engineer.

A week after my meeting with LTC Savage, Mikhail Gorbachev stepped down as leader of the USSR and Boris Yeltsin stood in his place as head of the Russian Federation. I spoke with Frank about these momentous events. He reminded me as kids we learned to hide under school desks to protect ourselves from atomic bombs. Lelia commented it was like a great darkness lifting from the back of her mind. She was grateful her children wouldn't have to live under a cold war threat. The end of communism in Russia served as a Christmas gift for the world. It was an unexpected turn of events and an amazing way to end 1991.

## 1992

As the new year began, I moved into a private office on the second floor of Building 533. Gone was the day-to-day supervision of Dan Cherrick and the need to coordinate my calendar with two captains and two sergeants. I was on my own seeing LTC Savage a few times a month, and phoning in every Friday. This loner life was more to my liking even though the duties were more mundane.

After learning the ropes, I discovered I could meet all the requirements of my job in just a few hours of effort per day. I devoted excess time to taking extended lunch breaks, running five miles per day, and developing my almanac. I settled on a program called *dBase* to sort and catalogue my biographical data. I also spent hours studying programs like *WordPerfect* and *Lotus 1-2-3*. I strove to learn as much as possible about desktop computing.

Eventually, I felt guilty for not doing military work so I initiated a plan to visit each of the Division's twenty sites. My proposal was approved by HQ and I laid out a schedule for the following six months.

The winter was unusually cold and stormy. Snow actually fell on the Golden Gate Bridge and carpeted our back yard. I have a photo of Simon posing with a hand-held snow man. We wanted to see more of the white stuff, so we headed to the Sierra mountains.

We stopped first in Auburn to join with the James Walker family, then headed to Tahoe for two nights. The roads were treacherous and required chains. Kim and I enjoyed the bunny slopes; James and Val skied the bigger hills using the lift, while Zachary and Simon had a ball plying the grounds on snow boards. That was my last time on skis.

Simon was playing freshman basketball and I have video of him dribbling and shooting on the high school court. When the season ended, I visited the Presidio facilities manager and asked if a basketball pole and hoop could be set up in the chapel parking lot. It helped that I was now the division engineer. Soon the Fort Baker kids enjoyed additional recreation.

Both Simon and Zachary went out for track. Zach was chagrined that his little brother outperformed him in high jump and triple jump. I was pleased that Simon found a sport in which he could excel.

My family visited Presidio once a week to drop by the commissary or stop by the PX. We three guys also got our haircuts at the PX concession. Simon called the very old barbers *holocaust survivors*, because of their heavy accents. On one visit, we made it a point to eat at the brand-new Burger King. It was the first fast-food joint on post and we all loved it. I told the boys this particular restaurant sat on the choicest piece of real estate in all America.

At Tamalpais High School a teacher named Yuri Suzdaleff was a Soviet émigré. He set up a sister-city relationship between Mill Valley and Olympic City in Russia. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, he traveled to Russia with groups of high school students. Kim and I thought it was worth the few thousand dollars for Zachary to experience this part of the world. With five fellow Tam students, Zachary was touring Moscow and Olympic City.

On April 25, I flew round trip to Huntsville, Alabama, to attend Engineer Training. The course concerned facility downsizing which was my pressing concern at the time. I was away from home for about a week. While away I heard news of the not guilty verdict in the beating of Rodney King. I watched the motel TV showing the rioting in L.A. that followed.

The day I got home; my sons were participating in a protest march from Tam High School to the Golden Gate Bridge. The riots were also a major news story in the Korean community because many of the L.A. shops that were burned and looted belonged to Korean immigrants.

In May I attended a 91<sup>st</sup> Division conference in Reno, Nevada, to discuss re-organization. LTC Savage was the featured speaker since facilities management was central to the planning. I whispered in his ear as he held the microphone. My boss appreciated my expertise.

The venue was really odd. Our hotel rooms were on one side of a casino and our conference room against the opposite wall. I remember a dozen uniformed officers traipsing past slot machines to attend our sessions. I figured the Division saved a bundle of money meeting in Nevada.

Throughout March and April, I had visited several local USAR units, all within driving distance. In June I made overnight trips to Ukiah and Lathrop. After a tour of all Division properties, I spent days creating a command presentation. By combining narrative with still photos, voice, and video, I produced a polished briefing for Division Headquarters—a top-notch dog and pony show. I got word that even the generals were impressed with the quality of my work.

When Zachary turned seventeen in May, we presented him with a car—the red Pontiac Sunbird. He was happy as was Kim. She got to buy a brand-new vehicle. After stopping at several lots Kim decided to buy a Saturn. Simon suggested the color gray. We paid only \$9000 cash, getting the maximum rebate of \$5000 for using our GM credit card. This new line of cars was supposed to be special, but Kim had issues with the Saturn over the next six years.

Zachary drove his newly-acquired Pontiac to Camp Royanah for a week of scouting. Kim drove her new Saturn to photography classes in Mill Valley. She had purchased a fancy SLR camera and for several afternoons she and her class practiced their skills in the Marin Headlands.

While Kim was learning about my passion—picture taking—I was learning about hers—desktop computing. I bought a new software program called Microsoft *Windows 3.1* and began mastering it. Windows enabled a Graphical User Interface which I thought looked just as cool as Kim's Apple Macintosh.

Kim enrolled Zachary in a Journalism Camp at SFSU. He was able to hang out in a dorm room with other 12<sup>th</sup> graders. I not sure what he learned concerning journalism, but when he returned home, he was an expert juggler.

On the Fourth of July, Johnny Foreman came by for a two-week stay. He said he was tired of Alaska. At eleven years old, Zachary and Simon treated him as a little brother. He tagged along as his big cousins took him to sights in San Francisco and Marin.

Just after Johnny left, we had a tragedy in the family. It happened like this: I remember leaving my quarters in the middle of the day with an arm full of books. I must have left the front door slightly ajar. It was open just enough for our neighbor's cat to enter the premises, pass through two rooms and seize the bird.

When I returned home a few minutes later, I saw the front door open and yellow feathers scattered in the house. I saw the cat lurking in the shrubbery and chased it away. I began looking for Chester and eventually located him through faint squeaks. The bird was yet alive and I rushed him to the pet hospital in Sausalito.

The veterinarian did what he could, even putting a splint on the bird's wing. But the trauma was too great and Chester died the next morning. It was sad and I apologized to Simon for my neglect. We buried Chester next to Wilbur at the top of the hill. Two dead cockatiels were sufficient for Simon and we packed away the bird cage with all its paraphernalia.

The summer Olympics were held in Barcelona, Spain, in late July. In later years, I wrote a newspaper article about Kim, Zachary, Simon, and I watching a portion of that Olympics on TV. I called the piece "The Olympic Cheer Test".

During the summer of 1992 all four of us were watching the Barcelona Olympics on TV. Specifically, we were watching the marathon. The last mile of this race was really exciting. Three competitors were running neck and neck. The lead runner was an American. Close behind was a Korean runner named Hwang Young-Cho.

My wife wasn't paying close attention, but when she heard the name "Hwang Young-Cho" her ears perked up. She had never heard his name before and didn't know much about the marathon, but when she saw Korean flags waving, she started cheering wildly "Go. Go. Go." When Hwang pulled out ahead, she was jumping up and down. "Run. Run. Run." Suddenly, the American ran ahead again.

My two sons began cheering "Go. Go. Go."

My wife's face got red. She yelled "You're Korean. Don't cheer for him".

They said "we're not Korean".

After a minute of shouting at the TV, Hwang Young-Cho passed the finish line first. Ecstasy possessed Kim's body. I couldn't believe how passionate my wife could be about sports. (Understand. This is a woman who won't even touch the sports section of a newspaper.)

What explains this? After all, she is an American citizen. If you Korean readers cheered for the Korean runner, you are Korean at heart. It doesn't matter what country you adopted as your home.

I realized that Zachary was one year away from high school graduation and Simon was not far behind. I began anticipating this empty nest and wanted to spend quality time with my two sons. Looking for adventure, I determined to make a road trip all the way to Alaska. I was able to take military leave from August 4 to 21.

This trek began with the four of us driving to Portland in the Peugeot. Zachary served as an excellent second driver. In Portland I attended a military conference while my family enjoyed fellowship with relatives on both the Kim and Foreman sides. For three nights we stayed at the Red Lion Hotel along the Columbia River.

With Zachary and Simon, I then began the long road trip north. Kim lingered in Oregon a few more days before Pam drove her back to Fort Baker for some sister time.

We three guys drove north through Washington State, up to Vancouver, B.C., then across British Columbia to the start of the Alaska Highway at Dawson Creek. Here we moteled for the night and side-tripped across the border into the province of Alberta.

The next day we began the 1390-mile route of the Alaska Highway. We passed through the top of British Columbia, then across the bottom of the Yukon Territory. I remember slowing the car for moose and bugs plastering the windshield. We stopped at a hot spring, but once in our swim suits, the mosquitoes were so brutal, we hopped into the steamy water then right out again. There was a rule that whoever did the driving got to pick the accompanying music. I heard the sound track from *Aladdin* more than I cared to.

I remember driving north as the sun was rising. When I rounded a corner, brilliant light dazzled in my face. I shoved the visor down and cupped my hand over my sensitive eyes. A motorcycle RCMP pulled me over. He saw me swerve and figured I might be intoxicated. After a sober conversation, he let me drive on.

We spent one night in Whitehorse. I slept in the station wagon and the boys shared a tent. We crossed the Alaska boundary and continued to the terminus of the Alaska Highway at Delta Junction. In another hundred miles, we passed Eielson Air Base then stopped in North Pole, Alaska, a little town just short of Fairbanks. As I pulled up to their log home, Frank and the family greeted us. He was relieved we had successfully navigated our long journey.

We remained in North Pole for three nights. I hung out with Frank talking about God, dentistry, and life in Alaska. We hiked all over town and up hillsides. We visited local sites and toured the Air Force Base. Zachary and Simon hung out with their cousin Joshua and his new girlfriend, Stacy.

Earlier I had made a bargain with Simon. For a year he had wanted to sport an earring. He agreed to wait—mostly at the insistence of his mother—and I promised he could get his ear pierced in Alaska. One of our activities in Fairbanks was to visit a tattoo/piercing parlor and fit Simon with a tiny left earring.

Frank had not explored the state much outside of Fairbanks, so he decided to join us for part of our return trip. We headed south along Highway 3 skirting the fringe of Denali National Park. We wanted to view Mount McKinley, but the sky was too overcast. The Peugeot did lose its muffler on a gravel road just inside the national park. We passed numerous glacier-fed waterfalls and drove under the Alaska pipeline.

While caravanning south in two vehicles something strange happened. I wrote about it at the time:

A big part of the adventure was losing Josh. This is how it happened. Frank and I were driving and stopped in the middle of nowhere to consult maps. During this two-minute stop, Joshua hopped out of the car to *take a whiz*. He was wearing only tennis shoes without a shirt. He says he climbed over Simon who was sleeping.

Frank and I drove away, each thinking that Josh was in the other car. After two hours or so, we realized that Josh was not among us. Frank's son was seventeen years old, but still we panicked. We called the highway patrol and finally caught up with Josh at a service station in Wasilla. The days were long and even at 10:00 p.m. there was plenty of light. Josh said he lifted stones to keep warm.

To memorialize this mishap, Josh re-enacted the series of events as I took photos: 1. Josh climbing out of the Suburban over sleeping Simon. 2. Joshua with back turned taking a whizz. 3. Josh chasing after the fleeing car. 4. Josh bare from his waist up, thumb up, trying to hitch a ride.

With Joshua safely in the Suburban, we looked around Anchorage then spent the night camped out in two cars and two tents. I acquired a new muffler during a lunch stop near Anchorage. We viewed oil tankers in Valdez then headed north to join up with the Alaska Highway. Frank parted from us in Tok and his family returned to North Pole.

We returned to the U.S.A. by a different route. In northern British Columbia we left the Alaska Highway and drove a more rugged road called the Cassiar Highway. We stopped along the route many times to marvel at the glaciers and waterfalls. I grabbed a football sized chunk of glacier and packed it into the ice chest.

We popped into the Alaska panhandle at a tiny town called Hyder, dubbed "the friendliest ghost town in Alaska". Although the town was located in America, we

bought supplies in Canadian dollars. We camped out near Hyder, then continued south. The Cassiar Highway may have been a shorter route distance-wise, but much of the roadway was gravel, slowing our Peugeot to 40 MPH.

Two days later we arrived in Longview. I remember putting the remnant of the glacier chunk into my mom's freezer. I spoke with Eileen while in Longview. She related how the three sisters had taken mom to a hospital for psychological testing. Our mother was diagnosed with dementia. Shelley Walker was now living with mom providing her with some live-in help.

The next day, I placed the ice sliver in my glass of cola. As I crunched the glacier with my teeth, I regretted that this great Alaskan adventure was so soon over. After a day's rest Zachary and I drove the final ten hours to Fort Baker; altogether an adventure of 7200 miles.

When I returned home, I asked Kim how she had spent her time in my absence. She answered, "I was shopping for real estate. I know your army tour is almost done and I want to stay in Marin. I've been looking mostly in Mill Valley."

"That's a good thing," I replied. "I think I have a few more years with the 91<sup>st</sup> Division. I've only been in this engineer slot for eight months and with the re-organization, I think they need me around a while longer. I'd like to do six years of active duty here, then put in two more years as a reservist. That way I could earn my twenty-year retirement."

Just before school began, a big event occurred at Fort Baker. *Escape from Alcatraz* was a much-publicized triathlon. After a swim from Alcatraz Island, a run through San Francisco, and a bike ride in the Marin Headlands, the triathlon ended at Fort Baker. As facility manager of division property, I was asked to be on hand at the finish line. Zachary and Simon joined me in passing out water bottles and spraying cyclists. For our effort, each of us received an *Escape from Alcatraz* tee shirt.

When school started up, Zachary entered his senior year at Tamalpais High School and Simon was two years behind him. Zachary was now driving the Pontiac into school. He was typically running late and a few neighbors complained that he was speeding down Murray Circle too fast. Zachary was also taking honors/college prep classes. He was striving to graduate at the top of his high school class.

As Kim began the 1992-1993 school year, she was promoted from assistant to associate professor. With this advancement she also received a raise and a private office. Kim was overjoyed with her academic profession and future prospects.

Kim phoned her mother inviting her to drop by before Christmas break. She so wanted her mom to visit her campus, her classroom, and her private office. Kim always said it was her mother who inspired and motivated her success. She anticipated how proud her mom might be of her. Maybe she would even have a new house by the end of the year.

We began looking at homes in earnest. Kim had accumulated about \$65,000 from her Korean club and had reclaimed \$15,000 from Pam. On August 12, we sold our property in Eugene for \$62,000, clearing \$30,000. I also got a note from Wells Fargo bank qualifying us for a \$200,000 loan. That put our house-buying limit at \$310,000. We settled on a neighborhood called *Marinview* in the hills above Tam High School.

Over the course of two weeks, we looked at a dozen properties. The market was tough for sellers and many places went un-sold. We gave our prospective homes descriptive names like, *grouchy-guy house*, *two-dog house*, and *mansion house*. Finally, we bid for the two-dog house at \$305,000. This property was located at the end of a cul-de-sac and was occupied by three single guys—refugees from the Oakland fires. The house appeared run down and cluttered. But that was a bargaining chip.

The owner—who lived in Hawaii—countered with \$325,000. We couldn't come up with that amount and figured we had lost the property. However, on September 21, our real estate agent called to say the owner would work with us. She agreed to accept our promissory note of \$20,000 and the deal was closed.

On the very next day, I received unfortunate news. The division adjutant approached my desk and asked me to follow him to the Chief of Staff. I was handed a letter which read in part: "Subject – Results of the AGR continuation board. This letter is to inform you that the continuation board did not recommend you for continuation in the AGR program."

A week later, on October 7, I received my official orders informing me of my *de-selection*. "You are released from active duty, not by reason of physical disability, and assigned to the USAR Control Group effective January 4, 1993. You are involuntarily separated and authorized to receive full separation pay."

My inglorious end came as a bolt from the blue. The action could not be undone. I figured two things conspired to doom my AGR career. First was the bad OER I had received in 1990. Second was my long-delayed promotion. I was barely a major when the continuation board considered my records.

Events progressed quickly. Two days after I received orders for involuntary separation, Kim and I signed papers for the property at 306 Ashton Lane with a move-in date set for November first. The tenants had three weeks to vacate the property.

It seemed to me, from my humble perspective, that God had orchestrated the whole concert of events in our behalf. I had maintained my military job just long enough to qualify for the bank loan; no job/no loan. Also, because I was involuntarily dismissed from active duty, I was handed three months of paid leave/readjustment time. In addition, I would be getting a separation check of

\$32,000 in January. As much as the summary dismissal hurt my ego, it was much to my advantage for the army to release me rather than for me to release the army.

Plus, the timing was perfect. The new house was in hand just as we were forced to clear military quarters. I couldn't help but think of the Bible verse, Romans 8:28. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

We received tragic news in mid-October. Kim's mother was flying from Seattle when she suffered a stroke descending into Seoul. She was forced to spend a few months in Korea where Hyun Hee looked after her. Kim felt so bad and lamented for years to come, "My mom never got the chance to see me in front of a university classroom. She would have been so proud of me."

I found myself in an odd situation. I talked with my supervisors and all said I was on transition leave and permissive TDY until my termination date of January 4. I still had an office, military quarters, and a position until that date. I explained to them my plan to vacate all by November first. That was no problem. My engineer successor would arrive in December.

I carried a form called *Installation Clearance Record* and shuffled from the career counselor, to the dental clinic, to the finance office, to the personnel register, to the provost marshal, and to the mail room. All was complete except for clearing my quarters at 525 Fort Baker. That wouldn't happen until November 7.

Since I had unstructured days in my engineer office, I plugged away at *The Almanac of Comparative Biography*. Just before leaving the Division, I pulled an all-nighter and worked the printer for six hours to run off 539 pages of my opus magnus. The first proof was finally complete.

Kim, Zachary, Simon and I spent our last day at Fort Baker on the last day of October, 1992, a day of trick-or-treating prior to All Saints Day.

## Chapter 20

# NESTLED

November 1992 to December 1999  
Mill Valley, California

*Go your way for God now accepts your works. Live joyfully with  
the wife whom you love for that is your portion in this life.*  
(from Ecclesiastes 9: 7-9)

Over the next seven years, Kim and I nestled in our bucolic Mill Valley home. Zachary and Simon grew into adulthood and un-nestled, each to follow his own muse. Kim expanded her academic career at San Francisco State University, while I pursued a patchwork of positions. Often, I juggled three jobs at the same time. My heart was restless, and as Saint Augustine observed, “restless, until it found its rest in God”.

### 1992 TO NOVEMBER

Kim and I spent the first day of November sleeping on floor mats, strolling around our empty rooms, and admiring forested views out our patio windows. The house was supposedly cleaned, but we toiled for three days in extra floor-scrubbing and touch-up painting.

Our new homestead was only a ten-minute drive from Fort Baker so I rented a small U-Haul to load and off-load our belongings. The truck made three circuits in one day. At seventeen and fifteen years old, my sons were strong enough to walk furniture up two flights of stairs into the living room. At entry level, Zachary chose the room on the left and Simon the one on the right. They appreciated their shared bathroom and kitchenette. We installed two phones downstairs—one for each son—and a third phone upstairs. Our new number was 415-389-6929.

As we were moving boxes, I monitored presidential election results. On November 3, Bill Clinton defeated George Bush. Bill was my choice at the time and Kim admired the fashionable Hillary.

On November 7, I cleared my military quarters with a housing inspector, then stopped by the 91st Division HQ where the adjutant handed me my outgoing Officer Evaluation. LTC Savage was effusive in his praise. I smiled. It was a pat on the butt on my way out the door.

The purchase of 306 Ashton Lane took every penny we possessed. It drained our savings and maxed out our credit cards. We were stretched to our financial limit. I was waiting on my severance pay to rescue us from debt.

The bottom back of our house was left purposely unfinished containing just a furnace, drainpipes, and walkway. Our steep hillside sloped into this wasted space. With time on my hands, I began to excavate the dirt and carry it in buckets into the back yard.

By December, the three-foot wide pathway had expanded into a ten-foot living space. I installed plywood floors and make-shift walls. We moved our washer and dryer into the right side re-imagined as a utility room while the left side eventually transformed into a half bedroom.

Kim finagled me some classes at SFSU. I taught one group about Microsoft *Windows* and another about trouble-shooting PCs. My wife was advocating for me and I appreciated her effort.

I understood that Simon was done with pet birds, but I needed a house companion. I did some research and figured a conure might be the right fit for me. This bird was termed a *pocket parrot* because of its size relative to cockatoos or macaws. On December 2, I bought a dusky conure in San Francisco. Paco the parrot was a little larger than Wilbur or Chester. He didn't whistle, but he did squawk and imitate background sounds.

Paco inherited the cockatiel cage and equipment. This gregarious bird was my home companion for the duration of my time in Mill Valley. I used to joke with Kim, "You can tell how long I've been sitting at the computer. Do you count one, two or three poops on my shoulder?"

Zachary embraced his senior year with exuberance. At a Music Expo in November, he dressed in period costume as part of the Madrigal Singers. Two monster songs dominated the pop charts in late 1992: Boyz II Men singing *End of the Road* and Whitney Houston with *I Will Always Love You*.

In December, Zach asked if we could host a Russian boy for ten days, and so Dimitri from Olympic City celebrated Christmas Day with our family. He was Zachary's special guest hanging out with him over the holidays.

On New Year's Eve, Kim was nagging Zachary to a point of desperation. My son had applied to only one college for early admission—Harvard. That was his single hope and he had no back-up plan.

Zachary the procrastinator had partially completed applications to Stanford, Williams, and UC Davis. These letters had to be post-marked by December 31 to be valid. Kim was frantic, shouting “If you don't complete these forms right now, I'm going out to that deck and jump off!”

Zachary got the point. The two of them sat at the dining room table, and together completed the applications. Kim personally drove the letters to the post office to ensure a postmark of 1992.



Kim and Chris in 1990



Ashton Lane House in 1992

## 1993

My last day as an AGR officer occurred on January 4. I visited the Division HQ on the next day to ask about my severance pay. Mr. Gibson, the assistant chief of staff, made a few phone calls on my behalf. The best he could tell me was that “the check is in the mail.”

I remember stopping at a gas station to fill the Peugeot. I tried two credit cards but each were declined for non-payment. Just when I was considering an emergency bank loan, the big check arrived. After paying \$6000 in credit card debt, Kim and I decided to make several residential upgrades.

Kim considered her home way too dark. We installed two sky lights, painted the ceiling beams white, and sanded the parquet flooring, converting it from walnut brown to light oak. Next, we hired two guys to work downstairs. Simon called these two *Bevis and Butthead* because of their comedy routines. Over the course of a few weeks, they finished the utility room to include an outside window; then completed the extra bedroom to include an outside door. We installed a ceiling fan

in the peaked dining room and new linoleum in the kitchen. We ran out of money as we ran out of upgrades. Kim was now happy with the appearance of her abode.

Without a full-time job, I repaired decks and fencing. I also landscaped the back yard. With abundance of eucalyptus trees, I was constantly raking, grooming, and dumping. My wife and I agreed upon a division of responsibility. She was princess of the inside while the outside was my domain.

I was struggling at home while Kim taught at SFSU and the boys attended Tam. America on Line (AOL) was emerging as the premier on-line community. I bought a computer modem, connected it to the telephone line, and acquired my first email address: x4man@aol.com. Soon I was able to join chat groups and search for jobs. AOL had not yet connected to the internet.

Zachary was heartbroken when he was wait-listed for Harvard university, especially after pouring his heart into an original parody called "I am the very model of a modern Harvard graduate". He decided to join ROTC and so declined the offer to attend Williams College in Massachusetts. He did receive a full scholarship to enroll at the University of California at Davis, but finally committed to attend Stanford University. It was not his first choice because it was too close to home.

After his college status was settled, Kim and I traveled with Zach to the Stanford campus to check things out. We later went for a parents' orientation. Unlike our son, we loved the fact he was only eighty minutes from the homestead.

It was an eventful Spring for Zachary. He made an unanticipated trip to Russia after a Tam student dropped out at the last moment, acquiring her cheap tickets, room and board. Zachary traveled with two of his buddies, Robbie Elem and Jason McCoy. He was in Russia for a second time from April 8 to 19. He reported the saddest part was to see old veterans peddling their military decorations in Red Square. Zachary returned with Soviet medals and a wonderful video of his experience.

My busy high-school senior performed at the Senior Banquet Talent Show. He and five of his friends dubbed themselves "Mad Men" and sang *Duke of Earl* and *In the Still of the Night*. Zach participated in a mock senate at the Mill Valley city hall and wrote poetry for the Tam News.

Simon was doing academically well in school, earning somewhere around a B average. He hung out with a different crowd than his big brother. Number two was an *experiential learner*, respectful but with an attitude of his own. His hip-hop mentor / muse became Tupac Shakur, a rap artist from Marin City who had attended Tam High School a few years ahead of Simon. My son also bought a pager; a pocket-size device whose signal notified him of a message. I was never sure what he used it for.

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Simon often hit me up for money. I pretended to be an ATM machine—*cha-ching!* He'd tap me on the chest and I'd provide cash from my wallet. His slang became, "Flow me some juice, Pops." In a humorous vein, he began calling me "Flow".

Simon once again excelled in track. He set a sophomore record for the triple jump and anchored the half-mile relay. His best friend, Danny Leven, said he had *negro legs*.

The big national news of the Spring was the standoff in Waco, Texas. A cult leader named David Koresh holed up in his Mount Carmel stronghold. On April 19, after a fifty-one-day siege, the compound was stormed by police and military. A fire ensued killing seventy-six Branch Davidians. I remember seeing Attorney General Janet Reno on TV nearly every evening.

Along with intense schoolwork, Zachary was frantically trying to complete requirements for his Eagle Scout award. The looming deadline was his eighteenth birthday. After some misdirection, Trinity Community Church was kind enough to provide a senior project for him. He spent a weekend landscaping around the rickety old gym. His scout friends Andy Nation and Jesse Hammons helped out.

I remember sitting at my computer when I received a phone call from the San Francisco Police Department. Zachary was at the downtown station. I raced to find him sitting across from a detective. I couldn't believe it. This seventeen-year-old had been standing inside a church stairwell where Troop 14 met. He was in his scout uniform including neckerchief and shorts. A drug-addled man approached him, pointed a handgun, and demanded his wallet. My son complied. The cops nabbed the robber within a few hours and Zach's wallet was returned.

Scoutmaster Joe Ehrman presented my son with his Eagle badge a week before his birthday. Kim and I stood on either side of him at the court of honor. A major topic of conversation was the armed robbery.

Zachary's eighteenth birthday was low key. He was happy to receive from his parents a T. Row Price certificate of investment. His \$5000 in technology mutual funds nearly doubled in value over the next four years.

Zachary graduated fourth in his Tamalpias class of 260 students. He claimed he dropped in rank because he received one B+ in one leadership class. On prank night he and his buddies painted the Redwood HS football into Tam colors. Zachary was also a National Merit Scholarship finalist. His friend Robbie messed with the huge Tam High announcement board, mixing and reversing letters in the names FOREMAN, JACOBSON, PETROCELLI, and LARI.

Kim and I attended the outdoor ceremony and I snapped photos of Zachary as he accumulated several awards. Kim loved it. She knew her son was destined to become a professor following in her footsteps.

As Zachary graduated from high school with plans to move on to college, his cousin in Alaska also graduated from high school but with plans to move on to marriage. Frank was not thrilled with the prospect, but supported his son as best he could. He told me Josh was tired of home schooling by Lelia and baby-sitting for Lucinda. Marrying Stacy was his ticket to a new life. In June I paid for my two sons to fly to Alaska, Zachary as best man and Simon as a groomsman.

Just after the wedding, Frank and family relocated to Battle Ground, Washington, while the newlyweds stayed in Alaska. Frank became a Lieutenant Colonel in the Air Force Reserve working full-time for an outfit called Gentle Dental in Vancouver.

In June I finally landed a part-time job at nearby Tamalpais High School. For three evenings per week, I taught adults about technology. My instruction was bottom-rung basic. I brought my own desktop computer into the class, explained terminology, and answered questions. I attempted to de-mystify the technology. I held up my input devices; keyboard, mouse, scanner and camera. I pointed out my output devices: monitor and printer. I opened the chassis to reveal the processing components: CPU and RAM. I explained that disk drives were for storage and the modem was a communication device providing input and output.

On his sixteenth birthday, Simon received a check for \$3000 from State Farm Insurance. His mom and I approved him buying a car. With help from his buddies, he located a burgundy MG convertible. Kim drove us to Berkeley in her Saturn where my son and I met with the seller in the parking lot of a Wells Fargo Bank.

After Simon checked out the car's looks and I its operation, the seller cashed Simon's check and handed over the title. Simon only possessed a learner's permit and he didn't know how to work the stick shift. For a few days, we practiced driving together at Fort Baker. He drove round and round Murray Circle grinding the gears. After another week, he earned his driver's license driving the MG. My son was one proud sixteen-year-old.

When not otherwise engaged, Simon was constantly playing a video game called *Ecco* on his Sega Genesis. The goal was to help a lost porpoise to find his way back home. I remember poking my head into his room for progress reports. My son could never solve all the mysteries and *Ecco* never returned to his pod.

In late July, Zachary traveled to Korea with his Aunt Hyun Hee. After six weeks of wanderlust, he returned to the States accompanied by his cousin Ko Sung Kyung, otherwise known as Stephen.

Kim had struck a bargain with her sister. Stephen would live with us for four years at no cost to her while Hyun Hee would cover Zachary's Stanford tuition cost for four years. In the end it worked out well for both of us.

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Once Zachary left the house for college, Simon re-located to the double room and Stephen took up residence in the single room. My Korean nephew was thirteen and a half at the time and should have attended Mill Valley Middle School, but after Professor Kim met with the middle school principal, Stephen matriculated as a Tamalpais freshman.

Kim and I loaded up the Peugeot with Zachary's possessions and, driving his Pontiac, Zach led the way to his dorm room. At West Lagunita Residence Hall, my son seemed so happy, so suited, both to be on his own and to live in such an academically rich environment. I knew he was exactly where God intended him to be.

Simon began his junior year at Tam making two adjustments. First, he was racing his MG back and forth to school and second, his younger cousin was on the high school campus, keeping an eye on him on behalf of his Auntie Kim.

Simon needed gas money. I asked Tom, my friend at church, if he needed help at a place he ran called the Ham Shoppe. Simon worked a few hours per week, especially over holidays. Often his job was to baste conventional hams with a sugar mix and put the blow torch to them. Simon joked about his *honey baked hams*.

I expanded my job search by applying as substitute teacher in the Mill Valley school district. I passed the CBEST (California Basic Educational Skills Test) and attended one class at SFSU in California History. I also visited the Mill Valley Police Department for finger prints and mug shot. Although I received a credential to substitute teach, that is one thing I never did.

I expanded my tome, *The Almanac of Comparative Biography*, adding a few thousand names from birth through nineteen years old. I supplemented the text with a complete decade of names for people sixty through sixty-nine. Finally, I added names beyond seventy all the way to the last accomplishment—Jean Calment of France who was yet living at 118 years /5 months / 10 days. I attempted to market my book, sending letters to publishers of off-beat almanacs which I had collected over the previous four years.

Zachary thrived at Stanford. He auditioned for several a cappella groups, and was disappointed he didn't make Fleet Street. However, he was accepted into the Harmonics. We attended a few of his performances. He also sang in the chorus of *Iolanthe* performed by the Stanford Savoyards. He told me there was an amazing college golfer in one of his classes by the name of Tiger Woods.

Before Christmas, Kim brought home from SFSU an amazing CD-ROM to play on her Macintosh computer. It was called *Myst*, a video game where players solve puzzles and travel to other worlds. I could never immerse myself into this fictional universe and so became frustrated trying to travel about the Island of *Myst*. My avatar was simply dumped in front of a door and I had to figure out stuff on my own. After a few hours of futile activity, I gave up the effort.

As the year drew to a close, all five of us celebrated Christmas day at Trinity Community Church. God had been good to the Foreman family in 1993. Kim and I had settled into our new nest, Zachary had flown the coop, Steven had taken his place in the household, and Simon Peter grew to be more independent with a new car and new friends.

## 1994

In January, I interviewed for a part-time position at the College of Marin. I soon began driving to the Indian Valley campus in Novato teaching adults how to use *Windows 3.1*. I quickly added Microsoft *Word* and *Excel* to my portfolio of instruction. Along with my Tamalpias class load, I was earning money four evenings per week.

Kim and I dropped by Stanford a few times a month to see Zachary. Because Stanford did not support ROTC, our son was driving to Santa Clara University learning how to salute, march, and polish boots. In February, Zach discovered he was medically disqualified for military service and his hope of an army commission was dashed. He was disappointed, but his life moved on. With recent visits to Russia, Zachary focused on becoming an Eastern European Studies major.

When Kim and I visited his dorm room, we were amused. We had often scolded him for his messy bedroom in Mill Valley, but now his mess at West Lagunitas was epic. Pizza boxes, school books, Snapple bottles, and dirty clothes competed for every inch of floorspace. He kicked stuff aside as we entered to make a path. All I could do was sigh in exasperation. Tidiness was never my son's gift.

In April, we saw Zach star in a Lagunita Court production of *Into the Woods*. He disguised himself as both the Wolf and Rapunzel's Prince. At the same time Kim and I were relishing our lives in California, tragedy struck in Africa. On April 7, I began to watch news reports about mass killings in a tiny nation called Rwanda. I had to check my map to locate the place. For one hundred days, gruesome stories of Hutus killing Tutsis filled my daily newspaper—the Marin IJ. I could not have guessed this far-off land would someday play a major role in my life.

Simon was experiencing another great year in track. He was the top prep athlete in Marin County in April. The newspaper clipping read:

Last week he won the high jump with a leap of six feet, the long jump in 20-2 and the triple jump in 38-7 and was also the second leg on Tam's winning 440 relay team during a meet against Marin Catholic on Thursday.

Coach Bruce Grant says, "He's really coming alive as an athlete this year. He's taking it a lot more seriously. He's only a junior, and as big and strong and fast as he is, it's really just a matter of getting the technique down and he's going to get a lot better."

Oftentimes I would drive to SFSU—to pick up Kim, drop her off, or deliver boxes. It was always fun to pop into her office and converse with her fellow workers. I usually stopped at the bookstore to peruse the discount bins. I bought several CDs there, like Mozart's *Requiem*, Orff's *Carmina Burana*, and Bach's keyboard concertos.

My wife was always on the lookout for job openings on my behalf. One of her students named Lee Thompson told her about a position just launching at Golden Gate University in downtown San Francisco. I interviewed and by mid-May worked for an outfit called TSI (Technology Specialists Incorporated). I finally had the full-time job I had sought.

TSI had contracted with GGU to *facilitate* technology in all its aspects. There were seven of us *liaisons* on the team. I turned out to be the Faculty Liaison because of my PhD and academic background. Four women were liaisons for finance, library, students, and administration. A pony-tailed companion programmed code all day. We sat together in a large room and reported to Lee Thompson who inhabited a corner office. My new email address became: cforeman@ggu.edu.

My charge was to pro-actively meet with each faculty member to facilitate use of technology both in their office space and in their classrooms. I also began to offer classes to small groups of faculty as they requested. Lee and I got along well as I set about to meet with as many professors as would grant me audience.

My report time at GGU was 9:00 a.m. On most days I would leave the house at 7:45, park the Peugeot at the commute lot in Sausalito, then travel by the Golden Gate Ferry to the Embarcadero. I'd then walk about ten blocks to the corner of Mission and Ecker. I enjoyed this water commute much better than driving. I could nap, drink coffee, and gaze out the window at the marvelous skyline. Once a week, I'd make a bicycle-ferry-bicycle commute into my work place.

I remember on June 19 watching the evening news when a flash occurred concerning the former pro football player O.J. Simpson. I had followed a live broadcast as LA police pursued a Ford Bronco at low speed. Could O.J. really have committed a double homicide?

In late June, the whole family headed to the Northwest to look in on Kim's mother. All six of her children had assembled in Portland to support Halmoni. Kim and I drove in the Peugeot while Zachary, Simon, and Stephen followed us in the Sunbird.

This was the back story. After her stroke in late 1992, Halmoni spent a few months in a Korean rehabilitation center. Then she returned to the USA in early 1993 accompanied by Hyun Hee. Once settled in Oregon, Pam and two sons didn't know what to do with their mother. For over a year she languished in a Portland nursing home—out of sight / out of mind. No attendant spoke Korean

to her and no one provided Korean food. Poor Halmoni regressed to the point of grunting communication.

When Kim, Hyun Ok, and Hyun Hee finally visited their mom in 1994, the sisters were appalled at her condition. They felt shame and all determined she would stay in the same house as Pam. The three older sisters agreed to underwrite a full-time care giver by sending money to the youngest sister. After three days in the Northwest, Kim and I returned home. Stephen stayed with his mom and dad for the summer, while Zachary and Simon worked for their Auntie Pam.

Pam was an entrepreneur to the core, buying merchandise at a low price and selling it high. She purchased one thousand dollars' worth of goodies at Costco, traveled to various county fairs, and resold her product for three thousand. She giggled as she explained how she bought jugs of liquid syrup, froze her own blocks of ice, then sold shaved ice at a dollar a cone.

Pam had struck up a relationship with a Finnish man—a Jehovah Witness—named Ilka. These two were odd business partners. He would do all the heavy lifting while she scripted a gypsy lifestyle. Over several summers Zachary or Simon would join Pam and Ilka for weeks of county fairs and Indian powwows. Often the boys would return home with a thousand dollars in their pockets.

In the Autumn, Zachary returned to Stanford and Steven to Tam. Simon recognized he ran with a bad crowd at Tam and petitioned the school district to switch schools. I supported his transfer to Redwood High School and bought him a bright-red running suit. The kids at Redwood knew him by reputation and a few guys harassed him.

My son would not be bullied and within a week he got into a serious fistfight. I sat with the principal of Redwood and we agreed he should return to Tam. Official paperwork had never been fully processed and so it was like the transfer never happened at all. Simon returned and finished his high-school days at Tam.

Kim began her sixth season at SFSU always documenting her achievements and moving up the ladder of success. I returned to GGU and noticed the atmosphere seemed to sour. Lee Thompson began to resent my easy air and cozy relationship with certain of the faculty. He hired me because I was a doctor in name. Yet he was saying I shouldn't use "doctor" in correspondence. I strove to avoid the man.

After writing to a dozen almanac publishers, I finally found one that showed interest. I signed a few letters of intent with Houghton Mifflin Harcourt and negotiated over the course of two months. They changed the name of the book to *At Your Age* and it looked like I might become a published author. However, a second review of my project concluded *At Your Age* was not marketable. It broke my heart

when I received the letter declining to publish and wishing me luck. In dejection, I banished all my materials, binders, and reference books into a corner of the attic.

In October I purchased a Motorola MicroTAC 9800 flip phone. I justified its purchase to Kim by telling her I was keeping up with technology. The monthly charge of \$50 was steep for the amount of use. I remember once cruising on the Golden Gate Ferry when a man experienced chest pain. He shouted out “Does anyone here have a phone?” I was a hero for that moment. I carried the Motorola for about a year, before it was moved into the attic—that graveyard of unwanted technology.

With the attic being increasingly used for storage, I decided to lay a plywood floor over the 2x6 cross-beams. I first increased the size of the entrance hatch then installed a permanent wooden ladder. Because four-foot by eight-foot plywood would not fit up the hatch, I cut several to a two-foot width. I installed lighting and hired someone to mount a window to the outside. It was a worthwhile project. With carpet on the floor and wicker stuck to the peaked roof it became a semi-habitable space.

We traveled to the northwest over Christmas, having the big get-together at Frank’s new home. It never ceased to amaze me how the generations multiplied. I was astonished to see myself surrounded by great nieces and great nephews. We dropped by mom’s house. In November Terry and Eileen had sold their own home and graciously moved in to look after her. Dementia had worsened and Shelly, who was showing signs of bipolar disorder, moved into her own apartment. With a magnifying glass, mom would examine boxes of old pictures and laugh through hours of *I Love Lucy*.

On December 27, we celebrated a second Christmas, opening belated gifts under our own tree. A photo shows Simon wincing as he displays an unwrapped Chia Tree. Zachary ended the year according to his long custom. He wrote the digits 1-9-9-4 on a piece of drawing paper. At the stroke of midnight, he ripped the paper into tiny fragments and sprinkled them over his mom’s head. Once more we shared how would grow spiritually, mentally, physically, and socially.



## 1995

On January 2, I stood in Lee Thompson's office during an intense argument. I explained to him I had reserved three nights at a Lake Tahoe rental for myself and family.

He responded, "I don't approve of that. The team needs you here to support the faculty."

Showing him my pay statement with ten days of vacation, I spoke calmly, "This is semester break and most faculty are out of the office. I have a commitment. I'm taking three days off starting Monday."

Lee shouted he could not approve of my absence. I countered that I did not require his approval and stomped from his office.

I was never sure what the issue was with Lee. Was he just exercising his assumed prerogative? Was he testing my loyalty to TSI? I did know one thing. From that point forward he was out to get me.

My family did share a wonderful three days at Lake Tahoe. We all luxuriated in a hot tub surrounded by snow. On one morning I bought ski passes for five and watched Zachary, Simon, and Stephen ski down a hill side. On the next day, I dropped the three boys at the ski lift while Kim and I walked across the state line to the casinos. Although the time was pleasant, my mind was troubled by the hostility at work.

Later that month at lunchtime I saw the Super Bowl champs, San Francisco 49ers, parade down Market Street. I happened to be in the right place at the right time.

Tamalpais High School provided students with exceptional educational opportunities. At the same time, the ultra-liberal high school promoted many notions antithetical to my Christian worldview. A look at the high school newspaper called the *Tam News* revealed student predilections.

Three headlines read: *Student group proposes free distribution of condoms; Typical night for student raver; Do drugs enhance the experience?* The trio of sex, drugs, and rave parties permeated Tam all the way down to grade nine. Zachary showed little inclination toward these diversions, but Simon was an experiential learner.

In the company of his family, Simon was always respectful, but amongst his peers his behavior conformed. Regarding his car driving I once pointed out to him, "Simon, think hard about those five times you got either a ticket or in an accident? Every single time you were showing off for your friends, right?"

Kim and I were in constant prayer for Simon. Three times we picked him up at the police station; for shoplifting, for dope smoking, and for trespassing. He was finding himself and in doing so finding himself in trouble.

We sought a counselor for our son. Trinity Community Church had no such person, so we checked elsewhere. For a few sessions, Kim, Simon, and I sat with a minister at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Tiburon. After hearing Simon explain himself, I discerned him to be a good, intelligent, and creative person. He saw nothing wrong in smoking marijuana and attending all-night parties. As a seventeen-year-old, he resisted authority and sought autonomy. I figured that was natural enough. He didn't look for trouble, but trouble often looked for him.

Track season kept his focus for a few months. He participated in all the meets, and made it to the Nor-Cal regional meet in long jump. He almost made it to state. I watched him as he scratched his final leap of twenty-three feet. His toe stuck over the take-off board. Except for the ultimate champion, I guess all competitors end in defeat.

My son was thinking about his future and visited UC Santa Cruz and UC Santa Barbara. It was a tough choice for him, but when he discovered a few close friends were opting for the latter, he decided to attend UC Santa Barbara. Kim and I were encouraged when he got his conditional acceptance letter. We knew the place had a reputation as a party school, but I thought the laid-back ambiance seemed well suited to our son's personality.

Simon was working at Subway, referring to himself as a sandwich artist. He ditched the MG—which was falling to pieces—and bought a 1988 Chrysler Conquest TSI. This turbo-speed car was roaring fast. I remember Simon saying he could drive up to Portland in just four hours. I dared not calculate the MPH.

Simon also led a busy social life, dating a girl named Chandra and hanging out with guys like Kareem, Danny, and Paimon. These folks often came to the house, sitting on the side stairs and in the back yard. I felt good when the group was on Ashton Lane. I could keep a closer eye on them.

Zach continued to thrive at Stanford. His a cappella group, the Harmonics, performed the national anthem at an SF Giants baseball game. I drove a carload of the guys from Stanford to the ballpark and dragged along my old video camera to my outfield seat. As the harmonics performed, I hit the record button. Nothing happened. My ten-year-old wonder of technology had reached its obsolescence. After lugging it home, one of my favorite toys of all time retired to a corner of the attic.

I heard about the tragedy while working at Golden Gate University. I was busy on April 19, so I just caught tidbits. On the ferry ride home, I listened to KQED as the news flooded in from Oklahoma City. A home-made bomb had killed 168 people and injured more than 500. It turned out to be the worst ever peacetime bombing on US soil. The perpetrator of the attack, Timothy McVeigh was executed six years later.

At GGU I learned about something called the World Wide Web. I remember talking with my colleague, Sharon, whose hometown was San Diego. On her computer she opened a program called Mosaic and typed in some numbers. “Look at this,” she chirped. “This is a highway that runs past my house. This is an actual video of what’s actually going on right now. Isn’t that cool?”

I certainly thought it was cool, and spent many of the following days reading about the Web, exploring its nooks and crannies. I had the inspiration to create a website called *The Millennium Source Page*. The year 2000 was not far ahead and as I searched, I found little about this watershed date. When I did a search of the word “millennium”, the phrase that popped up most often was *Millennium Falcon* of *Star Wars* fame.

Bridget was the technology liaison to the Library. Her station sat next to mine. She posted an illustrated cartoon reflecting her attitude toward TSI: “Some days you’re the windshield and someday you’re the bug”. Most of my days at Golden Gate seemed to be bug days.

In June, both Simon and I suffered disappointment. My senior-grade son failed a physics class receiving an F. He was then one credit short of qualifying for UC Santa Barbara and his acceptance letter was revoked. This really upset his mother. Simon quickly adjusted his plans and enrolled for the fall term at Santa Barbara City College. Kim and I attended his high school graduation, but his disappointing news put a damper on celebration. Simon insisted for years that Mr. Lapp, his physics teacher, was out to get him.

There was also someone *out to get me* and on June 3, Lee Thompson succeeded. Earlier he had told me to turn over excess desktop computers to TSI so he could redistribute them elsewhere. I knew of a few professors who had requested a computer for their office. I thought little of giving computers to faculty. Lee was furious when I casually told him what I had done. He stormed from his office, consulted with the big boss, and when he returned demanded I clear out my desk. I smiled and complied.

I dropped by the office of the big boss who explained Lee was too well-connected to be disregarded. I told the boss not to be troubled, because “God does not shut a door without opening a window.” Our conversation turned spiritual and he invited me to a farewell lunch. We passed a bookstore with a sign out front “George Foreman signing books today”. We walked through the door just as George walked down the center aisle. I reached out my hand and he grabbed my thumb. He was one big dude. A few minutes later, I exited the book store with a signed copy of *By George*.

The job loss was okay with me. Working in proximity to Lee was miserable. The hard part was breaking the news to my wife. As we sat in the parking lot of Barnes and Noble, I lowered my head to the steering wheel. She asked, “Chris, is something wrong?”

I began weeping, not because I had lost the stupid job, but because I seemed to be such a failure at every task I put my hand to—our marriage, the army, my almanac, this job. I felt like such a loser. Kim comforted me, assuring me of her love. With confidence she spoke, “I’ll help you find the place that God wants for you. Let’s work as partners.”

My precious wife was more than I deserved. When her semester ended, we spend hours together. There were so many trails within walking distance of our house. We could exit the back fence of our property, climb up deer paths, scramble over rock outcroppings, and traverse three miles of sage to attain a lofty ocean overlook. We often walked to Tennessee Valley shoreline where Kim stacked flat stones on the sandy beach. The fabled Muir Woods was just a ten-minute car ride. At 7:00 a.m. the park was un-peopled. We could admire the giant redwoods without charge and in seclusion. It was like our private park.

Kim not only helped to rejuvenate my soul, she helped me knit together a patchwork of jobs. She understood who I was. Kim held the rock-solid job with benefits and retirement. It was fine that her husband freelanced at several jobs as long as I was busy, happy, and pulled in an amount of money comparable to hers.

She helped me obtain a business license framing myself as a computer consultant. I named my company “Praxis Educational Services” adding to my calling card “praxis is the application of knowledge.” My email became: praxis@ix.netcom.com. I advertised in a local computer magazine and over the next year worked several odd jobs—some odder than others.

I visited one old man whose passion was to play computer chess. When he had upgraded to *Windows*, his familiar DOS program no longer worked. I suggested he upgrade his chess game to a *Windows* version, which he declined to do. I charged him for five hours as I created a macro that would revert *Windows* to DOS and open his treasured game. I also helped a local author named Susan Roane who had written *How to Work a Room*. She needed help in how to work her computer.

At forty-five years old, it was clear to me I could not earn a retirement unless it were through the U.S. Army. I had seventeen good years of military service which meant I had to serve just three years more to hit the magic twenty. Kim encouraged me to persevere. On June 16, I went to Fort Baker and dropped off a letter seeking an O-4 position with the 91<sup>st</sup> Division, 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, located about thirty miles away at Parks RFTA (Reserve Forces Training Area). I also began taking army correspondence courses, needing all the retirement points I could muster.

Kim was able to find me a position teaching computer classes at the SFSU downtown center. During that summer, I taught eight classes in *Windows* and in *MS Word*. The center was located just a few blocks from my old place at Golden Gate University.

I also replied to a newspaper ad seeking a computer instructor. I hooked up with a guy named Ernie through whom I taught a few private *Windows* sessions in Sausalito. Soon my patchwork grew into a quilt and I was teaching nearly every week day.

Zachary spent the month of July in Latvia with a program called Students for Eastern European Development (SEED). In August once again, he and Simon migrated to Portland to earn money at county fairs and Indian powwows. By this time Dong Hyun and Kyu Nam were operating convenience stores in the Portland area. The boys helped out there too, receiving generous remuneration. Kim appreciated her two sons living in proximity to her two brothers.

I remember driving alone from Portland to Mill Valley in late August. As I sped south on I-5, I noticed a bright object burning in the sky to the west. It seemed to be following me. Was it a UFO? I pulled the CRV to the side of the road to gaze at comet Hale-Bopp, unbelievably bright with a shining tale.

In the autumn, Simon packed his Conquest and moved down to Goleta, California, near Santa Barbara City College. He booked a dormitory-style room at a place called Tropicana Gardens. Several of his friends soon joined him in the frolic. His classrooms were located within sea-sound of Venice Beach. It would be an understatement to say Simon was distracted from his college studies.

Zachary enjoyed communal life and returned to West Lagunitas for his third straight year. Steven was comfortable staying in the single bedroom for his junior year at Tam. He was a quiet nephew, renting tapes from Video Droid and hanging out with Asian buddies.

In October, I found short term employment at Patten College in Oakland. This small Christian school had just inaugurated a Degree Completion Program and wanted me to teach a course called Research One. I taught students on four consecutive Fridays, six to ten at night. The texts were mandated and not well suited for my audience. I had to slow down and leave out parts. I remember one woman who was startled upon learning one negative number multiplied by another negative number yielded a positive number. I spent thirty minutes explaining the reasoning behind the math. After my initial commitment of four classes, I did not return to Patten College.

I was anxious to join the First Brigade and round out my military service. Yet, the army seemed to drag its feet. I penned a few letters to the brigade adjutant with no response. I finally called upon a few old comrades at Fort Baker and shortly received welcome back orders on November 28: "You are released from USAR control Group and assigned to 91<sup>st</sup> Division 1st brigade at Parks RFTA in Dublin." It took yet another month for me to report for duty at Camp Parks.

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I calculated seventeen good years, 1976 through 1992, and three bad years 1993 to 1995. That meant I required just three more good years: 1996 to 1998. With a reserve retirement, I could begin collecting a pension at age sixty.

In December, I signed up for a Web class at SFSU. I learned about something called Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) and how to code a simple page with tags. How cool it was to create a web page with text, image, and hyperlink! I tried the web magic at home, but couldn't make it work. I discovered that my *Windows* computer did not distinguish between upper case and lower case, but the Apple servers at SFSU did make the distinction.

A few days before Christmas, I drove Zachary to the San Francisco Airport. He was once again headed overseas. This time for a program called *Moscow for Stanford*.

## 1996

My first drill with the First Brigade occurred in January. I made the one-hour drive to Camp Parks which was near Dublin in Alameda County. Colonel Roach was my brigade commander and LTC Enberg was his deputy. First Brigade consisted of officers and senior enlisted soldiers who traveled throughout the West, assisting Reserve and National Guard units. The brigade consisted of three sections: Military Police, Transportation, and Engineer. Majors Hamner, Kaufman, and Burger worked with me as engineer evaluation officers.

For most of my time with First Brigade, I would drill at Camp Parks for two drill weekends of planning and coordinating, then travel for annual training in a five-day segment. My first stint involved an engineer evaluation at Fort Grafton, North Dakota. I remember it being so cold that we did not exit the Quonset hut. The ground was too frozen for land mines or entrenchment. The temperature hit twenty below zero; the coldest I had ever experienced.

Kim and I were burning out at Trinity Community Church. Part of it was the church's inability to help Simon in his teenage angst and part of it was Pentecostal theology. It seemed to me that the Third Person of the Trinity was supplanting the other two. The balance should be Father then Son then Holy Spirit, not all Spirit. I attended a Giants baseball game with a church group and spoke with Will Nelken between pitches. He noted my spotty attendance and I laid out my theological objections. He sadly agreed it might be time for me to resign as an elder and move on.

Kim and I looked at the nearby Lutheran church, but found it too liturgical. Kim suggested a Presbyterian church because she was reared in that denomination. Also, we had appreciated the effort of Westminster Presbyterian on behalf of Simon. So, we began attending church in Tiburon. Kim was overjoyed with the place. "More her kind of people," she said, but I had reservations about the liberal

theology. Kim formally joined the congregation, receiving the biblical name of Esther as she stepped up front.

I did enjoy the men's group which met early on Friday morning. Usually about a dozen guys got together to munch donuts and talk about private lives and public news. I was at the younger end of the spectrum while Phil Oconomen, our facilitator, was a youthful eighty-five. Phil was an army veteran of the D-Day landing. I remained faithful to this group attending for the next ten years.

Simon managed to complete just one semester at Santa Barbara City College. He caroused with too many buddies, romped on too many beaches, and got high at too many parties. Simon remained in Santa Barbara living the high-life of an emancipated eighteen-year-old. I remember getting a letter from Tropicana Gardens expelling my son from his room and accusing him of theft and property damage. I knew my son projected a tough persona, but he was neither a thief nor a vandal. I figured he needed a few hobo years before settling into a more stable lifestyle.

Kim and I were driving to Portland every three months in order to support her ailing mother. We often spent the night in Ashland, Oregon, and considered this town as a possible site to retire. Once in the Northwest, Kim would have a brief encounter with my family and I would greet my in-laws. Then we would part company for a few days. While her mom was alive, Kim made sticking to her side the priority.

On one trip north we stopped by Nancy Jo's extravagant home. Brian Ament was in the construction business and had built his own million-dollar mansion complete with grand entrance and winding staircase. The estate rested on an acre lot complete with hobby-farm and Christmas-tree grove. Their third daughter, Aubrey, was celebrating her sixth birthday on the afternoon we dropped by. The event was an over-the-top affair with a magician entertaining. My niece was living the fairytale life she had dreamed of.

In April I posted my first Home Page on the World Wide Web. It was hosted at SFSU. My motto stated: "There's no place like cyberspace!" My first home page contained nine categories: Praxxis Educational Services; SFSU; Resumé; Millennium Source Page; Multimedia Studies Program; Favorite links; U.S. Army reserve; Church; and Family Photos. I updated this page by handing over floppy discs to the guy at the SFSU computer lab.

Kim became more involved with the Korea Center in San Francisco. Together we attended fund raisers and cultural events. We often traveled to Stanford to see Zachary in various performances, as when he played in the Mikado. (He showed an affinity for Gilbert and Sullivan.) Kim and I enjoyed a street fair in San Rafael marveling at sidewalk chalk art. With my army weekends, consulting business, and three venues for teaching computers, I was pulling in nearly as much money as Kim.

I always had a penchant for new technology and bought a *Winbook* with a Pentium 75 MHZ chip. This laptop computer with all its accessories cost me about \$5,000. Kim winced at the price, but it wasn't much more than her new Macintosh with printer. I carried the Winbook to Camp Parks and to my computer classes. My computer-geek friends thought it was pretty cool.

In August I flew to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, attending Command and General Staff College for two weeks. I made a point to visit Jack in Dallas. By 1995, my 35-year-old nephew Alan had three children by three women and 24-year-old Patrick was out of college working at a bank.

On our quarterly visit to the Northwest, Kim hung out with her family while I spent most of my time with Frank. My brother and I finally accomplished that long-delayed climb to the summit of Mount Saint Helens. After the volcano erupted in 1980, the mountain shrunk from 9000 to 6000 feet. Frank and I, along with eight of his in-laws, made the ascent, posing at the lip of the caldera on a wonderfully clear afternoon.

Zachary took off a full academic year of college to study at Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland. We kept up a regular e-mail correspondence between [paladin@scess.in.uj.edu.pl](mailto:paladin@scess.in.uj.edu.pl) and [praxis@ix.netcom.com](mailto:praxis@ix.netcom.com). My son experienced a major misfortune when he first set foot in Krakow. He left his one-hundred-pound duffle bag unattended and all was stolen except the clothes on his back. Because of this loss, he struggled the first few months in country. Zachary had chosen Poland as a place to study to get in touch with father-side roots. However, he found no one in that country with the surname of *Formanski*.

By this time, Simon had relocated to the Portland area. He lived for a time with his cousin Don John and with his Auntie Pam. He sometimes slept in a filling station or at Washington Park. Simon related this funny story: a relative had asked him the whereabouts of his big brother. After Simon told of his location in Eastern Europe, the startled cousin responded, "What? Zachary's living at a 'crack house in Portland?'"

When Simon came home on Thanksgiving Day, he bore a new facial ornament—a nose loop. His mother couldn't stand it. She yelled and threatened and would not look at his face. Stubborn Simon would not remove the loop. As a compromise, he covered his nostril with a band-aid during Thanksgiving dinner. The meal was tense. There was not much opportunity to give thanks. My advice to my wife was "just ignore the nose ring". Immediately after the meal, Simon stormed back to Portland.

I continued my patchwork of jobs and the months passed. On November 6, Bill Clinton was elected to a second term defeating Bob Dole. We made a point to connect with Simon, meeting him at a coffee shop in downtown Portland. He was

pierced and tattooed, carrying a hand-painted backpack with a plastic dinosaur dangling from a strap. He relished his freedom, telling us about couch surfing and living on the streets. We voiced concern, but Simon scoffed, urging us not to worry. Our conversation remained pleasant, but Kim shed tears as he walked from the coffee shop. We held hands and prayed that God would keep our prodigal son in the hollow of his hands.

By this time, my mom had moved out of her house and into SunRise Care center in Vancouver. We stopped by with Frank to visit her in her new setting.

While Zachary was abroad, Kim and I took the opportunity to both visit him and indulge in international travel. This would mark Kim's first time in Europe. While we were away from December 18, 1996, to January 2, 1997, we asked Simon to look after the house and take care of Paco.

Our trip to visit Zachary started in Frankfort, Germany. We rented a car and then drove nonstop to Prague. Because no major highway ran from Germany into the former Eastern Bloc, roadways became increasingly small as we approached the Czech border. Crossing the frontier was no problem. I think Czech border guards were happy to entertain Americans.

We had planned ahead of time to meet Zachary and his semi-girlfriend, Zoreen, on the famous Charles Bridge at high noon. After walking the bridge for an hour, we almost lost hope, but we finally hooked up with them. We spent the night and the next day in snowy Prague posing in front of noteworthy buildings.

The next day the four of us drove to Vienna, Austria. We paused at the Austerlitz battlefield to visit the site of a famous Napoleon victory. Vienna was fun and we stayed overnight, again driving around the city taking pictures at monuments, especially the Schoenborn Palace. Zoreen parted our company in Vienna.

The three of us passed through Budapest, without stopping, then into Slovakia. We paused in Bratislava, then spent the next night in a little resort area called Banska Stiavnica. It was a snowy time.

We then drove up to Krakow and spent four days with Zachary, including Christmas Day. We toured around town viewing medieval fortresses, church buildings, and Jagiellonian University. Zachary's favorite spot was a McDonalds Restaurant located in the cellar of a sixteenth-century monastery.

The day after Christmas, we toured the Auschwitz death camp. It was a chilling experience both in emotion and temperature. I looked through the extensive list of victims killed at Auschwitz. I discovered there were six with the last name of *Formanski*. Could it be that this was a Jewish surname and not actually Polish-based?

The next day, the three of us drove northwest through Poland. We spent a night in Wroclaw. Not able to read the road signs, I remember trying to navigate the city streets, getting lost and driving over a railroad bridge.

The next day we were in Berlin visiting old friends. We celebrated New Year's Eve with Barbara's family, Claire, Heidi, and Lothar. We sipped champagne, making toasts, and reminiscing about 1967.

## 1997

On New Year's Day, 1997, Kim, Zachary, and I woke up in Berlin. My son then traveled by train back to Krakow, while Kim and I returned to Frankfurt. After dropping off our rental car, we caught the long non-stop flight back to San Francisco. We spent the night of January second exhausted in our own bed.

The next morning, I discovered something unexpected in the corner of my king-size bed. I held up the petite pair of panties to Kim. "Do these belong to you?"

She chuckled, "They're a bit too small. Where did you find them?"

When Simon crawled out of bed a few hours later, I asked him who had lost her underwear. He apologized saying the New Year's Eve party got out of hand. Our grumpy neighbor filled me in on the fifty people that had celebrated on our premises a few nights earlier. Simon had tried to get everything back into shape but overlooked a few items.

My wife joined the Korean Writers' Guild and was soon chosen to be an editor. To polish her writing skills, Kim filled spiral-bound notepads with words in both English and in Korean. This is an excerpt from two pages dated February 14, 1997.

I am so split over my decision to be an editor. During my professional life, I guess I must go through this kind of stress since this is the way God made me. I will need to write and write. This is the year where my literary life starts, whether it is in English or in Korean, whether it is creative writing or it is academic. I want to really be a successful author. It is my desire, my talent, and my destiny.

I should write every chance I get. From this moment on, I will never mention that I have any accent or deficiency in English. I will be proud of my achievement. I have discovered it is solely up to me how I design my life.

I will go on and love each minute of my life. Living is all that matters to me and is so precious to me. I will savor every minute of my breathing life and I thank God that I have this opportunity to be an editor.

I am so happy that I live in this time and this place. I am surprised that I have found this happiness. I am especially joyful about my family. Ever since I decided I should not live my husband's life or my children's life; I feel a great weight off my shoulders.

At San Francisco State University, Kim began meeting with a retirement specialist named Starrett Dalton, an agent for Securities America. He wanted to speak with the two of us on campus, so I obliged. Starrett and I struck up a friendship. He asked me to devise a database for his business located at point Tiburon. I agreed and had a lot of fun setting up a big relational database using MS Access. He was impressed when I showed him the final product and offered me a job on the spot. I declined at first because I enjoyed my independent lifestyle. He assured me that my hours would be flexible and I could work around my teaching and military commitments. In April I signed a contract with him to work thirty hours per week. I didn't need benefits, getting health insurance through Kim and a retirement pension through the army.

My job at the beautiful Point Tiburon office consisted of inputting data from investment statements, printing out reports for individual clients, ever-improving the database, and answering the phone. I sat alone in a large office facing a duck pond. During a typical work day, I had more time than duty.

I created a color calendar for Starrett using Calendar Creator Plus. My March calendar showed a potential work month of twenty-two days or 176 hours. During this particular month, I worked 88 hours at Securities America, 27 hours at the College of Marin, six hours at SFSU, and 16 hours for the Army Reserve. Therefore, I was working 137/176 time or 78% of full time. Kim and I were okay with that patchwork.

Zachary returned to California in April and moved back into his old room. We talked about Poland and Pope John Paul. We carried out long conversations about religion and my son shared he was tending toward Roman Catholicism. He was attracted to its antiquity, aesthetics, and formality. I called it the *bells and smells*. He considered my Pentecostal-Evangelical-Protestantism too shallow. I did not object to his religious bent, praying together and putting the matter in God's hands.

Kim grew tired of her Saturn vehicle which always seemed to have problems. We traded that lemon in on a white 1997 Oldsmobile, again getting a deal with our GM credit card. About that time Stephen graduated from Tam High School and his father and mother were in the process of emigrating to the USA. I also got word from my nephew Jimmy Walker that he and Valerie had produced a fourth child, a baby girl named Julissa. I was proud of this nephew. He was growing prosperous and successful as an estate planning attorney, mostly for elders.

One of our first trips in the Olds was up to Portland. Simon and Zachary drove up in the Pontiac. This was a get-together for my family, but even more for the Kims. Hyun Ok flew in from Virginia while Hyun Hee arrived from Korea with her husband. I talked the Kim family into a climb up Mount Saint Helens. Thirteen of us made it to the top: Chris, Kim, Zachary, Simon, Frank, Amber,

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Stephen, his mom, his dad, Hyun Ok, Megan, Dong Hyun, and Candice. The day was overcast, obscuring the distant mountains. The three Kim sisters had figured this was just a stroll and wore ill-fitting shoes. Kim later lost two of her toenails on the descent. (They later grew back.)

My sons stayed behind in Oregon to work with Auntie Pam at fairs and powwows. The Sunbird Zachary had been driving blew an engine along the Columbia Gorge. He ignited a grass fire, which a passing truck driver helped extinguish. The 1984 Pontiac was towed never to be seen again. Pam drove Zachary and Simon south a few weeks later.

My army job continued its rhythm. In August, I traveled alone to Cheyenne, Wyoming, to evaluate a fire-fighting unit. That was a fun outfit to hang out with. When I filed my report, I asked the major how I could help him fix the problems he identified. Together we wrote the words.

A few weeks later, I flew to Boise, Idaho, with a few of my army comrades. An odd thing occurred there. As I was dining at a restaurant, I gazed across a few tables to see a man I recognized. His aged face was familiar but I could not place him. After wracking my brains, it popped into my head. That was Coach Johnson from Clark School. This guy was Frank's gymnastics coach in 1969. I rose from my seat, approached the man, and he too said he recognized me. He figured I might be Frank. I phoned him from my motel room that night and we held a long nostalgic conversation. That was the first and only time something like that had ever happened to me.

Zachary stayed at the house during the summer working for an enrichment program called *Making Waves*. I remember driving him to the high point of Camino Alto road, removing his bicycle from the back of the Peugeot, and watching him zoom downhill toward Corte Madera.

On the last day of August, the most photographed woman in the world died in a car crash. Kim was glued to the news for days following the death of Princess Diana of Wales. She cut short her TV-watching to attend a big writers conference called *Soon Bok Camp*. Kim was a featured speaker. A multitude of Korean women looked up to this professor as both mentor and role model.

Kim was publishing a Korean story every month or so. I proved to be her sounding board and helped with ideas. Her favorite newspaper article was called *One Hundred Bags of Rice*. It involved her mother in 1970.

Education had always been important to Lee Il-Song. She became frantic to gather money to keep both Hyun Deok and Hyun Ok enrolled in university. The girl's father did not contribute a single Korean won. Her mother schemed to

bring cheap objects from the countryside and resell them on the streets of Seoul at a profit. After a few months of success, she was arrested by the police and held in a station for not paying taxes. To escape prison, she had to provide 100 bags of rice; an enormous amount, about \$1000. She had to humble herself and ask a rich cousin to bail her out by paying the bribe/fine. Thereafter, Lee Il-Song worked doubly hard to both support her daughters and repay her cousin. Kim wrote that was the measure of her love and sacrifice for them.

Inspired by Kim's writing commitment, I began to work on a piece of speculative fiction called *With Dead Certainty*. The plot centered on the philosophical question, "How would you live your life if you were dead certain of your death date?" I wrote a few dozen pages, but of course this project withered when I wandered into another direction. Would I ever complete it?

In the fall, Zachary returned to Stanford for his final year. He reentered the life of academics and Harmonics. He served as a director at Roble Hall enjoying a rich social life. My number-one son also joined the Catholic Student Union.

By September, Starrett's business was growing and he hired a person to work alongside of me. Jannette Pierce became the employee who answered phones and filed statements. We had a great relationship and she became the one who looked after Paco when Kim and I were out of town.

We truly had an empty nest. Zachary, Simon, and Stephen were all gone. I converted the smaller bedroom downstairs into my office buying a new computer desk and a small couch hide-a-bed. The upstairs dining room with the big glass table became Kim's in-home office. We ate our meals at the smaller kitchen table.

I had time to update my Home Page, doing most of the work at my Tiburon office. I liked the Mickey Mouse Sorcerer picture, so I sliced it up into nine pieces with a major link for each piece. At that time, I was composing an online book about the Worldwide Web calling it *Around the Web in 24 Hours*. My files were still uploaded to the SFSU server.

I still spent many hours at home sitting at my computer, enjoying my CD collection. For twenty-five years I had been an enthusiast of Classical Music. By 1997, my CDs had grown in number to about 130, half of which played in a regular rotation. I bought a fancy CD player that rotated through six CDs. I was constantly pulling some out and putting others in. I calculated my ten favorite classical composers based on number of compositions. With 19 hours, Wolfgang A. Mozart was number one. J.S. Bach was number two with 15 hours. Then followed Beethoven, Haydn, Tchaikovsky, Handel, Brahms, Vivaldi, Telemann, and Schubert.

These magnificent classical compositions invigorated my soul. Through much of my time in Mill Valley, one constant friend has gone unmentioned. That was Paco the Parrot—always company, always squawking, always sitting on my

shoulder. Not everyone loved my bird. He could be territorial, and terrified some visitors with his screeching and biting.

Paco escaped from the house a few times. Once I called a tree climber to rescue him from a towering redwood. I asked the climber how I could pay him. He said "How about twenty dollars for dinner?" Once Paco was lost for five days. I phoned the local SPCA and recovered my conure from a neighbor several houses away. My bird was a golden thread in the fabric of my life.

When I attended my November drill at Camp Parks, I received this official notice:

You were considered by the Army Reserve Components Mandatory Selection Board for LTC in May 1997. Unfortunately, you were not among those recommended for promotion. This is your second non-selection for promotion. Because you have now been twice non-selected by a DA mandatory board you must be separated in accordance with Title 10, US Code. That section requires that you be removed on the first day of the month following that on which you reach 20 years of commissioned officer service.

I was not surprised by the letter. I became a major late in life and showed two bad years on my record. Yet, it would have been nice to achieve the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. That would have bumped up my retirement pay by a few dollars. However, at forty-eight years old, I was ready to hang up my combat boots.

Both sons were home over Christmas. Kim had a long talk with Simon about enrolling at SFSU. Because she was faculty, he could attend college tuition free. Simon could stay with us at no cost as long as he remained in school. We both told him God had a plan and maybe that plan ran through San Francisco State. Simon said he would think about our proposition.

Zachary was in a quandary about his career after graduation. He had passed the Foreign Service exam, both written and oral. That was quite an accomplishment. Did he want to become a diplomat? He wasn't certain. Zach was looking for employment around Stanford. Could he possibly find a worthwhile academic position on campus? He also breached the possibility of a religious vocation. What would we think if he attended a Catholic seminary? The year of 1997 ended with uncertainty.

## 1998

I could discern God's hand in my life. Just as my army career was winding down, my work with Starrett Dalton was picking up. It seemed like I was crossing a stream with stepping stones. I was able to plant one foot on a forward stone before lifting the other foot from the stone behind.

In January, I submitted the following letter to Colonel Roach:

I request transfer from the 91<sup>st</sup> Division to the Army Retired Reserve effective 1 April 1998. This request is based on the understanding that I have sufficient retirement points to make this past year a good year for retirement purposes and that as of 22 March, 1998, I will have completed 20 years of eligible military service.

After receiving the letter, Colonel Roach assured me that he would sit down with the Brigade S1 to make certain my *ducks were in a row*.

In February, Simon dropped by the house in his Conquest TSI. He said he was done with Portland and decided to enroll at SFSU for the Fall term. Kim was overjoyed. First, however, he wanted a final fling, hanging out with buddies in Santa Barbara.

I grew weary of my Peugeot. It seemed to be the car that would not die. I wanted something fun so in March I paid \$5800 for a vintage VW Bug. Kim was not amused with the bright red convertible. After a while, neither was I. Being twenty-one with a 1965 Bug was different than being forty-eight with the same car. In nice weather at low speeds, it was an eye-catcher, but cruising down Highway 101 in the rain it was a hassle. I passed on the aging Peugeot to Zachary who was delighted with my largess.

My last days in uniform occurred during the April drill. Everyone knew I was on the way out, so I walked from room to room dispensing my last good-byes. On Saturday, a training officer approached urging me to qualify with the M16 rifle. He needed to meet his quota. I obliged and barely made marksman. At 204 pounds, I was out of shape. I was uncomfortable in the prone position, and my glasses kept sliding down my nose. Retirement from the army seemed reasonable.

After the Sunday drill, the colonel hosted a farewell meal for me at the post eatery. I remember over-stuffing my Bug convertible with six people and transporting them a few blocks. The good colonel presented me with a parting plaque. Once home, I removed my uniform for the last time. My military service had come to an end. My uniform was destined to become a Halloween costume.

By May, Zachary was finishing up his Stanford experience. On a few occasions I drove with him to Palo Alto just because I enjoyed his company. One time as we were pulling out of the driveway, I stuck a CD into the car player. It was *Carmina Burana* by Carl Orff. When we pulled into Roble Hall the final notes of the composition reverberated. I told Zachary that Stanford was exactly one *Orff* from Mill Valley. He examined the CD jewel box and told me one Orff equals 58 minutes and 10 seconds.

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On June 14, Zachary graduated from Stanford University. Kim and I drove Robby Elam and Simon down to the campus. I took a dozen photos as my son marched around the stadium track and received his diploma. It was a hot day and Simon devised a hat out of two graduation bulletins. We walked for pictures at *Mem-chu* and *Hoo-tow*. Located around campus stood various statues by the sculptor Rodin, most notably *The Thinker*. On one of the pedestals, the human shape had been removed. Zachary took the opportunity to mount the base posing with his cap and gown as *The Thinker*.

A few weeks after graduation, Zachary-the-world-traveler was touring Europe with the Stanford Chorale. He emailed me pictures from Pamplona where he was running from the Bulls. Kim was also taking steps to become a world traveler. She once explained the story to me this way.

Kim was a subscriber to the San Francisco Korean times, devouring the words from front to back. In June she read an advertisement posted by an organization called Christian Life World Mission Frontiers. This group was recruiting volunteers for a short-term mission trip to the suffering nation of Rwanda. Kim read the ad, then stuffed the newspaper into the trash. She tossed in bed all night. In the morning she retrieved the paper from the bin and called Christian Life. Kim had two months to prepare for her missionary trip to Rwanda.

Her commitment posed a problem for me. We had agreed to meet up with Zachary in England at the close of his Stanford Chorale tour. Our plans called for us to tour England, Scotland, and Ireland in August. After a discussion, we agreed I should visit Zachary alone in Britain while she could go without me on the mission trip to Africa.

Kim quickly made a whole new group of Korean friends: Missionary Kim and his wife from Mountain View, Fred and Kris Kim from the Salvation Army in San Francisco, as well as Pastor Choi and Rebecca from Prayer Mountain near Scotts Valley. To support my wife, I met with her new friends as they prayed, sang, and otherwise prepared for their missionary journey. Kim bought an ELPH digital camera to photograph her adventure.

As I dropped Kim off at the airport, I casually told her, "I'm sorry I can't go with you to Africa this time, but if you ever go again, I promise to go with you." I figured this trip was just a one-time adventure for her.

A few days after Kim left for Africa, Simon drove me to the airport promising to look after the house and bird. When I landed in London, I immediately rented a small car. It took me a while to get the hang of driving on the left. In fact, I dinged the bumper pulling out of the rental lot.

The next eight hours were an adventure as I drove three hundred miles north to Edinburgh. The left turns and roundabouts provided the greatest challenge. By the time I reached the church where Zachary's Chorale performed, I collapsed in exhaustion.

We spent the first night together in Edinburgh where I recovered from fatigue and jetlag. We then began our whirlwind tour, having just seven days to return the car. The next morning, we drove west to Glasgow then south to the car-ferry at Cairnryan. Zachary took charge of reading the brochures, plotting the course, buying the tickets, and talking with locals. I was along for the ride, to enjoy my son's company, and to foot the bill.

We ferried to Belfast where we spent our second night. In the morning we viewed some local sites then headed up to Londonderry. Zachary and I discussed the difficult politics separating Northern Ireland from the Republic. We diverted north to explore the Giant's Causeway, walking in heavy mist. We stayed our third night at a nearby guesthouse. We experienced constant light rain which kept the countryside green and the sky gray. I did much of the driving trying to keep the car to the left of the roadway. My son became my *Zach alarm*. Whenever I drifted too far to the left, Zachary would let loose a "woo-woo".

We paused in Sligo and Galway, stopping at Kilarney Castle to climb the medieval staircase. Zachary chose the interesting restaurants and I paid with colorful Irish punts. Making frequent stops we ended up at Cork to visit Blarney Castle and touch (not kiss) the famous Blarney stone. We shared a small room for the night and then headed to Dublin. About halfway in route, Zachary reached for his passport and couldn't find it. He had left it under his pillow for safe-keeping. I told him "inside the shoe, not under the pillow." We were delayed a few hours, but the guesthouse returned his passport. Driving north we viewed the ruins of a dozen churches and monasteries, destroyed by Oliver Cromwell three centuries earlier.

Once in Dublin, we drove through Trinity College and sampled beer at the Guinness Brewery. Dublin proved to be a compact walkable city. We spent our fifth night in the Irish capital and early the next morning caught the Dublin car-ferry to Holyhead in Wales.

We followed the coastline constantly stopping to marvel at medieval castles. The best of the bunch was at Caernarfon, where we wandered the walls for much of the afternoon. We spent our sixth night in Cardiff, the Welsh capital, then drove into Heathrow Airport where I returned the rental car. Fortunately, they didn't notice the ding. I thanked Zach for the memories then headed back to California. My son would follow me in a few days.

Upon my return to Mill Valley, I undertook a major house project. I decided to build a massive back deck. Zachary owed me money for his college education,

and I agreed to subtract one hundred dollars per day for his full assistance. We began by tearing down the old rickety back deck. It was so dilapidated; Zach and I were able to combine strength and push it down. With that removed we began construction. The plan was to span the length of the house, about fifty feet, then to build into the slope about twelve feet. We also planned to connect the back deck with the side deck and the side stairwell. The total project included about 800 square feet of redwood decking.

Zach and I bought all the wood and screwed all the planks into place. Since we were not professionals, I overbuilt the deck to keep it strong. Simon joined the project for several days. He suggested a hot tub might be appropriate for Mill Valley, so we incorporated that into the construction. Our 8-foot by 8-foot tub was three feet high. We sank half that height into the deck for easier access. I did hire a professional to electrify the hot tub.

As Zachary and I toiled for long days, baseball provided a pleasant diversion. This was the August when Mark McGwire and Sammy Sosa competed in the great home run chase. We listened to the radio as the sluggers battled it out. By season's end McGwire hit 70 while Sammy hit 66. It was a great year for baseball. I never heard a word about steroids.

Kim returned from Africa just as we were completing the deck. She was hyper-invigorated after spending three weeks speaking Korean and experiencing Africa. She brought back souvenir wicker baskets and a woven floor mat. Kim was impressed with the back deck, especially with the fact we had built it ourselves. A week after her return, she was impressed with the hot tub even more.

After Labor Day, Simon moved into the double room downstairs and began his bachelor's degree at SFSU, majoring in fine arts. Zachary decided not to pursue the foreign service, but rather focus on a vocational career. He held a lowly job at St. Dominic Catholic School in San Francisco. He also remained active in the Stanford Catholic Association. On one occasion he assisted Chelsea Clinton at a Catholic orientation.

My patchwork career expanded and I began teaching classes at Santa Rosa Junior College (SRJC). The drive was long but the situation rewarding. I taught the suite of Microsoft Office: Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Access.

After her missionary trip, Kim became more biblical in her faith. We began to drop by the Salvation Army church located near SFSU. The ten-thirty service was held in Korean with about fifty people sitting in the pews. Several of the church women were married to non-Korean men. These guys politely sat in the rear of the church waiting for the service to end. Fred Kim asked if I could lead this band in a Bible Study. I agreed and soon my wife and I commuted into the City to worship and teach.

We grew more distant from the Presbyterian Church. After Kim talked with the lead minister about the lesbian youth director, she decided it was time to cut ties. This doctrine was not the one she had grown up with in Korea. I enjoyed participating in the Friday morning men's connection and continued to attend. It was a stopping off point on the bike ride to Point Tiburon.

We began to look around for a local church where we both could be nourished in the English language. We settled upon Tiburon Baptist Church, which held an affiliation with nearby Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary. We appreciated the Biblical messages of Barry Stricker and the hymn singing led by Craig and Beth Singleton. The atmosphere was intellectually stimulating with several seminary professors being Sunday School Teachers. For a few years we attended two services every morning: one starting at nine in Tiburon and a second at 10:30 in San Francisco. Sunday became an important day.

Simon was truly a multidimensional artist. His interest in hip-hop music expanded when he hooked up with Renat and Dean to form a group called the Brassknucks. His buddies belonged to wealthy families—rumored to be Russian mafia—and money did not seem to be an obstacle to his creative work. Production, promotion, performance; it was all first class.

I typed this up for Simon as one of his first art assignments:

Simon Foreman, Art 412, Nov 4, 98. This project really stumped me. I have been putting much thought in it. I have also had a few good ideas pass through my head. But I haven't had that one great idea that hits you and you know it's the one. You know what I mean? For some reason most of my ideas are darker, emotions like terror, deep depression, rage. Now, I'm not a hateful person but I don't see portraying something like love, or joy. A more jolting thing for people to see would be a darker emotion, I think. I know that the poster will be a shadow of a man, on a Yellow backing, with a yellow tear. The person casting the shadow will be much smaller and in a different position. But this even is not the one great idea so it may change. I'm sorry I don't have more today. But I am sure inspiration will hit, and my project will be ready.

Toward the end of the year, Kim and I attended a class at SFSU called "Digital Story Telling". The goal of this class was to create a short multimedia presentation using Adobe Photoshop and Premiere. I had so much fun creating *Brown Paper Bag*, weaving together video, audio, old photos, clip art, and sound clips. I told of the time in 1960 when I confused a cabbage for a lettuce. The closing line of this tribute to my mother was narrated in my own voice, "When I think about my mother, I think about her mercy. I think about her cheerful optimism; her ability to make the best out of whatever emerged from her brown paper bag." Yep, that was my mom.

At the end of the year, Kim and I drove to Longview to visit my mother for her eighty-fourth birthday. She was well looked after at the SunRise Care center, mostly because a daughter or son dropped by nearly every day. My mom suffered from severe dementia. She spoke to me without her dentures and without her mind. We hired a professional accordionist who walked around the birthday room playing Polish tunes. My mother perked up and danced. I've often thought *When the mind leaves you, the person who remains reveals your true self*. My mother was kind and joyful.

The next day, I sat with my mom at a McDonalds. It was sad. We could not discuss the past. We could not discuss the future. She was existing only in the moment. I pointed outside through the big glass window at some ravens that were pecking at abandoned French fries. I said "Look mom. Do you see those blackbirds?"

"Yes," she said. "They look hungry".

As the year of 1998 came to a close, I prayed for my mother; that God would bless her for as many days as lay ahead for her.

## 1999

For a few years, Kim had subscribed to the San Francisco Korea Times. As Professor Kim Hyun Deok, she had also published a few articles in the poetry section. In January the editor asked me to submit an article. My first writing—*Don't make dog sounds*—was such a success, he proposed I become a bi-weekly columnist. And so it happened. Unbelievably, over the course of eight years, I published 195 articles.

My column was titled *Korea through Western Eyes*. The process worked like this: In English I would compose a witty story about my interaction with Koreans; Kim would translate the five hundred words into Korean, asking me clarifying questions; she would submit the article to a professional editor at the Korea Times who would adjust the text. Then it would appear in print. At first, my articles only appeared in San Francisco, then expanded to Los Angeles. After a few years, my name appeared nationwide. One Korean lady in Chicago once peppered me with questions, not understanding the limitations of my Korean language. I had to point her in Kim's direction.

I wrote an article for Kim in celebration of our twenty-fifth wedding anniversary. I titled it *Keeping Korean Time*. This was a portion of the original text:

I learned about *Korean Time* when I first stepped foot in the Hermit Kingdom. The bus was late to pick us up at the Airport. Our American sponsor said "Don't worry, the driver is keeping Korean time". I shortly learned Korean time meant approximate time, and usually several minutes late.

The first time I met my wife-to-be she was keeping Korean time. I was already ten minutes into teaching an English workshop. I looked to the rear

of the room and saw this good-looking 22-year-old woman sneaking in with her back to the wall.

When I asked the middle-school teacher out to a tea room, she was about 20 minutes behind schedule. On our wedding day, the same woman was thirty minutes late. She claimed the hairdresser wouldn't release her.

Let me wish my wife a happy anniversary with my favorite Sijo poem:

What is love like?  
Is it round or is it square? Long or short?  
Is there more to measure than what I am stepping on?  
You may not think that it lasts long, but I can't see where it ends.

My Love, may the Good Lord keep *Korean time* when the day comes to call you home.

In February, Zachary and Simon dropped by for Kim's forty-eighth birthday. Before we sliced cake, Simon handed her an envelope. At first, she thought it was empty, but after jiggling it upside down, a tiny gold wire fell out. "That's my nose ring," Simon laughed. "I did this for you."

My wife gave her son a big hug, saying it was her best birthday present ever.

Also, in February, a long-running news story reached its climax. For several months tawdry headlines detailed a White House encounter between President Bill Clinton and an intern named Monica Lewinski. On February 7, the Republican House impeached the president, but later the Senate could not garner the two-thirds votes needed to remove him from office.

In March, I nearly killed myself. I was running late for a computer class at Drake High School when I found my VW Bug stopped in traffic by a never-ending stream of oncoming vehicles. I needed to turn left into the Drake parking lot. A kind driver at the front of the column paused and hand-motined to me to turn left. At just that moment, a pickup came racing down the curb to his right. I was wearing my seat belt as the pickup slammed into my passenger-side door. I felt as if an electric current had passed through my body. The old VW was demolished.

A few passers-by helped push my dead Bug through the gates into the parking lot. I was shook up. My shin oozed blood, but remarkably I proceeded to teach my two-hour MS Word class. Afterward, I showed my wreck to a student who marveled that I escaped without serious injury. That kind student also gave me a ride back to Mill Valley. The next morning, I had my mid-life-crisis-car towed away. The engine was in tack and the junk yard gave me \$500.

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I was desperate for transportation, and quickly bought a 1993 Honda Civic for \$3000. I thought the car looked unique until I drove down the road and spotted dozens like it. I did get an insurance check for \$4000 as well as a police citation for an illegal left turn.

Simon came into his own as a student, earning high marks in every art class he attended. He was painting, drawing, performing hip-hop, and making ceramics. His favorite class time was spent with his ceramic teacher on the beach, firing soft clay sculptures into finished bowls and cups. The talent in him I had long suspected began to emerge. One evening he appeared at the house driving a 1962 Buick Skylark Special. He hung on to this clunker for half a year, then parked it at Renat's house to rust away.

My work situation at Securities America continued to please. I once remarked to Jannette that being employed by Starrett was like working for Ebenezer Scrooge—after he had learned the spirit of Christmas. When my mind was not engaged in investments it wandered into word play:

Some collectives of animals have a hierarchy of rulers. The Black Wildebeest, also known as gnu, are led by an alpha male. In larger herds the leadership extends to the beta male, the gamma male and so on to the omega male. One day a solitary wildebeest encountered the herd. Alpha challenged the stranger. The new arrival could only join the herd if he knew one of the wildebeest leaders. Fortunately, the answer was *yes*. The new gnu knew Nu.

Starrett fancied himself an ornithologist keeping a set of binoculars handy by the picture windows to spot ducks on the blue lagoon. I took up this task and managed an unofficial count of waterfowl. Before I left his service, the tally grew to thirteen: Golden Eye, Merganser, Egret, Canada Goose, Mallard, Scaup, Loon, Ring-necked Duck, Grebe, Cormorant, Kingfisher, and Pelican.

Kim and I often splashed in our hot tub. I composed this poem while soaking in warm water and inspired by the surrounding Golden Gate National Recreation Area:

Flying fog greets the evening calm,  
inviting tall eucalyptus to dance  
and seducing redwoods into song,  
playing peekaboo with a reluctant moon  
and chasing melancholy from my soul.

I wrote on my website about the phenomena of flying fog.

When the Central Valley of California heats up, waters off the coast of California remain cold. The temperature of the interior may soar to 110 degrees Fahrenheit, while the ocean surface remains in the 50s. These regions of extreme temperature difference are separated by coastal mountains all the way from the Columbia gorge to the Gulf of Cortez. There exists only one small coastal breach; the Golden Gate between San Francisco and the Marin Headlands.

When the interior heats up, inland air rises. This leaves a surface void. Nature abhors this vacuum, so cold foggy marine air rushes through the Golden Gate and nearby mountain gaps to fill it. Flying fog spills down hills, boils through passes, and bounces off islands as it hurries inland.

On June 3, I purchased a new Pentium 3 computer and upgraded my personal website. I acquired the domain name *flyingfog.net*, establishing my on-line identity as *flyingfog*. At that time, I was using the internet chiefly as a teaching tool for classes at the College of Marin, Drake High School, and Santa Rosa Junior College.

In mid-August, the four of us traveled to Longview for a family reunion in Battleground, Washington. A photo of the event showed fifty family members gathered as a tribute to my mother. The newest additions were Riley and Shae Sobottke born to Stephanie on July 15. Unfortunately, the guest of honor was in no condition to attend.

My mother's health had been declining rapidly. Dementia ravaged her mind, causing her body to deteriorate. She was confined to bed at Parkway North Care Center, near Frank's house; no longer able to feed herself or speak. As I held her hand and looked into her eyes, I could discern the person I once knew as mother was no longer present. With three sisters at the bedside, Frank said it was just a matter of days before she would pass away. I kissed her on the forehead then began the drive home.

A week later, on August 26, Frank phoned to say that mom had died. My brother told me she was finally unable to swallow food. A stomach tube would be required to keep her nourished. The family declined this heroic measure; she was removed from other devices; and nature took its course. Genevieve Marie Foreman was 83 years, 7 months, and 28 days at her return to God. Charlotte related how she had experienced a vision at mom's last breath. Charlotte looked out the window to see angels escorting our mother from this world to the next.

The four of us flew back to Portland to attend a funeral service on August 30. This event occurred at Longview Park in the same chapel where my dad's life was memorialized twenty-two years earlier. Roger Lucas from Shekinah Christian

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Center officiated. Each of her children present shared a remembrance, as did many grandchildren. Especially poignant were the tributes of Eileen, Jenny and Laura.

I presented “the world’s shortest poem” which I had devised in the parking lot moments before the memorial. It consisted of only three letters. I wrote on a sheet of typing paper: M-O-M. I asked attendees to read the word out loud several times. Then I turned the paper upside down and asked them to read it again: W-O-W. I flipped the paper as they repeated the two words.

Mom’s coffin was interred in a crypt not far from the chapel. Her remains lay just above that of John Foreman. The brass on the bottom crypt read: “With Jesus”. I thought to myself; *Maybe mom’s brass plaque should read: with Jesus and because with Jesus, with John.* Unlike my father’s death which always seemed premature, my mother’s death seemed timely because her mind had already departed from her body.

Frank did not attend the funeral service. In fact, my brother was fortunate to be alive. One day after mom’s death, early in the morning, he had climbed to the peak of his house to install copper weather stripping. Just above the garage door, he lost his footing, falling twenty feet to the concrete driveway. He landed on his feet and shattered the large bones in both of his lower legs.

Frank later described how he rolled over to his back and watched his feet flop over the sides. He said he remembered no pain in his shock. He crawled on his hands and knees fifty feet to his front door pushing it open. He howled until Johnny arrived to discover his situation. Lelia called 9-1-1 and paramedics rushed to the house. Frank was in bad shape. The medics suggested he might be crippled for life. However, after months of surgeries, pins, braces, and rehab—but especially prayer—he healed to the point of near full recovery.

Kim shared an interesting comment with Frank. In the Korean tradition, sometimes the ghost of a deceased mother misses the youngest child. Therefore, that child must be vigilant in the weeks following his mother’s death. Frank verified a grain of truth in that folk wisdom. He was indeed distracted by his mom’s death rather than focused on hammer and nails.

Since Frank could not attend his mom’s funeral, he asked me to read aloud this hand-written eulogy:

As I sat and watched the life of my gentle humble mother ebb from her indomitable body, I could not be sad. The tears welled up unbidden, but not unwelcome. It was right, but it was not easy.

Mom was prepared. She will inherit her reward; to see her true father and husband; not the father who begat her and died before her birth, nor the

father who adopted her and raised her as his own. She will see her “Abba Father”, who witnessed through His Spirit that she is indeed a child of God. Her true husband who beckoned her to shed her corrupting body of flesh and put on her marriage gown of fine white linen.

I believe that she will meet again her soul mate in the next life; a man called John Foreman who loved her from the third grade through forty years of marriage and six children. When dad died, I told mom that she would see him again. However, in heaven, they would not be husband and wife, but brother and sister. She shared that through their long hand-in-hand walk, they always felt like children of the same father more than husband and wife.

Their humble spirits perceived that their roles on earth were temporary. The 22 years that separated them were brief in light of eternity. Ten of mom’s years were swallowed in the curse of forgetfulness, but now mom remembers all. The dark glass is removed.

Jesus called Jenny home. He lifted his nail-scarred hands in welcome. Our mom always wanted to know if she had done a good job; that her homework was well done. Yes, Jenny, you did a good job! Our love for you is an earthly testimony. The testimony in Heaven will be from Jesus Himself who says, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” Even so come quickly, Lord Jesus.

In the months following my mother’s death, I created a memorial web page with pictures and tributes, including a video called “All My Life, God Has Been There”. I added this observation about my mother:

Our mom is a good egg...  
Although she appears scrambled on the outside ...  
on the inside she is always sunny-side-up.

Kim and I continued to attend two churches on Sunday morning, loving them both. Kim got spiritually fed twice—once in English, then again in Korean. I grew spiritually twice—once by listening to Barry’s sermon and a second time by teaching my band of husbands. I received a thank-you plaque from Fred Kim which read: “Heart to God, Hand to Men. In appreciation of Dr. Chris Foreman for devoted and faithful service rendered to the Salvation Army S.F. Korean Corps. For English Bible Study. Given by Lieutenants Fred and Chris Kim, Corps Officers.”

Just before cold weather set in, Kim and I vacationed for two days at Yosemite National Park. We took photos along Yosemite Valley, by Half Dome, and from Glacier Point. We were delayed exiting the park because of police and media vehicles. It turned out to be a tragic irony.

A BASE jumper had just parachuted from the top of El Capitan as a protest to demonstrate the safety of such jumps. Her chute failed to open. The jumper had used an unfamiliar cheaper parachute, because park rangers planned to confiscate her expensive one. This odd incident won a prize in the Darwin Awards for 1999.

For Christmas I sent out a dozen videos. The note read:

Dear Family, as part of our Sunday School class, we watched this video tape about the life of Jesus. We think it's an authentic portrayal of His life and would like to share it with you. You can watch it yourself, pass it on to a neighbor, or show it to the little ones when they are tired of whatever else they are watching. It's good viewing for grown-ups, kids, grandkids, and great grandkids. Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Chris & Kim

Simon was busy recording music with his hip-hop group. The Brassknucks flew to Miami on a promotional tour. I was proud of Simon and his very full life. I wasn't so sure about my own life. I had just turned fifty and I seemed to be going nowhere.

As the year rushed to its conclusion, excitement increased. An old song by Prince filled the airwaves: *Party like it's 1999*. The upcoming transition at New Year would not only mark the end of a calendar year but the end of a decade, a century, and a millennium. The Roman calendar would shrink from MCMXCIX to MM.

The event was dubbed *Y2K*. Along with celebration there was consternation. Fear was rampant that computers would explode, the Internet would freeze, and airplanes would fall from the sky. This concern was caused by something called the "Y2K bug"—an issue with mainframe computers programed in outdated languages. Over the course of 1999, it seemed everyone was updating their computer software and hardware to avoid catastrophe. So, what would happen? Did the world come to an end in the year of our Lord 2000 AD?



# Chapter 21

## REDIRECTED

January 2000 to June 2003  
Mill Valley, California

*Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not  
to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

*(2 Timothy 2:15)*

After a decade of misdirection and vegetation, the time had come to follow a lifelong inclination. The spiritual nudge may have come from the death of my mother, or perhaps the occasion of my fiftieth birthday, or maybe the advent of a fresh millennium. The quiet voice grew into a distinct call.

“Chris, do you love me?”

“Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.”

“Feed my sheep.”

### JANUARY 2000

I stayed up late on New Year’s Eve as California welcomed the new millennium while Kim fell asleep in front of the TV. Nothing earth-shattering had happened in earlier time zones, so we figured no airplanes would fall from the sky. Y2K turned out to be a bust and I could sleep next to my wife in peace. In the morning, I did notice someone had stolen the *Ashton Lane* street sign, but that was replaced a few weeks later.

I began to grow my web presence, constantly adding photos and text. At the new year, I posted these words about dabbling: These ten things I do in my free time, watching the world at whim.

1. I dabble with my computer. I just burned a CD of 78RPM recordings for my family and friends.

2. I dabble in writing. Some writing is about word play and puzzles. Some of my writing is for the Korean Newspaper. At a few hundred dollars a month, I still consider my column-writing dabbling.
3. I read both the San Francisco Chronicle and Marin IJ every day. That's one hour a day dabbled away.
4. I dabble in our backyard, sitting in the hot tub and watering backyard flowers. I always have some sort of project going. I have heard that a house is a man's largest toy.
5. When I'm at home, I enjoy music. My ears dabble in the classics, while I multitask primary activities.
6. I sometimes dabble in elections, working as a deputy inspector at my local precinct. I am not always happy with the outcome.
7. I listen to two radios. One is tuned to our local public station: KQED. A second—right next to it—is tuned to KFAX, a Christian station. When public radio begins to talk religion, I switch to the religious station. When the religious station talks politics, I switch back to public radio.
8. I dabble with exercise, bicycling to Tiburon a few times a week. I try to stay fit at the Sausalito Nautilus gym. I walk with Kim on weekends and go on outings with the Mount Tamalpias Hikers.
9. I dabble in travel and enjoy taking pictures with a variety of cameras.
10. I probably over-dabble in the lives of my sons Simon Peter and Zachary. My sons remain my pride and joy.

On January 4, Kim and I vacationed in Hawaii. This had been on our to-do list for a long time. We booked a hotel room at the Weston on Maui and packed as much activity as we could into six days. From our base in Kaanapali, we drove our rental car to distant Hana, stopping at a dozen waterfalls.

We watched for whales on a sunset cruise off the island of Lahaina and on the next morning drove to the volcanic rim of Haleakala. The sunrise was spectacular and the air crisp. Everywhere we turned we seemed to spot a rainbow.

Kim and I lounged in the five hotel pools, splashing through the waterfalls, then strolled to the sandy beach to wade in the warm Pacific. We totally enjoyed each other's company and had the time of our lives. Hawaii counted as my forty-fifth state.

The next time Zachary and Simon came by the house, I said, "I have a surprise for you." I dragged upstairs the two millennial foot lockers they had sealed twelve years earlier in Tomah. The boys didn't seem as excited as I was concerning their time capsules. They obliged me by cutting through the packing tape and pulling open the hinges. Each son unpacked old toys, stuffed animals, school papers, and baby albums.

I think they were at an in-between age where the magic of childhood had departed, but the nostalgia of adulthood had not yet arrived. Each removed a few items then I resealed the boxes for a later time, perhaps at a decade of greater appreciation.

As 2000 dawned, I was teaching occasional computer classes at the College of Marin, Santa Rosa Junior College, and Drake High School. My major employer continued to be Starrett Dalton at Securities America. A few times a week I bicycled into Point Tiburon, about six miles from the house. The peddling was bayside scenic all the way.

One day out of curiosity, I re-routed my return trip to check out Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary (GGBTS) located at Strawberry Point. My thought was to dabble in a few classes to expand my horizons. The registrar convinced me to enroll in a program called MATS—Master of Theological Study. This was a stripped-down version of the full-blown Master of Divinity. I decided to go for it.

I had considered my life as a range top with four burners. For twenty-nine years, the water pot of military and academia boiled in the front while the pot of ministry simmered on a back burner. I figured it was time to move the vessel of gospel ministry to the front and turn up the heat.

My timing was unfortunate since the spring semester was only a week away. I enrolled as a non-returning, late-arriving student and got stuck with two leftovers: Pastoral Counseling and Church Web Design. These classes kept me occupied from February through May. I did receive a tuition discount as a member of a Southern Baptist Church.

The academic aspect was familiar to me, but the open proclamation of the gospel was novel and refreshing. Dan Boling taught Pastoral Counseling. The content seemed so contrary to my personality type. It was challenging to be an *aloof confidant*. I appreciated the in-class discussions and the personal experience that Dr. Boling shared. I conducted two counseling sessions, submitting papers called *verbatim*.

Herb Drake ran the seminary's website and as a sideline taught a class in Church Web Design. We did not use an HTML editor, but key-stroked the code. I thought I knew a lot about HTML, but was disabused of this notion. Herb's class motivated me to build beyond my original web framework. What I learned in that 2000 class continued to serve as a foundation for all future websites.

I had free time at Securities America to do seminary work and to frolic on my *Flying Fog* Web Site. A portion of my site was labeled *Recreational Wordplay*. I developed several wordplays from data gleaned in putting together my almanac of names. One original work I called *A Lexicon of 200 Double Duty Surnames*. Here is the introduction:

It's fair to say that all family names at some point in their lineage and language conveyed meaning. To speakers of the English language many surnames continue to carry meaning. The words *foreman*, *grant*, *march* and *ball* are both common proper names and proper common names. In addition, certain surnames carry meaning if considered in their homophonous form, for example: Wright = right, Bragg = brag, and Whittier = wittier. Each of the two hundred names in this lexicon stands as a surname first and then doubles as a verb, noun or other part of speech. These double duty surnames make the word following redundant, and therefore expendable. Each sentence is crafted in a way that alludes to the identity of the well-known person.

Here are ten samples of double-duty surnames:

BROOK SHIELDS her eyes from prying photographers.  
In the role of 007, I liked ROGER MOORE than Sean Connery.  
Did her first husband pay JULIA CHILDE support?  
Did little STEVIE WONDER if he'd ever become a singing star?  
Was JAMES WORTHY to be a part of the Dream Team?  
MARK SPITZ out water whenever he swims too much.  
Was James Thurber or THORTON WILDER?  
As for philosophy, Aristotle can but IMANNUEL KANT.  
MALCOLM LITTLE realized he would someday change his name to X.  
OEDIPUS REX his life when he sleeps with his mother.

In March, Zachary was living in Palo Alto working for the local Catholic parish. The Peugeot finally stopped functioning and my son survived without a car. I didn't see him for a few months. Simon continued to live downstairs focusing on his school work and hip-hop with the Brassknucks. By that time, he was commuting to SFSU in a Mercury Cougar. I didn't see much of this son either.

In March, Kim and I visited the Grand Canyon. We flew to Las Vegas where we stayed one night in a casino-hotel, then rented a car. It was a two-day dash. We toured the Hoover Dam, driving to Grand Canyon Village for the night. We spent a full day walking the canyon rim, marveling at the views, and playing the tourist. Kim drank in the experience, writing in a notebook as she gazed into the distance.

In the summer of 2000, I took one course at seminary: *Christian Ethics* with James Higgs. This was an intensive class with students coming in from all over the West. I was assigned to a small group for projects on our major

text, *The Moral Quest*. We presented on the issue of war and peace. I also did an individual report of Jacques Ellul, learning that efficiency does not always equate to effectiveness.

Simon was a good sport for his twentieth birthday. Along with cash, I gave him Nicorette chewing gum and Kim presented him with a nicotine patch. We both hoped he might kick that nasty habit he had acquired in high school. Simon then went to Portland to work with Pam, while Zachary traveled to Latvia for a Catholic Youth festival.

In early August, Kim and I traveled to the northwest for a Foreman family reunion. We gathered in Battle Ground to celebrate Joshua 22:34; "For the rock altar shall be a witness between us that the Lord is God." All participants received a symbolic stone painted with this Joshua scripture. To further the celebration, I brought along a roll of Sacajawea one-dollar coins. I passed out twenty of the millennial keepsakes to family members.

On August 11, Kim and I dropped off Zachary at the Saint Dominic Priory in Oakland. Our son had taken the plunge. He had signed up for one-year service as a novice in the Order of Preachers, Western Province. Zachary donned the black and white habit and joined the millennium novitiate of fourteen Dominican brothers. Was he on the road to becoming a Catholic priest?

I harbored mixed feelings about this prospect. On one hand, I was proud of his faith and commitment. On the other hand, Catholic dogma did not ring true to me and a vow of celibacy would rule out grandchildren on his part. Kim had feelings like mine, yet she certainly loved and admired her son.

Simon and his Russian friends flew to Moscow for a few weeks to promote their new album release: *Men's Evil Manners Live in Brass*. I later attended a debut performance in San Francisco at Fort Mason and watched their video: *Digital Domain*.

Simon brought me back a gift: the complete catalog of Beatles songs in MP3 format. I didn't know how to play the pirated music and so laid it aside for a few years until I discovered it was really quite a prize.

I was still writing bi-weekly columns for the Korea Times. The action of this story took place in the summer of 2000.

On a recent Saturday morning, my wife and I agreed to go for a walk in the mountains. About ten o'clock I called to her, "Okay, Yobo, let's go for our walk now".

She scrunched her nose and said, "I'm not done writing yet. Give me a few more hours and we'll go."

I was disappointed but decided not to waste such a lovely day. I put on my leather gloves and began to work outside. I raked up an endless accumulation

of eucalyptus leaves; I pulled weeds from my garden; and was just beginning to dig some holes for new flowers.

Then my wife called to me in the back yard, “Okay Honey, I’m all done writing now. Let’s go for our walk”.

I replied, “But I’m in the middle of yard work”. I could tell she was a little perturbed at me.

After a long pause she said, “Why don’t you just hire some Mexicans to do that stuff for you?”

I replied a little hurt, “But I enjoy this”. I put down my shovel and walked over to her. I thought some more and smiled “Why don’t you just hire a Mexican to do your writing for you”.

She laughed and recognized herself. I got on my hiking boots and we went off to the mountain. As we started our walk I expanded, “Tell you what. You like writing more than going for a walk, right? and I like gardening more. Maybe next time, we could hire a Mexican guy and a Mexican girl and they could go for a walk in our place?”

I thoroughly enjoyed the creative process of writing. In addition to essays for the Korea Times, I continued with wordplay. This was the introduction to something I called *Name Chains*. I composed thirty-five of them.

A name chain occurs when one person’s last name is the same as another person’s first name and, in turn, that person’s last name is the same as another person’s first name. And so on, as far as you can figure. Here are three examples of name chains, with accompanying clues.

Dred - Scott - Joplin (Famed runaway - ragtime player)

George - Washington - Irving - Berlin (President - author - songwriter)

Chester - Arthur - Murray - Abraham - Lincoln - Ellsworth - Bunker  
(A president - a dancer - an actor - a president - an explorer - a diplomat)

When seminary started in the Fall, I grew too busy for word play. I was like a kid in a candy shop, wanting to savor every chocolate in the box. I ended up with these three classes:

1. *Old Testament One* was taught by Gary Arbino. We studied the Torah—first five books—then the background of the Near Middle East. Gary’s personality took some getting used to. His grading methods were weird, but I adjusted. I reviewed two articles and wrote my big paper on Sodom and Gomorrah.

2. *Church History One* was taught by Dwight Honeycutt. The content of this class was right up my alley and the instructor great in both knowledge and presentation. I wrote five illustrations from early church history. To honor my son at his Catholic seminary, I wrote my biographical sermon on Saint Dominic.
3. *Foundations of Ministry* was taught by Michael Thompson. We met mostly in a circle of chairs and discussed our way through three foundational books, one was *Preparing for the Christian Ministry*, another was *How to think Theologically* and the third was *Spirit of the Disciplines*. It was a low-pressure, enjoyable experience.

I wrote this article for the Korea Times which described a late summer event:

When you begin a walk on the beach, you never know where it will end. A few days ago, my wife and I went out for a walk along a nearby strip of sand. We drove our car to the north end of the Golden Gate Bridge and parked near the entrance to a hilltop army bunker. From that high point we strolled a mile or so down a dirt trail to a beautiful area called Kirby Cove.

We saw a magnificent panorama of San Francisco spread out below the span of the Golden Gate Bridge. On this summer day we walked down the shoreline in the sand. I always point beyond the Pacific and tell my wife, "Way, way, over there is Korea."

The beach was not long, maybe two-hundred yards. Among the piles of driftwood, I spied what appeared to be a teeter-totter. It looked as if someone had moved a very long piece of pier planking on top of a short thick pier support.

I said to my wife: "Let's try it out". She stood cautiously at one end while I gingerly stepped on the other. We were able to make the plank of wood teeter. After a few ups and downs the wooden plank snapped. I asked my wife, "didn't you play like this when you were a little girl"?

She thought a while and said, "yes, it was fun".

So, I said to her, "See, when you and I began our walk down the beach, I bet you never thought it would end in a fun game of see-saw."

Kim and I were still attending two church services every Sunday morning. The Baptist seminary was drawing me closer into fellowship with Tiburon Baptist Church while leadership at Salvation Army-Korean Corps forged a tightening

bond between me and eight Korean-American couples. One of our favorite parts of the Korean church service was the spicy luncheon that followed.

Kim discovered a meditation rock on a hillside about one hundred yards beyond our back gate. Fred and Kris Kim were among many friends who walked that trail with us to sit, talk, and gaze at the distant splendor.

Simon was in a somewhat steady relationship with a young lady named Kristen. She was in and out of the house and in and out of his life. Kristen was an extremely intelligent, Christian raised, emotionally fragile young lady. I really liked her. For Halloween, Simon dressed in my old army uniform and Kristen donned a madrigal outfit that Zachary inherited from high school. Together they shared a great time at a San Francisco party. That might have been the high point of their relationship. Kristen soon drifted away.

Throughout the summer and autumn of 2000, the presidential sweepstakes held my rapt interest. I still viewed myself as a populist, socially conservative yet economically liberal. It was a close call for me, but I did vote for the Democrat over the Republican.

I figured Al Gore was a shoe-in for the election, so it came as a shock to me on Wednesday morning when George W. Bush held a narrow lead. After a month of partisan bickering and Florida shenanigans, the Supreme Court declared George Bush the forty-third president of the United States.

Kim and I rounded out the year with winter activities. We rode the ferry into San Francisco to walk among Christmas lights and view window displays. The skating rink at Justin Herman Plaza gave the city a sense of Midwestern winter.

We experienced a genuine winter a week later when we met for a weekend at Lake Tahoe with our Salvation Army friends. Four couples gathered for Bible study, sledding, conversation and Korean food. Kim and I constituted a dynamic duo in the Korean community; she as a gregarious academician and I as a culturally attuned commentator.

While hanging out with my church friends, I suffered severe pain in one of my molars. For a few weeks I took a heavy dose of Advil. Finally, I went to an endodontist and underwent my first root canal.

## 2001

As the new year began, Kim and I wanted to tour nearby California sights. Two spots that drew my interest were Big Sur and Hearst Castle.

We set off on a Wednesday about noon and took the lazy drive along Highway 1 across the Golden Gate Bridge, through San Francisco then along the Pacific

coast through Half Moon Bay and Santa Cruz. We arrived at the Big Sur Inn just before dark. We scouted a few local eateries and indulged in a great meal at the Nepenthe Restaurant.

The next morning, we tramped a short hike in Pfeiffer State Park, up to a lookout point and then to a waterfall. As Kim and I hiked along the trails, we sang church songs. Kim could never carry a tune, so I would help her out with the melody. Together we would belt out a stanza of her favorite song, then I would shout, "Take it away, Yobo!"

As best she could, she sang the refrain, "Then Jesus said, 'Come to the water, stand by my side. I know you are thirsty. You won't be denied. I felt every teardrop as in darkness you cried. And I strove to remind you, that for those tears I died.'" We laughed so much at our comical duet singing!

Kim and I left about noon and proceeded slowly down Highway 1, stopping often for the spectacular ocean views. Just before reaching Hearst Castle, we spotted a pod of elephant seals cast upon the sands of Cambria, appearing as large boulders. We spent a while walking among the passive beasts, who seemed so comfortable yet so out of place. Kim and I then toured Hearst Castle. It was a wondrous site yet sad to me; too much decadence for too few people.

We drove south, then caught Highway 101 going north. We arrived in Monterey after dark and found an oceanside hotel. In the morning we drove the opulent 17-mile drive along Pebble Beach then spent the afternoon at the famed Aquarium. I found it to be a feast for the eyes; a great place to sit and watch brightly-colored fish, turtles, and jellyfish glide past my face as if performing for my benefit.

We settled for a restful night at Korean prayer mountain near Santa Cruz and then shared a meal with Salvation Army friends in San Francisco. It was a pleasant way to pass a week.

I continued my patchwork of computer jobs, but technology instructor began to fade as an identity as church worker and seminarian moved to center stage. Starrett was always generous to me, our relationship being cordial and my hours flexible. I enjoyed working beside Jannette and our workplace seldom struck a discordant note.

I remember driving my co-worker to one of my MS Word classes at Santa Rosa Junior College. Jannette and I were delayed an hour on the drive home. As we slowly passed the scene of an accident, I noted the rear wheel of a big rig resting upon a crushed motorcycle. A tarp covered a lifeless object with boots protruding. I prayed for the man's family as we crept by. Jannette and I talked about the afterlife.

In the Spring of 2001, I enrolled in four seminary classes. What could be sweeter than an in-depth and systematic study of my Christian faith? I remember conversing with a classmate who wanted a Christian vocation without a rigorous preparation.

“Not me,” I told him. “I think I’m like the medical student who has admired the contours of the human body his entire life. Finally, I have the opportunity to take out the scalpel and dissect the object of my admiration. This vivisection may offend some, but for me, the deeper I cut into the living word, the more wonder I behold.”

1. *Old Testament Two* continued the content of *Old Testament One*. We studied the Kethihim (prophets) and the Nevihim (writings) as well as the Apocrypha. I learned to better navigate the quirks of Gary this time around. It’s true to say Dr. Arbino was both my best and worst professor.
2. *Church History Two* picked up where *Church History One* left off. We studied Luther, Calvin, the English and Radical Reformation. I wrote five Historical Illustrations and a biographical sermon on William Booth, founder of Salvation Army.
3. *Hermeneutics* dealt with the science and art of biblical interpretation. For this class I presented an OT paper on Exodus 21: “an eye for an eye”. I wrote my NT exegetical paper on Galatians 3:28, “For there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”
4. *History of the Baptists* was my first experience with an online class. The distance learning did not diminish rigorous requirements. I wrote a paper on the Southern Baptists and Slavery, concluding that virulent racism was the paramount sin with slavery its evil consequence. I argued the latter could be out-lawed, but the former had to be out-loved.

In March, I committed to go with Kim on a mission trip to Rwanda. This life-direction seemed more than natural; It seemed inevitable. For the next three months, together we attended a dozen planning and preparation sessions. We spoke at churches and raised funds for school supplies. I grew close to Missionary Kim, Fred Kim, and several others who signed up for Africa Mission 2001. We also spent a few nights in the little cabins at Fasting and Prayer Mountain.

One of my favorite photos of the era shows Zachary and Simon outside the house. Brother Zachariah is draped from head to toe in a white Dominican habit. He’s standing in front of the white Oldsmobile. Simon is dressed in black slacks with black leather jacket, wearing a silver cross. He’s near his black Cougar. My two sons were equal and opposite in so many ways.

Zachary dropped by the house on a few occasions with several of his Dominican brothers. They mostly sat on the back deck and grilled meat. Sometimes we tossed horse shoes on my top-of-the-hill sand pit. I was always delighted to see his cohorts arrive and engage in Catholic-Protestant dialogue.

I was deeply connecting with my Baptist church. Ken Eakins was a retired seminary professor who taught Sunday school. He was an aficionado of C.S. Lewis

and for a few years I studied Lewis works with Ken, book after book. I assumed a role of classroom understudy, honoring Ken as leader and helping as I was able.

Craig Singleton led praise and music at TBC. Like Ken, he was a former professor at the seminary. I learned through Pastor Barry that Craig led a bible study inside the walls of San Quentin State Prison. For both personal and vocational reasons, I asked to accompany him.

Craig taught every Saturday morning from a book called *Experiencing God* by Henry Blackaby. After gaining clearance into San Quentin, I joined Craig as he sat in the chapel library and met with inmates for two hours. I expected my participation to be short-lived, but it stretched beyond my imagining.

Kim and I joined the Mount Tamalpais Hiking Group. In April, our hike leader identified fifty-two varieties of wildflower. In May, a local botanist pointed out a dozen varieties of mushroom. Outdoor activity combined with education was a hallmark of our shared life.

My sister Jeanne dropped by our house to visit Kim and me and we three took a ferry to San Francisco. I wrote a story about the experience for the Korean Times called *Last One on the Boat*:

Not far from our home is a ferry boat that transports commuters between Sausalito and downtown San Francisco. One of my favorite activities for visitors new to the Bay Area is to ride the ferry back and forth across the gorgeous San Francisco Bay. When my sister came to my home for a visit, we planned to catch the ferry boat that left Sausalito at 8:20 a.m., do some sight-seeing at Fisherman's Warf, and then return by ferry in the afternoon.

As usual we were running late. It was already eight o'clock when we left the house. Sitting in my car I remembered that the ferry tickets were still inside the house. I dashed inside and out again. Just as I returned to the car and started the engine, my sister remembered that she left her windbreaker in the closet. And so it went. All the stop lights turned red against me, all the school buses turned in front of me, and of course all the nearby parking spaces were full. With my blood pressure increasing behind the steering wheel, I was pleading and praying at the same time. "Why do all these bad things happen to me?" and "Lord, please let the ferry linger a while past 8:20."

I saw the last stragglers were just walking up the dock onto the ferry. I left my sister and wife off. I asked them to hold the boat until I could park and run back. Mercifully I found a parking spot and began a brisk walk toward the boat. I heard the ferry whistle toot. I saw the ticket taker glance at his watch. I saw my wife look anxiously over the side of the boat and I murmured to myself, "please, let the boat wait one more minute". The ticket taker saw me struggling toward the ferry and gestured with his hand: "hurry, hurry". As I reached the floating

footpath and stepped past the roped-off entrance, I tried to express my thanks but I was out of breath. I thought to myself, *what a good ticket-taker. I should write the ferry company a letter of gratitude.*

A moment later, I was sitting next to my sister thankful that I was the last one on the boat. But why wasn't the boat moving away from the dock? After all, I was safely on board. Now I was in a hurry to reach the city. I looked over the side and saw a woman with two kids struggling up the dock. I thought to myself, "Why is he waiting for them? Doesn't he know that I am in a hurry?" My opinion of the ticket taker changed. "This guy is a jerk. The ferry is supposed to leave at 8:20 and it's already 8:25. Why is he letting these people on board?" Then like a shot out of heaven, I realized how ridiculous I was and said beneath my breath, "Forgive my impatience and my unkind attitude toward others."

This incident later came to mind when I was discussing immigration with my friends. After recounting this story, I asked, "Why is it that immigrants from 20 years ago are now trying to prevent new immigrants from entering America?" I know that many Americans in 1914 were not happy to see my Polish grandparents pass through Ellis Island. It was a bit strange then to hear my own father complain about all "the Mexicans that are flooding into this country". There are now voices in California that say "it's time to get tough and stop all these Asian people from entering America". I think to myself, *The grandparents of these voices thought that they were the last ones on the ferry. Their children are ready to rope off the entrance. Now they must be reconciled that they are not the last ones on the boat.*

I always had free time at my day job and so *Flying Fog* continued to expand. By mid-2001 my site included five categories and eighteen sub-categories. The structure revealed how I visualize my life:

IDENTITY- Family, Church, Education, Korea, Music, Politics.

HISTORY- Genealogy, Nostalgia, Travel, Peace Corps, Army.

ACTIVITY- Day Work, Technology, WordPlay, Dabblings

PHOTOGRAPHY- Best Photos, Recent Photos, Christmas

ABOUT ME-

I continued to create an occasional Original WordPlay. A few examples are:

Challenge 1. Compose a six-syllable phrase on the pattern AB-AB-AB with 3 A's and 3 B's being homonyms. "Shah's Lament: I ran Iran; I ran". "Clinton Reform bill: Well, farewell, fair welfare."

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Challenge 2. Use a person's name in a referential message. **Died in a nasty accident; I am chairman of Chrysler America; Beat up Saddam Hussein.**

After the Fourth of July, my focus shifted to the African mission convention 2001. Zachary asked if a Stanford acquaintance named Eva St. Clair could house-sit the homestead during our three-week absence. She proved to be a short time blessing who grew into a long-term friend.

Our Africa adventure began on July 17 when we hooked up with ten fellow missionaries at SFO. I was the lone non-Korean American. Each traveler carried two fifty-pound bags, one filled with personal items and a second with team supplies. I was stoked, knowing intuitively this sojourn inaugurated a new phase of my life.

Our mission team paused for two nights in London to meet up with twenty Korean seminary students who accompanied us into Kampala, Uganda. We slept our first African night at a small missionary church in the village of Nsengi. A primary school held classes in that structure. We joined in celebration as fifty children sang and danced to Christian songs. I thanked God He had led my steps to east Africa. Twenty short-term missionaries from Christian World Life Frontiers posed on the steps of the countryside church.

The next morning, we traveled to Kigali to meet our Rwandan co-laborers. Because Kim was a college professor and the National University was located in Butare, Missionary Kim put us in charge of the Butare group. Paul Gasigi was assigned as our sponsoring pastor; Franc Murenzi was our interpreter; and Amon Munyaneza became our music assistant; the latter two were university students. We broke with the main group and five of us headed south to Butare. There I led a seminar for two-hundred local pastors.

We were novelties in rural Africa. Eyes gravitated to us wherever we wandered. Kids would point to us and whisper to their fellows, *Mzungu*. A term that means *rich man* or *Westerner*. This crowd-drawing ability proved to be an asset in witnessing. We could gather an audience with our face and an interpreter could deliver the Gospel with his voice.

While in Butare, there were unusual rain storms in this dry season. Our pastors would pray in the morning that rain would stop so people would attend our evening crusades. I talked about this rain problem to Pastor Paul. He informed me that local farmers were counter-praying. Summer showers grow grass for cows. After discussing this theological dilemma of praying, our pastors agreed that rain could fall at night, but that in the daytime sun would shine. Our prayers were answered. All the drizzle occurred during the nighttime hours.

On Friday and Saturday evening, I proclaimed the Gospel at a soccer stadium. I preached on the parable of the Prodigal Son and on the parable of the Good

Samaritan. The response was great and many people came forward to accept Christ. Franc the interpreter completed my teaching sermon with enthusiastic evangelism and Gene Lee stood next to me video-taping the action.

On Sunday evening I preached on the parable of the Sheep and the Goats. While choirs were singing on a rickety stage, I noticed a small herd of cows walking up a nearby hill. I remarked to Franc, "If only some sheep and goats would appear. That's exactly what my sermon is about."

Just as I mounted the platform a boy appeared on another hillside leading a flock of sheep and goats. Coincidence? Providence? Miracle? Whatever one calls it, I was amazed as I gestured toward my visual aids. Gene Lee captured this entire episode on tape and on later viewing it appeared even more remarkable. I counted this miraculous provision as divine confirmation that my life was to ever be at the service of the Gospel.

Kim and I became fast friends with Paul, Franc, and Amon. We laid plans for a 2002 return to Butare. As my right-hand man, I spoke with Franc about coming to America to study at my seminary. He called me papa.

Our Christian Life team then traveled to Kigali. Over four days Kim led a seminar for Sunday School teachers. She did most of the presenting but I helped where I could. We held a singing day, a drama day, a craft day and a felt board day. Two-hundred fifty teachers received a Hallmark bag stocked with paper, pens, scissors, and other items collected in California.

At the National Convention in Kigali, famous Korean preachers addressed mass audiences as keynote speakers. I was blessed to address ten thousand Rwandans for a single sermon. With Franc as my interpreter, I spoke of keeping our eyes on Jesus. This is the lesson that Peter learned when he walked across the water toward Christ but then began to sink (Matthew 14:22-32). This was my wish for the Rwandan people: "Keep your eyes on Jesus". I told my audience this was the best insurance against a return to genocide.

Kim and I spent three days touring the country. On Monday we went to a village near Kigali called Yamata. We walked through a genocide memorial where over twenty thousand Tutsi people were killed by Hutu militia. On the grounds of a Catholic Church, we saw gruesome sights; a sanctuary stained on the floors, walls, and ceiling with blood; an underground mausoleum filled with human bones. I wrote in the guest book "No Jesus, No Peace / Know Jesus, Know Peace". The experience was visceral, demonstrating the depths to which humankind can fall when allegiance to tribe overrides allegiance to God.

Kim and I spent the next three days of our mission at a U.N. Refugee camp near Byumba, Rwanda. This camp held ethnically Tutsi people displaced by war

in the Congo. In the daytime I led a seminar for camp pastors. I repackaged much of the material that I presented in Butare.

Over the course of three evenings, I taught the life of Jesus in three one-hour sessions. When I taught about the woman taken in adultery from John chapter 9, the experience felt Biblical. As I re-enacted the story, I bent over and wrote upon genuine African dust. A few minutes later I walked a few steps to pick up a real African stone.

The camp was full of children with little to do. They were drawn to us foreigners like magnets to iron. I could relate to Jesus moving off-shore in a little boat to put some distance between himself and the crowd. I could also see why the disciples chased away little children. There was a pastor with a long stick whose sole job was to keep the kids at least ten feet away from our presentation.

Kim spent much of her time singing and playing with the children of the camp. She twisted her ankle teaching *duck, duck, goose*. The refugees were in great distress and we were truly blessed to bring light into such a dark place.

On August 4, we left the refugee camp and spent Saturday night again at the missionary church in Uganda. Our long bus ride paused at the equator just as the sun was setting. I loved the photo of Kim standing in the northern hemisphere and me in the southern; Our arms are extended to shake hands in the middle.

We returned from Entebbe to London on an overnight flight, then flew on to San Francisco. When I returned to California on August 6, the red dust of Rwanda was still on my clothes, still in my nostrils, and embedded in my soul.

I thanked Eva for looking after my house and my bird. Kim and I basked for weeks in the afterglow of our trip to Africa. We felt we were living at the center of God's will. At GGBTS, I turned in a binder of photos and stories to the mission department and earned three credits.

In August my Honda Civic failed to start. It would cost more to repair the ignition than the car was worth. After stopping by various used car lots, Kim surprised me by insisting I purchase a new Honda C-RV. And so, I drove my Compact Recreational Vehicle home. It was a workhorse for many years.

We drove the C-RV up to Portland for a double family reunion. My brother Jack and Barbara made an appearance so all six children were together with all six spouses. The twelve of us boarded a Columbia River pleasure boat for a day-long excursion.

Kim and I also got together in Turner, Oregon, with a dozen people from her family. Hyun Hee now operated a grocery store in Turner, Dong-Hyun ran one in Vancouver, and Kyu-nam in Corvallis. Pam was anchored in a planned village near Portland but she and Ilka led a Gypsy lifestyle. Simon attended a few fairs and powwows with Pam before returning to California.

After serving one year as a novice, Zachary took his first vows on September first. Kim and I were on hand as our son lay prostrate before the archbishop. He swore celibacy, poverty, and obedience. As a first-year seminary student, *Brother Jacek* was now enrolled at the Graduate Theological Union (GTU) in Berkeley. He was also recording ancient music with the Schola Cantorum of St. Albert Priory. I loved to hear him sing.

Simon moved out of the house to Fell Street in San Francisco. He relished the urban environment and being on his own. He continued his passion for art; visual, conceptual, and musical. My second son possessed an esthetic sense that transcended labels.

In the Fall of 2001, I signed up for five classes at GGBTS.

1. In *New Testament One*, I wrote papers on John the Baptist, the Roman Empire, and the Parable of the Wicked Farmers. My major composition concerned the organizing principles of John's Gospel.
2. Dwight Honeycutt taught a wonderful class called *Church History interpreted through Cinema*. We viewed six movies depicting events of the English Reformation: *A Man for All Seasons*, *Ann of a Thousand Days*, *Elizabeth*, *Lady Jane*, and *Cromwell*.
3. *The Principles of Church Planting* focused on the book of Nehemiah as a template for church building. The Nehemiah Project became a pillar of my Africa instruction.
4. *Christian Philosophy of Religion* was an on-line course. I wrote five short papers and a major research paper titled "Homosexuality in the church: Exploring the boundaries of pluralism".
5. For *Multicultural Ministry*, I made two site visits to non-Christian religious services. The Metropolitan Church, a homosexual denomination, went out of its way to appear mainstream. Contrarywise, a Samhain-pagan celebration on Halloween morning went out of its way to appear non-conformist. I also wrote about *Korean-American Churches in the Bay Area: United by Culture / Divided by Language*.

The world shifted on its axes on September 11, 2001. I wrote about this infamous day for the Korea Times.

How can I begin to express my feelings over the events that happened last week? Words cannot capture the full spectrum of emotion and thought. I woke up as usual about seven o'clock on Tuesday morning. I was still sleepy when I turned on the kitchen radio. I heard something about airliners smashing into the world trade center in New York City.

At first, I thought that it might be a joke of some sort, or maybe advertising for a new disaster movie. When I realized it was for real, I felt a desire to go back to bed. If I woke up a second time, perhaps this Tuesday morning would begin differently.

I continued to listen to the news. After a few moments, my wife joined me in the kitchen and I broke the news to her. She responded with "What! Are you sure?". Then we listened to the TV news together. I was an hour late for work and when I arrived Jannette was sitting at her computer terminal but her attention was directed to a small TV. Tears were in her eyes. We watched the news and talked for a while. It did not seem to be a day for working, so I went back home. I dropped by my seminary class. A handwritten note was stuck to the door: "No classes today. See you tomorrow. Pray for our country."

Over the next few days, I felt numb and sick. I can remember feeling the same way just after my mother died. Last week's trauma was different because most people I met shared this same numbing sickness. The four people in my family reacted differently to this crisis. Since last Wednesday morning, I have flown the American flag from my second-floor balcony. I turn on the news but only for a few minutes. I know that constant news of suffering would cause nothing but suffering in me.

My serious-minded older son has been in daily prayer with his religious brothers at a Dominican priory. My happy-go-lucky younger son volunteered for the first time to give blood. This from a young man who has been fearful of needles his whole life. My Korean-born wife watched television, read the newspaper and listened to a sermon in church. She tells me that for the first time in twenty-seven years she feels more like an American than like a Korean. These are strange times indeed.

On Thursday, I received e-mails from two Rwandan college students. Franc and Amon expressed sorrow and offered sympathy for the terrible events that took place in my country. This is also strange to me. It was just in July that I traveled across the world to preach reconciliation and peace to this African country torn apart by war and massive death. How could I have guessed that my two Rwandan friends would be preaching to me about peace and reconciliation in America?

And the news in America is very, very, grim indeed. To quote Thomas Paine, "These are times that try men's souls".

Simon wrote: BUT WHAT OF OURS? September 11, 2001

Do you hear them? They cry out for us. Broken. Alone. Frightened. Desperate for Salvation. Do not forget. They are you and I.

Do you feel them? They are scars. A cross upon our heart. Callous from remarks from the Polis. Discussion of oppression and redemption. For our selfish and heedless ways. Though we should not judge. The judgment passed on those who died. Is equally unholy?

Their souls are clean now. But what of ours? Yesterday we changed. Today we mourn. Tomorrow we seek vengeance. Heal us God. Of scars rigid and black from hate. Guide a wounded heart To Love.

A few weeks after the Terror Strike, I read about an outbreak of anthrax in Florida. At first it seemed that the fatality was caused by accidental contact. Next, it became apparent that anthrax was deliberately mailed through the post office. Suddenly there was panic across the USA. Postal workers were getting sick. My local hardware store began selling protective masks against anthrax. I wondered when this story might end.

About one month after the terror attacks of September 11, American coalition forces started to attack the Taliban in Afghanistan. Osama Bin Laden had released a video in which he admitted he had instigated the terror. After a month of *Operation Enduring Freedom*, the Northern Alliance captured much of northern Afghanistan. By December the hard fighting had ended but Bin Laden had escaped.

Kim and I participated in two churches; I was neck-deep in seminary classes; and Kim continued to meet with leaders of Christian Life. It appeared natural that Kim and I would take a lead in planning Rwanda Mission 2002. During a meeting at Prayer Mountain Simon joined our sessions and agreed to accompany Missionary Kim on a scouting expedition to East Africa.

Simon, Zachary, Kim and I joined together for a Christmas meal at the Korean Tofu Restaurant on Geary Street in San Francisco. A favorite photo shows the four of us in Santa hats sitting around a table enjoying our meal. There was little I enjoyed more than being with my family over the holidays.

## 2002

Zachary dropped by on New Year's Day and three of us walked to Tennessee Valley Beach. Following several examples, we tried our hand at stacking flat stones on the sand. Nuggets of driftwood helped balance and support our structures. Kim threw up her arms in surprise when her house of twenty stones collapsed into rubble.

In the intensive J-term, my seminary study focused on New Testament Greek. This was really my third attempt. In 1971, I bought a book and tried to learn it on

my own—without much luck. In 1983, I studied in Eugene, but had to drop the class when I moved to Korea. This time around, with Dr. Jay Noh as my teacher, Greek stuck. I thumbed through the one-thousand vocabulary cards, studied the grammar book, and deciphered passages. I aced the final exam which was taken from John 15, “I am the vine. You are the branches.” I told Dr. Noh I felt it cheating since I had memorized that chapter.

Simon traveled to Africa as an assistant to Missionary Kim. They were laying groundwork for the summer mission. From January 6 to 23, my son made stops in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and Rwanda. The high point for him was a safari through Serengeti National Park, driving along side of lions, gazelles, hippos, flamingos, baboons, giraffes, and elephants.

On his return home, Simon bummed around Europe earning pocket change, performing hip-hop on street corners. When he returned to California, Simon moved into his own apartment on Jones Street in San Francisco. He liked the urban grit and art scene of the big city.

My son, Brother Zachariah, dropped by every few weeks. He was thriving in his academic/religious environment. At the Graduate Theological Union, he was able to study Hebrew texts from real Hebrews; the Reformation from real Lutherans; and Thomas Aquinas from practicing Thomists.

Kim and I put some time and money into our home on Ashton Lane. I remember shopping at a local garden center where Kim discovered a water fountain she liked. It was a concrete sculpture of an imp pouring water from a jug. My Honda C-RV was packed with gardening supplies, so Kim held the seventy-pound object on her lap as we drove home. I joked it was the little girl she never had. Kim had wanted to name our daughter *Emily* and that became the name of the water sculpture.

My Spring term was a seven-course meal.

1. *Church Administration* dealt with the practical parts of ministry like personnel, business, and finance. A friend from church, Tom Jones, taught this class.
2. *New Testament Two* covered the Acts of the Apostles through the Epistles to Revelation. I wrote a paper on Paul’s theology.
3. Dr. Noh also taught *Greek Exegesis: Colossians*. I so much enjoyed going through the Greek text line by line.
4. *Historical Theological Integration* centered on the Orthodox tradition. My presentation and research paper were on Saint John Chrysostom.
5. In *Christian Leadership*, we examined six roles of the church leader: Preacher, Teacher, Pastor, Administrator, and Priest. We also did an inventory of our own leadership skills.

6. In *Introduction to Preaching*, I delivered two sermons: “Was Made or Just Happened?” and “Keep your Eyes on Jesus”. My portrait of a famous pulpiteer concerned Billy Graham.
7. *Basic Evangelism* was a challenge. It was so difficult for me to approach strangers in the park and ask them about Jesus. I prayed for boldness

In late May, Simon graduated from San Francisco State University with a Bachelor Degree in Fine Arts. His mother was so proud of him as he walked forward with his cap and gown to receive his diploma. She was personally acquainted with many of his professors. He also received an achievement award for academic excellence scoring in the top eight-percent of his class. His friends Deven, Danny, and Paimon celebrated the afternoon with him. Hip-hop buddies marveled at the accomplishments of this magna cum laude.

As an art graduate, Simon occupied a booth to show his art. Various ceramics and paintings were displayed. The Brassnucks got together to demonstrate the art of hip-hop.

Simon’s long-time friend, Danny, was engaged to Juliet whose step-father was the popular author of *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus*. John Gray was expanding his book franchise into an exercise video. Simon made a cameo appearance, leaping and swinging his arms as John Gray talked about the planets.

In June I enrolled in a one-month summer class called *Exegesis: Epistle to the Romans*. We met four days a week at eight hours a day completing one pre-assignment and three post assignments. It was intense. My research paper was titled “The Place of Natural Revelation in Bringing People to Salvation” based on Romans 1:18 to 21. I also earned one credit for *Evangelism Practicum* in recognition of the Missionary work I was about to accomplish in Africa.

Since the beginning of the year, Kim and I had been attending workshops and meetings preparing for Christian Life Africa Mission 2002. I even flew to Denver to promote Christian Life at a Korean Church. On July 2, Zachary drove Kim, Simon, and me to SFO to launch our missionary trip to Uganda, Rwanda, and Congo.

After landing in Entebbe, we acclimatized for a few days at the church in Nsangi. Here was the building Missionary Kim’s father had founded back in 1995. Forty-eight missionaries gathered; twenty from the LA area, twenty from the Bay area; and a handful from Colorado. Once more, I was the only Caucasian in the group photo. Again, I experienced a double culture shock, nested with Korean-speakers yet surrounded by Africans. At one event, I was pointed out as the color that completed the rainbow.

An adjunct part of our group was the Hallelujah Soccer Team. Twenty young men from Korea joined us to compete against local teams. This was to be *football evangelism*—sermon followed by sport.

Simon proved to be a regular entertainer. At many of the roadside bus stops, he could gather a crowd by both his physical appearance and hip-hop music, rapped through a megaphone.

We paused for a few days at the Isano hotel in Kigali then went to our assigned locations. Kim and I returned for a second year to Butare, while Simon ministered in a town called Kibungo led by Mrs. Lee.

Our team of four stayed for a second time at the Eden Garden hotel. Accommodations were basic; gravity toilets, boiled wash water, and occasional electricity. The mama who managed the rooms and restaurant was kind and Kim grew close to her.

Kim and I had distinct missions in Butare. I held outdoor evangelistic rallies behind Pastor Paul's Pentecostal church while Kim led VBS training sessions at Pastor David's Anglican compound. Franc and Amon assisted in all we did. I had hoped to sponsor them in America, but that was made impossible because of restrictions put in place after September 11.

I also led teaching workshops at the National University of Rwanda (NUR). This campus was built by the Belgians as a European High School and grew to be the center of all education after de-colonization. I met several wonderful Christian students during my workshops including Immaculate Wansula, who became our leading lady in neighboring Burundi. After five session days, I handed out eighty graduation certificates.

I wanted to build my own ministry in Rwanda outside of Christian Life. I came up with the concept of *Mission Mates* and took portrait photos of all eighty graduates. I later cobbled together a website calling it *missionmates.com*. My ambition was to match American students with Rwandese students. Like most of my half-baked schemes, the vision was spectacular, the follow-through meager, and the marketing non-existent.

Kim worked with Andrew and Jean ministering to one hundred mamas, many of them pastors' wives. She had such a great heart for women and children. A favorite photo shows her connecting on a high-five with a graduating student.

When Simon returned to us after a week, we learned that he had been sick with stomach flu most of that time. Mrs. Lee had looked after him. With his return, a tour group visited the Murambi genocide memorial. Simon was truly touched to see the horrors wrought by tribal hatred and the depths of human depravity. The memory that continued to stick with me was the sight of lime-preserved corpses accompanied by their musty odor. The gigantic banner read, "No, no, to deniers of this genocide."

We also made a day visit to the Batwa (Pigmy) people. This minority is analogous to the Native American. Batwa were once indigenous to all central Africa, but have been relegated to reservations. Kim and I presented this cluster of Batwa with five goats and took many photos. My all-time favorite is of Kim standing in the midst of children adorned in a red t-shirt emblazoned with the words “Joy of God.”



With the big group re-convened we crossed the frontier into the Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire). We spoke in churches in the major city of Bukavu in Kivu Province. Congo was difficult for ministry. Central government had collapsed and anarchy reigned just outside city limits. Much of the terror was perpetrated by Hutu renegades who found refuge in dense jungles.

In the Congo, Kim ministered to women and children, while Simon served as Missionary Kim’s right-hand man. I taught university students, half of whom spoke French and half Swahili. Translation was accomplished into both languages. I had brought along sufficient classroom supplies to furnish each student with a single pen. On the first day of instruction, I was careful to provide every participant with one pen and one notebook.

The next morning, as I began to teach, I noted several students without pens, and said “I’m sorry. Who doesn’t have a pen?” Half of the hands shot up. I thought to myself *This is weird* and passed out another twenty pens to empty-handed students. On the third morning, the same pen shortage occurred.

I asked my interpreter what was going on. He said, “This is a very poor country and most men you see here have wives at home and kids in school. If they go back home with a shiny pen, they are obliged to give the prize to the ones they love.”

I ruminated on this incident. It was true students had deceived me into thinking they had *accidentally* forgotten their pens. That was dishonest. However, their motive was love of family. How would God look upon this situation?

Christian Life had reserved the city soccer stadium for a series of evangelistic services. I preached a few times to a thousand people. I was proud of Simon as he gave his testimony while performing hip-hop on the stage. He was mobbed by youth as he stepped down from the platform and merged into the masses of people.

As part of my seminary studies, I entered a mosque in Bukavu. As I stood and observed, I noted the ritual fountains, racks of shoes, and kneeling men. A few women knelt outside the doors on straw mats, not permitted inside the structure.

With all scheduled ministry completed, missionaries from Christian Life enjoyed three days of soccer play. We cheered the Hallelujah Team first in Bukavu, then crossed back into Rwanda for one match in Butare and a second in Kigali. Many of our enthusiastic ladies painted in Korean colors to lead the cheers.

From Kigali, we bussed north to Entebbe, then flew into Brussels for an overnight stop. In the Belgian capital, we had just enough time to walk downtown and visit a few sights. Simon's favorite landmark was *Manneken-Pis*, that odd bronze fountain sculpture in the center of town. When we finally arrived back in California on July 23, I was exhausted from my second missionary journey, yet already mentally planning my third.

In August, Kim and I drove up to Vancouver for a Family reunion at Evergreen Park. Kim and the boys spent some time with their Korean family while I stayed with Frank. At the reunion, some of the youngsters asked questions about Brother Zacharias. "Why is that man wearing a white dress?" Eileen handed out a keepsake to all families that attended:

"Our family is a circle of strength and love. With every birth and every union, the circle grows. Every joy shared adds more love. Every crisis faced together makes the circle stronger."

Simon stuck around in Portland, working with his Aunt Pam. On his twenty-fifth birthday, he had received his final insurance payout of \$25,000. He kept some of it, but invested the bulk with his aunt. (After several years, he did get it all back.)

In the Fall of 2002, I signed up for four classes.

1. *Pastoral Care* was difficult to sit through. The instructor seemed disinterested, going through the motions. I wrote a paper "Troubled Families, Suicide, and Related Legal Issues" along with three reaction papers to the text book.
2. *Introduction to Missions* lacked continuity. The instructor was away on missions most of the time and special guests rambled about their foreign experiences. I did collaborate in one group presentation.

3. *Systematic Theology 1* was a great class. Dean Rodrick Durst was supercharged as he taught. I turned in weekly theological reflections about the text, *Christian Theology* by Millard Erickson. I also wrote a research paper in lieu of exams. I titled this essay “Logos Revelation: A Theological Meditation of a Third Way that God Reveals Himself to His People”.
4. I took a third class from Jay Noh, *Greek Exegesis: Galatians*. I loved spending three months working our way through the Greek text. We also read through a text called *It’s Still Greek to Me*.
5. I also began a year-long *Leadership Practicum*. Larry Laxton was my Peer Group leader. I met weekly with him and eight other third-year students. Ken Eakins was my spiritual director. We went on a few long walks together. I could sense my seminary time was rushing to an end.

Jerry Stubblefield, Nancy McLennon, Sam Mulli, Janet Locke, and Don and Carolyn Michaelian served on my Ministry Reflections and Support Group (MRSG). I met with them three times. Barry Stricker was my supervisor and mentor. I was delighted with this fine group of Baptists and signed a covenant with the church outlining my duties for the following year. If all went according to plan; I would graduate the following May, then Tiburon Baptist Church would ordain me in June.

I was busy in seminary and church work for the remainder of 2002. I taught Sunday School, participated in the church council, attended deacon meetings, and continued to teach at San Quentin Prison every Saturday. In addition, Kim and I were speaking at various Korean churches, drumming up support for Christian Life.

Through our Presbyterian contacts Kim and I were introduced to the Catholic Mercy Center in Burlingame. We attended a few spiritual retreats. I especially enjoyed walking the Labyrinth to *Jerusalem*, and the Taize singing. I even bought three Taize CDs. The lyrics so often expressed my heart: “My life is at the service of the Gospel. God has given me this gift of grace”.

Kim began driving to Burlingame once a week to earn a spiritual training certificate. She dropped the program, however, when she discovered her assigned mentor was a sexually disordered ex-priest.

My life was focused on Christian ministry and I slowly jettisoned my computer teaching. My last day of teaching classes at the College of Marin occurred in November and my final day at Santa Rosa Junior College occurred in December. I enjoyed being in front of a class and I was an excellent instructor, but this season of my life had passed.

Zachary existed in the ethereal world of Saint Albert Priory, taking seminary classes and discerning his fitness for priesthood. Simon returned to his passion of hip-hop, writing lyrics and composing beats. He decided to pursue a Master’s

degree in fine arts and began to put together a massive art portfolio. He preferred higher education in England.

Kim and I returned to the Northwest over Christmas. We began spending more and more time with her mother. Her mental and physical condition was deteriorating and the family guessed she had little time ahead of her.

I loved staying with Hyun Hee and her husband in Turner. Their property abutted Mill Creek and a cascade of water always tumbled past the rear of their house. It proved to be a good place to sit and watch the world at whim. Hyun Hee ran two stores in Turner: Turner Market and Perky's. Operating those places, kept a household of four busy most of the day. I think the reason I liked these visits involved Kim and observing her joy as she interacted with her siblings. With her mother non-communitive, the oldest sister assumed the task of keeping all six children in a positive relationship with each other.

We returned to Mill Valley in time to welcome the New Year with Zachary and Simon. I counted my blessing for this family of four. We actually treasured an evening of reminiscing and looking through old pictures. I fired up my dusty slide projector for its final rotation through thirty-two carousels of transparencies.

## 2003

We extended a New Year's tradition into 2003. Four of us strolled in a slight drizzle down Tennessee Valley trail to the sandy beach. Giant waves crashed against the donut-holed rock and a high tide ebbed in rivulets back to the restless sea.

On January 4, the four of us retreated to Lake Tahoe, renting a cabin. Snow had fallen waist deep but our street was plowed bare. As we trudged down roadways, we noted two mis-parked cars, mangled by a snow plow.

Zachary suffered a painful injury when he and Simon careened down a hillside on a plastic sled. As the boys smacked bottom, Zachary keeled to his side writing in pain. I thought he might have broken his back. A nurse ran to our side, talked with my son and diagnosed his condition as spinal compression. As excruciating as it was, my son fully recovered within a few hours. Yet for several moments it was scary.

In the J-term, I took *Introduction to Hebrew* with Greg Watson. I prepped for this class by learning the Hebrew alphabet and memorizing one hundred vocabulary cards. This course was intense. In seventeen days, we covered a mountain of material. I could not say I could actually read Hebrew, but I could say I knew *how* to read it.

I remember an odd incident. I had been teaching in San Quentin every Saturday with Craig. Next to the Protestant chapel, stood the Jewish center with Hebrew writing printed above the doorway. In December, I had no clue what the

word meant. I didn't recognize the letters or even knew to read the script from right to left. In January to my utter amazement, the entire Hebrew word popped out at me: SYNOGOGUE, as if it were magic.

Later in January, Simon flew to London to select his art school. I urged him to stop in New York City to apply to at least one American school. I added, "You need a back-up option in the USA".

Simon flew to London, interviewed at three colleges, and to oblige his father, he stopped in New York City. The way my son tells it, it was love at first sight. He focused all his attention to the New School at Parsons, and within a few months his path cleared for a big adventure in the Big Apple.

In the Spring term at GGBTS, I continued *Leadership Practicum* with my eight-person peer group. I wrote a self-evaluation and an Integrative Paper. In addition, I took these final six classes.

1. *Introduction to Worship* was taught by Gary McCoy. I recognized this man as the father of Zachary's high-school friend. We talked about past days when my son traveled to Russia with Jason. I reported on observations made of Saint Albert's Priory and Stanford's Memorial Church. My group project concerned the stations of the cross.
2. In *Systematic Theology Two* the categories were Christology, Pneumatology, Soteriology, Ecclesiology, and Eschatology. I wrote a final project comparing two books: *The Myth of God Incarnate* in contrast to *The Truth of God Incarnate*.
3. Jay Noh was my professor for the fourth time as I attended the online course *Gospel of John*. Of course, I loved this in-depth study, especially writing my exegetical paper called "Simon Peter and the Beloved Disciple: A Study into the Authorship of the Fourth Gospel".
4. Greg Watson taught *Hebrew Exegesis: Ruth*. It was great to get neck-deep in Hebrew Scripture. The five chapters seemed just the right amount to cover in ten weeks. My exegesis paper concerned Ruth 2:1-3, addressing the nature of divine providence.
5. Since I never had much of a singing voice or could read music, I put off *Introduction to Church Music* to the final term. I responded to the text, wrote about hymns, and interviewed a worship musician.
6. Foundations of Ministry was taught by William Crews, president of the seminary. My "Spiritual Journey to the Present" began with this paragraph:

I am fifty-three years old and finally Sunday is my favorite day of the week. It wasn't always so. Although I have had a longstanding relationship with

Jesus Christ, most of my life has been spend keeping Him safely at arm's length. Viewing my spiritual journey in retrospect, I can make out three contours of three cycles—two times when I heard the call to ministry, took a step forward, hesitated and then stepped back again. This third time I am stepping forward. Mine is the testimony of Simon Peter to whom Jesus asked three times, “Do you love me?”

Kim celebrated her fifty-second birthday on February 20. She was into health food at the time and didn't want a fattening frosted cake. Simon was in the house and I conspired with my son to create a health-cake. I purchased the ingredients and he used tofu as the block cake with eight spears of asparagus as candles. He then added color with various sliced vegetables, topping it with red pepper paste. V8 served as the punch. Kim loved his ingenuity. She blew out the 5-2 wax candles, then boiled the rest in a large pot for dinner. Zachary was in Europe and phoned in his *Happy Birthday*.

In March, Kim's father showed up at the house accompanied by Dong Hyun and Kyu Nam. This was the second time I had met Kim Yung Ou, the first time being at Dong Hyun's wedding. He spoke no English so conversation with my father-in-law was limited. Kim also was reluctant to interact with him. As she often repeated, “My dad was not a bad man, but he was never present after sixth grade. My mom supported me all by herself. I constantly had to choose between my dad and mom and I always chose my mom.”

The story was different for her younger brothers. They grew up in the village with their dad and loved him dearly. Now that Kim's mother was mentally incapacitated, the father could drop by to see his six children in America.

Kim showed compassion toward her eighty-year-old father and invited him into her SFSU classroom. My wife introduced her dad, induced him to stand, and encouraged students to applaud. Later, I received word from my nephew that Kim's father wept with remorse and joy as he observed his number one daughter commanding her class as a successful university professor. Kim's dad was in town just long enough to meet and smile at his two grandsons.

After several weeks of saber-rattling in the middle east, US and coalition forces invaded Iraq in something called *Iraqi Freedom*. On March 19, tomahawk missiles struck Bagdad and within three weeks most of the country was occupied. No weapons of mass destruction were ever found, but American forces did find Saddam Hussein hiding in a rabbit hole. The war didn't come to a stable conclusion until eight years later.

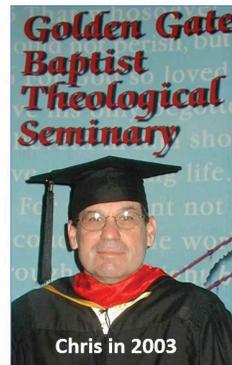
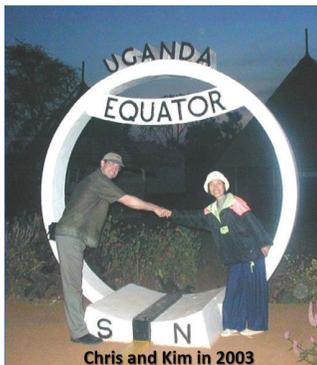
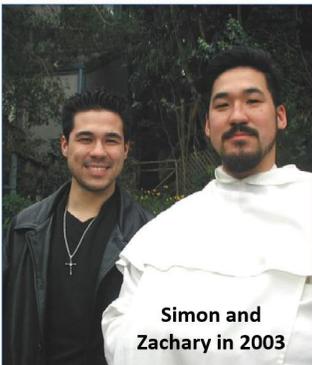
My seminary term zipped by. I was busy every day writing class assignments, meeting graduation requirements, and fulfilling obligations to the Baptist Church. I had to jump through all the right hoops in just the right sequence.

Finally, on May 31, my seminary studies came to an end. I stood with fifty other students for my class picture and discovered I ranked second out of fifty-one. With Kim the only family in attendance, Dr. Crews handed me a diploma marked *Master of Divinity*. I posed with my wife, fellow students, and a few favorite professors. After a taste of cake, it was over. I considered this event preliminary. My big event lay a few weeks away, when leaders of First Baptist Church of Tiburon would lay hands on me and ordain me to the Christian ministry.

By June, Simon was counting the days for his relocation to New York City. He was striving to complete work on his CD called *Inertia* before his departure. Simon was rapping under the handle of *Pyung Hwa*, his Korean middle name. Friends Devin, Jeremiah, and Andre worked with him tirelessly to publish his debut album. He showed me pictures of his professional photo shoot. To market his nom de plume, Simon acquired the vanity license plate PYUNG HWA.

In June, Kim climbed another rung on the ladder of success. She was officially promoted to chair in the Instructional Design Department at San Francisco State University. The pay increase was slight, but the prestige value was great. I was still gainfully employed at Securities America so we decided to spend some money. At fifty dollars per month, we installed Comcast broadband internet—it was such an improvement over dial-up. I also coordinated with Zachary and Simon and all four of us joined together on an AT&T family calling plan; each selecting the cell phone of choice. Of course, parents paid the bill.

I was uncertain of my future employment, but Dr. Noh approached me telling me of a possible position as an English congregation pastor. I asked him to keep me in mind for that position, but I could not commit until I had returned from Africa mission 2003. I sensed my life was about to take another turn.



## Chapter 22

# ORDAINED

June 2003 to September 2006  
Mill Valley, California

*Fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of hands.  
(from 2 Timothy 1:6)*

The world opened up to me when I opened my heart to the Gospel. The sword of truth was in my hand. However, I perceived this sword more as a Swiss army knife. The big blade was my primary pastorate in San Francisco. The second blade was my missionary work in Africa. The can opener was my teaching ministry at San Quentin Prison. Miscellaneous blades were Sunday schools, Bible studies, fellowships, and disaster relief. As I told my friends, “My life is at the service of the Gospel. God has given me this gift of grace.”

### JUNE 2003

When I first enrolled at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, I figured the endpoint was graduation. I under-appreciated the significance of ordination. In Baptist circles, successful degree completion merely demonstrates competence for ministry, but ordination—the laying on of hands—marks its inauguration.

Because I was a member of Tiburon Baptist Church and Pastor Barry Stricker was my mentor in supervised ministry, it made sense for my home congregation to become my ordaining church. In addition, the six men and women who served on my Ministry Reflections and Support Group (MRSG) doubled as my ordination council.

I learned there were three foci of qualification: preparation, character, and calling. Seminary graduation counted as preparation. My character was under scrutiny during my six months of weekly meetings and interaction. My committee even spoke privately with Kim, Zachary, and Simon. The committee chair told me

I passed this informal investigation with flying colors. I gave my public testimony on several occasions; fully confident that God Himself, according to his sovereign will, had called me to preach the Gospel and to pastor His people. The committee concurred. My invitation read:

The family and friends of Chris Alan Foreman cordially invite you to his ordination service on Sunday, June 15<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 p.m. Tiburon Baptist Church will set Chris apart to an office of leadership in the Christian ministry. A small reception and meal will follow the service.

I was surprised at the large turnout. About one hundred church members showed up. Jeanne, Charlotte, Jim, Eileen, Terry, Frank, and Lelia drove down from the Northwest and stayed one night in a local hotel. James, Valerie, Jael, and Julissa also attended.

First, Zachary, Simon, and Frank spoke on my behalf. Next, I thanked the church and gave my testimony. Barry charged me with words of ordination which I repeated as vows. I adapted the pledge from 2 Corinthians 4:1-2 and 5-7, calling it a *first-person version*.

Therefore, since through God's mercy I have this ministry, I do not lose heart. Rather, I have renounced secret and shameful ways; I do not use deception, nor do I distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly I commend myself to every man's conscience in the sight of God. For I do not preach myself, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and myself as your servant for Jesus' sake.

For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in my heart to give me the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. But I have this treasure in a jar of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from me.

After reciting my pledge, I knelt facing the altar. Kim was at my side in her Korean hanbok sitting in a chair. All present were invited to lay their hands on my shoulders and pray for my Gospel calling. A few dozen came to offer prayers; some out loud, some in silence, while some whispered words of encouragement into my ear. It was an awesome experience. Many also knelt beside Kim to pray God's favor in her life.

Pastor Barry presented me with a certificate of ordination and the *Message Bible*. My four siblings presented me with a Thomas Kinkade painting of *The Lighthouse*. Following the ordination ceremony, we gathered in the fellowship hall for snacks and conversation. Some of my family also traveled to Oakland to check out the priory where Brother Zachariah lived. June 15 was a transformational day in my life. To mark the watershed, I changed my clean-shaven face to include a stubble of beard.

Three days after my ordination, Zachary and I drove Simon to the airport. His bags were packed and he was on his way to Art School in New York. A few of his buddies met him at a terminal restaurant for a farewell meal. Simon left me with his car to sell and one-thousand Pyung Hwa CDs to store.

On June 21, Kim and I attended the wedding of Eva St. Clair to Ernie at the Stanford Memorial Chapel. Eva thanked us again for housing her during the summer of 2001. She told Kim, "I want you to know you and Chris are my inspiration as to what a married couple should be."

From Stanford, we drove on to Prayer Mountain where we led in the final Christian Life meeting before our third missionary journey to Africa.

Missionary Kim led this group through three nations in East Africa: Uganda, Rwanda, and Congo, over the course of three weeks. Mission 2003 was smaller than the previous two, with about a dozen people total. We left SFO on June 25, traveled for twenty-two hours, then rested and regrouped at the big church in Nsangi.

It was a strange first night in Africa. All of us slept on foam mats on the primitive floor of the church. Cardboard provided some protection from the dirt. Bugs were buzzing around our ears, so a few people burnt coils of insect repellent to keep them away. About three in the morning, gigantic wasps began to drop onto our bodies. Women were shrieking as we all brushed insects away. It turned out dozens of wasp nests were encrusted into the high ceiling and hundreds of the mud-dabbers crashed senseless to the ground.

The next day we checked into the Marvin Hotel in Kampala. My assignment for five days was to lead fifty pastors in a seminar. I chose *The Nehemiah Project*, a great curriculum I picked up at seminary. The concept was simple, observe what Nehemiah did in re-building the walls of Jerusalem and follow his example. The twelve steps as outlined in the book of Nehemiah were:

1. Identify the problem (chapter 1:1-3)
2. Prepare yourself spiritually (chapter 1:14-21)
3. Prepare a plan in writing (chapter 2:1-10)
4. Make a personal assessment (chapter 2:11-16)
5. Motivate others to assist (chapter 2:17-20)
6. Organize the work (chapter 3:1-32)
7. Remove rubbish (chapter 4:10)
8. Keep a single-minded focus (chapters 5, 6, and 7)
9. Give God the thanks (chapters 8 and 9)
10. Make a Covenant (chapter 10)
11. Dedicate your work (chapter 12)

12. Never cease your quality control (chapter 13)

This was probably the best curriculum I had ever taught. My prize student certainly thought so. A young man named Levi Gordon stuck next to me, peppering me with astute questions. I could not but admire this inquisitive student from Makelele University. Gordon invited Kim and me to an orphanage he supported on the outskirts of Kampala.

On July 2, we accompanied him to the Good Samaritan on a corner lot and containing about a thousand children of all ages, boys and girls. This was a day orphanage in that poor working women dropped off their children for a small fee to be looked after during daylight hours. It seemed to be part school, part day care, part church, and part refuge. Kim and I stuck around for an hour as we watched children dance and sing. When the five-day seminar was over, I asked Gordon to keep in touch with me for future ministry possibilities in Uganda.

From July 7 to 11, I taught the same Nehemiah Project in Butare. This time, with Franc as my interpreter. It was good to see my *son* again as well as Pastor Paul, Pastor David, and Amon. While I was teaching sixty men the twelve steps of Nehemiah, Kim was leading a group of ladies. She acquired two very special helpers: Ruth and Robina. These cousins spoke excellent English, beamed with joy, and projected a devout faith in God. Kim fell in love with them. We earmarked both Ruth and Robina as possible helpers in any future ministry we might establish in Butare.

Our friend, Amon, was the most accomplished Christian worker I knew; brilliant, musically talented, and driven to succeed. Like most of my well-spoken acquaintances, he was Ugandan-born but returned to Rwanda after the genocide. Amon managed the Living Faith ministry in Butare and was raising funds to support orphans by recruiting foreign sponsors. We visited his office and gave him a hundred-dollar gift.

We also made a return visit to the Batwa, bringing along six goats. A fellow missionary had donated a few dozen Kinyarwandan Bibles to distribute and Pastor Paul carried a box of them into the Batwa encampment. As Franc interpreted, I asked, "Who would like a Bible?" All the adults raised a hand. Hallelujah!

Then Franc asked, "How many of you can read this Bible?" About half of the hands went down.

Then Paul opened a Bible to its first page and held it before a woman with raised hand. "What does this say?" he questioned. The embarrassed mama squirmed then lowered her hand. Paul said to me, "These are God's resources. We must be wise as serpents and as gentle as doves."

On Sunday, July 13, we accompanied Robina to the Transformation Church, danced to the drums, and clapped to the singing. I mastered one phrase in the

local language: “Imana Irabacunda”—God loves you. Every time I spoke for interpretation, I prefaced my remarks with this phrase.

On July 14, our missionary team crossed the frontier into the DRC (Democratic Republic of Congo). For Missionary Kim this entire African endeavor was just a scouting trip for a major evangelical push in 2004. For two nights we met with local pastors in Bukavu and planned for the next year.

Kim and I were now on our way home, first returning to Butare, then north to Kigali. During a two hour wait at the airport, Franc said he had a surprise for me. As I sat drinking coffee, he escorted a young lady to the table. He introduced Claudine as his female of interest, but asked I keep the information hush-hush. Little did he know that within a few days, pictures of him with his secret girlfriend would be posted at my web site. I later jokingly apologized, “Sorry, my custom is not yours.”

Our 2003 mission trip was now complete, but Kim and I still enjoyed five more days of travel. Simon had made two friends while in New York and the brothers—Andrew and Nicholas—wanted to host us in London. It was Kim’s first time in Britain and we toured as much as we could. We arranged to stay in Enfield at a missionary’s empty apartment and made forays via the Tube during the daytime. We visited Buckingham palace, Big Ben, Houses of Parliament, Saint Paul’s Cathedral, and Greenwich Observatory. The brothers accompanied us to Canterbury to see the ancient church.

We had such a good time that we missed our Heathrow flight and had to spend one night in sleeping bags at Dulles Airport. We finally dragged ourselves home on July 22. These missionary outings were a remarkable bonding experience for Kim and me.

It was now time for me to begin the full-time work which God had called me to do. The Korean First Baptist Church (KFBCSF) met on Taraval Street in San Francisco, renting space from a Presbyterian congregation. About two hundred Korean-speaking Christians gathered every Sunday to worship. As is often the case, dozens of second-generation Koreans were affiliated with the church. These English-speaking young people required spiritual leadership. This was the E.M. or English Ministry.

My seminary professor, Dr. Jay Noh, had been leading the E.M., but he was relocating to a seminary in Chicago. He asked me—as a favor—to take over responsibility for this church within a church. I accompanied him on an outing

to VBS and a picnic. All seemed to bode well. After visiting the church leaders on August 3, we agreed that my tenure as pastor could begin with the school year. Pastor Kim led the Koreans and I developed a good relationship with him.

Kim and I wanted to fit in a vacation before the start of school, so we traveled north in mid-August. Forty folks from my family gathered in Vancouver where I passed out cards quoting Joshua 24:15, “As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD”. The card featured the iconic picture of six kids cascading from tall Jeanne to baby Frank. The note read, “1952-2003: Celebrating 52 summers of being together.” Jack and Barbara flew in from Texas so all six of us were together.

There was some bad news: Jack was battling throat cancer, but seemed to be recovering; and Jeanne was separating from Don. We prayed for God’s help in both of these situations.

We also gathered with Kim’s family. I got to know Dong Hyun’s daughters a little better: Candice and Deborah; also, Kyu Nam’s little twin boys: Sun Bean and Sun Woo. Of course, Kim’s mother was the focus of concern. Her mind was pretty much gone as she smiled for the camera.

I finally quit my job with Starrett Dalton, assuring him if he ever found himself in a fix, I would be more than willing to help out. I also stopped attending Tiburon Baptist and the morning fellowship at Westminster Presbyterian.

In September there was a recall election in California. Soon Arnold Schwarzenegger replaced Gray Davis as governor. I recall that Kim and I were on a Hornblower boat cruising the Bay as results were coming in. It seemed so odd at the time.

I eased into the lead position at the E.M. as Jay Noh eased out. While I was becoming *mok-sa-nim* (pastor), Kim was becoming a *sa-mo-nim* (pastor’s wife). This was a recognized position in the Korean church and community. She contributed to my pastorate in countless ways, serving as a role model for college students and as a liaison between the Korean and American sides of our church.

The E.M. was divided into two equal parts: adults over eighteen (mostly in their twenties), and students in high school and below. The distinction was often fuzzy. I interviewed and hired Eugene Curry from GGBTS to look after the younger crowd.

On October 19, the English Ministry celebrated its inaugural service. In my welcoming message I explained we were autonomous yet interconnected to the Korean Church through ties of history, family, and friendship. My key people—Hannah, Chris, Mike, James, Anne, Arnold, Vivian, and Jeff—were all offspring of Korean church deacons.

I soon fell into a work routine of driving into my small office three times a week and making the long bike ride on Tuesday mornings. I developed an appreciation for a 1940's Jubilee group called the *Golden Gate Quartet*. As I peddled across the Golden Gate Bridge and through the streets of San Francisco, I remember listening to such jubilee songs as *Gospel Train*, *Ride up in the Chariot*, and *Dese Bones Gonna Rise Again*.

Kim and I drove to Sweet Home, Oregon, to visit Kyu Nam in his mobile home. Somehow Kim got the notion to purchase the property on which the home was located. It was a nice location, but in the middle of nowhere. I was against it, but I loved my wife and so I signed the papers putting us \$55,000 in debt. I think she wanted to help her brother and at the same time invest in property. Two years later, we sold the land back to Kyu Nam, breaking even.

Simon came home over the Christmas holidays and together with Zachary, we welcomed in the new year at Camp Alta. This was an E.M. outing and the photograph shows twenty-eight young people posing in front of a snow pile. For three days we frolicked outside and played games inside. The twenty-year-olds really knew how to look after the younger kids. My sons enjoyed the interaction and I was happy to show them off to my youthful congregation.

I prayed with Kim as the kids were whooping up the new year. We asked God to provide Simon with nourishing fellowship in New York, so that he might keep his spiritual footing. For Brother Zacharias, we prayed for discernment. It was becoming *crunch time* for him. He had to decide, to vow or not to vow.

## 2004

The new year started out with a rebranding of my English Ministry. I wrote in the January newsletter:

There is a new star in the constellation of churches in San Francisco. Our English ministry with the Korean First Baptist Church of San Francisco has been re-christened *Liberty*. We stand on the words of Jesus when He says "if the Son therefore shall set you free, you shall be free indeed (John 7:24)." We thirst after this liberty that can only be found through a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

If you are looking for a place to worship, serve, and study with fellow believers, then check us out. We are committed to living out the Gospel on a daily basis. We need your help to bring salt and light into the city of San Francisco.

In the same newsletter I wrote about a book and a movie.

We have just completed a six-week journey through *The Purpose Driven Life* by Rick Warren. We learned about worshipping God in spirit and in truth, fellowshiping in the unity of the Spirit, following Jesus as true disciples, ministering to God by serving others, and evangelizing the world with the Gospel of Christ. Many of us are fortified and energized to better live out these five purposes.

On Sunday, February 29th, I saw the movie *The Passion of the Christ* with several members of Liberty. It was a gut-wrenching spiritual journey through the final hours in the life of Christ. I cannot say that I *enjoyed* the movie, but as one called by Jesus, *The Passion of the Christ* demonstrated to me once again “the power and wisdom of God” (1 Corinthians 1:23). Jesus suffered all this for me.

I do believe this movie can be an effective outreach tool, especially as a beckoning call to those raised in the church. For those who carry intellectual objections to the Gospel, this movie may bypass the head and goes straight to the heart. At bottom this motion picture is a devotional tribute by Mel Gibson. Without devotion to its central figure, much of its impact and appeal is lost.

I launched and maintained a website called *libertysf.org* into which I poured my energy and ideas. The primary links were to Information, Our Mission, Bulletins, Newsletters, KFBCSE, Youth Ministry and Pictures.

On March 22, Kim and I flew to the East coast to visit Simon. We rented a minivan at Newark Liberty Airport, drove through Manhattan, then to Simon’s place in the Williamsburg neighborhood of Brooklyn. We carried a house-warming gift and Simon prepared dinner with his new rice cooker.

Tuesday marked our thirtieth wedding anniversary. It was double-special to spend both a day on vacation and a day with our son. We left his apartment early and caught the subway to Union Square for a short walk to Parson’s Art School and the New University. After signing in at the front desk, we elevatored to the third-floor student art spaces. Perhaps I was biased, but Simon’s installation art appeared number one to me. In a glass room, he had placed two white chairs standing in tall wheat grass and facing each other. The work was called *Deny Third Choice*.

After an hour or so, we took a cab to the Empire State Building, shooting lots of pictures on the ride to the top. The winds were freezing as we stepped outside. My hoodie was drawn tight and Kim suggested I looked like the Unabomber. Next, we went by subway to ground zero, then to Times Square. It was a full day of playing tourist.

Wednesday was less hectic than the day before. We returned to Parsons with Simon and talked with his department chair. Simon had work to do so Kim and I strolled to Washington Park and sat on benches, drinking in the ambiance of the Big City. We returned to Brooklyn for a while, then to Greenwich Village to see an off-Broadway show called *Cookin'*. In the evening, James King—Simon's cousin—dropped by for a visit. That marked a second awesome day.

On Thursday the three of us did something unusual. I coaxed my wife and son to accompany me on a drive-through of New England. My big challenge—a personal Mount Everest—was to visit all fifty of the United States. I stood seven states short.

Leaving at 5:00 a.m., we drove through Queens and Bronx, then up to Connecticut (my 44th state). We continued north through Massachusetts (45th state) and just crossed the border into Vermont (46th state). We turned east and drove through New Hampshire (47th state), then up to Maine (48th state). We paused in Maine for lunch and headed back. We stopped for a moment at Harvard Square in Cambridge. Then, just after dark we drove through Rhode Island (49th state). It was a full but satisfying day. Delaware, the First State, was left to be my last.

After a few weeks of travel recovery, Kim and I stayed two nights at Yosemite National Park in the wonderful Lodge. Sitting near the base of Yosemite Falls, I perceived the voice of water three distinct times: at its distance falling, as its mid-point crashing, and at its near point rushing. Kim relished walking up the Misty Trail to Vernal Falls. This was our favorite part; wet, slippery, misty, and with multiple rainbows.

On April 30, Zachary decided the Catholic priory was not for him. He wrote the following as part of his farewell letter.

I am sorry that I have to read this, but otherwise I might start crying (I may anyway). Also, I apologize to those of you whom I have not talked to personally about this. Very often, the right decision is the most difficult one. But God's will be done. Over the past year I have discerned that the Dominican Order is not where God is calling me now. Thus, I am not petitioning to renew my vows when they expire on September 1st. It is no secret that I have had difficulties participating in the life of the community and when I tried to discover the reasons, I came to the conclusion that my vocation is not as a professed Dominican friar.

A few weeks after Zachary quit the Dominican order, he moved into his own apartment in Berkeley. He was already two years into a three-year Master's Degree program. The Catholic Church had paid for the first two, Zachary would have to foot the bill for the last.

Simon was gaining confidence as an artist. He wrote this for an Art Show in early 2004:

Art illuminates the darkened corners of our hearts and minds. Contemporary art should attempt to discover truth. The truth I seek is spiritual. Since being in graduate school, and exposed to the writing of so many brilliant minds, I have retraced the steps in my walk with Christ. I have so far come to the conclusion that I will not abandon God in making art. On the contrary, a fire has been lit under me to further lay bare the torturous ambiguities existing in my personal faith. The truth I seek in art is already there, and has always been there as the manifestation of God. Its illusiveness taunts me, yet I am comfortable in its shadows. To search for religious truth in art is my paradoxical challenge.

Simon and Zachary came home for the summer. My older son began work on his master's thesis concerning just war, while my younger son created large acrylic paintings to adorn the house. My favorite was titled *johnthreesixteen*. This large creation was bright yellow with three block letters in the center JOHN then THREE then SIXTEEN. The words were sanded nearly level with the background thus barely discernable. *Aha*, I said to myself. *The message of the Gospel is hidden to those not seeking.*

Over the next month, Kim handed out diplomas to graduating groups in Instructional Technology. One special commencement speaker was Senator Hillary Clinton and my wife got pictures of the two of them arm in arm. She was so proud.

Frank and Lelia paid us a visit for a few days. The high point was a daylong hike on Angel Island, with accompanying ferry boat ride to Fisherman's Wharf. I mentioned to Frank that Zachary was going to Rwanda with us in July. He asked if sixteen-year-old David could join the mission team and so preparations were put in place.

On July 3, Simon's best friend was married. We were all invited to a Sonoma-County vineyard to witness Danny exchange vows with Juliet. For Simon the get-together was like a High School/Hip hop/College reunion. It was a festive Jewish occasion for all of us.

I became a regular listener of Christian Radio—KFAX—especially following three shows: "Just Thinking" by Ravi Zacharias provided me with apologetic knowledge; "Truth for Life" by Alistair Begg taught me the virtue of good preaching using the expository sequential model; and from "New Life Live" and Steve Arterburn, I learned about pastoring and sexual integrity, especially by reading his book, *Every Man's Battle*. As I prepared for Africa, I incorporated material from each of these ministries.

*Celebrate Africa 2004* began on July 20. Kim, Zachary, David, and I flew from San Francisco to London to Nairobi to Bujumbura to Kigali.

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On this mission trip, we coordinated with Missionary Kim, but worked independently. My wife helped me teach a marriage seminar to university students. Sitting in the soccer stadium, we presented a “Pre-marriage Seminar for the Young and Hopeful” based on five Old Testament figures:

Adam and Eve – The Template for Marriage  
Isaac and Rebecca – Finding your Soul Mate  
Samson and his Bimbos – Finding the wrong person  
Ruth and Boaz – Marriage as it should be  
David and his Wives – Marriage in Confusion

Kim and I were an especially good tag-team as we worked our way through five days of material. Students appreciated our biblical perspective. Franc and Paul assisted me while Ruth and Robina hung out with Kim. Zachary and David helped Amon at his Living Faith Orphanage. They also assisted in the distribution of one-hundred reading glasses.

After one week in Butare we traveled south, crossing the frontier into Burundi. We stayed at a gated missionary compound near Bujumbura with Immaculate as our hostess. Once more, I led a five-day marriage seminar, this time by myself, since Kim was leading a women’s group. Zachary led a government class featuring the Korean concept of the *New Village Movement*. In Bujumbura, we visited the home of Immaculate for dinner, the church and home of Pastor Jeremy, and the shore of Lake Tanganyika. Zachary and David also purchased a full wardrobe of East-African apparel.

We were having trouble gaining exit visas at a local government office. My Burundian friends suspected the official was waiting for a bribe. That same afternoon we attended a soccer match seated next to national leaders who had attended Zachary’s government seminar. One fellow introduced himself as *minister of clean government*. I mentioned our visa problem and he grew embarrassed. Immediately after the match, he accompanied us to the passport office and suddenly all ten passports magically appeared.

Back in Rwanda I rested while Kim taught a group of women in the principles of the New Village Movement. I went to a genocide memorial with Zachary and David and on the return ride we encountered a large contingent of prisoners dressed in pink—the sign of their incarceration.

Kim and I spent the last four days of Mission 2004 in Mubende, Uganda, visiting orphanages, preaching in churches, and teaching parts of the Marriage Seminar. A favorite photo shows a young girl in orange dress. She was ringing the school bell, which consisted of an iron auto wheel suspended below a wooden tripod.

We touched bases with Gordon Levi re-visiting the Good Samaritan Orphanage in Kampala. Then we headed back to the States. We had scheduled a ten-hour layover in London; just long enough for the four of us to take the Tube downtown and visit a few sites along the route.

After a few weeks of mission recovery, we traveled north for a family visit. Kim stayed with her sister and ailing mother while I stayed with Frank at his new home in Vancouver. Frank reported good news and bad news. The bad news was that my nephew Joshua had just divorced Stacy and his two sons, Justin and Shane, were in the custody of their father.

The good news was that their autistic daughter, Lucinda, was approved for Companion Home Care funding. She was now living with her cousin, Aletha, in a duplex a few blocks from their house. Frank and Lelia were celebrating their newly-found independence.

We all got together on August 14 near Battleground to renew acquaintances. Eileen later sent me a refrigerator magnet she called *Sixlets*, with a photo of Jeanne, Charlotte, Jack, Eileen, Chris, and Frank.

Three weeks later we returned to the Northwest for unexpected sorrow. I wrote this article for the Korea Times:

My wife's mother passed away on September 9 in the home of her third daughter, Hyun Hee. She lived to be seventy-seven years old. The last twelve years had been difficult as we saw bits of her personality disappear piece by piece. It is with sorrow and relief that we mark her passing: sorrow that she is no longer with us, but relief that her indignity and suffering is over.

Our final visit with her occurred a month ago. My last memory is a pleasant one. My wife and I placed her frail frame into a wheelchair for an outside ride in the fresh air. We pulled a baseball cap over her white hair to keep out the bright sun. We gently strapped down her right leg to keep it from dangling to the ground. Then we raced her a few blocks to visit Hyun Hee's grocery store. In spite of her disabilities, the wind, shouts, and speed made her giggle. It almost seemed like we were pushing a child in a carriage. But it was time for God to take this child home. Goodbye and God bless you, Halmoni.

The funeral took place in Turner at Hyun Hee's church. Kim's entire family was present; all six children, their five spouses, and all nine grandchildren. Even Kim's father showed up—much to the displeasure of Pam. I spoke a prayer in English; Kim eulogized; and both Zachary and Simon spoke words of remembrance. Lee Il-Sung was laid to rest the following day at a plot near Salem.

The rhythm of the school year returned. Simon was back in New York City for his last year at Parsons. Zachary was at Berkeley for his final year at the Graduate Theological Union. Kim returned to SFSU with constant tales of political intrigue as department chair; and I returned as Liberty pastor.

I did all I could to nurture and grow my congregation, but it never seemed to expand much beyond its core group of second-generation Korean youth. By September we were running a Sunday attendance of twenty, ranging from sixteen to thirty-five, with an occasional outlier. Eugene Curry and I worked well together, although we never grew close.

In September, I delivered a sermon series on following Jesus through baptism. On September 18 we held a retreat at Prayer Mountain to baptize eight of my English Ministry. Many from the Korean side sat in attendance as Arnold, Steve, Richard, Hana, Annie, David, Janet, and Andy were immersed in water. The proprietors of the place, Pastor Choi and Rebecca, applauded the event as spectacular. They later posted an oversize photo of the eight who were *dunked for Jesus*.

Kim and I continued with some traditions. Liberty sponsored a big Harvest Festival where we dressed in African wardrobe. Kim invited five couples to our home for Thanksgiving; and we traveled to Camp Alta once more for Christmastime snow.

On election day, I worked at the local precinct, walking the floor and assisting in booths. I was moderately surprised when George W. Bush defeated Bob Kerry to win a second term. I thought for sure the debacle in Iraq would unseat him.

I was involved in many aspects of ministry. After a month of pre-marital counseling, I officiated at my first wedding. On November 20, Priam wed Dianne as the Liberty praise team provided music.

The year ended for Kim and me in the basement of the big Presbyterian church. While many in my E.M. ministry supervised children, I called out bingo numbers for one hundred adults.

## 2005

Simon and Zachary dropped by the house at the first of the year. We walked together from our home to Tennessee Valley Beach talking about life and the new year to come. Through his installation art, Simon had become expert at laying drywall. We asked him to apply this skill to our utility room. Soon the walls and ceiling were smooth and painted.

On January 3 the four of us packed up and headed to Maui for a short vacation. This was our second visit to Hawaii and the boys' first. We stayed three nights at the Royal Lahaina Resort on Kaanapali Beach, walking down long strands of sand and splashing in ocean water. The boys rented snorkeling gear and spent an afternoon with faces under water. Simon reported seeing spectacular butterfly and bluefin fish.

We ate pig meat at a luau as we watched hula dancers and torch twirlers. Some of the magic shows baffled me. How did they do that? The next morning, we sailed in a catamaran to Molokini Islet. My favorite times involved watching my two offspring in carefree play. I was proud of them both. We drove our rental car to Iao State Park to view the famed needle. All too soon it was time to fly back to California.

In February, my work at the church acquired a political aspect. I participated in a rally in support of traditional marriage. The rally was sponsored by the Chinese Churches of San Francisco. A few thousand people lined Nineteenth Street a few blocks from our church. I joined in with a dozen Korean friends who were also participating in the rally. Most people were wearing red t-shirts with the words “Marriage = 1 man & 1 woman”. On the back side of the shirt was the same thought expressed in Chinese characters. I recognized this was a losing battle, but I wrote in my bulletin:

Marriage has always been understood as an institution between a man and a woman. I believe that the creator of humans made them male and female from the beginning. To redefine *marriage* to include same-sex couples would be like redefining *north* to include *south*. Marriage is a yin and a yang. It cannot be a yin and a yin.

In mid-February we visited Simon in New York City. He was exhibiting his art at the MFA Fine Arts Exhibition. Simon was described in his Art School catalog as an *emerging artist*.

We viewed Simon’s latest work called *Yggdrasil*—the immense mythical tree that played a central role in Norse cosmology. This art was a column stretched floor to ceiling, three-feet square and about twenty-feet tall. The surface of the pillar was composed of moist sod. The texture was subtle, appealing to the eye, the touch, and even the smell. It was certainly unique among the twenty-two pieces on exhibition. All of his friends, teachers, and mentors raved about Simon’s creativity.

We spent the night in Simon’s Brooklyn apartment. He was keeping a flock of nine finches that flew from perch to perch free-style around his rooms. It was a kind of installation art to which the birds contributed their own paint drops.

The next day, we went to Battery Park for the ferry tour of Ellis island and circumnavigation of the Statue of liberty. We then went to the Heidi Cho Gallery where Simon displayed an art piece called Red State. (He actually sold it a month later).

Simon insisted we visit the newly-opened Museum of Modern Art (MOMA)—one of his favorite places. He led us to a prized piece in the collection painted by

Jackson Pollock in 1950. The museum brochure read that “*One* is a masterpiece of the pouring technique, the radical method that Pollock contributed to Abstract Expressionism. Moving around an expanse of canvas laid on the floor, Pollock would fling and pour ropes of paint across the surface.” After reading this comment, my mind raced back to the birds in Simon’s room. I asked my son if his nine finches were abstract expressionists.

Liberty Christian Fellowship decided to sponsor a special event for English Ministries in the Bay Area. The brochures read:

*Liberty* is hosting a Praise Festival on Friday, April 8, 2005. The festivities commence at 7:00 p.m. and continue to 10:00 pm. We have four participating praise teams and we hope to fill our place with enthusiastic songs of joy. The Liberty praise team of Hannah, Mike, Steve and William will lift up their voices and their instruments to the glory of God. You are certainly invited to praise, sing along, raise your arms, and clap your hands. Bring your friends, too. As the writer of Hebrews says, “Let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess his name.”

My position was becoming difficult at *Liberty*. My age and sensibilities conflicted with the young people. Hannah and Mike spoke a few unkind things to my face. Kim felt she was being disrespected by the Korean side of the church. She commented that church polity were worse than university politics.

The situation became untenable for Pastor Kim. I was sitting in on a church board meeting when the elders asked him and me to step out while they discussed our future. I was never certain what their beef was with either of us, but since he was the man who sponsored me, we were a package deal. When they asked him to resign, they asked for my resignation as well.

On my next-to-last Sunday, I preached a sermon called *Parting Company* based on Acts 15:35-21, where Paul parts with Barnabas. I wrote in the bulletin:

As most of you know, my final day as your pastor is next Sunday, April 24. It is with a sense of sadness that both Samonim and I part company with this outstanding congregation. To be honest there are some hurt feelings in the present, some worries about the future, and some regrets about the past. The Korean side of the church will say an official goodbye to Pastor Kim and myself at the end of the Korean service. You are invited to attend.

I was disappointed another position had ended in failure, but neither Kim nor I thought we were a good fit. The twenty-year-olds were talented but lacked life experience in so many areas. At fifty-four years old, I found myself once more unemployed and seeking another ministry.

My brother Jack had survived a bout with throat cancer. I felt bad because I was so little involved in his life. I phoned Frank and he agreed on a three-brother get-together. In May, Kim and I flew to Dallas to spend a leisurely week with Jack and Barbara in their suburban Colleyville House. Frank flew from Portland to join us. We spent leisure hours sitting poolside, sharing our lives. Frank and I also spent time with nephews Alan and Patrick. It was good to see them healthy and prospering.

I figured it was divine providence. Just after I lost my job with the English Ministry, I learned that Tiburon Baptist Church was searching for an associate pastor to back up Barry Stricker. Since Kim and I were again attending TBC I filed my application for the job. I considered myself a good fit. After all, the church knew me, Barry had served as my mentor, and members had voted to ordain me. The position was to open in the Fall. Whenever I anxiously asked Barry about the selection, his stock reply was “trust the process.”

In May, we celebrated Zachary’s thirtieth birthday. He told me he felt old. Since Simon couldn’t attend, I placed his ceramic bust at the kitchen table as a stand in. Later in May, Simon graduated from the New School with a Master of Fine Arts. He graduated with distinction and numerous accolades.

I had been partners with Craig Singleton at San Quentin Prison since 2001. I wrote this story for the Korea Times about my forays into the prison. I titled it *Visit to Another Land*.

This morning I visited a land that most of you have never been to. After waking up early, the first thing I checked was my wardrobe. I can’t wear anything blue. This morning I dressed in khaki pants and a brown shirt. Just before leaving the house, I checked out my wallet. Once I forgot my official ID and couldn’t get into this land. My driver’s license was in place and I was ready to go.

After a twenty-minute drive I parked the car, leaving my cell phone in the glove compartment. Everything had to be inspected. I stood in line then opened my bag. I signed in at exactly 8:00 a.m. After a short walk, another officer inspected my belongings. This time I had to walk through a metal detector. I couldn’t get through until I removed my shoes. After another short walk, I had to show my ID card a third time. I signed my name again and another officer stamped my right hand with yellow ultraviolet ink.

Then a big steel door opened. I stepped through it and the door slammed shut behind me. Next, a second door opened in front of me and I walked into this alien environment.

Welcome to San Quentin Prison. On Saturday mornings I lead a Bible study for prison inmates in the Protestant chapel. Whenever I enter this place, I

experience a bit of culture shock. Entering this prison is not unlike visiting a foreign country. The clothing is different—they all have to wear blue. The customs are different—they all have to sit down immediately whenever a whistle blows. The language is even different—*H-unit* and *lifer* are now part of my vocabulary.

Whenever I visit San Quentin, I feel out of place. The officers are professional and my friendships are genuine, but this is not my home. I am a visitor and a three-hour tourist. The natives of this country are leading lives that are beyond my understanding.

As I walk into the main yard, I see well-maintained rose gardens and juniper bushes sculpted into ornate balls. Situated on the San Francisco Bay, I often see sea gulls swoop down from the sky and splash-land into a concrete pond. How freely they enter over the prison walls, spend a few moments inside the prison, then fly away. How difficult it was for me to gain entrance onto the prison grounds. How very impossible it is for these prisoners—and now my friends—to exit this place.

Today I studied and prayed with six prisoners. We never ask our student inmates what they are in prison for, but sometimes they volunteer the information.

James tells us that he is in for attempted murder. He shot his neighbor during an argument. He would have killed him too, but his gun jammed. James has twin boys who visit him every few months.

Harold and Lonnie are in San Quentin for drug charges. They don't talk about it much, but you can see the scars on their arms.

Donnie is a lifer. He killed someone when he was 21 and now he's 45. He has been a model prisoner. Every year his parole comes up and every year his parole has been denied. He is praying that the new governor in California will permit his parole this year.

Calvin is in on robbery charges and is due to be released this September. Today was probably the last time that I will see Harold. He is due to be released this coming Friday. We prayed for him before we ended the study.

Harold is up against tremendous odds when he is released. With few social skills and many years behind bars he will be dropped off at the San Rafael bus station with \$100 in his pocket. Is it any wonder that so many inmates return? My scripture tells me "to remember the prisoners as if I am in prison with them". Although I lead them in study once a week, their faces come before my eyes nearly every day.

In June, Zachary and I drove up to Vancouver to Visit Frank. Joshua was at the house with his two sons and new fiancé, Heather. We provided labor for a few

days as Lelia wheeled barrels of bark mulch over new plants. It was a good time for both Zach and me.

Kim's life was busy as a mentor to young Korean ladies. She often played matchmaker because of her wide circle of friends. I officiated at the weddings of several proteges over the next few years.

Without full-time employment I considered a full-time ministry as a sponsor of short-term missions to Africa. I registered *Come and See Africa International* as a charitable non-profit, taking the name from the Gospel story of the Samaritan woman who said of Jesus, "Come and see a Man." My idea was to accompany Americans to East Africa, to show them the various needs, and to trust God to connect their hearts to an appropriate ministry.

I organized a summer mission trip to Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi independent from Christian Life. Through her university contacts, Kim recruited three women for Come & See Africa Mission 2005. Our team consisted of Kim and me; Velma, Tina, and Lynda, as well as my great-nephew Josiah Walker.

We six spent a weekend of bonding at Prayer Mountain where I distributed a detailed guide book with foreign phrases, praise songs, games, pointers, and Biblical devotions.

As leader of this mission team, Pastor Choi of Prayer Mountain prayed for me. As I sat surrounded by my team, she laid hands on the crown of my head and began to shout. The Korean words were loud and fervent. I understood some of the language, but afterward I asked, "What were you praying for me mostly".

She replied in English, "I was praying for baldness."

I felt the top of my head and chuckled. "What was that you were praying for?"

This time I heard the word "boldness".

On the car ride home, I mentioned to my wife that now I have an excuse. My hair loss must be caused by all these church ladies praying for "baldness". I joked with Kim, "I do hope that by the time these words reach heaven the Almighty does not confuse boldness with baldness."

Zachary drove Kim, Josiah, and me to SFO on June 29. We each carried our requisite fifty-pound bags. We stopped in New York long enough to greet Simon and connect with Tina, Velma and Lynda. We flew together to Heathrow then on to Entebbe.

Ruth Besigye was our contact and coordinator in Uganda. In Kampala she organized a Pastor Leadership Seminar for me and Women's Leadership Seminar for Kim. Our mission team traveled to Africa with a mix of motives. Kim and I knew our duties and performed them. Josiah was sixteen years old and floated from place to place as a carefree observer. Velma was a hefty church-going African-

American woman from Oakland. She assisted in Gospel songs and Bible teaching. She could always be counted on to belt out her favorite, *Got Up This Morning with Jesus on my Mind*. Lynda and Tina were non-religious tourists along to see the land and culture. They did appreciate the work we did with widows and orphans. They knew enough about computers to help Kim when hands were raised.

After three days of seminars, we traveled north to Jinja and the source of the Nile. We stayed one night. Josiah paid local swimmers to dive into the rapids and plunge over a waterfall. The next day we headed south, pausing at the equator for pictures. We spent a night with Ruth's family near the Rwandan frontier, where Franc joined us. After talking things over with Ruth and Franc, my wife and I decided to establish an ongoing presence in Butare.

All six of us were on hand at the Hotel Des Mill Collines (Hotel Rwanda) when Franc and Claudine took their civil wedding vows. Each had to clasp the Rwandan flag and swear allegiance to each other and to their nation. This was a legal requirement, and the two would not live together until their church wedding in October.

Next, we travelled to Butare staying at the Beobob Hotel. We had brought along a suitcase full of reading glasses. Kim tasked Tina, Lynda, and Josiah to assist in their distribution. Pastor Paul helped out by gathering elderly people from several churches. Franc organized outings to present goats to the impoverished Batwa people and hoes to a group of field laborers called *Women Today*.

Kim delegated the Women's Leadership Seminar to Velma while she focused on a Technology Seminar at the National University of Rwanda. Tina and Lynda helped her a little in this class. I met with pastors for a few days and passed out a booklet called "Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel." We talked our way through the eighty-six headings of John.

I considered Amon to be the cleverest businessman I knew in Africa, so when Kim and I decided to launch *Come & See Africa* in Butare, I met with him. His first input was this: "Do you want your organization to be a business ministry or a friendship ministry?" I considered, then told him the former.

He said "Good, I can help". After more discussion, I hired Ruth as a house director and Franc as a teacher. Pastor Paul agreed to provide oversight. Ruth's job would be to find a house to rent near campus and Franc would teach and find other teachers. I left a few hundred dollars with each of them, telling them I'd be back in a few months.

Our team then moved on to Bujumbura in Burundi. For the third time I taught a Pastor Seminar and Kim a Women's Leadership Seminar. We were wonderfully housed at the Swedish Missionary compound and our team visited

many of the local sights. Both Immaculate and Jeremy led us to universities, orphanages, schools, and churches. A highlight in Burundi were the synchronized drummers, outfitted in the national colors of orange and green who entertained us at several points along our tour.

On July 25 we began our long bus ride back to Entebbe. We paused overnight in Kigali to chat with Ruth, Franc, and Paul about their new responsibilities as workers for Come & See Africa. In Kampala we sat at an outside restaurant to eat a chicken dinner. I joked that in Africa one never knows if the chicken in question was once a rooster or hen. It's the same meal in this part of the world. As I was speaking two boda-bodas (motorbikes) pulled up each laden with a dozen clucking chickens of both genders.

We paused in London long enough to ride the Tube downtown and back again. Then we returned to the States. On July 29, Jimmy Walker showed up at the house to pick up his son. After this tourist experience, I decided that leading expeditions was not my bailiwick. Tina, Velma, Lynda, and Josiah were decent people, but they lacked missionary hearts. My life was at the service of the Gospel, not at the service of adventurers.

While we were away, Zachary worked feverishly to finish his Master's thesis. I cloistered him downstairs for a week, then banished him to Prayer Mountain to encourage his focus. It didn't work. With all of his coursework complete, he decided to relocate to Arlington, Virginia, to share an apartment with his friend Robbie. His revised plan was to complete his Master's then enroll at the Catholic University of America to earn a Doctor of Philosophy. If not a priest, he could still be a professor.

In late August I began Disaster Relief training with California Southern Baptists. I attended classes in Fresno and received my yellow cap and tee shirt. A week later a disaster happened in New Orleans when Hurricane Katrina struck the gulf coast. I nearly deployed with a Disaster Relief team, but my *mud-out* qualification was not yet complete.

On September 2, Kim and I were startled from sleep with loud footsteps. My wife shouted, "who's there?" I sprang up from bed and listened closely. I determined that the footsteps were coming from the roof. I said to her, "It's probably a cat or squirrel on the roof" and went back to sleep.

The next morning, we heard the footsteps about the same time: 6:30 am. This time I investigated. I went into the back yard and spotted a large turkey pacing on the peak of the roof. A 20-pound bird with hard claws can make a lot of racket on tar shingles

covered with grit. As I watched I saw not one turkey on our rooftop but several. It appeared one mama turkey called to her babies to join her for a morning meeting.

After a week of this precise morning ritual, I captured the turkey meeting on video. The flock spent the night roosting one hundred yards away in Eucalyptus treetops. Just before dawn, the mama turkey swooped to land on my rooftop. The younger birds followed, one-by-one, until I counted eight turkeys on the rooftop, scratching and making a nuisance. After a week of such commotion, I never saw those turkeys again.

At church I led a Sunday School class of seniors I dubbed *the Methuselabs*. I was disappointed when I learned that I didn't get the associate pastor position at TBC. I thought I was a good fit. One gentleman in my class told me the fix was in and an old friend of Barry's got the job. I continued to teach this morning class and attend an evening class by Ken Eakins then reading the Space Trilogy by C.S. Lewis.

I attended two weddings in October. On the first of the month Joshua Foreman married Heather Kerekffy in Bellevue, Washington. Zachary and I drove north for the occasion. I loved the avant-garde wedding stage with full moon and haunted tree. Zachary and I enjoyed one night of camping at Crater Lake.

Then on October 22, I attended the wedding of Amon Munyaneza and Erica Watkins at the Winona Lake Free Methodist Church in Indiana. I flew into Chicago then drove a rental a hundred miles. I was actually a co-officiator at this wedding, standing at the side of the church pastor. I counted Amon as a friend and important part of my ministry in Rwanda. He had so much to offer.

I departed for Rwanda on November 9. My purpose was to plant my ministry, *Come & See Africa*, on a firm foundation. I flew into Entebbe where Franc and Gordon met me. We talked about ministry all the way to Kigali where we stayed the night. I met Ruth and congratulated her. She was single when I had hired her; now she was two-months married.

Ruth had rented a house, close to the NUR, for two-hundred dollars per month. Looking around the property, I thought it was a good deal but my friends considered it over-priced. I gave both Ruth and Franc five-hundred dollars for back wages. Ruth had hired a watchman named Jacques and a housekeeper named Pascazia. Both of these were from her Transformation Church and I grew to like them.

I wanted to set up a local board of directors to oversee CASA. These positions were non-paid, but not without benefit. Pastor Paul Gasigi, Pastor David Nahayo, and Pastor James Musoni, agreed to serve. The new board opened an account at a local bank, so I could wire money from California. My initial pledge was five-hundred dollars per month.

I spent considerable time and effort to improve the building to American standards. For example, the porcelain toilet needed a seat, water needed to come from all faucets, electricity needed to be regular, screens had to be fitted, and locks had to be installed. I often complained to Franc, “We have a higher standard in America.” I think I offended my African son.

About the time the House was shaping up, I ran into a crisis. One morning Ruth asked to speak in private to Franc and me. With tears she confessed she was four months pregnant and asked for forgiveness. We prayed together and of course I forgave her. She had not yet told her own pastor, but when she did tell him, she expected some kind of church discipline. Ruth wanted to know what her future was as director of our house.

I discussed the situation with local pastors and women leaders. I wanted to balance conviction with compassion. They each said that in the Rwandan Christian community, it would be difficult for her to continue as a Christian leader especially if her own church sanctioned her. “People would not visit the house,” they said.

After some prayer, I asked Ruth to resign at the first of the year. I told her to keep her salary and to look upon this as a six-month maternity leave. She seemed to accept the decision.

I talked at length with Franc about Ruth’s situation. “Something like this would never happen in America. Most American churches would accept her kind of pre-marital sex as part of the modern world, especially since she is now married to the father of the child”.

Franc replied with a sly grin, “Yes, Pastor Foreman, that may be true in America but in Rwanda we have a higher standard”.

I prevailed upon Robina to succeed Ruth and soon she settled into the house as director. Gordon stuck with me as an international guest. His specialty was making Ugandan pancakes, called je-pad-i. I saw a lot of Willie Ngabo, who was operating Amon’s organization called *Living Faith*. He often sang in church with his girlfriend Rose. Pastor Paul and his wife Mary Jane grew close to me along with their three boys. Paul drove a car we nicknamed *Lazarus*. He claimed the car had died during our 2004 visit, but now it was alive again.

Gacaca courts were established in Rwanda to address the thousands of crimes committed during the days of genocide. These courts held session every Wednesday morning and attendance was mandatory for local residents. Markets and schools closed so all could take part in the genocide tribunals. Of course, that interfered with our classroom plans.

I attended one session as Pastor David’s guest. Standing in the dock I saw one old Hutu man accused of stealing a goat after its Tutsi owner was murdered by

Interahamwe militia. After group scolding and his contrition, the man confessed, was fined a small amount, then released back into the community.

I made a quick trip south to Bujumbura. My limit with this tourist visa was seventy-two hours. I visited Immaculate and stayed at the home of Pastor Jeremy. I bussed back to Butare with Immaculate's mother and four younger sisters. The family was in town to see her graduate from the university. I was pleased I could accommodate her entire family at the Christian Fellowship House. On the same day, I was on hand as Robina graduated with a degree in business. I was delighted to witness these two young women so accomplished and so happy.

December 3 was a big day. Franc and Claudine were married in Kigali. They held two separate services: in the morning a traditional wedding with Rwandan regalia and in the afternoon a church wedding with Franc in tux and Claudine in gown. I joked that Franc had been married three times! But every time to the same woman.

I was happy for my Rwandan son and snapped a hundred pictures of the festivities; people dancing, sitting, vowing, and posing with friends. As a sign of union, the couple placed drinking reeds into a large gourd containing traditional sorghum beer. It was the only time I ever saw Franc imbibe.

After the traditional ceremony, we traveled to the big Assembly of God church. This time Christian vows were spoken. I met a few of Franc's family from Uganda. After these two weddings came the reception. In Rwanda, this act of hospitality costs thousands of dollars. The official guest list may top one hundred, but often friends of friends swell the numbers. I know Franc went into deep debt to pay for a Rwandan-style wedding.

On December 9, the Christian Fellowship house opened its doors for a community-wide party. Our folks stood along Cyarwa Road passing out invitations. We gave a small gift package to each person entering through our gates. My thought was to show people our public intentions. I was disappointed some of our decorations were stolen.

When I left Rwanda a few days later, I felt *Come & See Africa* was in good hands. I had confidence in Franc, Robina, and Paul.

Soon I was back in California, speaking in churches, trying to raise my pledge to CASA of five-hundred dollars per month. Kim was my missionary partner and she helped me gain entrance to many Korean churches.

Both Zachary and Simon were away for the holidays: Zachary in Tyson, Virginia, and Simon in Venezuela. He reported to us he had met a woman of interest and was checking her out in her hometown of Caracas.

## 2006

As the year began, I was hosting six web domains: flyingfog, comeandseeafrica, comeandseerwanda, simonforeman, zacharyforeman, and emacsf—which was for the English Ministries for Asian churches in San Francisco. I also dedicated a portion of flyingfog as a *photo journal* and began to seriously record my life month-by-month with accompanying pictures.

The year began with a string of four visitors. First my sister Jeanne arrived on January 5. She was by that time officially divorced from Don due to his deception, philandering ways, and money mismanagement. The couple had sold their home in Bauer Woods and Jeanne had relocated to an apartment in Canby.

Jeanne asked if she could accompany Kim and me on a mission trip to Africa. At seventy-two years old, I thought hers a bold request. She confessed she had always traveled at the pleasure of Don, but now she wanted to do something on her own. Jeanne was in Mill Valley for five days, touring San Francisco, visiting Prayer Mountain, and sharing a meal with granddaughter Heather in Oakland.

As soon as Jeanne left, Simon came to town with his girlfriend Dilia Marquez. She was such a beautiful and pleasant woman. The couple doted on each other. They borrowed my two mountain bikes and peddled the local trails. I took them to church, Kim to her workplace, and all of us toured the de Young museum. Dilia's dog, Ike, was a child to her, at her feet every moment. Simon helped spruce up our home with original paintings and store-bought art. The couple spent about half the time at our home and half with Simon's friends. I would want to show off Dilia too.

In February, Amon dropped by the house for a few days. I showed him around San Francisco and gave him the tour of Muir Woods. We stopped by the Cathedral Grove where the United Nations paid homage to FDR in 1945. A commemorative brass plaque opened with the words, "Under these eternal redwood trees ...". The odd thing was that this particular redwood tree had been knocked flat in a wind storm. I asked Amon, "What do you think when you see that fallen tree?"

"All the money the giant tree could now bring in."

"I'm a different man than you," I responded. "You're a businessman. I'm a dreamer. I see an irony between the boast of an eternal tree and the humility of a broken wreck. Eternal? Hah!"

Just after Amon left, Zachary returned from Virginia. He picked up his dual degrees in Philosophy and Theology from Berkeley. His Master's thesis concerned just war and terrorism. I treated my son to an Outback steak for this accomplishment. Zach said he was comfortable with his simple life, working for the Archdiocese of Arlington and sharing space with his high-school buddy.

Simon and I were corresponding about his relationship with Dilia. He said he wanted to marry her, but didn't know how to proceed. I chuckled, "First you have

to get engaged. You do that by presenting her with a ring and asking for her hand in marriage. If she says *yes*, you set the date.”

Simon got right on it. He wrote this on April 15:

Hello Mom, Dad and Zach, Well, yesterday was the big day. I officially proposed to Dilia and she said... YES!! Here are some pictures of us yesterday at Central Park where I proposed. I got down on one knee by a little pink tree among many large green ones. From now on every time, we go to Central Park, we can visit our *engagement tree*!! I love you all, Simon

Dilia wrote this to Kim a few weeks later:

Hi Mrs. Kim, Yesterday I finally got the wedding dress that I bought through eBay. It's so beautiful, I just love it. I need to get it altered and that's it. Thank you so much for your concern and caring and being with me through this process. This is definitely the one that I am going to wear, but thank you again for sending your dress. I will always keep yours and take good care of it. I would love to alter it and wear it in the future. Love, Dilia. P.S. On Saturday we're going to a Korean store to try and find a bouquet.

Kim constantly networked at SFSU. She volunteered to escort a group of ten professors from Hosei University around her campus and the city. Her kindness was reciprocated and the professors invited her to Japan. Kim was away from March 3 to 15, leading a symposium at Hosei and touring both Tokyo and Kyoto. She reported a wonderful reunion in Korea meeting old friends and visiting her hometown. It was a triumphant return for her.

In early May we drove north to Vichy Springs in Ukiah. Kim had always wanted to experience natural hot baths. She was disappointed, finding the muddy-sulfuric water unpleasant and stinky. She dubbed Vichy Springs 'Itchy Springs.'

I was growing frustrated that no pastor position appeared on the horizon. I was asking. (Why was there no answer?). I was seeking. (Why did I find nothing?) I was knocking. (Why was no door opened to me?) I did guest-preach every few weeks; at a Chinese Church in San Francisco; at a Korean Church in Monterey, and at the First Baptist Church of Middleton. As I reached for them, these positions seemed to melt away.

In nearby Sausalito, I visited a small Baptist church with a dozen in attendance. I thought this might be a ministry project for me. Perhaps, I could preach on Sundays and grow the flock. A female graduate from GGBTS who managed the services cooperated with me for a few weeks, but I figure she perceived me as a threat to her leadership. I didn't want to go where I was not welcome, and so continued to search for a pastor position.

At the same time, Kim and I were sponsoring a Christian writers' club, and once a month five people met in our living room to read poems and discuss book proposals. I composed *Psalm of the Doors* and read it to the book club:

How do you place yourself at the center of God's will? I've heard that there are doors that open and close which lead to the center of His will.

I see a door wide open leading to Africa, but upon examining the door-knob fingerprints I wonder: *Are they God's or my own?*

I struggle with a closed door that refuses to yield. Whose prints are on the latch? Did the grace of God close this door for my sake? Or did my own lack of faith seal it shut?

God, I want to be useful to your kingdom. I long to glorify You on the earth. I desire to be at the center of Your will.

Lord, I am a simple creature. Leave me a bread-crumbs trail. Sound the alarm bell when I arrive at the center of Your will.

Simon's wedding took place on May 27 in Millerton, New York. Kim and I flew out on May 24, driving a rental from Newark Liberty Airport to a country estate owned by Dilia's Aunt Gardenia.

We met Mr. and Mrs. Marquez from Venezuela as well as Dilia's two sisters from Florida along with their husbands and children. Simon had invited Danny Levenson as his best man and Zachary as his groomsman-singer. Jim McGuire—the best man at my own wedding—drove in from nearby Walpole, Massachusetts.

It was a joyous few days with twenty people hanging out at the big house. We held a walk-through practice in the living room on Thursday evening, then a full-scale rehearsal at the ceremony site near a pond on a wooden platform. As we practiced, a pair of white geese waddled onto the wood and squawked as we chased them off. Ike the dog followed Simon up the aisle.

The wedding took place on a bright and windy Saturday afternoon. The scene was pastoral with blue water, white clouds, and green fields. Participants walked about one-hundred steps from the front door to the pond. Attendance was not great with about fifty guests seated in folding chairs.

The first pair on the platform was the two mothers. Mrs. Marquez and Kim each lit a candle to symbolize two family lines which will merge into one. Kim wore a Korean gown for the first time in many years. The mothers then returned to sit in the folding chairs. The second group consisted of Simon the groom, Danny his best man, and myself the officiator.

The third group was the bride's younger sister and an art-school friend of Simon; and the fourth group was the bride's older sister and Simon's brother. As Zachary walked across the wooden planks, I wondered when his turn would come to be married.

The fifth group was the maid of honor, followed by little Gus the ring bearer, and Mariana the flower girl. The children did a good job of patiently walking, even though gusts blew most of the petals into the water.

Finally, came the bride holding the arm of her father. Mr. Marquez spoke little English, so I memorized a phrase in Spanish that translates as "Who gives this bride to be married?"

This processional included a few intruders. An old aunt of eighty-seven walked behind one of the couples, oblivious to the people ahead of her. A few people waved to her and she waved back. Then Gardenia strolled behind another couple. She said it took her a long time to make her hair just right. These two ladies were a source of on-stage joking.

When everyone stood in place, I introduced the couple to the assembly. Zachary sang a hymn: *The King of Love My Shepherd Is*. Then Dilia and Simon faced each other, exchanged vows then rings.



I spoke a few words then prayed for their future. After that, each took their own family candle and together lit the unity candle. I pronounced them man and wife, they kissed, and guests applauded. My second son was married. Hallelujah!

After the wedding, the pond, dock, flowers, and wedding arbor provided a wonderful photo backdrop for this attractive couple. Kim and I joined the

reception and I chatted with as many people as I could. Soon the big day was over except the afterglow of joyous smiles.

In the months that followed my son's wedding, I officiated at three more: Arnold and Jane, Sean and Anne; Drew and Lisa. All of these good people were friends of matchmaker Kim.

At San Quentin, I branched out on my own. Rather than signing in with Craig, I acquired my own Brown Card granting me unaccompanied access. The Baptist Seminary had inaugurated a program called CLD (Contextualized Leadership Development) and I taught the first course. My Greek lessons began with twelve students and shrunk to three. One of my drop-outs remarked, "I thought we were learning *about* Greek, not learning Greek."

One Saturday as I was walking from the San Quentin parking lot into the prison, Craig Singleton expressed an interest in joining my upcoming mission trip to Africa. That made four of us. One of Kim's Korean friends—known as the Flower Lady—volunteered her twenty-year-old son to accompany us as well. Ted Kim increased our group size to five.

Kim and I traveled to Portland in June. We had long wanted to stop in Ashland to attend the summer Shakespeare Festival. We stayed a single night in a Holiday Inn, shopped around the funky city center, and beheld a contemporary version of *King Lear*: "How sharper than a serpent's tooth is a thankless child." Kim spent a few days in Turner with her sisters and visited her mother's grave. I talked with Jeanne in Canby about Africa, helping her to prepare a packing list.

On the Sunday before CASA Mission 2006, Kim and I attended the Chinese Church in San Francisco. After delays and confusion, my name was put before the English ministry congregation of about twenty young people. This was not a stellar pastor position, yet I failed to muster the two-thirds needed to gain the role. The older Chinese speakers were disappointed that the young folks had rejected me. I think it had to do with my traditional approach to worship and my Korean connections.

Before Mission 2006, I contacted Jack and Barbara, inviting them to stay in our house. They agreed, but could not arrive in Mill Valley until after we had departed for Africa. I left the house key with a book-club friend named Vienna. Paco stayed with my old friend Jannette.

Jeanne flew into San Francisco with Frank and Lelia on Saturday, July 1. All three stayed at the house a few days shopping, sight-seeing, and preparing for the mission ahead. On Monday Frank drove Jeanne and I to catch the red-eye to New York. (Kim, Craig, and Ted would catch up with us at Heathrow).

Simon and Dilia met us in Manhattan and helped carry our heavy bags to their apartment in Brooklyn. It was July 4 and the four of us went to Coney Island.

The highlight was Nathan's hot dog eating contest, which Joey Chestnut won once again. On July 5 we took the subway around the city to the Statue of Liberty, Wall Street, and Twin Towers site. That evening we took the red-eye to London.

Our three fellow missionaries caught up with Jeanne and me and we five toured London on a double-decker bus. Then I caught my third red-eye to Entebbe. Gordon met us at the airport and looked at Jeanne in her white pillbox hat. He decided she looked like Queen Elizabeth and thereafter referred to Jeanne as the Queen of England. We visited the Good Samaritan Orphanage, entertained by children dancing and singing. In the evening we spoke at Gordon's church.

After spending the night in Kampala, we began the twelve-hour bus ride to Butare. Jeanne was amazed at how many passengers the driver could pack into a bus; also, at how I was able to sleep through the ordeal. Paul Gasigi met us in Butare and we all slept well that first night in Rwanda.

Jeanne kept a journal of this mission and described the place like this:

The house is bi-level. It has a very nice-looking office, facing the street in the front, with a door to the outside. Then there is a full bath. It needed some repairs that I understand are getting done. It is very large. Then there are three large bedrooms and a storage room. On the bottom floor there is one-half bath, a large sitting room (we had ninety mamas and children there for morning devotions) with a fireplace and windows overlooking the backyard. There is a fairly large kitchen that leads to a courtyard where the cooking is done on three charcoal burners.

The backyard has papaya trees, banana trees and is landscaped very nicely. It also has an outhouse, used by village people who come for meetings. The door off the sitting room leads to a large cement porch that can be used for meetings and overlooks the hillside. It is a beautiful setting. It is a stone house with a stone fence around the property with a metal locking gate to the street. It is on the main highway to the university.

Sunday was hectic. I preached at Paul's church in the morning, attended a Christian rally in the afternoon, and all five of us shared the evening meal at Paul's home. Franc told me Butare had just welcomed three famous visitors. Joyce Meyer, Bill Clinton, and Bill Gates had all passed through town the previous week. I observed, "It seems like your country is getting spiritual, political, and financial assistance."

On Monday, Robina introduced us to the Morning Mamas. These were women who stopped by the house on their way to the work fields. Most toiled a full day for about two dollars. Jeanne called them *diggers*. They were in the house singing, and

praying from about 5:30 to 6:30. They needed to arrive before dawn in order to begin work at daylight. On this morning about fifty laborers dropped in.

Each of us had our assignments for the work week. Kim visited the university to set up a week of technology classes. She worked out of the Center for Instructional Technology.

Craig was a professional guitar teacher and dozens of students flocked to him at the house. Ted knew how to strum so served as his assistant. Jeanne worked with Robina, leading a Women's Seminar. A young woman named Scovia served as her interpreter. My sister used *Beauty from Ashes* as her study guide. She told me, "All over the world, women have the same prayer concerns: abusive husbands, wayward children, and money woes."

I led three seminars at three places. My pastor seminar met at the Assembly of God church in the morning. The PowerPoint was titled "Seven Heavenly Letters" taken from Revelation, chapters two and three. In the afternoon, Craig and I taught from *Experiencing God* (like we did at San Quentin). And in the evenings, I taught students in the university auditorium about Sexual Integrity. I asked a young lady to stand upon a desk with a man standing at her feet below. I urged her, "Now, let's see if you can lift up this guy to meet your level."

On Friday, we received unexpected gifts. A missionary in Kigali had asked Franc if he would distribute Christmas boxes sent by Samaritan's Purse. This was satisfying to me, because I had packed such boxes for Operation Christmas Child while attending Tiburon Baptist Church. We watched as one shoebox was opened by a group of six children. Rather than one child getting the entire box of gifts, each of the six selected one—a pen, or toy car, or fuzzy doll. And they were leaping with joy. I thought, *how culturally appropriate this is! One Rwandan child could never hog a whole box of goodies, while a second child around him had none.*

On Saturday we headed to Burundi for a three-day adventure. We visited Immaculate and Pastor Jeremy, staying at the Swedish compound. On Sunday morning, we split up two-by-two to visit three different churches. It was always a mark of prestige for local churches to have Muzungu (Western) visitors. We rejoined to have a feast on the shores of Lake Tanganyika. Ted said, "I'm not going in there. Alligators and hippos!"

Jeanne wanted to see wild animals so Immaculate brought us to a reptile zoo. We witnessed a crocodile chomp a guinea pig. Ted and I each held a large boa constrictor across our shoulders. It was odd to feel this pulsating, writhing, cold-blooded mass. Kim thought I was brave or crazy—or both.

On Monday we visited a few churches and the central market. Our friends huddled around us to ward off pick-pockets. Then it was time to return to Rwanda. I told my team, "We must get to the frontier before dark, otherwise we'll be stuck

here.” We stopped along the way to see distant hippos in the wild. Because of that side trip we were almost stuck at the barricades. With Immaculate’s pleading we made it across the border. *Thank you, Lord.*

We stayed in Butare a few days more. The five of us presented our adopted Batwa tribe with five goats. I have a wonderful video of Craig, Robina, and Franc dancing with pigmies. We also accompanied Kim to the office of the university president. She spoke:

I have been to Rwanda, Burundi, and Uganda every summer since 1998, and worked with churches, schools, and non-profits. This year I am here as a Fulbright Senior Specialist. This year’s trip was special because I could merge my professional work with my heart work. Thank you for allowing me to give three faculty development workshops at the NUR on *Teaching and Learning with Technology*.

Jeanne really wanted to see monkeys before we left Rwanda. We walked into the university arboretum, but all we found were clusters of Christian students sitting and praying under the big trees. I told Jeanne, “What a parable of Africa. You were seeking wildlife and you found spiritual life.”

We then began the long drive back to Entebbe. We stopped a night in Kigali, then paused at the equator for pictures. Jeanne was intrigued by the water that swirled counter-clockwise. We paused at Gordon’s college, then spent the night in his hometown of Jinja.

Our team really enjoyed the crashing waves of the Nile River as it flooded into Lake Victoria. The flocks of bats were amazing. I remember going on a special boda-boda (motor bike) ride with Gordon. The driver held the handle bars, Gordon held the driver, and I clung on the far back, clinging to Gordon. We three were zipping down a dirt trail when we came upon a dozen long-horned cows. It felt as if I existed in a video game, as the driver darted right and left to avoid the sharp horns. Our journey was over all too soon and we were on the way home.

We stopped in London with a three-hour layover, then on to New York for an eight-hour stop. Back in California, Jack and Barbara were in the house. We shared our mission experience with them and they told us of their California adventures, then drove their rental car to the airport. The next afternoon, I dropped Jeanne at SFO for her short hop home.

Kim and I began to unwind from our overstimulation. We rested several days at home, then sheltered a weekend at Prayer Mountain. I sorted Africa pictures, and shot new ones of the many flowers, ponds, and numerous rabbits. Kim spoke of the *Macys Effect*. She explained that for one month following an African mission, she feels convicted by the Holy Spirit not to waste money on frivolous desires.

During the first week of August, I received a phone call from a person named Jane Thornell. She introduced herself as head of the pastor selection committee from the First Southern Baptist Church of San Lorenzo. She asked if I were still seeking a position as pastor. I said I was. She asked if she could call back in a few days when I could take part in a conference call with the entire committee. That follow-up phone interview went well.

We agreed that I would guest preach in a few weeks. My sister Jeanne was in town on August 20 for an Africa mission reunion. She drove from Mill Valley with us for the forty-five-minute trip to San Lorenzo. The white-clad church was quaint, built in 1870, resplendent with steeple, bell, and stained glass. San Lorenzo was an unincorporated section of Alameda County sandwiched between San Leandro and Hayward.

My sermon was “The Lawyer’s Question” taken from Luke 10:29. I stuck around after the morning service and met with the pastor’s committee. Then I went with a group of about twenty people to Baker’s Square which was just across the street. Kim and I got to mix and laugh with this congregation. I learned two things. The previous pastor quit in disgrace after trying to fire all five of his deacons. That was about a year earlier. I also learned the house located next to the church was designated a parsonage. Becoming pastor meant relocating to San Lorenzo.

I was invited to visit on September 3 and to preach *in-view-of-a-call* to be pastor. My topic was Africa. I wanted my potential congregation to know that I was a missionary at heart. The search committee was unanimous in recommending me to be pastor. They said that my name would be up for a vote on September 24.

After the morning service on that Sunday, the entire congregation met for a business meeting to vote on me as pastor. While this was transpiring, Kim and I walked at nearby Lake Chabot. Jane called my cell phone about 2:00 p.m. with the news that I was elected to be their pastor. The vote was 47 to 2. I felt joy and release—like a long journey had come to a successful end.

## Chapter 23

# ACTUALIZED

September 2006 to July 2010  
San Lorenzo and Hayward California

*I have become all things to all men so that by  
all possible means I might save some.  
I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that  
I may share in its blessings.  
(1 Corinthians 9:22-23)*

The potential so long dormant within me had finally become actual. I had become lead pastor at First Baptist Church in San Lorenzo. The steepled building and mature congregation seemed to be my perfect fit.

Kim was an accomplished professor at San Francisco State University and our two sons were out in the world pursuing their dreams. For thirty-three months Kim and I were at the top of our game. Life had never been so sweet and so rewarding.

### SEPTEMBER 2006

Kim and I were both delighted that First Southern Baptist Church of San Lorenzo had selected me as pastor. I immediately signed a contract with a start date of October 1. I did have a few previous commitments—to preach elsewhere on a few Sundays and to travel to Portland.

Simon and Dilia flew into town on September 27 and the four of us headed north in the C-RV. I had made reservations at Crater Lake and we spent a wonderful day at the lodge, walking along the spectacular caldera rim. The next night we stayed at Hyun Hee's house in Turner and laid flowers on Halmoni's grave in Salem.

The big event—and purpose for the travel—was a formal reception for Simon and Delia. This was an opportunity for all relatives who could not make it to the wedding to greet the newlyweds. It also served as a mini-family reunion. At

Frank's house in Vancouver the couple cut a sheet cake, received gifts, and mixed with my family.

Joshua, Zachary, and Simon played croquet in the back yard. Jeanne, Charlotte, and Eileen practiced the old Polish custom of passing a shoe from person-to-person stuffing it with cash for the bride. A second reception was held at Pam's house in Wood Village and a third at Jeanne's home in Canby. Simon and Dilia flew home from Portland while we drove back to Mill Valley, ready to begin a new life of ministry in San Lorenzo.

Kim and I decided to rent our beloved Mill Valley home and move into the church parsonage. This was a sacrifice, especially for my wife. The structures were of comparable size, but we loved our scenic hillside location and had considered living in Marin County for many years to come. Our new plan called for us to rent the house for a few years then encourage Simon and Dilia to move in.

When we returned from Portland on October 2, I began transporting our belongings one carload at a time. I had considered moving my Bible into the house first, but without thought, I kicked the large exercise ball into the empty garage, it becoming our first possession to enter the parsonage, 11501 Usher Street.

October 3 represented my first Sunday as church pastor. The setting was traditional. To my front were twelve rows of wooden pews with a capacity of about 120. About seventy people were present that first day. I spoke from a raised platform behind the pulpit. A communion table stood to my front featuring a large open Bible. To my left was a piano played by Joyce Thornburg and to my right an organ played by Jean Johnson. A robed choir of a dozen sang in the space behind me with a baptismal further back. Light streamed in through eight stained-glass windows. From the far rear my message was projected onto an overhead screen. I felt at home. This enclosure became my new preaching arena.

Shauna Shoptaw was a fantastic worship leader and my four deacons supported me whole-heartedly. My church office consisted of an outer room for Caryl Shaw, the church secretary, and an inner office reserved for my use. My personal space included a private restroom and shower. I installed bookshelves into a large closet for my theological library. I could not have been more pleased with my surroundings.

On October 12, I took pictures of our Marin house—inside and out. Kim advertised the property for rent on Craig's List for \$2900 per month. About a dozen people dropped by to look, but we got no takers.

I rented a small U-Haul truck to move loads of boxes into the parsonage. Church members with pick-ups helped transport furniture. The process was slow, my commute was long, but we were in no hurry to abandon our long-time home.

Finally, with the help of two deacons, I loaded up the bedroom furniture. Our first night together in the parsonage was Friday, November 3.

On November 5, the church honored me and Kim with an inaugural service. Lyman Alexander, head of the Baptist Association, welcomed me to the East Bay. Jim Walker, Valerie, and two daughters joined the celebration. A church-full of strangers was transforming into a congregation of friends.

I was committed to visit Jack in Texas, understanding his health was precarious. I wanted to make up for lost time. For too many years my older brother had not been a part of my life. For five days Kim and I communed with Jack and Barbara, reviving old memories and generating new ones.

When we returned to California our Mill Valley house remained vacant. We decided to spruce up the place by painting the walls and installing a kitchen countertop. We also reduced the rent to \$2400 per month. The house was finally occupied on December 1, concluding sixty days of transition.

I began to compose a Church Newsletter and mail it out on the first of every month. As my first article I wrote *Trophies in the Attic*.

I found it a challenge letting go of my old residence in Mill Valley and moving into the church parsonage. Our old place held fifty years of accumulated memories. The large attic contained boxes filled with a thousand little things. I looked through bags, suitcases, boxes, and bookshelves full of my old stuff, my wife's cast-offs, and left-behinds from our two sons. The attic served as a kind of limbo for personal objects that were no longer useful but not yet useless.

I spent days emptying out limbo. I ran across long-forgotten college papers (keep), broken telephones (toss out), and old books (donate to Goodwill). I was surprised at the number of old plastic trophies. It seemed like the only time I looked at these objects was when I moved them from place to place.

I saw trophies from high school when I ran track. I saw church and boy scout awards. I saw plaques from twenty years served in the army. Why did I hang on to all this junk? Many of these trophies were made of ugly gold plastic. I would never display such trifles. Why did I retain them in limbo? I suspect that my old prizes offered a kind of security. I could cling to them if my self-worth flagged.

There is an old Christian hymn with the phrase "lay my trophies down". I didn't understand those words in my childhood, but now I do. Worldly trophies collect dust and rust. Last week I threw a dozen into the dumpster. The time has come to seek the imperishable trophies only God can award.

Our church was the meeting place for the association pastor breakfast. Two faithful ladies prepared coffee, eggs, toast, and hash browns every Thursday morning. I became the host of this function with about eight local Baptist pastors in attendance. We shared our lives and prayers. I got to know these fellow laborers well.

In December I drove up to Portland to touch bases with Frank and Lelia. They had volunteered to travel with me to Butare to help with the “Inter-University Great Lakes Regional Conference 2007.” We discussed this first winter mission and the organization of Come & See Rwanda (CASR), the daughter organization of Come & See Africa (CASA). I told Frank I was bringing along five flags representing the five nations participating: Rwanda, Uganda, Congo, Burundi, and Tanzania. Lelia was in contact with Amon who now lived in Portland and operated a grade school in Butare.

Back in San Lorenzo, I was in full Christmas mode. A group of revelers went house-to-house caroling to shut-ins. Shauna held a church cantata for which I was the narrator. We decorated the steeple with lights, and the parsonage with a flashing reindeer.

I preached a sermon series using manger scene items as props. Week one was the empty table when I spoke of the prophecies; Week two the manger only; week three angels and shepherds; week four Mary and Joseph; and I introduced baby Jesus on week five, Christmas eve. I asked a child to bring each piece to the front as I explained its significance.

Zachary flew out for the holidays, participating in the events of Christmastide. We were happy to host him in our parsonage. As a Christmas gift, Kim presented him with the title to her Oldsmobile and he drove our nine-year-old car back to the East Coast.

I picked up Frank and Lelia at the Oakland airport on December 29. They were in town one night before Kim drove the three of us to SFO. Frank and I carried along conference material while Lelia packed one hundred pounds of children’s books and vegetable seeds.

## 2007

Kim dropped us off at SFO on December 30 for our thirteen-day mission. We flew Ethiopian Air the entire route to Kigali, arriving twenty hours after departure. After a night of recovery in Kigali, we greeted the Assembly of God church in Butare at a Sunday morning service. On New Year’s Day, we attended a special service with Robina at her Life Transformation Church. Each of us introduced ourselves and spoke a few words of greeting.

We hung out at the Christian Fellowship house enjoying the company of Franc, Robina, Gordon, Immaculate, and Jeremy. Every morning before dawn we met with the Morning Mamas for worship, prayer, and refreshment. Frank and Lelia loved to gather the raggedy children around them.

While Robina was escorting Lelia from place to place, Franc Murenzi helped Frank and me with our “Inter-University Great Lakes Regional Conference.” Under our five flags, we gathered twenty young people from the National University of Rwanda, six from Uganda with Gordon, five from Burundi with Immaculate, five from Congo with Phillip, and one from Tanzania.

We met in the university auditorium for four sessions—Tuesday through Friday. This Christian conference was as much an opportunity for students to mix with peers from other nationalities as it was to learn theology. Frank taught about the birth of the church from the book of Acts and I taught about the First and Great Commandment (love God) and the second commandment (love others). We also gave testimonies—along with Lelia—and sponsored a singing contest with each nationality performing on stage.

Frank visited the university dental office thinking he might return to Rwanda for professional dentistry. He ruled that out. Out of five chairs, only one functioned; supplies were minimal, and competent assistants non-existent. Lelia visited Amon’s organization, *Living Faith Ministry*, not far from the Christian Fellowship House. She dropped off her large suitcase of books.

At the end of the conference, we headed to Burundi for a short three-day sojourn. The Swedish compound was a great place to unwind. I recorded the ever-present ambient sound of twenty species of tropical birds.

We made our rounds to Lake Tanganyika, the central market, Immaculate’s home with five of her sisters, Jeremy’s home with his seven children, followed by his New Life Church on Sunday. It was a lot to pack in during our seventy-two-hour stay.

We spent a day back in Butare where we handed out goats to the Batwa, then we returned to Kigali on January 11; then to London and on to San Francisco. My brother and sister-in-law enjoyed the missionary work. After getting their feet wet in the waters of Africa, they both pledged to return for a longer swim.

I published my final article for the Korea Times in January titling it, “And Now the Necklace”:

Everything has a lifespan. For this newspaper column, *Through American Eyes*, it’s eight years. That’s right. After 195 appearances, this column is drawing to a close. My life is moving into directions that make continued writing difficult. As a church pastor, my focus is increasingly on church matters and the needs of my

congregation. Before I sign out, I want to thank my wife, Kim Hyun Deok, and our long-time column editor, Jung Hee Kwon.

I look back at each of my columns as a single pearl. My project will not be complete until I see all 195 pearls strung together into a beautiful necklace. Therefore, you may see these articles again—offered as a single publication. My book may be advertised in these pages. One last thing, and I wish that my voice was loud enough for each of you to hear, “THANK YOU, God bless you, and good-bye.”

I was striving to find activities that my congregation of mostly older Christians would enjoy. A popular event turned out to be a Valentine party. On a Wednesday evening, about twelve couples joined together to celebrate their love for each other. The highlight turned out to be taking lovebird pictures on the two red-padded dignitary chairs. We carried them from the church stage to the fellowship hall, setting them side-by-side. I photographed each royal couple and distributed large-sized color prints at the next Sunday service.

The Balsley family had long been associated with First Southern. Young Michael Balsley grew up in our Sunday Schools, then went on to join the U.S. Army. He was killed by a road side bomb while serving in Afghanistan. I visited his mom and dad to comfort them as best I could.

Our church was packed to overflowing on February 17. I was in charge of the ceremony and the Balsley family came early to sit up front. I heard Mr. Balsley shout out, “It’s just not right.”

I was startled and looked around asking myself *What’s not right?* Was his son’s military portrait misaligned? Was the music bad? When he repeated the words, I understood their meaning. It was the tragic death of his twenty-three-year-old son that was not right. I had already officiated at the funerals of two elderly women. At neither funeral did anyone say “it’s not right.” It seemed so wrong that a child should be buried before his parent.

I was busy in the Spring re-organizing the church. I wrote detailed bylaws, defining FSBCSL as a council-led church. The pastor chaired the council, meeting with the trustee, treasurer, head deacon, clerk, and chairs of personnel and education. At council meetings, we discussed business, facilities, programs, and policies. The new bylaws were passed at a business meeting in May.

I also reformed the deacon board to function as spiritual overseers. As Christ’s “under-shepherd”, I wanted every sheep cared for and none overlooked. Every

congregant was assigned to a deacon-led team. Al and Jane Thornell led the Blue Team, Ken and Barbara Day the Red Team, Ken Hillard the Green Team, Mike and Char Fortner the Gold Team, and John and Roberta King the Silver Team. (Kim and I joined the Silver Team). At deacon meetings, we prayed for our flock, mentioning each person by name. This separation of spiritual from business functioned well.

On February 19, Kim and I agreed to dog-sit a Korean jin-do-ge for a couple that was going to Korea. Lilly was in the house for six days when something bad happened. I wrote about it to Zachary and Simon:

I feel so bad this evening. I let my bird down. The dog killed him. Paco had been in the cage ever since Lilly arrived in the house. It looked like we might adopt her, so I put the cage up extra high and let Paco sit on the top rung next to the ceiling.

Lilly found a way to startle Paco and the bird with clipped wings fluttered to the ground. I was only a few feet away, heard the squawks, raced to the dog, but it was too late. I think the dog only got one chomp, but that was enough. Your mom got so mad. She yelled at the dog and threw her out of the house. We will not be cruel, but Lilly will stay in the garage until the couple returns from Korea.

I do feel bad. Paco was my companion for fifteen years. He was a pain at times. He pooped on my shoulder a lot, but life is emptier without him.  
~ Dad

In March, Kim and I traveled east to see our two sons. We planned to split the days between Zachary in D.C. and Simon in New York. We hung out in Simon's Brooklyn apartment for two nights, walking Dilia's dogs (Ike and Stella), visiting Simons friends and his art space.

Kim and I took the train from Grand Central to Union Station in D.C. where Zachary met us. We toured a few of the Smithsonian museums before going to his rented room on Montana Street. Zachary now owned our old Oldsmobile and he drove us to the Catholic University of America where he was working toward his PhD. We also checked out the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, the largest Catholic church in the USA.

We then went to Alexandria where Kim met up with some long lost "cousins". These were old friends of the family from Seoul. The next day we stopped at the fabulous Air and Space Museum then headed back to Brooklyn. I set foot in my last of fifty states, Delaware. It lay about half way between my two sons. The "First State" proved to be my last state.

The next day was March 23 and marked our thirty-third wedding anniversary. We celebrated at a fancy restaurant in Manhattan; five of us Foremans along with Dilia's sister and brother-in-law. Because he lived in Brooklyn, I told Simon it was my "toidy-toid."

Spring was a busy season. We paid a visit to Jim Walker's magnificent home in Granite Bay. I marveled at their gadgets. Jim explained something called WIFI which allowed each of them to hook up their gadgets to the Internet without wires. I was amazed.

Our church hosted a sculptor-preacher and a missionary from India. Zachary dropped by the house, as did Amon and Erica. I also spent time in Mountain View with Korean friends, officiated over one wedding, and baptized four. I felt engaged in the life of my church.

On April 22, I began a six-month sermon series called "The Mountaintop Teaching of Jesus". It was a verse-by-verse exposition of the Sermon on the Mount taken from the Gospel of Matthew, chapters five, six, and seven. I learned more from this in-depth study than anyone in the pews. I recognized expository teaching as my true gift and calling.

In addition to this Sunday morning service, I was reciting and teaching from the Gospel of John on Sunday evenings; On Wednesday—fellowship evening—I spoke for about fifteen minutes concerning the distinctives of Baptists. On Thursday morning, I hosted the Association Pastor's breakfast; On Saturday I taught theology classes at San Quentin State Prison; Once a month on a Thursday evening, a group of us traveled to Oakland Rescue Mission, where we ministered to the homeless; and once a month on Monday afternoon we met at the Driftwood Healthcare Center, where we sang and preached to a few dozen shut-ins who were confined to wheelchairs. I had never felt more at the center of God's will.

As June arrived, I began to prepare for my ninth trek to Africa. Our church sponsored a Parking Lot Sale with all proceeds going to CASA. For a week we stuffed donated items into the fellowship hall; furniture, clothes, housewares, a myriad of odd items. On June second, we held a gigantic sale with our treasure-junk displayed on folding tables and blankets. I stuck around from morning to evening. Our total haul was \$986. It seemed like a lot, but it required a week of effort and I recognized it was no way to underwrite a foreign mission.

For a few months, Kim had been looking for a new car. Since December she had been humbly commuting to SFSU on BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit). She was undecided between a Honda, Toyota, and a Kia. When I told her "Kim Is

Awesome” she purchased the Korean car for just over twenty thousand. For the next three years, that full-sized vehicle was her black beauty.

The news wasn’t good for Jack. He was diagnosed with Acute Myelogenous Leukemia. He checked into the M.D. Anderson Cancer center in Houston to consider a blood and marrow transplant. Each of his five siblings—including me—sent blood samples to the clinic. Frank showed the closest match and so made arrangements to travel to Texas for the procedure.

On June 27 Kim and I set forth on our Africa mission 2007 with Don Comfort and Nathan Nam. Don was an acquaintance from Tiburon Baptist—a bit older than me—and Nate was a twenty-year-old friend of Mrs. Kim, the flower lady. These two accompanied us as mission-tourists, without specified duties in Rwanda.

We arrived in Kigali on June 28 and settled in with our normal routine of morning mamas and afternoon seminars. I taught about church leadership and the Sermon on the Mount, re-purposing my Baptist Church sermons. I also preached in a few churches and held a few rallies at the soccer stadium. Kim taught on campus again in the Instructional Technology department.

Don took along a dozen old film cameras and taught a two-day class in photography. With digital photography so prevalent, especially in Africa, we struggled to find a place to develop the negatives into prints. Nathan hung out with college students and children, mostly on his own. Both of our fellow-travelers took hundreds of photos and explored on their own.

We accompanied Don and Nathan into Burundi for our three-day national tour, visiting both Immaculate and Jeremy in Bujumbura. We returned to Rwanda for a few days, then crossed the frontier into Bukavu, Congo.

I noted the place was more chaotic this time with AK-47-toting soldiers on the streets. I warned my mission team not to snap photographs of soldiers, but Don could not listen. His camera was confiscated. We were fortunate just to have his film removed and camera returned. They demanded all his exposed film, but our Congo escort was able to bribe his way out of the situation by Don paying the soldier the value of the film. Once again, I recognized my calling as a missionary and not as a baby-sitting tour guide.

Kim and I determined to build our future ministry house at the end of Cyarwa Road. The big empty lot was only two hundred steps from the back door of the university. I took pictures of the overgrown property, but Franc said I needed to be more circumspect. Locals should not know we were seeking that land. Our interest might attract speculators.

The highlight of this mission was constructing a widow’s house. About twenty college students participated in digging ditches, implanting local timbers, weaving thatch, and installing iron sheets. I have a video of Nathan in his bare feet mixing

mud for the thatch walls. David Nahayo supervised this work, celebrating its completion with song and prayer. The final touch was the delivery of three goats to the widow and her two young sons.

When we arrived back in the States on July 13, a message was waiting for me. Frank was traveling to Houston in ten days and wanted to know if I would accompany him. I considered it a privilege to be with my two brothers; one giving blood and one receiving it. Jack reported he had an eighty-percent chance of recovery if all went well.

I wrote this story for the church newsletter about my car ride to the Oakland Airport:

Already late for my flight to Houston, I see a river of red brake lights. Traffic slows on the Nimitz and then stops. I switch on the local news. Soon I hear, "Major backup on the northbound lanes of I-880 near the airport. There are reports of a jack-knifed big-rig."

After forty minutes my car crawls past the accident scene. A big-rig blocks the two right lanes and under its back wheels a crumpled minivan still smolders. I think of the inconvenience. *How will I explain to Jack that I missed this flight?*

I finally park my car and sprint to the counter. The attendant tells me I'm too late and I have to book a later flight. I gripe to myself, *Why me, God? Why am I having such a bad day?*

I settle in front of a TV for a two hour wait. A local newscaster reports, "In the East Bay this morning, there was a deadly car crash on the Nimitz Freeway." I see video footage taken from a helicopter. I squint searching for my white C-RV. The account continues, "A woman and her young son died at the scene." I see video of fire trucks dousing the wreckage.

Contrition fills my heart. *Oh God, forgive me. So what if my flight is delayed a few hours? I stepped into my car and I stepped out again. It's good to be alive and to take in the breath that you have given me.*

I stayed in Houston for only two days while Frank was passing blood to his brother. I spoke with Jack, asking him how he was enjoying my collection of books-on-tape. He told me he was too distracted to focus, but he promised to play them while resting. I later got this email from him:

Chris ~ Thank you so much for your love and concern. I am now listening to your box of tapes and I promise to take good care of them. You know Brother, you and I are a lot more alike than we are different.

I also want to thank the members of your church for their prayer and many of them have also sent me cards. Please thank them and let them know I can feel their prayers lifting me up as I go through this process. Also, I feel much better than I should be feeling. So, God bless them all. ~ Brother Jack.

One of our churches big annual events turned out to be Vacation Bible School (VBS). We ordered boxes of merchandise from Lifeway Bookstore, complete with theme, posters, music and associated paraphernalia. Their annual programs were great and their theme music kid-appropriate. First Southern sponsored VBS 2007 with “Game Day Central” as the theme. Shauna served as the singing cheerleader and Jane coordinated behind the scenes. A dozen members worked hands-on with children and about fifty youngsters passed through our doors from July 29 to August 3.

My wife began to write a weekly column for the monthly newsletter calling it “Kim’s Corner”. While my columns tended to be theological, hers were inspirational. Kim wrote about the Wednesday evening fellowships, our missions to Africa, and about her Korean family encounters. Kim also discovered Korean dramas that streamed over the internet. Sometimes when the house was very quiet, I’d look for my wife and find her curled in a corner chair, tears in her eyes, watching “K-dramas” on her laptop.

An annual event was the Labor Day BBQ hosted by Jean Johnson in her Oakland back yard. A few dozen folks would gather as this African-American lady served and fussed over her many relatives and church friends.

About a dozen of us regularly went to the Open Door Mission in downtown Oakland. Ken Hillard usually preached while Jean Johnson regaled the down-and-outs with her jazzy piano. Al Thornell often led in singing his particular rendition of “Love Lifted Me.”

To facilitate ministry transport, I encouraged the church to purchase a fifteen-passenger bus with handicap lift. We bought a second-hand vehicle for about \$10,000 and I committed to drive it. That was a stretch for me. Driving was not my gift. I was not mechanical and had poor hand-eye coordination. I wrote this pastor column about my experience:

Out of all my recent achievements, the one I feel most proud about is my California Driver’s License-Class B Commercial-Passenger Endorsement. When I glibly volunteered to be a church bus driver last March, I didn’t realize what was ahead for me.

First, I had to pass the physical exam. On that I did well. Next there was the DMV written test. I studied the book but still I was unprepared. I faced three

separate fill-in-the-dot tests: one was the basic rules of the road, the second was the Commercial Class B, and third was the passenger endorsement. On my first try, I passed the first two but not the third. The nice lady at the DMV let me take that test a second time and I passed by one point.

Next came the driving test. This challenge also came in three parts: a pre-inspection, a skills test, and an on-the-road-test. On my first try, I failed the pre-inspection miserably. I could only miss seven and the inspector stopped counting at twenty. I didn't even get to drive out of the parking lot. I rescheduled the test six weeks into the future.

For the second driving test, I really studied the DMV booklet and endlessly practiced my parallel parking. I placed myself under a lot of stress. I praised God when I passed the pre-inspection test and then began to drive the bus. When I finally pulled back into the DMV testing station, I didn't know what to expect. Finally, the tester smiled and said, "Congratulations, you have your Class B license".

I thanked her and spoke a silent prayer. It's a blessing and a minor miracle that I can now drive the people of God in our nice-looking church bus.

A church like mine always looked for opportunities to gather for old-time fun. In October we held a talent night complete with old ladies warbling, off-key singers drown out by karaoke, and purveyors of stale jokes. Some genuine talent also emerged. On the last day of the month, we gathered for our annual harvest festival where Kim and I showed up in African regalia.

About this time, I was approached by a Korean pastor who was looking to rent space for his congregation of thirty. After a talk with my deacons, we signed a lease with Pastor Han and his Peace congregation. They met on Sundays at noon and we did not interact much. Kim was our church liaison. After a while, Pastor Han occupied an office on the second floor. Kim often dropped by the church on Sunday afternoons to speak Korean and enjoy comfort food.

Kim and I traveled to the Northwest over Thanksgiving 2007. We visited Hyun Hee and Dong Hyun in their grocery stores, then drove up to Longview for a visit with Eileen and finally to see Charlotte in Kelso. We stayed a few nights with Frank and I spoke at his church on Sunday. Rob Winkler—his pastor—and Frank Miller, a church elder, committed to travel with me to Africa over the new year. Lelia was also up for a return visit. Frank had wanted to accompany us, but with his new dental practice, two weeks was too long for him to be away from his profession.

The family also talked about Jack. His health at M.D. Anderson in Houston was taking a turn for the worse. We heard from Barbara that he had developed graft versus host disease. His body had rejected Frank's bone marrow graft. I also learned that Don Zelen had suffered a serious heart attack and was living with Don John.

December was a busy month of church activity: cantata, Christmas party, *hanging of the greens*, and a Zachary visit. Our son treated Kim and me to a performance of Nutcracker in San Francisco. In the midst of all the cheer there was depressing news. On December 21 Barbara sent this email:

Hi Guys ~ The doctors and I agreed to transfer Jack to Dallas. Jack wants to be close to friends and family. He sleeps a lot and is not eating or drinking. We are trying to find a room in a hospital that can treat him and I will let you know where he will be as soon as I find out.

And the next day this message came:

I am bringing my love, my life, my soul mate back home to hopefully see everybody again. Thank you for all your prayers and support. This is what Jack wants and the doctors recommend. He put up a hell of a fight.

On my birthday, December 24, I boarded a jet plane and headed off on my tenth mission to Africa. I anticipated this mission with both delight and dread. I looked forward to meeting my friends, but I did not want to be out of the country if Jack passed away. Lelia, Rob Winkler, and Frank Miller accompanied me on Africa Winter Mission 2007-08. Two days after I departed to Africa, Kim flew to New York City to house-sit and dog-sit for Simon and Dilia, while they spent a week in Florida.

My mission team flew into Kampala and made tourist stops in Jinja and Mbarara. Franc and Gordon joined us as tour guides. We also paused at the equator for a photoshoot and at Gordon's orphanage to watch the girls dance to the rhythm of Ugandan drums.

The mission team arrived in Butare on Saturday, December 29, a day of recovery and preparation. On Sunday we split into two teams. Rob preached at the Assembly of God while Franc assisted. Lelia and I went to the Transformation Church with Robina as my interpreter. I loved gazing into the faces of those vibrant Christian brothers and sisters. They were so excited and honored to host Western missionaries.

During the night, I received an e-mail from Frank. He told me he had flown to Dallas to be with Barbara and Jack during the last days. He reported that Jack could not speak and was close to death.

Monday, December 31, was sandwiched between Sunday worship and New Year's celebration. The morning mamas did drop by and I assigned Elder Frank Miller to lead that group in devotions. He drank it up! Because of his age and white beard, the Rwandese called him "Moses". On the last morning together, Moses

presented each of the hard-working women with a new iron hoe-head. I explained to him that mamas were able to make their own wooden handles from local bamboo.

On New Year's Eve we visited Africa Mission Alliance—Amon's reformulated organization. Lelia presented them with more books. Franc and Paul had been investigating our corner lot. We could purchase it, but it would be a slow process. Rob thought the land looked good and we moved forward to procure it for \$16,000,

## 2008

In the evening we all gathered at the Assembly of God to pray in the new year with fervor. After midnight, we missionaries re-collected at Paul's home, not far from CASR.

About 12:30 a.m. Franc informed me that Zachary had just telephoned him. The satellite signal was weak but the meaning was clear. I had previously instructed my son to contact me only in the event of Jack's death. After a few hours of trying to connect with people in America, the meaning was confirmed. Jack had died on December 31, 2007.

I was able to speak with Frank and Barbara in Dallas. They insisted I should stay in Africa to complete my mission. Barbara requested a memorial service on Jack's birthday, March 15. That became our plan.

I excused myself from the festivities and walked the few steps to our mission house. Jack was dead! For some reason I had to repeat those words out loud to make them real to my ears. "Jack is dead. Jack is dead". As I spoke the words, sorrow pierced my heart and tears ran down my face: "My brother Jack is really dead".

I later wrote:

My brother Jack was a good man. I wish I could have spent more days with him. I am glad I had the opportunity to commune with him for a few days in Houston. I once heard that living your life is like licking honey off a thorn bush. I know that my brother is in a better place, but there is still grief in realizing that I will never again see his face in this world. But then maybe the next time I do meet Jack, it will be in a place of honey without thorns. May God be so merciful.

The four of us focused on individual ministry for four days: January 2 to 5. Rob was more than competent to solo lead a pastor seminar at the AG church. Moses and Paul hung out with him. Lelia followed her bliss with Pastor David working in gardens, teaching the locals how to grow mushrooms for profit.

I led the international conference. We assembled 100 students from Rwanda, 50 from Uganda, 35 from Burundi, 15 from Congo, and a few from Tanzania and Kenya. I wanted to teach about leadership in a way that might inspire African pride.

With this in mind, I developed a curriculum called *Joseph in Africa*. Taken from Genesis 37 to 50, each of these ten lessons represented a page in the life of Joseph.:

1. Overcome your past.
2. Dream big dreams.
3. Leave your dreams with God.
4. Serve with loyalty and integrity.
5. Run from sexual temptation.
6. Trust God and let Him promote you.
7. Give God the credit.
8. Plan for the long term.
9. Test others before trusting them.
10. Forgive Freely.

The conference was a smashing success. The Rwandan foreign minister dropped in and spoke a few words about Joseph. I delighted students with an Egyptian headdress and dozens posed for portraits smiling like a pharaoh.

My friends Willie and Rose Ngabo wrote a song called, "Come and See Africa". Rose sang the words in closing the conference.

Come and see Africa, the land of great beauty, O Africa, O Africa.  
 You are the source of revival, source of knowledge.  
 You have treasures and blessings, beauty and love.  
 You became a refuge for Jesus, place for His safety.  
 You became a food store to the hungry Israelites.  
 People of all nations, Come and See.  
 Come and Work to Expand the revival. Friends come and help.

On Saturday afternoon we headed out for a three-day tour of Burundi. After crossing the frontier, we paused to see hippos and monkeys in the wild. For dinner that evening we ate a platter of lakefront fish with Pastor Jeremy. On Sunday I preached at New Life Church in Bujumbura, then we drove a few miles out of town to see the stone monument marking the place where Livingstone purportedly met Stanley in 1871.

On Monday we re-crossed the border and paused in Butare long enough to hand over six goats to the Batwa. Moses especially delighted in presenting villagers with animals. On Tuesday we made the long drive to Kampala and the next day we headed home. On the twenty-hour flight westward, I praised God for allowing me to lead such a robust ministry. I pondered a remark Pastor David had spoken a few days earlier: "They bring us bags full of material goods and we send back bags full of blessing." I concluded we got the better end of the deal.

I was glad to get back home and reunite with my lovely wife. On my first Sunday, I began a fourteen-week sermon series called “Let the Church Hear the Spirit” expositing the first four chapters of the Book of Revelation. In February our church sponsored a Valentine party and celebrated Kim’s fifty-seventh birthday.

On March 14, Kim and I flew to Dallas for Jack’s birthday-memorial service. He would have been sixty-five on March 15. (“Beware the ides of March,” he used to warn me.) We met at the cemetery where his ashes were placed in an urn. I delivered a short eulogy and several voiced their memories of John Joseph Foreman. The group photo showed seventeen family members in attendance, including my ninety-year-old uncle Stutz. I presented Barbara with a picture board composed of thirty-six CD acrylic boxes (eight across and five deep). Each box held a photo of Jack.

In March we held a revival week, meeting every evening between Palm Sunday and Easter. We scheduled our Cantata (*I’ve Seen Jesus*) on March 16, then four days of revival speakers from March 17 to 20, a Good Friday communion service, then Easter baptisms. I was super busy seven consecutive days. Al Thornell grew tired of leading the song “Revive us Again.”

On March 23 a “double header” occurred. Kim and I not only celebrated Easter Sunday but our thirty-fourth wedding anniversary. I hadn’t realized that coincidence until I ripped February off my office calendar and circled my anniversary date. I determined the next time such a thing would happen would be on our 186<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. I wrote, “My common sense tells me that Kim and I won’t be around on earth to celebrate that day. However, my spiritual sense tells me that in 2160, Kim and I will exist in a realm where we will recognize one another. Maybe we will even share memories of the Easter-Anniversary that occurred 152 years earlier. It’s worth waiting to see.”

In April, Kim and I made a few overnight trips to prayer mountain; me to walk and unwind, Kim to interact in her native language. I also began a picture board project of one-hundred four photos (13 x 8). I repurposed CD jewel boxes from my massive classical collection. I was happy with the result. Every picture included a likeness of Chris, Kim, Zachary or Simon. Every time I passed the display, I would touch a different photo and remember a different time.

I wanted non-human companions in the house. I was averse to dogs after Paco’s death and didn’t want to attach to another long-lived parrot. I opted for two yellow canaries. These male birds were true singers and filled the house with musical notes. They stayed in their cage and were not troublesome to look after.

Zachary came to town in May with his fancy photo equipment. Kim had just bought a high-grade digital camera. I proposed the three of us travel to Yosemite and compete in a picture-taking contest. I still had my small digital camera, but contended good pictures were more a product of a good eye than good

equipment. We strolled valleys and viewpoints for two days seeking photographic opportunities. I posted on my web page thirty pictures from each of us. My favorite was a silhouetted Zachary with tripod set on a rock outcropping, pointing a telephoto lens into the distance.

I was planning to travel to Africa on my own, but a few weeks before departing, a Korean young man named Mark Shim asked to tag along as a mission-tourist. I agreed telling Kim that every traveler paid a thousand-dollar mission fee to CASR.

Jason McCoy was once at Tam High student with Zachary. By 2008 he was in grad school at the University of Florida majoring in ethno-musicology. Through Craig Singleton, he had learned of my ministry in Rwanda. Jason was already in Butare and had hired Franc as his interpreter. Craig told me his son—Mark—and Jason's wife—Kristen—wanted to travel to Butare to check on Jason's study of indigenous Rwandan music. Mark Singleton and Kristen McCoy flew to Kigali a week before me, taking along Mark Shim.

On June 24, I flew to Brooklyn to stay a few days with Simon and Dilia. My son was completing his gigantic masterpiece, *Decalogue*. This painting consisted of green, blue, yellow, and red dots on a black canvas. The thousands of Braille dots spelled out the Ten Commandments as written in the King James Bible. I thought it was very creative. Yet his spouse was even more creative.

On the way back from a neighborhood walk, Dilia dashed into a pharmacy to buy pregnancy strips. When she returned to the house, she dashed into the bathroom, then asked me to interpret the colors on a strip of paper. She said, "Mr. Chris, help me read the results." She had been disappointed before.

I read the instruction, examined the color strip, read the instructions again, then pronounced. "It looks to me like you're pregnant!" Dilia was overjoyed and rushed to tell her husband. I was the first to know my grandchild was on the way.

My mission to Africa began on June 24 when I arrived at the Kigali Airport. Jason, Kristen, Mark, and Mark were already ensconced in the Christian Fellowship House. This was a different location than the winter before. The previous landlord had raised the rent from \$400 to \$500 per month, so we moved to a similar place on Cyarwa Road, a few lots down the street.

I brought \$10,000 in cash with me to purchase the double-sized lot. I learned it had been vacant since the 1994 genocide when a grand mansion was razed to the ground. The army had destroyed the structure because the property had been owned by a major figure in the former genocidal government.

Although I took some flak from my wife, I insisted the property be titled in the name of CASR, not CASA. Rwandese would be responsible for its ultimate success not Americans. Was I being generous or foolish?

With my four fellow travelers already a bonded group, I was operating alone. I allowed Franc to remain as Jason's companion and hired Eric as my interpreter. I asked Jason and Mark Singleton to head up something I called *Praise and Worship Explosion*. They were distracted in their own bubble and local Rwandese musicians led this effort.

I taught a Pastor's Seminar utilizing First Timothy as my template. My intent was to use the seminar as a proving ground for a sermon series I was about to begin in San Lorenzo. The four missionaries enjoyed interacting with the morning mamas and each gave a testimony which I recorded. We visited David Nahayo's non-profit, renamed *Butare Christian Mission*; Franc's house with two little girls; Paul's house with three sons; and as always, we passed out goats to the Batwa.

Kristen McCoy kept a blog of her experience making these observations of the Summer Africa Mission 2008:

I am a 30-something female who is slowly finding myself. I'm married to a wonderful, though sometimes complicated, man. I was very excited to get to Rwanda because Jason had really fallen for the country and had made a lot of friends that he was excited for us to meet. Rwanda is a beautiful place. There are many mountains and the country is very green and tropical. The farmland was a patchwork of fields of tea, coffee, and rice. There are littering laws in Rwanda, so there is no trash along the streets.

In Butare we stayed in a nice house that is called CASA. This is the organization that brought us to the area. All of Jason's initial contacts were made with people in this organization. The house was located about a 20-minute walk from the center of town in a neighborhood called Mukoni.

Robina is the manager of the house. She was a fire cracker, always on top of things, busy meeting and greeting. She was a lady who could get things done; a true business woman. She had a wonderful sense of humor and was a lot of fun to hang out with.

Franc was also an employee of CASA. He lived with his wife and two young girls. He was Jason's interpreter and friend during the entire trip. He was one of those people that Jason was very anxious for us to meet. Franc was always smiling and laughing. He was great at telling funny stories and had a lot of friends.

Pastor David made a huge impression on me. He was a member of the CASA board. He was an Anglican priest who ran an after-school program for children.

He also has a program to teach to women, so that they learn a skill in order to get a job. I think the thing that impressed me the most was how wise and understanding he was. He seemed to understand our silly American ways. Yet he respected everyone. He had a sense of quiet service that touched people. He, his wife and family were a true blessing to me.

The other Americans on our team were Chris Foreman—the director of CASA— and Mark Shin another confused American like us. Mark was in his early twenties and just wanting to see and do something different when he decided to come on this trip. He was a lot of fun. Always positive and kind of quirky, he was a great friend and we really enjoyed him. Chris was a great guy, as well. He was busy doing his own mission work, so he was very understanding of us doing our own thing. He was funny and laid-back. We really enjoyed our entire team.

While our team was in Butare, Robina was indeed a “fire cracker”. However, when we were away, she spent most of her days in Kigali. Franc, Paul, and David reported that she had become devious, hiring a half-price substitute to fill her shoes and pocketing a profit. I told her it was time to leave CASR and gave her a few months to find employment elsewhere. Things did not go easy with her and it took months before Pastor Paul finally terminated her employment.

I returned to California on July 11, exchanging my missionary hat for my pastor hat. I began to preach a nineteen-week sermon series taken from Paul’s First Epistle to Timothy. Much of my thought was molded by my favorite radio-preacher, Alister Begg. I ordered and listened to all thirty-six of his expository sermons on the epistle.

First Southern held an outstanding VBS from July 27 to 31 with the theme of Hawaii. Once again, Shauna and Jane combined their talents making a great leadership team. We displayed all the paraphernalia, danced the hula, sang motion-intensive songs, and consumed a luau pig. Two girls co-named Jessica stayed in the parsonage over five VBS days as helpers from California Baptist College.

I also used the VBS to launch a fund-raising campaign to construct a mission house in Butare. Our initial cost estimate was \$60,000 for a new building. I brought home a crumbling Rwandan brick and tied it around my neck to market the fund raiser.

My economic timing proved unfortunate. Just after heavy equipment moved in to level the plot, a serious recession struck the USA. It grew difficult to raise funds for our capital project.

For the August 2008 Newsletter I wrote the *Gospel of the Boiled Egg*. In this column, I discussed the Greek word for *substance* (hypostasis) and for *form* (morpha). I contended that the substance of our gospel presentation must never change, but the form is flexible. I closed with this paragraph:

Take the chicken egg for example. The essence of the egg does not change, but the form in which it is served can alter dramatically. To Baptists I can serve hard boiled eggs; to youth, scrambled eggs; to senior groups, eggs sunny side up; and to Roman Catholics, eggs Benedict. To become effective missionaries, we must know the particular tastes of our particular audience. The substance of our Gospel message must never change, but the form in which it's presented must alter to meet the tastes of the listener. "I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means, I might save some." Amen, and pass the eggs.

Church life continued: On Wednesdays I was presenting an overview of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament. I officiated at a funeral; attended the Labor Day BBQ in the backyard of Jean Johnson; and spent an overnight at Camp Casadero for a men's retreat.

In my September newsletter I described one week of activity:

Sunday: Preach in the morning a sermon from I Timothy 2: 8-15, "Complementary Roles" about men and women. Preach in the evening from Revelation, chapter 16, "Bowls of Judgment".

Monday: Update church website; join in at Driftwood Rest Home ministry; Share lunch with five members; Begin reading for Sunday sermon.

Tuesday: Start off with pastor's breakfast, share and prayer; Buy a canary for a church member and deliver it to her home; and prepare for Wednesday lesson.

Wednesday: Complete Wednesday lesson; Sketch out two Sunday sermons. Join in the 5:00 meal, teach the evening lesson and lead the prayer team.

Thursday: Officiate at an un-expected funeral service at 1:00 p.m.; Drive the church bus to Open Door mission in Oakland.

Friday: Focus on getting all Sunday sermons complete. In the evening travel to a small-group meeting in San Francisco to promote *Come and See Africa*.

Saturday: Leave home at 8:30 to teach "Survey of the New Testament" at San Quentin Prison. There are a dozen expectant inmates. Get back by 2:00 p.m.

Kim and I attended the wedding of David Foreman and Mellissa on September 19. Rob Winkler officiated at a wedding hall and the gala reception served as a mini-family reunion.

Back at the parsonage, I was growing vegetables in the back yard. The ideal place proved to be a narrow strip of land to the sunny side of the house. I grew tomatoes, peppers, beans, and squash. The meager produce proved secondary to the joy of gardening.

In October, the church sponsored an *Indoor Camp Out*. Using a false fireplace, we donned outdoor dress, sang camp songs, and shared stories typical for a camp fire. October also included baptisms and our annual Harvest Festival.

Zachary was an active supporter of the Republican presidential ticket. He attended at D.C. rally for John McCain and Sarah Palin. He was disappointed a few weeks later when Barack Obama won the election. Kim wasn't around for presidential results. My world-traveling wife was in Taiwan attending an Ed-Tech conference.

Kim published an article for the nationwide pamphlet *Walmart Magazine*. This issue was subtitled *Asia Rising*. Kim's article was titled: "Ladder to Success: Technological Solutions to Education." Her words were a testimony to her life and faith.

December witnessed the usual flood of holiday events including carols, decorations and a cantata. At the Christmas party the church gave Kim and me a gift. It was a Keurig Coffee maker. My wife was delighted because it was exactly what she had desired.

Zachary dropped by in mid-December and we took a quick ride up to Portland. We encountered a snowstorm near the city and skidded through downtown streets. My son and I visited Hyun Hee in Turner, Jeanne in Canby, and Frank in Vancouver where we gathered for holiday cheer.

Our Africa winter mission grew into nine people. Kim decided to travel with me to look at the CASA property. A Korean couple, Paul and Grace Kim, wanted to see Africa and our missionary work. Their English aptitude was minimal, so they hung around with Kim much of the time. Pastor Rob Winkler wanted to touch bases with the Assembly of God church in Butare and brought along his son, Cody, plus three more from his church: Lelia, Debi Miller, and Tabitha Kelley.

We rallied at SFO and left aboard Ethiopian Airlines on December 30. Each person carried two fifty-pound bags to support the ministry. We paused at Dulles Airport for five hours before heading to Addis Ababa, then Entebbe, and finally Kigali just after midnight. After a quick night in Kigali with Pastor Paul and Franc, we bussed to Butare. I met Jane Kawahunga, Robina's replacement. The Christian Fellowship House seemed more peaceful without the intrigue of Robina.

The new CASR team consisted of Franc as undisputed director, Jane as subordinate house director, Pascazia and her sister Rose as housekeepers with Jacques as watchman. Paul was the president of the CASR board, with David as VP, Computer Ben as Secretary, and Immaculate as treasurer. I was proud of the team I cobbled together.

We rested most of December 31 and after dinner we headed to the Assembly of God for a New Year's celebration. Debi stood to introduce her four accompanying women. Each spoke a few words. Rob introduced us three guys. We also greeted the church. Dance, song, and prayer brought in the new year.

## 2009

January 1 was a day of rest for the nine missionaries. Kim and I wandered around the construction site with Franc. The lot at #2 Cyarwa Road had cost us \$16,000 and heavy earth-moving equipment another \$15,000. Ten deep holes had been cut eight feet into the ground. These were anticipating the foundation columns.

All large structures in Rwanda are made of concrete, rebar, and stone—no wood or steel. Our building when completed would be as solid as a parking garage. Kim and I christened our facility *The Lighthouse*—a refuge and resource for the people of South Rwanda. We revised the price tag of construction from \$80,000 to \$200,000. As costs were soaring, our donor base was shrinking.

On January 2, all nine missionaries showed up at the Lighthouse to work. We moved wheelbarrows of dirt from place to place and stacked rocks where supporting walls would someday appear. After a few hours of physical labor, I asked all staff and missionaries to write their favorite scripture verses and put the paper at the bottom of each foundation hole. Our firm foundation would be built upon the Word of God.

On January 3, seven in our group traveled to Burundi. Since Kim and I had been in Bujumbura a few times already, we remained behind in Butare. Rob, Cody, Debi, Lelia, Tabitha, Paul, and Grace crossed the frontier for three days. While Kim and I were alone, we caroused with CASR personnel getting a better sense of the mother-daughter relationship between CASA and CASR. On Saturday we took Franc's family out to a chicken dinner and on Sunday, I preached at the Assembly of God.

On Monday, January 5, we began our first series of classes. Rob, Cody and I led the three-day University conference, meeting at the auditorium. My curriculum was the Nehemiah Project, recycled from a few years earlier. Students were fewer than the previous winter. Most participants were Rwandese from the university.

Kim led a technology class for twenty professors. She was assisted by Paul and Grace. Debi and Tabitha held a VBS for local children on the grounds of the Christian Fellowship House. They brought along a lot of coloring books, markers, building blocks, and games. VBS lasted from Monday through Friday.

VBS and technology overlapped for one afternoon. Paul Kim worked for a software company in Silicon Valley and packed with him twenty gadgets called the "Pocket School." These had button controls, ear buds, and a tiny screen. Since the imbedded language was English, the gadgets proved amusing but not educational.

On January 6, Franc gathered all students from the university conference onto the Lighthouse lot. Pastors and mamas joined us. There were just enough to hold hands and encircle the entire property. David explained in his loud voice what we were building and urged everyone to support the project. It was awesome as one-hundred fifty shouted and prayed for this un-realized dream.

On January 8 and 9, we carried out local evangelism. We hauled a generator, loud speaker, and movie projector past the limit of electricity and projected the Jesus Movie onto sheets tied to the side of a building. Locals were attracted and fascinated. Several pastors and students filtered through the crowd inviting men and women to church and explaining the person of Jesus. A few dozen of these un-churched attended a local service on the following Sunday.

I had made earlier arrangements to cross into Goma, Congo, to speak with local pastors. I traveled with Goma students who had just completed the conference. Cody joined me as we preached at two churches on Sunday morning. We were only in Congo for twenty-four hours.

A second series of classes ran from January 12 to 15. I delegated these to our competent companions. Debi and Tabitha led a Women's Leadership seminar while Rob and Cody led a pastor seminar. Lelia hung out with Pastor David in his gardens while Paul and Grace wandered the town.

We left Butare for Kigali on January 16 and fellowshipped an evening with Immaculate and her new husband Denis. We all caught the midnight Ethiopian Airliner and headed back to the States.

Kim and I parted company in Washington, D.C. She continued home and I lingered to spend four days with Zachary. On January 19, the two of us traveled by Metro to D.C. and stood at the front gates of the White House. It was the last evening that George Bush would occupy the building. Even after dark and with temperatures well below freezing, we were thronged by inaugural pilgrims. We pushed through the crowds carrying our cameras and covered in layers of clothing. I was fatigued and foot-sore when we returned to Virginia.

On the next morning we decided not to make the return trip to the capitol. The press of people and freezing temperatures dissuaded us. In addition, neither of us was a passionate follower of the incoming president. Instead, we traveled a few Metro stops to Old Town Alexandria to watch the inauguration on a big-screen TV. The room was toasty, the seats were soft, and the hot dogs were free. I enjoyed my time with my number one son.

On the following Sunday I began a ten-part sermon series on the great "I Am" sayings of Jesus. The first message explained the basis of I AM from Exodus

3: 11-15. There followed: Bread of Life, Light of the World, Before Abraham, Door, Good Shepard, Resurrection and Life, Way-Truth-Life, True Vine, Jesus of Nazareth, and on Easter Sunday, King of the Jews.

On February 8 we got word that Dilia gave birth to a healthy baby boy. I wrote this in my newsletter a few weeks later:

I was wondering if it would happen to me before I reached my sixtieth birthday. I was wondering if it would happen at all. And then it happened; Lorenzo Hugo, the first-born son of my second-born son entered this world on February 8, 2009.

With Simon as his proud father and Dilia as his nurturing mother, Kim and I are extending our existence through our own grandchild “Lorencito”. The words that God spoke to the first mother and the first father are now being carried on through us. “Be fruitful, and multiply and replenish the earth,” God commanded. By producing our own two sons, Kim and I were merely “adding”. Now with a grandchild we are truly “multiplying.”

I believe our wise Creator planted into each human heart a vision of immortality; an intuition that, if we are His children, we will live forever. Jesus Christ promised us as much (“Whosoever lives and believes in me shall never die.” John 11:26) By once looking into the shining face of my own newborn son—and now newborn grandson—I glimpse that eternity, that “never dying”. I receive confirmation that being made in the image of God includes the proposition that I will live forever.

I understand these thoughts are vanity. Yet it is gratifying to me that my progeny—my offspring-genetic material— is now extending through one more generation of human history into the indefinite future. Thank you, Simon and Dilia. Thank you, baby Lorenzo. “Lo children are a heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that has his quiver full of them” Psalms 127: 1-3).

I continued to teach on Saturdays at San Quentin. My deacons smiled as I told them I was teaching Ethics in a state prison. I shared with them the fitness of the whole thing.

As we discuss dishonesty, immorality, theft, violence and even murder, I recognize the voice of experience. Because my students are criminals as well as Christians, the voice is not boastful, but matter-of-fact and often remorseful.

My incarcerated students have two things going for them in this ethics class. First, they know they are sinners. Unlike many of us who sit in church pews,

most prisoners will admit to being less than perfect. Next, they recognize the need of a Savior. They know first-hand the degradation of sin and the amazing grace of God.

In March Kim suggested we move out of the parsonage and buy our own place. She realized renting was not as wise as investing. Plus, home prices were at rock bottom because of the economic downturn. She began looking at “homes for sale” and I drove with her from place to place.

Kim and I finally got to see our new grandson on March 26 when we flew into JFK airport and took the subway to Brooklyn. Zachary was already there. It was another picture taking contest between Kim, Zachary, and me. I think Zachary prevailed with his quality camera and sit-down photos. What a smiling wonder was my six-week-old grandson!

My I AM series ended on Easter Sunday, punctuated at the end by three baptisms: Latoya, Jervance, and Donna. I loved being a pastor: to preach, to serve, to baptize. I felt at the center of God’s will. My potential was fulfilled and my actual was taking place.

I wanted to do more for God in recognition of what He had done for me and Kim. In March we put our Ashton Lane house in trust with the California Baptist Association. Sean Bong—a young Korean lawyer— created the trust for us. I had officiated at his wedding to Anne a few years earlier.

These were the basics: Upon our death, the property would be sold and the cash invested with a guaranteed return rate of 6% per year. Over twenty years that money would be distributed equally to Zachary and Simon. In addition, each son would receive a lump sum amount when the house was sold. This technique was advertised as “passing down your house twice.”

In April, I began a fifteen-part sermon series on the General Epistle of James. I enjoyed this process so much: buying a few commentaries and audio tapes; searching the internet; and slowly working through an entire book of the Bible. I learned so much more than anyone in the pews. At a total of 108 verses in *James*, I was traveling through the epistle at 7.2 verses per sermon or about one verse per day.

Louise Lovewell, our real estate agent, showed us about a dozen properties within a twenty-mile radius of the church. Kim and I purchased a two-story condominium across from Cal State-Hayward. The address was 25912 Hayward Blvd., # 211, Hayward, CA 94542. The bank-owned condo had been abandoned by its speculating owner. The place was 1964 square-feet with seven rooms: 3 bedrooms and three bathrooms. At \$215,000 it was a steal. We provided a \$50,000 down payment and financed the rest. We also paid the Canyon Oaks HOA \$350 per month.

On May 1, we began to transition into our new condo home. Once more there was a purging of the shards of life. The condo was only fifteen minutes from the parsonage so the transfer of boxes and furniture was not difficult. I rented a U-Haul and a few of my youthful parishioners helped me truck furniture to the parking lot, carry it through the front door, work it up the elevator, and pull it down the hall to #211. The new place was exactly what we needed, private, safe, spacious. I liked the high ceilings and open structure. Kim especially liked the swimming pool.

I worked a deal where Pastor Hahn of the Korean Church moved into the parsonage. His rent money covered my housing allowance. The Hans had two teenage sons, Isaac and Solomon. They helped me with some of the moving. I left my 1920s phonograph player to Pastor Han.

Skype became a weekly event in my life. My computer functioned as a two-way visual telephone. It seemed like magic. My monitor became a crystal ball and I was conjuring images of Lorenzo like the wicked witch tracked Dorothy in Oz. Half of my photos from 2009 are of my first grandchild.

Pastor Paul and Mary Jane came to our condo in June. They were invited and sponsored in America by Rob Winkler. Our African friends were our guests for a few days and we showed them around town. Paul was impressed that I was constantly walking. I showed him my new pedometer and shared it was my obsession to register 10,000 steps per day.

We relished our life in the condo. There was underground parking for two cars. I was about ten minutes from work and Kim was about forty minutes from SFSU. Sometimes she parked at the nearby BART station and commuted into the City. The Hayward campus across the street was a good urban place to walk in front of our condo while the Oak Trail out the back was like wilderness.

Since I was heading to Rwanda in July, we held a parking lot sale in June. My wife wrote about this event in the Kim's Corner portion of the church newsletter:

For several months, we collected used items for our church parking lot sale. On Friday, with Caryl's masterful guidance, we sorted and priced items. On Saturday morning at 7:00 a.m. volunteers began arriving at church. The weather was nice and the breeze was pleasant. I counted nine workers from the Korean church and seventeen from our church. Throughout the day, many church members came and encouraged us as well—thirty-two in all. This year we even had a food booth. Mrs. Hahn sold kimpap (Korean style sushi) while Steve and Shirley ran the hotdog stand

The Korean youth group helped the event by sorting and selling bags of clothing. Every penny we raised is going to equip students at the University

of Rwanda. I was surprised we had raised over \$1500, especially since many items only cost a dime. I learned that God can multiply our dimes into a \$1500 miracle.

I traveled solo on Africa Summer Mission 2009, leaving California on July 6 and arriving in Rwanda a few days later. After a day of rest, I returned to Kigali to speak with Jason McCoy who was working on a dissertation in ethno-musicology.

He was in the process of interviewing Rwandese involved in the genocide, both victims and perpetrators, to determine the influence of pop songs on killers. His focus was a man named Simon Bikindi, the most celebrated singer-songwriter in 1994 Rwanda. His lyrics called for the extermination of “cockroaches” (Tutsis) and for all Hutus to participate in the “work” (mass murder). Bikindi was convicted of war crimes by a UN tribunal and was then serving time in a Tanzania Prison—the only person ever to be found guilty of genocide for singing songs.

On Sunday, Franc and I went to the university radio station where I was interviewed and then presented a short sermon, “Before Abraham was, I AM”. Then at the Assembly of God I preached “I AM the bread of life” at the English service and “I AM the Light of the World” interpreted into Kinyarwanda.

From Monday through Friday, I taught at two venues. At noon I spoke to a few hundred students at the soccer stadium on sexual integrity using *Every Man’s Battle* as a template. (Bounce the eyes! Guard the mind! Protect the heart!) The heartfelt student questions assured me the topic was on target.

In the evening, I taught at the Christian Fellowship House from a book called *Africa Friends and Money Matters*. This curriculum pointed out eighty-six cultural differences between Americans and Africans. For example, in Africa:

1. Resources are to be used, not hoarded.
2. Being involved financially and materially with friends is an important element of social interaction.
3. Friends are given aid as a form of investment. This functions as a virtual banking system.
4. Space and things are shared but knowledge is kept private.
5. Precision is to be avoided in accounting as it shows the lack of a generous spirit.

This topic was also well received. Franc loved it, saying it helped him to understand mzungu (Western) friends like myself.

I accomplished two projects during my twenty-day mission. The first was a video performance to promote the Lighthouse. The production was called the “Parable of the Builder: A Matter of Perspective.”

A sage (Paul Gasigi) strolled past a brick wall under construction. He asked the first man, “What are you doing?”

The weary man (David Nahayo) answered, “Just putting one brick on top of another.”

He asked the craftsman (Jacque) the identical question, getting the upbeat reply, “I’m building a fine wall.”

The architect (Michael) replied to this question with excitement, “I’m building a cathedral to the glory of God!”

All three were doing the same job. Which builder represents your perspective?

The second was an ambitious two-year project. During my hours alone I developed a metanarrative of Christ’s redemptive history in thirty-six parts, each part with about 130 words. The story was Christ-centered, trinitarian, and comprehensive. I began with creation and ended with the last judgment. Franc and David translated my English words into Kinyarwanda. I commissioned Jean d’Mour—a local artist—to create thirty-six color-pencil drawings, depicting each panel.

The idea was to produce a “witnessing cloth” for 2010 with thirty-six panels. The teacher could move from panel to panel and read the prepared text. Designed for pre-literate adults and children, the witnessing cloth would tell the redemptive story of Jesus in dramatized pictures. It would be easy to carry, set up, and deliver.

I visited, lectured, and shared meals with a dozen people before I headed back to the USA on July 28. I met Zachary at Dulles and we sat together for two hours, sharing an airport meal. It was so great to go into the mission field and so wonderful to come home again.

A few days after I returned home, our VBS began. The theme that year was Boomerang Express and all the Lifeway paraphernalia pertained to Australia. Once again, it was exhilarating to see our old church filled with young faces—about forty of them. Kim led an adult class and Diane taught crafts.

Ed Wilbur was an inconspicuous fixture in our church. Enfeebled by age, he stumbled up stairwells and mumbled out his prayers. I wish I had known this saint in the April of his years. Upon his passing, I wrote this tribute to “Mr. Ed” called *Another Love Chapter with Apologies to Saint Paul*:

Mr. Ed Wilbur never spoke with the tongue of men and angels, but he did have love. He did enjoy the music of sounding brass and clanging cymbals, but he never spoke that way.

Ed never displayed a gift of prophecy, never revealed mysteries or profound knowledge. I don't remember him ever moving mountains. But he did have love and this made him special.

Ed did bestow much of his goods to feed the poor, and he did sacrifice his body daily. And he did have love, and that love profited him greatly—as well as all people around him.

The love suffered long and was kind; it did not envy; did not parade itself, and was not puffed up.

The love that Mr. Wilbur demonstrated did not behave rudely, did not seek its own, was not provoked, did not think evil; It did not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoiced in the truth.

The Ed-kind-of-love bore all things, believed all things, hoped all things and endured all things. I personally never saw Ed's love fail.

Now we know that where there are prophecies, they will fail; where there are tongues, they will cease; and where there is knowledge, it will vanish away.

When Ed was still among us, he knew only in part. But now that he is with the Father, the partial is gone away.

When Ed was a child, he spoke as a child, he understood as a child, he thought as a child; but when he became a man, he put away these childish things.

You see, when Ed was alive, it was like he saw in a mirror dimly. But now he sees face to face. Once he knew in part, but now that he is in heaven, Ed knows to the same extent that he is known.

Look around you. You will see people of great faith, hope, and love, these three. But Mr. Ed Wilbur demonstrated the greatest of these, because he showed to all of us the face of God's love.

We held a family reunion on Saturday, August 15. The group photo showed forty-four in attendance at Lewisville Park. Even though Don and Jeanne Zelen were divorced, they sat in the center as senior members. I posted 30 of my own pictures at *glory4ever.net*, plus 20 from Kim and 20 from Don John. I counted six dogs running loose at the event and was inspired to create a digital dog story.

Each senior family member wrote a synopsis of family happenings. Here's what I wrote:

We are prospering. Chris is enjoying his encore career. The weekly cycle of two sermons on Sunday and a Wednesday lesson is challenging, but allows Chris to pursue his greatest passion: digging into God's Word, mining its nuggets, and sharing the gold of the Gospel. It's the best job in the world.

*Come and See Africa* is moving along. Chris just returned from Rwanda on July 28 and is now busy raising funds to complete a Christian House near the University of Rwanda. He also is continuing a ministry at San Quentin prison. Chris will be receiving his Army Reserve retirement on his upcoming milestone birthday and hopes to travel more with Kim.

Kim is on summer break from San Francisco State. Chris and Kim moved out of the church parsonage and into a nearby condominium in Hayward. It's about a 15-minute drive from church. We enjoy the condo lifestyle (secure and no grass to cut). Kim swims every morning in a pool that's just outside the door.

Zachary is pursuing the life of a scholar. He is continuing his studies at Catholic University in Washington D.C. and is an ABD (All-but-dissertation). He works at irregular intervals for Powerscore, an organization that prepares students for testing in the SAT, GRE, and LSAT. Zachary will be teaching undergraduate philosophy classes in the Fall.

Simon lives in Brooklyn with his beautiful wife Dilia and his cute-as-a-button son, Lorenzo. He continues to create art and works at a Manhattan advertising agency.

On September 6, I began a twelve-part sermon series on the Parables of Jesus, taking six from Matthew and six from Luke. I introduced parables by quoting a favorite poem from Emily Dickenson. Parables are truth told slant.

Tell all the truth but tell it slant.  
Success in Circuit lies.  
Too bright for our infirm Delight,  
The Truth's superb surprise.  
As Lightning to the Children eased  
With explanation kind,  
The Truth must dazzle gradually  
Or every man be blind.

Frank and Lelia dropped by the condo over the Labor Day weekend. Jim and Val showed and we all took BART into downtown San Francisco. Lelia especially

liked the conservatory of flowers. At a Sunday evening service, Frank gave a talk about autism and Lucinda.

Cody Winkler dropped by the house in October. I had recruited him to the board of CASA as secretary and he spoke at a fundraiser held at Tiburon Baptist Church. In October I also baptized Gabriel, Heidi, Holly, and Jimmy.

I continued to post hundreds of Lorenzo photos; some from Simon, some from Zachary, and several from screenshots snapped during a Skype visit. Finally, my distant grandson appeared in the flesh, along with his parents. It was great to have Lorencito in the condo over Thanksgiving. We dressed him in Korean clothes as the eight-month-old smiled, fidgeted, and chewed his costume.

An announcement in the church bulletin of November 26, 2009, read, “Simon and Dilia Foreman will be dedicating their son Lorenzo Hugo Foreman this morning. The proud grandparents of Lorenzo are Pastor Chris and Kim Foreman”. In every picture taken of me holding Lorenzo, I beamed with joy.

Kim and I withdrew to Jensen Park for a few days of quiet togetherness. We assembled a 500-piece puzzle and walked along riverbeds. The Christian camp was festooned with scriptural quotes. Crossing a footbridge, we read the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm on the overhead beams one phrase at a time. Kim bought a bag of persimmons, but ate too many. She called these fruit “butt-pluggers” and with good cause.

We spent this time together in anticipation of Kim’s bunion surgery. Both of her feet were deformed with extra calcified bone by each big toe. The orthopedist broke bones in her left foot that caused pain for months. Kim was on crutches during much of December and January.

In the midst of holiday cheer occurred my sixtieth birthday. It was a surprise party that caught me off guard. When Kim and I pulled up to the church, thirty people were in the fellowship hall to sing me happy birthday. I received a 60 button and party sign emblazoned with “the Big Six-Oh!”

In the Korean tradition this day is called *Hwan-Gap* and is considered auspicious since my cycle of the zodiac had turned five times. Also, many years ago, it was uncommon for Koreans to live sixty years. So, at this venerable age, children honored their parents with a feast and merrymaking. Hwan-Gap marked the elder’s official day of retirement. It also marked the time I could collect my army retirement—about \$2000 per month.

Zachary was in town for the holidays and during the last week of the year we went on an adventure. I had never traveled by train in the US and arranged for Zachary and me to ride by Amtrak to Portland. We began by taking BART to Jack London Square in Oakland, then boarded Amtrak north. We got off and on at a

few stops to stretch and take pictures. Travel by train did not meet my romantic expectations; flying and driving were better.

I posed with a rabbit in Jeanne's backyard; with a birthday cake near Jim Francis; and with Sun-bean and Sun-woo at Hyun-Hee's house. Soon the fun was over. Zachary flew back to D.C. and I returned to Hayward by train.

## 2010

January 1 was a day of contrasts. I wrote in the church newsletter:

“To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born and a time to die.” I first heard these words in 1965 when they were sung by a rock group called the Byrds. “Turn, Turn. Turn” featured the words of King Solomon as recorded in the Book of Ecclesiastes.

These words returned to my memory on New Year's Day after I had just fallen asleep on December 31. The year 2010 was only three hours old when the telephone rang. Steve told me his sister, Jual Lynn, had just passed away. The death of this faithful church member came as a surprise to me. As the song goes, “there is a time to die.”

By as strange coincidence, I officiated at a wedding fourteen hours later at a Napa vineyard. This event was planned months in advance, so at 5:00 I pronounced the words, “What God has joined together, let no man put asunder.” On the ride back to Hayward, my mind returned to my early morning phone call and I thought, *a time to weep and a time to laugh both on the same day—both on the first day of the year. What could possibly lie ahead for 2010?*

On January 9 we held a funeral service for Jual Lynn and on January 17 I began a ten-part sermon series on First Corinthians, Chapter 15, called “Hope of Resurrection.” The series was timed to conclude on Easter Sunday (Resurrection Day). I planned to answer three questions for my congregation: What happens to you after you die? Why is Christ's resurrection the cornerstone of the Gospel? What is the nature of the Eschaton—the last age to come?

On the last day of January, I wrote my last check to Wells Fargo Bank, completing the purchase of 306 Ashton Lane. With this mortgage behind us, we felt wealthy. After my army retirement and house payoff, Kim and I now collected an extra \$5000 per month in the checking account. We talked about traveling the world together. Life would become even sweeter.

In February we joined in a celebration of Lorenzo's first birthday via Skype, receiving photos from Simon and Zachary. Later in the month we celebrated Valentine's Day and Kim's fifty-ninth birthday at a Wednesday fellowship.

I learned that Jeanne's on-again-off-again relationship with Don was on again. He was staying in her house while she was part-time caregiver and part-time employee of the Oregon Social Security Agency.

On March 3, Kim and I headed to the East Coast. Gardenia (Dilia's Aunt) was kind enough to lend us use of her Manhattan apartment: The Hampshire on South Central Park. We stayed there for two nights enjoying access to the vast park. Next, we spent four days with Simon and Dilia in Brooklyn. Lorenzo was a rock star, smiling, squealing, and scooting—more akin to a military low-crawl than true crawling. Kim especially enjoyed squeezing and hefting her precious grandson. By this time Dilia kept three dogs in the house: Ike, Stella, and Baron. They were also part of this family. We walked around Brooklyn taking turns carrying Lolo, then ate at Grimaldi's Pizza.

On March 8 Simon escorted us to the NYC Chinatown where we boarded the express bus to the D.C. Chinatown. It was just \$20 apiece. There was a mix-up when we arrived. Zachary had instructed us to meet at a place called *Teaism*. We texted him and he insisted he was already sitting at a counter. We couldn't find him! Finally, we figured out there were two shops with the same name. We united an hour behind schedule.

Zach drove us to his shared home in Alexandria where we rested in his room. Our son slept on a couch during our time with him. In the evening we ate at a Korean restaurant called Honey Pig located in Annandale. He told us this town had a higher concentration of Koreans than any place on the East Coast. The next day we spent in the capitol, visiting the Korean War Memorial, Viet Nam War Memorial, and Theodore Roosevelt Island.

On our final day, Zachary drove us to see Hyun Ok and Michael King near Richmond. Kim and her sister chatted in Korean while Zach and Mike argued politics. I wandered between the groups. On the way back to Alexandria we paused at the Stonewall Jackson Memorial in Lexington, visiting the house in which the general died of battle wounds. It was a terrific ten-day visit and I posted 63 pictures and 4 videos.

Kim led a busy church life. From March 12 to 14 she led twelve women from First Southern at the East Bay Baptist Association Women's Retreat. Then from March 26 to 30 she attended the 2010 Christian Writer's Conference at Mount Hermon. While Kim honed her writing skills, I chilled a few miles away at Prayer Mountain. I peeked in on some of her classes to see if I wanted to attend the conference in 2011.

I continued to write, but nothing for popular publication. In anticipation of Easter, I produced a nine-page philosophical reflection called “Implications of Embodied Artificial Intelligence upon the Christian Doctrine of the Bodily Resurrection of the Dead”. I wrote in part:

Why would our souls, once departed from our earthly bodies, require a new body? What is the logic? For centuries Christians could only supply religious answers. Now we finally have some scientific support. Embodied Artificial Intelligence (EAI) is providing answers. Here are five reasons why a human who has left behind an earthly body might require a resurrected body:

1. It is necessary for an intelligent system to have a body.
2. Bodies are the way that minds connect to the outside world.
3. The main task of the mind is to produce the next action. We need a body for this.
4. We do not simply inhabit our bodies; we literally use them to think with.
5. Imaginations need bodies.

Has EAI and DOR (doctrine of resurrection) ever been connected before? I don't know. Most people who delve into EAI probably are not interested in DOR, and visa versa. Maybe this reflection is the first to connect these metaphysical dots.

On Easter Sunday, we had close to a full house at First Southern. Before the service began, I noticed many of the ladies were wearing fancy Easter hats. Kim popped her head in my office, asking if I had a spare hat for her. The only one available was a Mickey Mouse cap. The photo shows Diane Varady posed with her red hat standing with Kim sporting mouse ears.

The Easter message taken from First Corinthians 15:55-58 was titled “Victory through Jesus Christ”. Throughout this sermon series I had been gaining insight into the resurrection and the eschaton by reading *The God of Hope and the End of the World* by John Polkinghorne.

One of the newer members was Jennifer Land, a young lady of 35 and fellow graduate of GGBTS. She was of a scientific bent and very withdrawn. After the sermon, she told me how enlightening she found my series of messages. I ushered her into my office and lent her my marked-up copy of Polkinghorne. It was a pleasure to later talk with her about end-time theology.

I was growing weary of my Honda C-RV and began looking for something tiny and cool. For a year I had been considering the new Smart Car. However,

it required premium gas and was overpriced. I finally settled on a 2001 Honda Insight—an underpowered, aerodynamic, two-seater, purported to get fifty MPG. I paid \$6000 for my silver bullet. Kim thought I was crazy, but Deacon Al pointed out that a man is entitled to his toys, especially if his wife was not expected to be a passenger. Zachary dropped by a few months later to take possession of my expired C-RV.

In late April, I began to preach a new sermon series taken from the Gospel of John, chapters 3 and 4. I wanted to speak about Christian witnessing, pointing out that Jesus proclaimed the truth to a privileged ruler of the Jews (Chapter 3) as well as to a detested Samaritan woman (Chapter 4).

When Kim had finally healed up from her bunion surgery, we began our first luxury expedition. Kim would act as my tour guide while we visited new sites and old sights. The tour lasted nine days for me and sixteen for Kim. We flew into the new Incheon Airport on May 4 and checked into the Dragon Hill Lodge. This military hotel left much to be desired but at \$100 per night the price was right.

Kim met with old friends in Seoul as I tagged along in her support. She spoke to a technology class at her alma mater, Kyung Hee University. Kim was so much in her element—so much in command. While she rested during that evening, I walked through the nearby Korean War Museum. The displays were first-rate as I strolled through ten years of peninsula history—1945 to 1955.

After a few days of adjusting to jet lag, we began a bus tour of Korea. With a load of Korean-Americans, we moved from site to site; hotel to hotel; city to city. We visited gardens, temples, historic sites, and a folk village. We viewed elaborate topiary sculptures and consumed fancy meals with twenty side dishes. I was happy to be her sidekick and let Kim run the show.

I ran into three difficulties along the route. First, every extravagant dinner featured a seafood platter which did not appeal to me. Second, much of the sitting was not in chairs but on the floor where my legs refused to flex. Third, I could understand but little Korean, unable to keep up with the rapid conversation. In spite of all this, I was filled with joy just hanging out with my exuberant wife turned tour guide.

We left the tour for a day to visit Kim's hometown in Cholla-Nam-do near the sea. She pointed out a few old buildings still standing after fifty-nine years. I met her uncle—two years older than herself—and his family. We only stayed a few hours.

We re-joined the tour as it departed by ferry to Jeju Island. We happened upon many of the spots we had enjoyed thirty-six years earlier on our honeymoon. The volcanic island bustled as a tourist hub so unlike our 1974 experience.

We embarked on a submarine in Jeju City before it passed under the harbor. Kim was amazed at the fish. Then we hiked up a mountainside to see *Buddha in the Rock*. In the evening, we entered an exhibition hall to view motorcycle performers, seeing six cyclists racing circles inside a large globe. It was amazing. My Korean wife was so pleased to see her native land prosperous and shining. I was forever happy we had made this pilgrimage-vacation exactly when we did.

We left the tour in Jeju flying back to Incheon Airport. I parted company with Kim and returned alone to San Francisco. Rumor had it my wife underwent a few nips and tucks during her extra days in Seoul, but I never pressed her.

At the end of May the church gathered in Jean Johnson's backyard for a Memorial Day BBQ. After an hour, I wanted to escape the extroversion and so walked to the front of the house. I spotted Jennifer Land slumped on the front stoop. I asked if she wanted to go for a walk. This introvert was happy to get away from the big group and we strode to a nearby park with a large installation art: THERE. The word was in reply to Gertrude Stine who said of Oakland, "There's no there there." I also spotted a rainbow-like halo around the sun. I googled the phenomenon and discovered it was caused by ice crystals in high cirrus clouds. That's what it was, but what did it portend? Something good or something evil?

On June 11, I attended a graduation ceremony at San Quentin. I stood with ten professors and offered the closing prayer. The prison newspaper reported this:

It was a historic moment Thursday when four inmates donned black caps and gowns over their prison blues to be the first to receive diplomas inside San Quentin State Prison. The inmates—Mark Baldwin, Robert Butler, David Cowan, and Darrell Hartley—are the first graduates of the seminary's leadership development program. About 150 inmates and members of the community rallied around them as they received diplomas in Christian Ministries at the seminary's first commencement held in the Protestant Chapel.

The leadership program, introduced at San Quentin in 2006 and the only one housed in a prison, provides post-high-school level classes aimed at developing effective Christian leaders. The program takes two to three years to complete and instruction includes eight classes that range from church planting and evangelism to ministry training. The thirty inmates in the program are taught by seminary graduates on a volunteer basis during spring and fall semesters.

Zachary stopped by the condo for a week-long visit. On July 4 he was swimming in the pool with me and Kim. At dusk we heard the pops of distant

fireworks. The next day Zachary and I drove to Vancouver where we spent a few days with my brother. Zachary inherited my C-RV and drove it across Canada back to Virginia. I flew home.

A week after that, Kyu-nam drove his twin sons, Sun Bean and Sun Woo, to Hayward to attend VBS 2010. Kim's brother stayed only a day. The theme of VBS was Saddle Ridge, a cowboy motif. Again, Lifeway supplied all the motion songs and paraphernalia. Kim never had more fun in her life; singing, teaching and laughing. The joy multiplied since she tutored her eight-year-old nephews in the A, B, Cs—Admit, Believe, Confess. I accompanied about a dozen of the VBS kids to the Hayward theater to see *Toy Story 3*. Both Kim and I really enjoyed our nephews and looked forward to many more encounters.

In the weeks before our Africa mission, I worked frantically to complete twenty witnessing cloths. Paul and Grace Kim assisted by laminating twenty spiraled books. These flip-books showed the thirty-six panels of redemptive history. With Caryl's help I also printed one-hundred color bi-folds with words narrating the panels.

The only missionary to travel with Kim and me was Tabitha Kelley who was our mission partner eighteen months earlier. A few days before our departure, she flew into SFO and spent an overnight with us. Al Thornell drove the three of us to SFO on July 21 where we embarked on Summer Africa Mission 2010. Kim and I felt at the center of God's will, looking forward to yet another spectacular mission!



## Chapter 24

# DEVASTATED

July to August 2010  
Rwanda & Hayward, California

*Oh, that my grief were thoroughly weighed,  
and my calamity laid in the balances together!  
For now, it would be heavier than the sand of the sea.*  
(Job 6:2)

My universe shattered at the mis-turn of a steering wheel on July 31, 2010. Thirty-six years of marriage—my hopes and dreams—perished along a roadside in Rwanda. My wife’s crumpled body survived the devastation for three days when at last her spirit returned to the One who had breathed it.

Kim Hyun Deok Foreman had been born in Asia; had flourished in America; and had died in Africa. She once had been a citizen of this world; On August 3, 2010, she became a citizen of the next.

I wrote in detail of Kim’s death and its aftermath in a book titled *Forgive Like a Rwandan: A Memoir of Love, Loss, and Letting Go*, which was published in 2015. As I write this current narrative, I follow the contours of that earlier memoir but in an abbreviated fashion. For an expanded treatment of the circumstances surrounding Kim’s death, I recommend to the reader *Forgive Like a Rwandan*.

### JULY 2010

Kim, Tabitha, and I flew Ethiopian Airlines to Dulles Airport, then to Addis Ababa, landing in Kigali on July 23. Two items topped our agenda. First, we wanted to distribute our twenty witnessing cloths and books. These items were expensive to produce and everyone would want one. We needed wisdom on how to share them with our African brothers and sisters. Second, Kim and I desired to invite Franc to California. We needed to sign multiple forms and process the right visa papers. It would be a challenge to complete in ten days.

Once at the house, Kim was introduced to our new house director, Jane. Each of us had a teaching assignment. Tabitha and Jane worked with children in a VBS program. That was her passion. Kim taught technology at the university and spoke to a women's group about leadership. I preached to students at the soccer stadium with Kim helping me. I was so blessed to honor my wife during each of these teaching sessions. My sermons were on men-women relations. I began with Adam and Eve. I called up Kim and quoted from Genesis One: "In the image of God created He him; Male and female created He them." I presented the two of us to the students. "Woman and Man together is the proper image of God." Kim was beaming.

During the summer of 2010 Jason McCoy resided in Butare working on his doctorate concerning the intersection of song and genocide. He lived in the Christian Fellowship House employing Franc as his interpreter. The two of them were working as an ethno-musicology duo. They were scheming to fly to the UN prison in Tanzania in order to interview Simon Bikindi. This was a long shot since the incarcerated singer-songwriter did not welcome outsiders. While in the house, Jason became a semi-member of our mission team, participating in an occasional activity.

I deferred management of the Morning Mamas to Kim and Tabitha. I recorded Kim teaching and Jane interpreting from Luke 19 about wee Zacchaeus climbing a tree to view famous Jesus. My wife pointed to the children. "Zacchaeus was little just like you." All the kids laughed. "Do you know who is coming to Butare in a few days? Yes, your president, Paul Kagami. Would you climb a banana tree just to see this famous person?"

The children squealed *yes*. Kim had a gift for connecting with kids.

One of the big events of this mission was Bible school graduation. For two years university students had been attending classes in the Christian Fellowship House. Our intention was to teach somewhere between Sunday school and Seminary level. Franc, Paul, and David were the principle instructors, although others helped out. I was amazed to see so many students attend our classes on top of their regular university studies.

The ceremony was a proud event for Africans. We borrowed caps and gowns from the National University and printed fifty-five embellished diplomas. Kim, David, Paul, and I were on stage to call names and shake hands. Each student faced the audience to thunderous applause and flashing cameras. It seemed like every graduate wanted to grab my arm for a selfie.

Kim was writing a daily blog. Her sidebar read: "Kim Foreman's reflection on works in Africa, at First Southern Baptist Church in San Lorenzo, and at San Francisco State University". On July 28, she posted a message titled "A Day in Butare, Rwanda":

When people ask me “What do you do in Africa?” I say, “We do all kinds of different things. We stay at the CASA house. We teach. We visit.” I think I need to give you a little more detail than this terse answer, so you can pray for us specifically. Here is a list of things that I did today, on July 28, 2010.

I got up around 4:00 a.m. It sounds like I am a very diligent person, but not really. My body is still keeping California time. I checked my email and prepared a sermon to share at the morning devotion. At 5:00 a.m., Jack the night watchman prepared the room for the morning devotion. Adults sat on chairs, and children sat on the floor. Around 5:50 people start singing, I join them. It was my turn to give a sermon this morning.

For this morning devotion, there were about 50 people. We surprised them with warm milk, bread and a hard-boiled egg. I wish you could see these delighted faces. CASA gives them milk and bread twice a month, but this morning we added an egg. The cost for all this? About \$15. How wonderful it is to see how our small resources can accomplish so much here.

From 10:00 a.m. to noon, we are having a VBS with kids. The same kids who attended the morning service come back for VBS, and Tabi from Texas teaches.

From noon to 1:30, Chris teaches at the NUR stadium. Several hundred are intently listening as Chris talks about dating and courtship. Around two p.m. we have a lunch (cooked bananas and rice), then rest a little before the evening class.

At 5:00 every night, there is a class at the CASA yard. There are about 300 students who are taking courses in biblical studies. The space we are renting is a 4-bedroom house, with no inside space for a classroom, so they are meeting outside. These students are on fire for Jesus, and they want to learn about God. Their passion and dedication is amazing, and they touch my heart.

From 8:00 to 10:00 p.m., Chris teaches again at the stadium. After this evening session, we have a late dinner (chips, rice, beef). I probably sleep 3 to 4 hours a day. My body is tired, but my soul is renewed.

Kim and I did a variety of other things. We each spoke at the Assembly of God; We treated local pastors to a chicken dinner at the Eden Garden hotel; We visited Franc's house for a meal; and we drove outside the grid to encourage three bush churches.

We ended up distributing twelve of the witnessing cloths and accompanying books. Kim and I sat in on classes as Sunday school teachers held up colorful illustrations and read Kinyarwandan text. I felt blessed to be a part of this work. The thirty-six panels of the witnessing cloth proved to be a great tool in teaching the salvation story of Jesus Christ.

We were disappointed with the slow progress of Lighthouse construction. The changes I noted in my one-year absence were barely noticeable. Only sixteen foundation pillars had been added in the past twelve months. But Franc-as-construction-manager could only build as fast as we in America could provide funds. And money for Africa was scarce.

On the day before our departure to Kigali, July 30, Kim and I led a strategy session. There were nine of us: Franc and Jane as full-time employees; the CASR board of Paul, David, Ben, and Florida; Tabitha as the new CASA treasurer; plus, Kim and me. Franc arrived an hour late because, as a leader in the local militia, he had to guard President Kagami all day long. He was exhausted.

Kim and I were departing Butare on Saturday in order for me to preach at the Kigali AG church on Sunday. At first, Tabitha was going to accompany us in Franc's car, but she preferred to stay with Jane a few days longer. That was not a problem for me. David could drive her up on Sunday to catch our midnight departure. What a fortunate decision that turned out to be!

The meeting dragged on past 10:00. There was a lot to talk about. Franc was anxious because he had not yet finished his America visa application and we had to sign forms. He grew so frustrated. The embassy required him to complete the application on-line, but with a slow dial-up connection, the visa pages would time out before they reached the printer. Finally, about midnight, Kim agreed to help him complete the proper forms and print them out. It was a major hassle. I went to sleep after midnight and heard Kim groan as she plopped into bed about 2:00 a.m.



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## SATURDAY – JULY 31

Kim's sleep was heavy; mine was light. We heard quiet conversation followed by fervent singing. She startled, "What time is it?"

I sprang from bed and looked at the little travel clock. It was 5:30. We dressed quickly and stepped into the living room five minutes later. I was in charge of the morning message and taught about Nicodemus and Born Again. Jane served as my interpreter. Kim led in singing *Imana Ninziza* (God is so Good).

Since this was our final day in Butare, we had special gifts—a handful of peanuts for thirty children and fifteen metal hoes for the digging mamas. Morning devotions and farewells were over by seven and we flopped down on our mattress for an hour of extra sleep.

Jason McCoy joined us for eight o'clock breakfast and soon Franc burst through the door. He was exuberant because he had finally completed his U.S. visa application. He heaped praise upon Kim for staying up so late with him on the night before.

We lingered at the house longer than expected, dropping by the Lighthouse, meeting with students, and greeting a never-ending flow of visitors. We shared a chicken lunch with many of these friends. At three o'clock we loaded up suitcases and headed to Kigali. On the way out of town, I picked up my custom-made gray pastor suit. Franc drank a can of Red Bull to fend off fatigue. All three of us were sleep-deprived.

Franc drove his C-RV; I sat in the shotgun seat; and Kim relaxed in the back. I talked with him for a while, but grew sleepy and nodded off. From the backseat Kim asked for a drink of water. I told her to look for a bottle in the space behind her. She unbuckled her seat belt, reached backwards, but could not locate the water. I told her not to worry because we would be stopping soon in Gitarama. Kim was so exhausted she flattened out on the back seat.

I remember staring blankly out the side window when I began to feel the car sway. I turned my head left to see a honking minibus heading toward us. I shouted "Franc" and he let out a gasp. He jerked the car to the right to avoid the minibus, then to the left to stay on the road, then right again to straighten the careening vehicle. Finally, on the next sharp left, the front fender dug into the pavement and the car flipped over. (A witness later testified he saw the car tumble two and one-half times before landing on its roof.)

I was suspended upside down, my harness holding me fast. I did not sense any serious injuries. I glanced to see Franc by the roadside grabbing his bleeding scalp and I looked behind me for Kim. Instead, I saw a group of Rwandese staring through the broken window. An old man cut me loose with a knife and two boys helped me to stand outside. I was shaken, but in no pain.

A man pointed back down the roadside about twelve paces. There lay Kim's body, half on the gravel and half on the pavement. She rested in a fetal position. (A witness later testified he saw Kim eject headfirst through a side window.) I sank down to street level to examine my devastated wife. I saw no obvious injuries like broken bones or profuse bleeding. I then lifted her head and pulled back a handful of sticky blood. That's when I lost it, wailing and convulsing in grief, "O, God! Save my wife. Keep her alive."

A passerby in a pickup loaded Kim into the bed of his truck with her head placed on my lap. I wept and groaned in agony during a ten-minute drive to a nearby clinic where Kim was placed on a gurney and rushed onto a hospital bed. The whole place was in panic. Nurses rushed to help. Many made urgent phone calls and soon doctors arrived. Kim was put on a ventilator as friends from Butare arrived. David, Paul, Tabitha, Jane, and Jason broke into tears after seeing the desperate condition of their beloved Sister Kim.

An ambulance from Kigali pulled up. I sat in the cab looking backward through glass into the medical compartment where a nurse applied the ventilator. I prayed and grieved as sirens screamed all the way to King Feisal Hospital. Upon arrival, Kim was transported through the emergency entrance for a full-body MRI. While waiting, I signed papers then sat in silence. I suffered in a nowhere zone alternating between numbness and pain. Finally, CASA friends arrived. Tabitha informed me she had contacted people in America. Hundreds of family and friends were praying for Kim.

After a few hours, Dr. Carlos appeared. He was the hospital neurologist on assignment from Cuba. The doctor showed me the MRI and explained that Kim had suffered massive brain swelling. He could do little to help her and suggested my wife could not survive more than a few days. I was devastated, cut to the quick.

Kim was transferred to the ICU then put into an induced coma. I sat at her bedside until past midnight as friends filtered in and out. A stranger dropped by, introducing herself as Julie, Chief Consular Officer at the US Embassy. She stood vigil with my friends. Finally, Pastor Paul suggested I get some rest and he drove me to the hotel where Kim and I had earlier booked a room to pass a pleasant Saturday night.

## SUNDAY – AUGUST 1

I checked into the Bon Jeur Guest House about 1:00 a.m. I knew sleep would be impossible, but perhaps rest would come. With mind reeling and body aching, I sank into my guest room bed. In the darkness I extended my arm to the side. The only object in reach was an overstuffed pillow. My face contorted in grief when I realized that—if not for a moment of highway inattention—my hand would be caressing my lovely wife. "O God, how can I survive without her?"

I found no rest on my first night without Kim. I prayed that God would re-start the day, move back the hands of time to Saturday morning. I pleaded with

the Lord. Could he re-tune the universe to make Kim alive again? With all the faith I could muster I re-opened my eyes and reached my arm into the darkness to caress Kim's side. The pillow mocked me, reminding me that wishing did not make it so. Reality chose not to conform itself to my magical thinking. Rather, reality reinforced that "all flesh is like grass, and all its glory like the flower of the grass."

I stayed awake all night pondering the ways of God. I knew without a doubt Kim and I were called to be co-ministers in Rwanda. Therefore, when we were passengers in Franc's car, we were smack dab in the middle of God's will. I knew it was according to the mystery of His sovereign will that Kim's body lay crumpled by the side of that road. Throughout the hours of darkness, my mind burned bright with memories of Kim.

The sequence of African sounds signaled the coming daylight: first the distant Muslim call to prayer, next the crowing of roosters, followed by a cacophony of barking dogs, a mixed chorus of morning birds, and finally the rattle of breakfast dishes outside my door.

Sunday morning was at hand. I knew Pastor Paul and the others would soon be going to church. I knew I could not. I had to get up, wash my face, and return to Kim's bed side at the hospital.

Pastor Paul and Pastor David sat at an open-air table in their Sunday best drinking African tea. They reported no change in Kim's condition. She was still in a deep coma. I declined their invitation to accompany them to church, instead asking for a ride to the hospital. Jason joined me and we were soon on our way.

At the entrance to intensive care, I walked to the far corner to sit with my wife. Jason remained in the waiting room, typing into his laptop.

Kim lay in a single bed with her thumb attached to a heart monitor. A respirator covered her face, and bandages wrapped her head like a turban. Tubes were adding and removing fluids to and from her body. She was tucked under a white sheet, with her toes poking out from the bottom.

I leaned over to kiss her warm forehead, careful not to disturb the bandages, wires, and tubes. Then I settled into a chair at the base of the bed, stroking her exposed left foot and praying for a miracle. A nurse walked next to Kim's bed, read her vital signs, and posted them to a chart.

Soon Dr. Carlos dropped by. He flashed a light into the pupil of Kim's eye and poked her toe with a pin. "No response," he told me. "There is nothing I can do. If the trauma were localized to one area, I could possibly drill a hole through the skull to relieve some of the pressure. But the entire brain is swelling. Believe me. No hospital in the world could do better. All we can do is wait and watch."

Under my breath I added, "And pray."

After an hour or so, I returned to the waiting room. Jason was tapping into his laptop. I asked if he had received any messages from my family. He read e-mails from Eileen and from Simon. Both were in prayer. Simon reported that he and Zachary were making arrangements to fly to Kigali as soon as possible.

I spoke with Julie asking if she could locate another physician to offer a second opinion on Kim's condition. After a few hours, a French doctor approached me. "I have looked at the MRI and spoken with Dr. Carlos. It does not look good for Mrs. Foreman. If she were a younger person, maybe there would be some optimism. I'm sorry for this bad news."

Immaculate was Kim's closest friend in Africa. She came by, along with her brother, who was a physician. I asked for his medical opinion. I held the absurd notion that since this man was my friend, maybe he could pull some strings and give me a positive prognosis.

Holding back tears he said, "I'm so sorry, but I don't think she has much longer to live." This was the third doctor's opinion, and none had offered hope.

I often broke the monotony of the bedside by going on long walks down hospital corridors. I fortified my soul by whispering hymns to myself:

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!  
Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee;  
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty!  
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

On one of my walks, I discovered a screened window in the hospital corridor that provided a view into intensive care. I was able to look through it and see the upper half of Kim's comatose body—her jet-black hair sprouting from a bandaged head. As I walked laps in the hallways, I paused to look through the screen upon my beloved wife. I felt like a helpless sparrow, perched on a housetop watching alone, flying in frantic circles, then returning to watch again.

Apostle Thomas, pastor of the Kigali Assembly of God, had volunteered to be my chauffeur. He drove me to the hotel long after dark. With my guest room lights turned off, I thrashed about in the darkness, sometimes in agony and sometimes in disbelief, but always with an oppressive sense of wrongness.

I spoke to Kim: "You grew weary of traveling to Rwanda. You wanted to explore other vistas. But I urged you to make this one last trip with me. We had talked about retirement, visiting other parts of the globe. You were supposed to out-live me. All the actuary tables said so. This is so wrong."

I questioned God, "Why did You take her, Lord? How could You rip my heart from my chest and expect blood to still course through my veins?"

With sleep impossible, I turned on a light. A strong desire compelled me to compose a letter to Kim while she was yet among the living—before she slipped from the present into the past tense. In the quiet of night, I wrote a letter to Kim titled “Goodbye, My Love, Goodbye: An Elegy for My Wife, Kim Hyun Deok Foreman: Composed on August 2, 2010, in expectation of your imminent death.”

O God, I understand that everything under Your sun must have a beginning, a middle, and an end. But I do not understand how someone I love so dearly can be snatched so suddenly.

Fifty-nine years of life, thirty-six years a wife, a woman full of grace and compassion, a beautiful woman on the inside and out, a remarkable woman of academic achievement, a faithful and playful companion to one husband, a caring mother to two sons, and an adoring grandmother to one small boy.

Your name is *Kim Hyun Deok Foreman*, and your name says it all. *Kim* is the most widespread family name in all Korea. *Kim* means *gold* and so you are—precious and incorruptible; a wife of gold to me.

*Hyun* is a name given by your mother to each of her six children. *Hyun* means *wise*, and so you are. Although at times distracted or confused, upon reflection, you always return to wisdom. You are a wonderful counselor to me.

*Deok* is your unique given name. *Deok* means *virtuous* and so you are—a Proverbs-31-woman par excellence. In grade school your teachers supposed *Hyun Deok* to be a boy, for what girl could carry a name like wise and virtuous? But you, my love, have carried it well for fifty-nine years. Your moral compass has kept us both pointed in a heavenly direction.

*Foreman* is the name that you adopted with joy. *Foreman* is my family name, and from our wedding day you understood that by becoming one flesh with me, it was proper for you to share one name with me. I marvel at how you acquired my family name, yet maintained your own identity.

You are unique, my love. There can be only one *Kim Hyun Deok Foreman* in the annals of history. Perhaps your one-of-a-kind name will help me locate you in the kingdom of God and in the reign of Christ. I will be looking for the remarkable woman of gold, wisdom, and virtue, who for thirty-six years was my earthly companion and of one flesh with me.

I am grateful to God you did not suffer pain in your last moments. I miss you so much already. My heart is breaking. I love you and I am confident I will see you again. Your husband, Chris.

## MONDAY – AUGUST 2

“There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job,” and he said, “Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me. I will not refrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul. My bone cleaveth to my skin and to my flesh, and I am escaped with the skin of my teeth.”

I awoke Monday morning confused, not knowing where I was. It took a full ten seconds to place myself in Kigali and a few more to once again feel the crushing weight of Kim’s impending death. I had returned to the land of Uz.

When I walked to the patio, I spotted Jason typing into his laptop. He read me this e-mail from Simon:

Thank you all for your prayers. Please continue praying for my mom. While things look grim, miracles do happen! Right now, please pray for my dad like crazy. Zach and I are devastated, but I can’t imagine what my dad is going through right now. My mom and dad have always been an inseparable team. Zach is flying out tonight and I am flying out tomorrow, so please pray for traveling mercy too.

Jason told me Franc Murenzi was healing well. I responded “I care nothing for Franc’s well-being because his reckless driving had caused Kim’s terminal injuries.”

Jason responded that I should reconcile with Franc and he needed my support. After a few minutes of angry words, Jason’s laptop chimed, signaling a message from Zachary. My son announced he would be in Kigali at eight o’clock that evening. Apostle Thomas was on hand and drove Jason and me to the hospital.

We arrived about ten o’clock and I sat at Kim’s bedside. I talked to the nurse who spoke the best English. She explained to me that Kim’s brain was continuing to swell and her systems were shutting down one by one.

A second nurse added, “We are now shooting dopamine directly into her heart.” The concern in her voice conveyed to me that Kim’s end was near.

When I returned to the waiting area, Jason told me he had spoken with the insurance representative who could authorize Kim’s transport to a more modern hospital. I would have to get a form signed from the senior physician stating the relocation was in the best interest of the patient.

I soon spoke with Dr. Carlos who listened carefully, then said, “Mr. Foreman, I cannot sign that paper. Your wife is dying. There is nothing anybody can do about that. In fact, putting her into an airplane could hasten her death.”

“But Doctor, surely in Nairobi or New York they could do something.”

“Mr. Foreman, there are two factors in making my decision. One is the quality of the care and you are right. Those hospitals have better equipment. But there is a second factor. That is the condition of the patient. Your wife is in a deep coma and her systems are shutting down. Even a hospital in New York City cannot resurrect the dead.”

My final sliver of hope melted away. In freefall I plunged into the abyss of grief. I returned to my wife’s bedside and looked at her battered body. I gripped her left toe, not wanting to let her go—ever! I couldn’t stop weeping.

All of my grief and pain twisted and turned against Franc. “This is all his fault,” I raged. I contacted Julie at the embassy and asked if I could write an affidavit concerning the car crash. She agreed to meet me the next morning at ten o’clock.

I was exhausted and returned to the hotel. I spoke to Jason. “Please phone the hospital and ask them to contact me if Kim is about to die. Otherwise, wake me up at six o’clock so we can meet Zachary at the airport.” I didn’t know what news would greet me when I next opened my eyes.

Pastor Paul entered my room before six, saying it was time to go to the airport to meet Zachary. He had also talked with Dr. Carlos who told him Kim was near death. Jason had received an e-mail from Simon who was encountering problems. His passport had expired and he had to get a new one. Simon would try to get to Kigali by the next day.

Apostle Thomas came by and drove us to the airport. Zachary was already on the ground waiting for his bags. His flight had landed at seven, not eight. When I caught sight of my first-born, my face contorted and tears gushed. My stoic son responded in kind. I hugged him close to my chest for a long time. Then I whispered, “We need to get to the hospital right away. Your mother doesn’t have much time.”

Thomas drove us to the hospital and we checked into the ICU. As had become my custom, I kissed Kim on the forehead and then sat at the base of the bed, holding her exposed foot. Zachary sat to her right, away from the noisy machines. I uncovered her small, bandaged hand and placed it into Zachary’s big one.

After a few moments of tears, Zachary opened his Catholic prayer book and read *A Prayer for Those About to Die*. After an hour we left Kim’s side and spoke with a nurse. She told me Kim’s kidneys had stopped functioning, she was beginning to swell, and she could not survive much longer. I asked her to please keep the respirator pumping, in case she died while I was away.

We returned to the guest house where Jason and Zachary re-introduced each other. I thanked Jason for his faithful help, adding that Zachary could take over now.

It was past midnight when we unwound enough to retire to our own rooms. I couldn’t sleep. Residents of Uz find rest nearly impossible. “My days are swifter

than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope. O remember that my life is wind: mine eye shall no more see good" (Job 7:6–8).

## TUESDAY – AUGUST 3

I awoke early and roused Zachary for breakfast. He was jet-lagged and bleary eyed. Jason passed on to my son relevant information then headed to Kigali to sit with Franc. Zachary began sending updated e-mails to four key contacts: Frank Foreman for my family, Al Thornell for my church, Steven Ko for the Korean side, and Pastor Paul for Rwandese.

Thomas drove us to the U.S. Embassy for my meeting with the Chief Counselor Officer. Zachary and I signed the register and followed the marine into the main building. Julie reached out her hand to greet me and I introduced my son. She gave us guest badges.

We followed her past a large portrait of President Obama and into the consul's room. She sat at her desk behind a computer and we sat opposite her in comfortable chairs. Julie asked, "So, Pastor Foreman, are you ready to make your statement?"

I spoke slowly for thirty minutes as Julie typed. I told of the CASA ministry, our arrival in Rwanda, and events that occurred on Saturday morning. I concluded by saying, "The car accident was one hundred percent preventable and Franc is one hundred percent responsible. I want to see justice in this case."

After this dictation/diatribe, I sat depressed and exhausted, but relieved this task was behind me. I had convinced myself I was making this irate statement as a favor to Kim.

Thomas drove us back to the hotel about noon. He called the hospital and reported, "They say that she is very weak and could pass at any moment. I will stay here for a few hours while you get some rest."

I thanked him, agreeing that both Zachary and I needed a bit of sleep. Dog-tired, I closed my eyes. It was past four o'clock when I opened them again. I found Thomas on the patio taking tea with his wife. "Have you heard any news about Kim?"

"Yes. The nurse called a few hours ago and said her heart stopped beating—Kim died."

"Died? Why didn't you wake me up?" I sputtered in disbelief.

"I opened the door and you were asleep. There was nothing you could do. I was going to wake you soon anyway. My wife just got here, so now we can all go to the hospital together."

Tears filled my eyes. It seemed so wrong that I wasn't at Kim's side when she died, but I couldn't be angry with Thomas. He did what he thought was best.

I had believed so much that Kim possessed the internal fortitude to hang on until Simon arrived at her side. I had convinced myself her life narrative could end in no other way. How foolish! Only God can determine such things.

I shook Zachary from his slumber and told him the news. He sat up and lowered his face into his hands. I left him alone for a while. Thomas, accompanied by his wife, then drove us to the hospital.

The duty nurse met and escorted us into intensive care. I kissed Kim on the forehead. She was cool to my lips. I heard the mechanical pump and saw her chest rise and fall, providing a fiction of life. I asked the nurse to stand by while Zachary and I spoke our final words and then she could switch off the futile respirator. I asked Zachary to pray first. From his prayer book, he read *De Profundis* and *Eternal Rest*.

I didn't want to turn off the respirator. I didn't want to let go of my beloved Kim. I wanted our marriage to last forever. *What's wrong with the world? It wasn't supposed to end this way.*

I decided to read 1 Corinthians, chapter 15, from beginning to end. These hope-filled words were still fresh in mind since I had preached this chapter as a sermon series for the recent Lent season.

With slow deliberation I read all fifty-eight verses in the King James Version, wanting to savor each moment and postpone Kim's inevitable death for as long as possible.

When I concluded my reading, I nodded to Zachary. He lowered his head in response. I gestured to the nurse to remove the respirator. There was a sudden silence, followed by quiet sobs. It was real. My lovely Kim was dead.

The nurse drew the sheet up over Kim's face. I pulled it back to give her one final kiss on the forehead. Then Zachary and I walked out of intensive care to find Apostle Thomas.

Back at the guest house, Thomas phoned Paul to give him word of Kim's death, and he passed it on to friends in Africa. Zachary sent e-mails to Frank, Al, and Stephen.

After enduring three days of acute uncertainty, Kim's death brought resolution. Sheer exhaustion led me to sleep. Depression led me to prolong my sleep. I rose from my bed after midnight, when it came time to return to the airport to meet Simon Peter.

## WEDNESDAY – AUGUST 4

As Tuesday transitioned into Wednesday, I steeled my heart to meet my second son. He would not know his mother had died. With dread of telling him the news, but with anticipation of his comforting presence, I traveled to the airport.

When I saw Simon approaching, I reached out to him and he embraced me in a bear hug. Before he could say a word, I whispered into his ear, "Your mother

died about ten hours ago.” Simon fought back tears, rubbing his eyes with his fists. “But we should still go to the hospital so you can say goodbye.”

“Sorry, dad,” Simon choked. “I tried to make it earlier. My passport expired two months ago and I never renewed it. I wanted to be here with mom before she died. But it’s a miracle I’m here at all.” He broke down into sobs.

“It’s okay, Son. You’re here now and that’s what’s important. I’m so happy to have both of my boys with me.” We headed to the hospital.

At three a.m. the grounds were deserted. The scene was eerie. The orderly on duty pointed us to the night doctor. Flanked by my two sons, I asked her permission to see the body of my wife. After getting approval from the hospital director, she led the three of us into the basement which contained a row of mortuary coolers.

I was startled to see Kim’s corpse. She looked bloated and battered. In her final hours, kidney failure had caused her to swell. Her exposed arms showed numerous bruises from needle injections. I saw head wounds that had been hidden by bandages.

“My poor, poor Kim,” I wailed.

Simon knelt and touched a cloth that covered her foot. He choked out several words about his love for her.

The doctor broke in. “We can’t leave this door open. All the hot air is getting in. I have to close it now.”

After Simon rose to his feet, we waved goodbye. Then the doctor pushed the cooler door closed. In solemnity and shock, we followed her up the staircase, away from the shadow of death, away from this desolate habitation of dragons.

We were exhausted when we returned to the hotel, sleeping then resting for the remainder of the day. We did fix a place and time for Kim’s funeral. The service would be in Kigali at the Assembly of God at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday. Her remains would then be transported to California in the afternoon. Zachary and I would return to the States on Saturday evening and Simon would fly out the next day.

My sons went shopping in the afternoon. Simon bought a dress suit for the upcoming funeral. I continued to cope in solitude, absorbing the enormity of Kim’s death,

## THURSDAY – AUGUST 5

I awoke to the sound of Paul rapping at my door. I washed and dressed. When I stepped onto the patio, Paul was sipping tea. We talked alone for a while, giving Zachary and Simon more opportunity to sleep.

“Well, Paul, now we have something in common. We’ve both had wives who were killed in Rwanda.”

He nodded, then spoke about losing his first wife during the 1994 genocide. I concluded our conversation by asking him, "When did you finally recover from the grief of losing your wife?"

He smiled, "When I met Mary Jane."

Paul's comment sparked a thought. Maybe the cure for my grief was remarriage. I knew my romantic inclination and figured I would not remain single more than a few years. Yet I wondered, *how can I ever let loose of my lovely Kim?*

Simon appeared at the breakfast table and Zachary followed shortly after. We talked about our day trip: a car ride to Butare and back to Kigali in one day, with lots of stops along the way. After coffee and cakes, we left the guest house.

Our first visit was to the Kabgayi Catholic Cathedral. We passed through an iron gate and visited the clinic where Kim had been treated five days earlier. I thanked the personnel who were on hand and took a group photo of them. I told the clinic administrator how much I appreciated his staff and their efforts to keep Kim alive.

Our next stop was the point in the road where the accident had occurred. I wanted to explain events to my sons at the spot where the crash had happened. As is typical in the Rwandan bush, when we pulled over to the side of the road and showed our white faces, locals began to cluster around us. Pastor Paul explained to them the purpose of our stop.

I discovered a ten-inch gouge in the asphalt where Franc's car dug into the pavement. Simon picked up fragments of glass and plastic. He considered using them for a memorial to his mom. The old man who'd cut me free from the seat belt walked up to me. My eyes welled with tears when I saw Kim's spilt blood still staining the white roadside.

I pulled out my wallet, held up a five-thousand-franc note, and shouted in English, "I will give this to the first person who cleans up this blood."

Pastor Paul, who was wiser than I, snatched the money from my hand and pushed it into his pocket. "You don't want someone to do this for cash. You want someone to do it with a compassionate heart."

He walked to the opposite side of the road, where several women stood gawking at the foreigners. "Please, will one of you be so kind as to wash away the blood from the road?"

Several walked away, but one woman ran to get a bucket and a brush. With care she scrubbed away the burgundy blood stains. When she had finished, Paul handed the surprised woman the five-thousand-franc note. The other women chased her and laughed.

Soon we were traveling down the road to the police station where Franc's wreck had been impounded. We passed into an enclosure surrounded by barbed-

wire fencing and parked near the demolished Honda. Then we examined the car wreck. It was a wonder anyone had survived. The front roof was caved in and all the windows were blown out.

I looked into the rear compartment and noticed a few water bottles scattered in the jumble. I pointed them out to Simon. "That's what your mother was looking for just before the crash." I closed my eyes in pain. "The last words I heard your mom speak were the same words Jesus spoke from the cross: 'I thirst.'" We then moved on to Butare.

We were met at the house by Jane and by Florida. They had prepared a meal for us, but it was awkward. Nobody knew what to say and no one had much of an appetite.

I was eager to show my sons the building under construction while it was still daylight.

The plot of land was not much to see. A deep foundation was laid, but it was invisible beneath the soil. After this tour, we returned to the house.

Rwandans had a curious custom to honor the passing of a loved one. When a family member died, survivors built a large wood fire in front of the house. Sometimes they sang; sometimes they shared memories; and sometimes they sat in quietness until the fire burned down. That was the way we spent Thursday evening. Maybe one hundred people passed through the front yard, with the fire and smoke acting as a beacon. I greeted students, professors, neighbors, pastors, church goers, and local mamas. Everyone had a kind word to say about Kim.

As midnight approached, I bid farewell to the few souls who would keep vigil the entire night, then we headed north for the three-hour journey to Kigali. Paul drove and I kept him company, talking with him about funeral plans.

Near the halfway point, I asked, "Can we pause one more time at the place of the car crash?" A little after one a.m. Paul pulled to the roadside and switched off the car lights. I asked for ten minutes alone.

The night was perfectly dark and utterly still. I lay flat on my back where Kim's blood had been scrubbed away. I had never seen so many stars in all my life. I considered, *Just six nights earlier Kim Hyun Deok was alive.* I felt a stab in the heart. *God, why did You do this to me?*

Then I considered His heavens, the work of His fingers, the moon and the stars, which He set in place. And I wondered, *What am I that God is mindful of me, and what are my sons that He cares for them?*

As I rose and dusted debris from my back, I knew I would be returning to Rwanda. Through Kim's death I would bring glory to the God who had created this panorama of stars.

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## FRIDAY – AUGUST 6

I awoke late on Friday morning to find Paul, David, and Jason sitting on the patio in animated conversation. They fell silent when they saw me approach.

“So, what were you all talking about?”

Jason looked up at me. “Chris, I just got back from Butare visiting Franc. He has such a good heart and feels so guilty and repentant. He kept saying you were his friend and his father, and he doesn’t want to lose that relationship. He would do anything to change the situation and have you forgive him.”

After the mention of Franc’s name, I lashed out at Jason. “I want nothing to do with that killer! He’s responsible for Kim’s death. Don’t you get it?”

Paul and David joined the conversation seeking to calm me and suggesting reconciliation. I responded to all three, “You can hang on to Franc if you like, but if he’s part of CASA, I’m not. Period!”

The morning ruckus tore my heart to pieces. I felt one hundred percent justified in abandoning Franc, viewing myself as a victim, entitled to revenge. Yet the spirit whispered within me that my friends were right and I was wrong.

I passed through the hotel gate rushing down a dusty road. I prayed fervently and God spoke to my heart. Yes, I needed to forgive Franc but, how could I? He’s the one who drove the car that killed my wonderful wife.

After returning to the guesthouse, I washed my face of embarrassing tears and regained my composure. David and Paul were still sitting in the courtyard, still locked in conversation. I asked them if they would stay awhile longer. I wanted Zachary and Simon to hear the stories of how they had survived the genocide.

Their words burned into my soul because each talked about forgiveness and reconciliation. My mind gravitated to the words of Jesus: “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven.”

Zachary and Simon left the hotel compound to do last-minute shopping. As Paul got up to leave, I asked, “Is everything ready for the funeral tomorrow?”

“Yes, all is in place.”

I needed to say one more thing to Paul before he left for the day. “Franc is welcome to attend the funeral. But I would appreciate it if all he did was express his sorrow that Kim died. I don’t plan to accuse Franc of anything, and I don’t want him to defend himself either. If he admits responsibility for this accident, that could be the first step to reconciliation.”

Paul said he would contact Franc and relay that information to him.

With my two sons out on the town and my two friends gone for the night, I had some time to think. I considered Franc. I wanted to continue my ministry in Rwanda, and build a legacy for Kim, but both were impossible with Franc as an enemy. I recognized at some point I must reconcile. But taking the first steps was so hard.

I wrestled with God all evening. Grief for Kim and indignation toward Franc tortured my thoughts. I wrapped a pillow around my head and tried to sleep, but visions of the coming funeral vexed my restless mind.

## SATURDAY – AUGUST 7

Saturday came at last, the one-week anniversary of the accident, my final day in Rwanda and the day of Kim's funeral. As the sun rose, I fussed about what words to share in order to honor Kim. After a hardy breakfast, Pastor Paul drove Zachary, Simon, and me to the Assembly of God church.

Wearing traditional Rwandan dress, Jane and Florida greeted us at the entrance. Then I met Julie who introduced me to U.S. Ambassador Symington. He asked if he could speak a few words and I consented.

The hearse pulled up just before ten and a team of undertakers removed the casket and escorted it to the front-center of the church. I led a solemn procession of mourners through the aisles clutching an African bouquet. Pastor Paul opened with a prayer in both English and Kinyarwandan. Then we sang praise songs until David read a prayer to honor Kim.

There were testimonies by Immaculate, by a representative from the National University and from the morning mamas. The ambassador also spoke a few kind words.

Next Simon walked to the podium and spoke with measured resolve. "Thank you so much for being here to honor my mom in this way. As sad as this is for me, this was God's time for my mother to go. She was right in the middle of doing what she liked to do best and what she was called to do."

Zachary spoke with a quiver in his voice. "Imagine that God appeared to my mother two weeks before her death and said to her, 'My child Kim, I will be taking you home in fourteen days. Because you have led such an exemplary life, I grant you to spend the next two weeks in any way you choose.' I suspect my mom would have chosen to spend the time exactly as she had lived it, working in Africa, assisting the poor and hugging babies. She had no greater joy. That was my mother."

Zachary introduced me as the last speaker. With my sons at my side for emotional support, I held up my Bible for all to see. "Let me read the words embossed on the front cover of this Bible. They are from Jeremiah 29:11. 'For I know the plans I have for you declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'"

As I spoke about this verse from Jeremiah, I noticed Franc walk in to take a seat in the back. I invited him to address the church, hoping his words would be brief. Instead, Franc removed a paper from his pocket. He insisted he was not

responsible for Kim's death and he had lost a *mama* too. I fumed in silence. I felt he had betrayed me. He was just supposed to apologize and sit down.

When his long-winded speech was done, Zachary asked for us all to pray. I could not put my hands on Franc's shoulders. Whatever charity I held toward him when the service began had vanished. When the prayer concluded, both of my sons said loud enough for all to hear, "I forgive you, Franc." Many in attendance gasped as these words were translated into their language. I kept my mouth shut.

After a final benediction, Paul invited guests to walk past the casket then proceed out the front door. I knelt at Kim's side saying, "As you are now, soon I shall be."

Paul drove us back to the guesthouse, where we parted company with Simon. After a final re-packing, we moved on to the airport. About the time we arrived, Kim's remains were being transported to San Francisco. I met Julie who was responsible for sealing the casket. She gave me twenty copies of a *Report of the death of an American Citizen Abroad* telling me to use this document in lieu of a death certificate.

I read through the one-page report. Under *official cause of death* it stated, "Diffuse subarachnoid hemorrhage with brain edema secondary to motor vehicle accident." Clutching the papers, I squeezed my eyes shut at this tangible token of the unimaginable.

I sat with Paul awhile, talking about the future of CASA. He told me, "If you want to return to Rwanda as a missionary and build a legacy for Kim in Rwanda, you must reconcile with Franc and accept him back on our mission team. You must learn to forgive like a Rwandan."

I slumped in my chair. I knew he was right. How could I proclaim the gospel in Rwanda and not demonstrate the gospel in my own life?

Zachary and I became so involved in conversation we had to dash to board our plane. In Entebbe we lounged for a few hours, waiting for a connecting flight to Paris. Sitting across from my son in Uganda, I strained to fathom my new reality.

*What wizard's alchemy has overtaken me? I entered Africa with a wife. Who has transformed her into a son?* I lowered my head, staining my cheeks with tears.

## AUGUST 8 TO 13

Zachary and I stopped in Paris for a six-hour layover. I wanted to sit and mope in the Charles De Gaulle Airport, but my son encouraged me to catch a few sights. We did manage a wonderful visit to Notre Dame Cathedral, arriving just as the massive doors opened. We strolled past the stained-glass windows and gazed at the vaulted ceilings. Zachary lit a candle for his mother as I sat in silence to mark the first Sunday since Kim's death. We then walked around the exterior of the magnificent structure, before returning to the airport and continuing on to the USA.

I spent three days with Zachary at his group house in Alexandria, Virginia. He continued to be a balm for my grieving soul. Through e-mail we arranged with Deacon Al to hold a California funeral on the following Saturday. Upon the recommendation of Gary McCoy, I contacted Holy Sepulcher cemetery, making arrangements for Kim's burial. I also wrote an obituary which I sent to the SF Chronicle and a local Hayward newspaper.

We also paid a sorrowful visit to Hyun Ok in Richmond to talk about her sister's death. I passed on to her a few tokens of remembrance.

On Wednesday, we headed to California. I dreaded landing in Oakland. I knew I would feel the pain of Kim's loss most acutely in the territory most familiar to us: our own town, our own church, our own home, our own bed.

Al met us at the airport. We embraced then wept. He drove us to my condo where the other five deacons greeted me. They laid hands on me and prayed. After a short rest, Zachary drove me in Kim's Kia to the nearby Holy Sepulcher Catholic cemetery where I signed papers and visited the plot where Kim would be interred.

On that first night back in the condo, I asked Zachary to sleep on the big bed, while I settled into the guest room.

The next morning, Zachary drove to the airport to pick up Simon, Dilia, and Lorenzo. Mother and child rested in the upstairs bedroom as I talked with my two sons about funeral and burial arrangements.

That afternoon I met with the entire church council. It was so painful to greet people with the first embrace after Kim's death. What could I say? At this meeting I was humbled. I had no funds to pay for burial expenses, because it would take another week for insurance money to arrive. Graciously, the church board approved a salary advance of \$26,000.

On that Thursday evening, Zachary, Simon and Dilia went out for dinner. I was happy to stay behind and entertain my fifteen-month-old grandson.

Friday was a day of arrivals. My three sisters and brother drove down from the Northwest with their spouses and additional family. Hyun-Hee and Pam dropped by the condo along with Kyu-nam and Dong-Hyun. The women picked out a white silk han-bok as Kim's final wardrobe. We went to the funeral home and asked that this Korean outfit replace her African apparel.

Zachary, Simon, and I returned to the funeral home later in the afternoon to greet those who dropped by the viewing.

I spent the afternoon in my church office, finalizing the program and printing out four hundred copies. Zachary and I dropped by Palma Ceia Church to ensure all was in order for Saturday's ceremony.

I tried to sleep, but my mind blazed. I turned on the light, sat up in bed with Bible in hand, and fussed over Kim's eulogy. Whatever words I composed could never do her justice.

## SATURDAY – AUGUST 14

At Kim's funeral I distributed this prayer card:

We give her back to You, dear Lord, for You gave her to us. Yet as You did not lose Kim in giving her to us, so we have not lost her in her return to You. Not as the world gives, do You give, O Lover of Souls. What You give You do not take away, for what is Yours is ours always if we are Yours.

And life is eternal and love is immortal, and death is only a horizon. And a horizon is nothing save the limit of our sight. Lift us up strong Son of God, that we may see further. Cleanse our eyes that we may see more clearly. Draw us closer to You that we may know ourselves nearer to our beloved Kim, who is with You.

And while You prepare a place for us, prepare our hearts for that blessed place so that where Kim is and You are, we too may be. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

As the sun brightened my room on Saturday morning, I sat in bed, reading my Bible and girding my soul for the difficult day ahead. After my family was up, fed, and dressed, we drove the two miles to Palma Ceia Baptist Church. Flanked by my two sons, I stood in the narthex and greeted people as they arrived.

I embraced my three sisters and one brother along with their spouses. I greeted my Korean in-laws, my church friends, Kim's university friends, and a host of people I had not seen in years.

The black hearse containing the Belgian casket pulled up. Kim's two brothers, two nephews, and two sons served as pall bearers. They escorted the casket through the front doors and down the center aisle, then rested it at floor level in front of the pulpit.

The funeral service began at nine with choral music by a touring Korean group called the Alleluia Choir. By 9:15 the church was filled with about four hundred people. The extended program called for six groups of Kim's family to take the platform and speak tributes.

I sat in the front row next to Simon and Zachary. Lorenzo squirmed on his mom's lap. Frank served as moderator and opened the service by reading Kim's obituary and saying a prayer. Then the family groups made their way to the platform one by one.

The chair of Kim's university department spoke of her devotion to technology, to teaching, and to her students. He asked how many from the audience were from SFSU and about thirty people stood.

Friends from my church then walked onto the stage. Al led in singing "Love Lifted Me," with Jean Johnson accompanying on piano. Three women from First Baptist Church paid tribute to Kim, speaking of her as a dear friend, a pastor's wife, and a mentor. Shauna led the multitude in singing "It is Well with my Soul."

Jeanne, Charlotte, and Eileen expressed memories of their sister-in-law. Each reminisced about the time in 1974 when their brother brought home this *souvenir* from Korea. They remarked on how delighted they were to have this joyful Christian become a part of their family. Lelia spoke of her time spent in Rwanda with her sister-in-law.

My Korean in-laws then walked onto the stage. Kim's two sisters and two brothers each said a few words in honor of their oldest sister. Hyun Hee could only stand and weep, so her son Stephen spoke on her behalf.

When the missionary group took the stage, Pastor Rob spoke of Kim's compassion for women. Tabitha mentioned her love for children. Amon, our friend from Rwanda who'd relocated to Portland, spoke of Kim's big heart for students at the National University of Rwanda.

With his wife and son at his side, Simon stepped onto the stage. He spoke with tenderness and passion about his mother; how she had inspired and encouraged him to pursue his dreams in education and art.

Zachary thanked all who came out to honor his mother. He spoke of the New Year resolutions our family once made to grow like Jesus in stature, in mind, with others and with God. He concluded by saying, "And now she is with God."

It was past eleven when I stood at the podium. I spoke of human life as a transient moment. "On Kim's gravestone it will read 1951 dash 2010, a birth year and a death year connected by a small horizontal stroke signifying fifty-nine years of life. What are you doing with your dash? What are you doing of eternal significance? Today, as we heard many people pay tribute to Kim, I was amazed at the eternal consequences of her life—of her involvement at her university, of her compassion with her family, and of her evangelism in Rwanda. Kim's life was cut short; Yet in the years God gave her, she accomplished much because she loved much."

After my tribute, there were benedictions in English and in Korean. Then the family departed. I shook hands with dozens of people as they ambled through the exit.

As people started leaving the church, I called for a business meeting of Come & See Africa. It was an odd thing to do, but I felt it was necessary because I was stepping down as board president and Kim, the treasurer, had died.

Craig Singleton (CASA vice president) was present, along with the Texas contingent of Cody Winkler (board secretary), his father Rob, and Tabitha. They would only be in California for one day, so I seized the moment to establish the future of CASA. My sons, brother, and sisters also attended.

In a small classroom, I called the meeting to order then announced, “I must step down as president of CASA. I might return, but I don’t know at this time. I cannot be impartial about events in Rwanda—especially about the future of Franc Murenzi. I have talked with my brother Frank, and he has agreed to serve as president of CASA.” I paused. “I hereby move that Frank Foreman become president, and upon his acceptance that I resign and turn these proceedings over to him.”

Craig, Cody, and I voted in favor of this motion and Frank became president of CASA. In quick order Simon was elected vice president—as the voice of his mother. Cody was elected secretary, and Tabitha was elected treasurer. I agreed to stay on as director, overseeing day-to-day activities.

When my brother asked, “Are there any questions before we adjourn?” Rob Winkler rose to his feet.

“I move we re-instate Franc to head CASA in Butare. He didn’t do anything wrong.”

I was shocked and glared at Rob. After ten minutes of heated discussion, Frank closed the meeting by saying, “We cannot return Franc to his position, because CASA did not hire him. Maybe that will happen in the future, but we have to be sensitive to my brother, Chris, especially at this moment.”

I felt angry and betrayed as Zachary drove me to Holy Sepulcher Cemetery. A police escort guided our long convoy onto the grassy lawn where fifty people gathered. Loose dirt and flower arrangements surrounded a neat rectangular hole.

The service was scheduled to begin at twelve thirty, but started about fifteen minutes late. Frank opened with a Scripture reading from 1 Corinthians chapter 15.

I spoke a few more words about Kim, then described the car accident two Saturdays earlier and the Kigali funeral the previous Saturday. Kim’s youngest sister sang a Korean folk song and Simon prayed.

The six pall bearers carried the casket from the hearse onto its platform above the grave. As workers lowered the wooden box into the ground, Zachary chanted the Latin hymn *In Paradisum*. In the distance Mary Nell sounded *Taps* on the trumpet. As a closing gesture, mourners dropped flowers onto the casket.

As I drove away with my family, I saw shovels of earth arcing into the pit. It reminded me of Genesis 3:14: “For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.”

After the burial, about twenty relatives jammed into my condo living room. We talked, joked, and reminisced about Kim. My sons moved the coffee table aside and with heads bowed, my four siblings and four in-laws laid hands on the three of us. Nieces, nephews, and others squeezed around. With arms extended everyone joined in with a loud group prayer.

I felt the presence of God and rejoiced that He had given me such a caring family. After several minutes, the place was quiet again. Only my sons remained with Dilia and Lorenzo. The August day was hot, so I switched into comfortable clothes while my family splashed in the swimming pool.

I crawled into bed about ten, leaving Zachary and Simon in front of the downstairs TV and Dilia and Lorenzo asleep in the upstairs bedroom. So many things had happened that day, yet my mind kept reverting to the ugly scene in the small classroom. *God, what do you expect of me? Am I being disloyal to Kim if I forgive Franc?*

I rose from my bed and went into the bathroom. I located Kim’s gold wedding band and pushed it down onto my right pinky finger. I made a vow to Kim that for the next year—as a sign of mourning and loyalty—I would wear a wedding band on each hand.

I stared into the bathroom mirror, and for the first time, staring back at me, I recognized the likeness of a widowed man.

## Chapter 25

# BEREAVED

August 2010 to August 2011  
Hayward California

*I am the man who has seen affliction by the rod of his wrath.  
He has led me, and brought me into darkness, but not into light.  
Surely against me is he turned; he turns his hand against me all the day.  
He has set me in dark places.*

*(Lamentations 3:1–3, 6).*

In my memoir called *Forgive like a Rwandan*, I recount five seasons of Solomon: Joy, Grief, Sorrow, Restoration, and Celebration. The year following Kim's two funerals marked my season of sorrow—a place of darkness. I struggled with grief, unforgiveness, and depression. I questioned God and His purposes. Slowly I learned to accept my life as scripted by God, striving to achieve a new normal; and I determined to redeem my grief to His glory.

This chapter is an abbreviated re-telling of my story as written in *Forgive like a Rwandan*. For an expanded account of events, please refer to that memoir of love, loss, and letting go.

### 2010 AUGUST

I awoke on the day after Kim's funeral with thoughts alternating between a memorable service and a painful board meeting. As I prepared to attend church, I knew I would meet friends who had not attended Kim's funeral. Once more, I prepared my heart for a piercing.

Most of my family had left town on Saturday, but Frank, Lelia, Jeanne, and Don sat with me. The director of the Baptist association filled the pulpit in my behalf speaking words of affirmation and comfort.

Eight of us drove to a local restaurant for lunch. While we were eating, someone broke a side window on my Honda Insight and stole Zachary's camera. After the meal, Zachary took the Kia and dropped off Simon and his family at the airport. After completing a police report, I duct-taped my car window and drove to the condo and spent the afternoon in pleasant conversation with my brother and sister. We left the condo a few minutes before six o'clock to attend a church service set aside to honor Kim.

Before closing the condo door, I gathered ten of Kim's fancy silk scarves. My intent was to reward each woman who attended this testimonial with a special remembrance. The number was perfect. Caryl wept as she received her gift. "I can still detect the fragrance of Kim on this scarf."

After the evening testimonials, Jeanne and Frank left for the airport, and I returned exhausted to my condo.

On Monday morning Zachary and I packed our bags and I drove my damaged Honda to church. While we were in Virginia over the next eight days, Deacon Al agreed to replace the broken car glass. Then he drove the two of us to SFO.

When we arrived at Dulles, Zachary's housemate picked us up and drove us to his home. Abiding in the presence of my son was a healing balm to my grieving heart. And it made more sense for me to stay in Virginia than for him to stay in California. I knew he would be away much of the time, yet I welcomed the opportunity to put another eight days' distance between Kim's death and the ever-advancing calendar.

After a day of recuperation, I went with my son to a hotel conference room, where he taught a Power Score class. I sat in the back row for a while, then relocated to the lobby. I continued to ponder my unforgiveness predicament. It seemed everyone was on the other side. Yes, I needed to forgive Franc.

On Thursday morning Zachary and I traveled down the interstate to the Civil War site of Manassas to view a battlefield reenactment. Then on Friday we drove ninety minutes north to a large mall in Christiana, Delaware, where we met up with Simon and Lorenzo.

We headed to the Apple Store for retail therapy. I wanted to compensate for our catastrophic loss in some way. I desired to mark a new beginning for us three survivors. Although it cost well over a thousand dollars, I purchased new Apple iPhones for both Simon and Zachary, and I bought the new iPad for myself. Then we walked next door and signed up with AT&T as our carrier. After a few moments of enjoying our new toys, we couldn't believe how we had ever survived without them.

I spent Saturday cloistered in my room, wrestling with God. "Franc killed my wife!" I thundered.

*Show compassion*, came the gentle answer. *Look at the car crash through Franc's eyes.*

“But You didn't see Kim crumpled by the roadside!”

*Oh, yes. I did. I also kept My hand on you the whole time. I wept with you at the road side.*

“But why did You take Kim from me?”

*She was never yours to begin with. She came from Me. She lived for Me. Now she has returned to Me.*

“But it's so hard!”

*Obedience and trust are always hard.*

I knew I must forgive Franc—to rid myself of all resentment. To accomplish that, I needed to look at the car crash through Franc's eyes.

“Okay, God. I admit Franc loved Kim like a mother and he would never intentionally do anything to harm her. Franc was exhausted because he was working for Your gospel, and he showed genuine remorse about the accident. I know he would do anything to undo Kim's death. I also admit that our times are in Your hands.”

I sent Franc the following e-mail:

It has been exactly three weeks since the tragic events of July 31. It's time for us to talk one-on-one. I'm sorry it has taken so long. Please forgive me.

You have been like a Rwandan son to me. You are a man of integrity and competence. I apologize for abandoning you and for the pain I have caused you and your family. My grief made me blind.

CASA will only succeed if you and I are able to put aside our differences, reconcile in truth, and work side by side. The vision is great, but the work depends on the two of us working together.

July 31, 2010, will always be a burning memory for both of us. Part of my road to recovery is to build a Bible school to honor Kim. I would like you to partner with me on that.

It took twenty-one days for my heart to heal to the point where I could reach out to Franc. It wasn't easy. Even as I sent off that e-mail, I knew God had further surgery to do in my hardened heart. Forgiveness is not for sissies.

On Sunday morning, I wanted to attend a Baptist church. According to my new iPad, the nearest was Mount Pleasant Baptist, about a mile down the road. While Zachary slept in, I grabbed my Bible and left the house. I didn't hear much of the sermon, being consumed in self-reflection.

When I returned home, Zachary was still snoozing. My iPad chimed with a response from Franc.

It is always good to hear from you. For weeks I have been praying to get a chance to talk, but even now it is hard to know which words to write after you gave me permission. I still pray we are going to have more grace and hope and less grief and pain. Physically I still feel a little bit dizzy and the areas around the head injury still seem sensitive, but this is not my worry. I am relieved that you have forgiven me.

Our conversation had begun. Would it lead to a full reconciliation?

I spent the rest of Sunday packing bags. Zachary and I went to Chicago Style Pizza for dinner. He told me one more time how much he appreciated his new iPhone.

“Thank your mom,” I replied.

Early on Monday morning, Zachary drove me to the airport, where I gave him a big hug. “Thanks for putting up with me. I know it wasn’t easy for you.”

I arrived in San Francisco about two o’clock, collected my luggage, and stepped onto a BART train. About an hour later I stepped off at Bayfair in San Leandro. I phoned Caryl, and she drove the few blocks to pick me up. I found my Honda in the church lot. The replacement glass looked flawless. The bill attached to the steering wheel read \$342.

I then headed to my condo in Hayward. As I drew closer, waves of grief washed over me. Every familiar street brought a lump to my throat. I opened the front door, breathing in the stale air. For the first time after twenty-three days, I was alone with no family or friends to support me. My only companion was sorrow. I opened all the windows.

It was eight o’clock on the East Coast and I was exhausted. I slept a few hours and awoke after dark. Hungry, I rummaged for food. After filling myself with a cup of ramen noodles, I went back to bed.

Kim not only inhabited my days; she haunted my nights. My dreamscape was her playground. Lying alone in the bed we once shared, I experienced a series of vivid dreams of my departed wife.

## SEPTEMBER

After a week of dreams, depression, and hiding in my home, I prepared for a visit from Frank and Lelia. Back in June, Kim and I had made reservations to spend a pleasant weekend with them at Yosemite National Park. In September, we three who remained decided to follow through with the plans.

I picked up my brother and sister-in-law at the Oakland airport. Frank preached at my church from 2 Corinthians 5 on how all Christians have the ministry of reconciliation. After a night in the condo, we headed east to Yosemite. I have a photo of me standing at Glacier Point, my back to the valley with my arms outstretched.

After the one-month anniversary of Kim's death, I resolved to resume my regular pastoral duties. Every Wednesday morning my church sponsored a breakfast for Baptist clergy. All eyes were on me as I entered our fellowship hall on September 8. Seven men listened to me stammer through tears.

Before the meal, they laid hands on me and prayed for God's peace on my heart. One of the pastors, John Richards, agreed to meet with me after the breakfast meeting. I shared with him my issues of grief and unforgiveness. He prayed, asking God to infuse me with His love, a love great enough to forgive a great hurt.

After that visit with John, I sent Paul an e-mail, saying, "It's time to re-hire Franc. Please talk with David and Immaculate. I will support it." Still my motive was more about saving my ministry than helping its director. But I considered this another step in my journey of forgiveness.

I returned to the pulpit on September 12. My first sermon as a widower was a repeat of a message, I had presented just eight months earlier. In 2009, the parable of the unmerciful servant was just one more message in a series of ten. On this Sunday it held special significance. I wasn't preaching to my congregation this time; I was preaching to myself.

As I closed my sermon, I confessed to the church, "I am pointing the finger at myself this morning. I struggle to forgive Franc from my heart as Jesus commands me to do. Please pray for me. I don't want to be that wicked servant saddled with unforgiveness. You have my permission to ask me whenever you see me, 'Chris, how is that forgiveness thing going?'"

Some of my deacons took me at my word, and in the following weeks they asked me about forgiveness. "I'm on my way," I joked. "I am forgiving Franc at least once a day."

As I continued to process my grief, not all my steps were sure-footed. Jennifer was a casual acquaintance of Kim and me. In September, she and I e-mailed each other almost every day. I delighted to find her thoughtful comments sitting in my inbox.

She helped me name a star for Kim. Together we registered an obscure speck in the night sky as *Sophia-Arête*, Greek for *Wise-Virtuous* or, in the Korean language, *Hyun-Deok* (Kim's given name). It was perfect. We continued to correspond about science and eschatology.

As I speculated with Jennifer, my mind rejoiced. And then my heart followed. I felt as if I had fallen off a horse and all I wanted was to remount and gallop into the sunset. Hoping that reengagement with a woman would stop the pain and staunch my hemorrhaging heart, I pursued Jennifer. I wrote her page after page of poetry. She stopped responding to my e-mails.

Finally, a fellow pastor phoned informing me that Jennifer did not share my romantic feelings. In my brokenness, I had mistaken her compassion for affection

and her *agapé* love for romantic love. After apologizing profusely, I broke all contact with this object of interest.

## OCTOBER

On the two-month anniversary of Kim's death, I brought flowers to her grave site. I was disappointed that the grave was still marked with an impersonal plastic name plate. Simon and I had made plans to design a special gravestone as a tribute to Kim. That was at the top of our agenda for his upcoming visit.

Simon flew to California on October 8 to spend a week with me. While driving from the airport to the condo, I shared my frustration with selling the Kia and the next day Simon took photos of the car and posted them on Craigslist along with a jazzed-up description.

Over the next few days, I received a few nibbles, but no bites. After mentioning I would consider exchanging the Kia for a camping vehicle, Simon located a Volkswagen camper for sale in Sacramento.

He phoned the place and found a trade-in was possible, so the next day I drove my Honda seventy miles to Sacramento. Simon followed in the Kia. I let my son do the negotiating and after a few hours, I drove back to Hayward in a 1987 Volkswagen Westfalia with fridge, oven, bed, and pop-top.

Simon and I made an appointment to meet with Shirley, the woman in charge of gravestones at Holy Sepulcher. Simon drew up designs and discussed the possibilities with her. Then he e-mailed specifications to the stone cutters.

Simon was a tonic to my soul. He doubled my joy and halved my sorrow. The clouds of grief were beginning to part. I once heard it said that the first sign of dissipating grief occurs when your unbearable loss is not the first thing that leaps into your mind as you open your eyes in the morning. For me this day of hope dawned during Simon's visit.

As I drove my son back to the airport, he asked me a surprising question. "Have you thought about getting a dog?"

"Simon," I blurted, "remember what happened when we looked after the Korean dog?"

Simon was quiet for a moment. Then he said, "At least think about it. A dog can be good company."

Simon's suggestion rattled in my thoughts. Maybe a canine companion could be a good thing.

At the October church council meeting, I handed the treasurer a check for \$26,000 and thanked the council for their trust in me. Afterwards, I mentioned my interest in a dog to Caryl and Diane. They leapt at my words.

I explained I wanted a large, masculine, pedigreed animal, something like a bulldog. They listened with patience, but then suggested that a small female rescue dog would better fit my lifestyle. I was a novice, so I deferred to their expertise.

After visiting a few animal shelters, Diane and I traveled to Lakeside Park in Oakland to greet a dog named Jody and to meet her foster parents. Jody was listed as “part Chihuahua, part terrier, fifteen pounds, prefers the company of men but not other dogs.”

Jody dazzled us with her playfulness. She showed off her spunk by chasing after Canadian geese.

As negotiations continued, Jody won the heart of Diane. “Oh, look.” She spoke. “There’s a little spot between her eyes that looks like an arrowhead.”

From her perspective it may have looked like an arrowhead, but from where I stood, her spot appeared as a teardrop. I named my new dog *Jody Teardrop* because she entered my life in the midst of tears.

In no time Jody Teardrop became my faithful companion. She hung out in my church office so often the deacons appointed her the official church mascot.

A week after I acquired Jody, I carried her to Kim’s graveside for an introduction. I believed that Kim would have thanked Jody, if she could, for filling a small portion of that vast chasm left by her passing.

On the last Sunday evening of the month, our church held a talent show. In honor of my animal companion, I presented an original poem titled “A Bit of Doggerel.”

God must have humor  
and have it no end,  
For His name spelt backward  
is now my best friend.



Kim Funeral in Kigali



Jody and Chris in 2011

## NOVEMBER

At the one-hundred-day anniversary of my wife's death, I noted three innovations that had entered my life. These transformations converged during my frequent road trips. The first was my 1987 Volkswagen Westfalia camper. Beginning in September, I tramped the highways of California sometimes to the ocean and sometimes to the mountains. I slept by the roadside, in campsites, and in RV parks. I indulged the inner hobo.

The second innovation was my traveling companion. With Jody riding shotgun there was never a lack of company. She nuzzled, licked, romped, and fetched. She was a good listener and never complained about my singing out of tune. Unlike a human companion, Jody provided company without breaking solitude.

The third post-Kim innovation was my iPad. With this miraculous technology, I could stay in touch with the world while traveling down its back roads. I also played games, watched movies, navigated with GPS, listened to music, and monitored the news. God's grace sustained me, providing the solitude of a camper, the companionship of a dog, and the connectivity of an iPad.

I searched online for churches that sponsored bereavement groups. I discovered that Neighborhood Church in Castro Valley held a GriefShare meeting every Monday evening. This group proved to be a godsend.

The routine was to watch a video for the first thirty minutes and then allow participants to share their stories. At the first meeting I told the group that my struggle was twofold: first with grief, then with unforgiveness.

I took away two things from my Monday meetings. First, I was not alone in my grief. All who attended had a story to tell and each account of bereavement was as unique as the teller's DNA. Second, there are no answers to the questions "How long should I grieve?" and "How deeply should I grieve?" It all depends on the circumstances of the loss and the psychology of the bereaved.

I learned that the term *mourning* refers to outward signs of loss, like visiting grave sites or wearing black. Whereas the term *grief* refers to the personal pain of loss. I also learned the word *ambush*. In the counseling world, this term refers to an unexpected attack of anguish that assaults the senses. A photograph, a fragrance, or a voice can trigger an ambush, returning the bereaved to the abyss of grief.

In the five months following Kim's death, I was surrounded by family. Either I traveled to see them or they came to see me. Zachary flew out to visit me a week before Thanksgiving. We attended a Stanford football game and on Thanksgiving morning we participated in a running event called the *Turkey Trot*.

We left the house for San Francisco at six a.m. and arrived at Golden Gate Park before seven. We ran the 10K side by side. I was way out of shape and struggled to finish in sixty minutes. Although Zachary walked part of the way, he completed the distance ahead of me. He said the threat of his old man beating him provided extra motivation.

The early-morning exercise took its toll. When we returned to the condo, Zachary and I napped for a few hours. In the afternoon we celebrated the holiday by eating turkey sandwiches, baked potatoes, and pumpkin pie. After dinner, as we sat and talked, the telephone rang. It was Eu-Gin, an East Coast cousin of Kim's. She told me she was calling to wish Kim and me a happy Thanksgiving.

Ambush! My conversation with Zachary had been happy and carefree, but in a few seconds, I unraveled like a ball of yarn.

I wrote a poem called "Thanksgiving Ambush 2010," to describe the event.

A distant relative of Kim called on Thanksgiving evening.

She wanted to wish us a happy holiday.

*I thought she knew.*

She asked me how I was doing. I said, "Under the circumstances, I'm okay."

I added, "My son Zachary is here with me and that's good."

*I thought she knew.*

She asked a second time how I was doing. I told her, "My son and I will be in Virginia at the first of the year. Maybe the two of us can visit you."

*I thought she knew.*

I said, "Give me your phone number, so I can contact you when we arrive in Virginia."

*I thought she knew.*

She spoke out the numbers and I wrote them on note paper.

*I thought she knew.*

Then she said with a giggle, "But Kim has my e-mail. Just ask her to send me your travel plans."

*I thought she knew.*

I said after a painful pause, "What do you mean?"

*She didn't know!*

I removed the phone from my ear and handed it to my son, who was sitting across from me.

I managed to sputter, "Answer her questions."

Then I rushed to our bedroom, dove headlong onto our bed, and wept until our phone call ended.

## DECEMBER

When I visited Holy Sepulcher Cemetery on the five-month anniversary of Kim's death, I was upset to see the plastic marker still in place. *When will that gravestone finally arrive?* I marched into the office and growled at the receptionist. "Is Shirley around?"

After I cooled my heels a few minutes, she appeared.

I scowled at her. "You promised the gravestone would be in place by October, then November. Now it's December. Where is it?"

"The granite stone arrived yesterday. I can show it to you in the work yard."

I followed her there. When she removed the stone's covering, awe replaced anger.

The block of black granite was polished and flecked with white. The word *Kim* was engraved on the left side, with her birth date above and her death date below. *Chris* was engraved on the right, with dates absent.

In the center was an oval wedding photo cast in ceramic material. The name *Foreman* crossed the horizontal plane uniting husband and wife.

Above the wedding picture was a shining sun—the start-point. At the bottom of the oval was the Christian cross—the end point.

Connecting the start point with the end point and running along the margin were forty-eight engraved symbols, providing a narrative of Kim's life. Simon and I had collaborated on the design for each glyph.

In recognition of Kim's career, we engraved her website address, *www.kimforeman.com*, on the stone so that any passerby could learn more about this remarkable woman by searching on the Internet. The techno side of Kim would have loved that!

The large base stone held nineteen words of Scripture: "I have glorified God on the earth. I have finished the work that He has given me to do. John 17:4."

"It looks great," I told Shirley.

She then explained a big reason for the delay. "They had to re-do the entire stone. It was supposed to be fifty-two inches long, but when we measured it, it was only fifty inches. Here, take a look at the old one. We'll toss this one in a few days."

I examined the rejected granite and it looked perfect. I finally said, "Don't throw it out. I'll ship it to Africa as a memorial stone." (A few days later Al Thornell loaded the 300-pound marker in the back of his pick-up and we stored it in the maintenance shed.)

I left the cemetery in a much better mood than when I had arrived. When I returned to the Holy Sepulcher a few days later, the plastic marker had vanished and the granite stone stood majestic in its place.

The Christmas season engulfed me with activities. There was a church Christmas party on December fourth, caroling on the eighth, and a Christmas

musical on the twelfth. I was preaching through the book of Colossians verse by verse, and on December 16, I delivered a sermon titled “The Supreme Christ,” based on Colossians 1:15 to 17.

About the middle of December, I published an essay titled “Goodbye 2010” in *The Pastor’s Corner*.

For the past several years Kim and I have mailed end-of-year letters to our family and friends. And for the past few weeks, I’ve wondered whether or not I should mail out Christmas letters for 2010.

My first inclination was *No, of course not*. People will understand my grief. My second inclination was *Yes. I won’t allow grief to take mastery of me. My family and friends deserve to know how I’m doing*. In the end I decided to save myself one hundred postage stamps and include my Christmas letter in our church newsletter. I hope you don’t mind.

So, if you’re wondering how I’m doing, I’ll say this: “I am glad the year 2010 is behind me.” It was my worst year ever, my dark night of the soul, my valley of the shadow of death.

I will never comprehend why Kim died in a car accident and I was spared. That is for God to know, and I have fully accepted Him as my Sovereign. My past was filled with grace; my future is filled with hope. It’s my present that’s bleak, but I expect my present to slowly grind into my future.

Some questions are impossible to answer, like the one hypothetically addressed to President Lincoln’s wife: “Other than that, Mrs. Lincoln, how did you enjoy the play?”

If you redirect that question to me, it becomes, “Other than your wife’s death, Pastor Foreman, how did you enjoy 2010?”

For me, 2010 will always mark the year that my sweet Kim died. I’m glad the year is behind me. Good riddance! And yet I expect great things for 2011 and beyond. God is not through with me yet. I am surviving my sorrow because I continue to have Christ in me, the hope of glory.

On December 17 I was ready to take off to the East Coast to visit my sons. I flew into LaGuardia airport to spend six days with Simon, Dilia, and Lorenzo. I could sense tension in their home. My son and daughter-in-law didn’t shout at each other, but I saw pain in their faces. From my basement bed, I heard muffled unhappiness drift down the stairwell. This troubled me, especially since Dilia was seven months pregnant with baby number two.

Simon worked long days in Manhattan and Dilia needed to get away, so they left me at home with Lorenzo. I had anticipated spending quality time with Simon, but it turned out to be a bonding time between my grandson and me. Zachary arrived in Queens on Christmas Eve. That was my birthday, and we all went to a local restaurant to celebrate. Lorenzo was the center of attention. Most of his antics were welcome; some were not.

On Christmas Day we exchanged gifts. With a doting father, grandfather, and uncle, little Lorenzo was showered with presents.

With snow in the air, Zachary and I headed south to Virginia. For miles we discussed politics, religion, and the latest news. I learned his current passion was ballroom dancing.

I stayed with Zachary for the final days of 2010. My son had purchased Kennedy Center tickets as my birthday/Christmas gift and on Friday evening we headed into DC for a New Year's Eve gala. We drove to a commuter lot and took the Metro into the capitol. The center was packed. Zachary and I lost and found each other a dozen times.

After the balloons fell and the new year arrived, Zachary and I walked a few blocks to the Metro station. Revelers caroused in happy chatter. Their merriment provoked my melancholy as I sat in contemplation. *Would Kim have enjoyed this New Year's Eve party?*

On the drive home, Zachary and I discussed the metaphysical question "Where is she now?" Each word in that question was fraught with speculation. *Where* is a term of location. How can one have location outside the three dimensions of space? *Is* is a word that means *exists*. But what is the mode of her existence? She does not exist in the same realm of my existence. *She* refers to a person. But what is her identity? Does she know herself to be Kim? Would I recognize her as someone I loved and cherished? Finally, *now* is a time word. Outside of time what can *now* possibly represent? Is her *now* the same as my *now*? Space-Existence-Identity-Time. Where is my lovely Kim now?

Still rapt in conversation, we arrived home at two a.m., too wound up to sleep. Zachary suggested watching a Netflix movie, but the title didn't interest me. I thanked him for the memorable New Year's celebration and retired to my room. It was a *happy* Happy New Year because 2010—my *Annus Horribilis*—was behind me.

## 2011 JANUARY

I was slow to get out of bed the following morning, but Zachary was even slower. January first was a federal holiday, and most sites around the capitol were closed for the day. But we checked online and discovered that Mount Vernon was

open until three o'clock. When Zachary and I arrived at two, we had only one hour to walk the grounds.

As I looked at the colonial-era buildings, I told Zachary, "The last time you and I were here was 1977, when I was stationed at Fort Belvoir. You were nearly two and toddling." I pointed to the vault that contained the remains of our first president. "Thirty-three years ago, I asked your mom to stand by the front door for a picture. Just before I took the photo, I shouted out, 'Do you know the dead body of George Washington is in there?' She made an awful face and I snapped the picture. It seems like a moment ago."

After our tour, we returned to his house and rested for the remainder of New Year's Day. On January 2, I sat in on one of his Power Score classes, and on January 3, I returned to California.

After I arrived home, I continued to attend GriefShare, most of the time with Jody on leash. My canine companion lifted the spirits of all the participants. I also continued my road trips. My compulsion to drive had more to do with escape and less to do with arrival.

In late January I sat in my office, polishing a morning message. I was about to preach from Colossians 3:3: "For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God." My thoughts returned to the deep philosophical question of New Year's Day: "Where is she now?"

It seemed the best answer to this question is the one Paul wrote to Colossi. "Kim is now hidden with Christ in God." What more can be said than that?

Jody sat on the couch, restless for a walk. I grabbed her leash and opened my door. I stopped at the secretary's desk outside of my office. "Where do you think Kim is now?"

Caryl paused in thought. "Well, I can tell you this. Kim's still on Facebook. I saw her there yesterday."

Jody tugged me outside. As she sniffed to find just the right spot, I laughed. It's a burden to be a philosopher. Church secretaries are the ones who seem to have all the answers.

## FEBRUARY

Kim would have celebrated her sixtieth birthday on February 20, 2011. Koreans held this day of *Hwan-Gap* in great regard. At my sixtieth birthday, fourteen months earlier, I joked with Kim. "Your Hwan-Gap is just around the corner. How would you like to celebrate it?"

She scrunched her nose. "Sixty years old! I don't even want to think about it."

Kim never had to trouble her mind. She died two hundred days short of this milestone birthday. However, her survivors wished to honor her with this Korean day of remembrance.

After consulting with Zachary and Simon, we decided to make her birthday a two-part affair. We would hold a Saturday celebration in San Lorenzo on February 19, travel by camper to Vancouver, and hold a Sunday celebration on February 20.

Every Sunday morning, about twenty minutes before the start of the church service, I projected announcements onto an overhead screen. On most Sundays a dozen slides ran in automatic rotation. On February 6, three slides ran in sequence.

Slide one was a birth announcement. “Pastor Chris is proud to announce the arrival of his first granddaughter. Gia Foreman arrived on February 4 at two in the morning—six pounds and six ounces, eighteen inches top to bottom. Baby and mother are both doing great.” Next to these words, a photo of one-day-old Gia brought smiles to the congregation.

The projector then rotated to slide two. “You are invited to attend a celebration and remembrance of Kim Foreman on Saturday, February 19, at five p.m. in our fellowship hall.”

The next slide reminded the congregation of the six o’clock service. “Join us this evening as we continue our study through the book of Ecclesiastes. Tonight, we will consider chapter three: ‘To everything there is a season and a time to every purpose under the heaven.’”

From our sound booth, I watched these three slides flash before my eyes. And I heard God speaking to me. “Don’t worry, Chris. Birth and death are in My hands. Be faithful and trust Me to handle the details.”

The following week I received a large package in the mail. It was a three-foot-by-four-foot portrait of Kim, custom made from my favorite photograph. She stood in Rwanda surrounded by children. Her face was beaming. She wore a red T-shirt with the words *Joy of God* emblazoned on it. I had ordered this portrait as the centerpiece of her upcoming birthday party.

Zachary arrived in the Bay Area on February 17 and Simon arrived the next day. Dilia stayed behind to look after Lorenzo and newborn Gia.

It was a pleasure to be with my sons again. We talked into the night. Simon laughed when I told him how I remembered his new daughter’s name. “G-I-A. It stands for ‘God is Awesome.’”

On Saturday we packed the VW camper, then headed out the door about three p.m. We stopped off at a party store and picked up two large Mylar balloons.

I wanted to show my sons their mom's gravestone so we stopped at Holy Sepulcher Cemetery. Simon was pleased with his installation art. I touched each of the glyphs that told the story of their mother's life. We sang "Happy Birthday" with heavy hearts, leaving behind one balloon attached to the headstone.

We returned to my church for Kim's final farewell. I was blessed to see sixty people in attendance. Most came from our congregation, many of whom were not able to honor Kim at the August funeral.

Zachary, Simon, and I did not stick around long. We gobbled some food, packed a little more, and began our all-night trek to Vancouver, Washington. The February evening was cold, so I dressed Jody in her purple sweater.

With multiple drivers and snacks to fuel our way, the six hundred miles passed quickly. I let the boys do most of the driving as I rested in the back seat, content to listen to their animated conversation.

We arrived at Frank's home about noon on Sunday, just three hours before the northern Hwan-Gap was due to start in the social hall at Frank's church. My family in the Portland area was extensive: three sisters and one brother, with fourteen nieces and nephews, many of whom had spouses and children. Kim also had two brothers and two sisters living in Oregon. All of these relatives were invited to Kim's sixtieth birthday party, which doubled as a memorial service for those who did not attend her funeral in Hayward.

About forty people filled the social hall. They sat and snacked as Simon spoke, then Zachary, then I. The forty-eight glyphs of Kim's life were attached to walls and concrete pillars. The hour was informal and the conversations light hearted.

Eileen put together a memorial booklet consisting of pictures and written memories of Kim contributed by family members. Reading the tributes, I gained insight into how my late wife had inspired the younger generation.

I had asked one of my nephews to bring ten helium balloons to the social hall. At the conclusion of the celebration, Zachary handed the balloons to ten family members. He asked each to attach a handwritten note to his mother. My note read, "Know you are missed. Know you are loved. Know you will never be forgotten." We went outside and released our messages into heaven.

By five we were dead tired. As others cleaned, we drove the camper back to Frank's house. The boys stayed up a bit, but I conked out until the next morning.

On Monday I drove Zachary and Simon across the Columbia River to the Portland airport. Their flights departed only a few hours apart. Simon returned to JFK and Zachary to Dulles. I continued the road trip south to Ashland, Oregon, where I spent the night in a motel.

I arrived in Hayward after dark the next day. The condo was frigid, so I turned up the heat. I thumbed through my mail, checked phone messages, watered my

plants, and fed my dog. After eating a bowl of Cheerios for dinner, I washed my face, then sank into bed. Jody hopped up next to me. The bachelor life wasn't that bad. Was I learning that God's grace was sufficient?

## MARCH

February departed and March arrived. I was startled. On March 4 I looked at my desk calendar. I had overlooked the eight-month anniversary of the car crash. That was understandable since there was no February thirty-first. But I'd also overlooked March 3 as the eight-month marker of Kim's death. I considered this a positive rather than a negative development.

March was a quiet month. My old Baptist church in Tiburon sponsored a musical concert, with all proceeds going to CASA in memory of Kim. Afterward, the pastor sent me a check for several hundred dollars.

I received news from Rwanda, reporting tremendous progress in constructing the Light House. After paying for funeral expenses, I wired one-half of Kim's life insurance settlement to support the project. Franc e-mailed me pictures of the first floor completed and the retaining walls standing tall.

I strove to include routine into my days of bereavement. During my church lunch-hour I would change into my work-out sweats, run down Hesperian Boulevard, and lift weights at *24-Hour Fitness*. During most of this exercise time, ear buds provided music. I rotated my tunes between rock hits and classical. Shubert's *Trout Quintet* became a favorite. On occasion I would listen my way through an Audible book.

March 23, 2011, would have been our thirty-seventh wedding anniversary. My custom was to present Kim with roses equal to the number of years we had been married. But not this year. During my lunch hour, I stopped at the Party Store and bought a baggie full of wedding glitter— tiny red, blue, and silver emblems of wedding bells. After work, I visited her grave site.

With Jody watching from the car, I wept bitter tears as I sprinkled glitter over granite and soil as if it were holy water. "Thank you for thirty-six years of devotion. I know you would be with me for number thirty-seven if you could."

That evening I received a phone call from Simon. He asked how I was holding up. I thanked him for phoning on my loneliest day of the year.

After the vernal equinox passed and the weather warmed, I prepared for a series of serious road trips. Since my thoughts were planted in Paul's epistle to the Colossians, I chose a verse from that book. I asked Diane, a scrapbook enthusiast, to provide me with two-inch letters spelling out "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him" (Colossians 2:6).

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On a sunny March morning, Caryl helped me stick the sixty vinyl letters to the back end of my camper. I was ready to hit the road in Gospel style.

## APRIL

I finished my sermon series on the last Sunday in March. Once more I found myself preaching to my own edification. Paul's words were as relevant to my ears as to the ears in ancient Colossi.

When the final message concluded, I was unsure where to turn next. Easter saved me, in a sense. Four April sermons would be Lenten, leading to an Easter message on May 1. After that, who knew what would follow?

"Lord," I prayed, "You have given me the solemn responsibility to present Your Word to Your people. Speak, for Your servant is listening."

On April 4, I packed my Westfalia and began a four-day road trip to Death Valley. Before departing I parked the camper next to Kim's grave site so I could say goodbye to her.

With Jody riding shotgun I caught Interstate 80 heading east. I listened to old songs, remembered old times, and shed a bucket of tears. In the mix of golden oldies, the Beatles reminded me: "Ob-la-di, Ob-la-da." My life would go on.

Jody and I camped overnight near Lake Tahoe. I drove down the east side of the Sierra Nevada Mountains along Highway 395. After resting at Mono Lake, we continued into Nevada. We arrived at Death Valley just before dark. Soon my campfire blazed under a canopy of twinkling stars. I sat in a folding chair, gazing into the flames.

Without a soul around, I complained out loud to God. "Lord, sometimes I feel like hanging it up. Why go on preaching? Kim was half the team—and the better half at that. I'm working with one arm, about to collapse. I'm breathing with one lung, about to suffocate. I'm cheating my church. Did you spare me in Rwanda just to make me suffer?"

The starry host held their peace.

Feeling sorry for myself, I groused, "Lord, I'm so inadequate. I don't even know what I'm going to preach about next month."

A thought flashed into my mind. Preach what you know.

"But all I know is suffering," I muttered in dejection.

More silence from the stars.

Suddenly I got it. "Bingo," I shouted, and Jody scooted off my lap. With Bible software on my iPad, I conducted a word search for *suffering*. One book of the Bible stood above the rest, mentioning suffering seventeen times in five chapters. I grabbed my pocket New Testament and read through the first epistle of Peter.

Simon Peter wrote to scattered churches throughout the Roman Empire. During the reign of Nero, Christians were under fierce persecution, and many died for their faith. The suffering saints sought out Peter, prince of the apostles, seeking an explanation for their tribulation.

Since my soul was steeped in grief and I was banished to this remote desert, I read through the letter with acute awareness.

In 1 Peter 2:21–23 I read, “For you were called to this, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in His steps. He did not commit sin, and no deceit was found in His mouth; when He was reviled, He did not revile in return; when He was suffering, He did not threaten but entrusted Himself to the One who judges justly.”

“O God,” I cried out, “help me to follow in the steps of Christ. Help me to completely forgive Franc Murenzi and banish every bit of resentment. I entrust myself to You, Lord. You will judge the matter justly.”

I rested in the camper that night knowing that Biblical answers to suffering now resided in my head. But I also remembered the old proverb: “The longest journey in the world may well be the eighteen inches from head to heart.”

I spent the next full day on the valley floor. The temperature rose to ninety-three degrees at the Furnace Creek Visitor Center. I stopped at Dante’s View and Zabriskie Point. Jody and I walked around abandoned borax mills.

Chugging out of Death Valley into the mountains I experienced a rain shower, a double rainbow, and snow flurries all within eight hours. Jody and I passed the night in the desert wilderness along a gravel mining road.

When I returned to my church office, I spent a few days in careful study of 1 Peter—specifically Peter’s apologetic on suffering. I outlined a sermon series that would carry me into August. My attitude toward preaching had always been: “I don’t know enough about this Scripture. The best way for me to learn it is to preach it.”

After two Easter sermons I was traveling again, this time flying east to meet a member of my family I had never seen: Gia Foreman. My new granddaughter was eighty days old when I arrived at my son’s house in Queens.

This time I had every intention of functioning as a nanny. Simon commuted into Manhattan every day and Dilia took advantage of my presence to visit her friends. I managed a feeding schedule for Gia, a playing schedule for Lorenzo, and a nap schedule for both.

The hardest part of this visit was managing the shadow of Kim. Tears welled whenever I looked into Gia’s pudgy face and considered that Kim missed this joy. If God had granted her another twenty years, nothing would have given her more pleasure than pampering her grandchildren into adulthood. *Lord, why did You take this pleasure from her?*

I stayed with my son from Monday to Friday. By the time I left for home, I'd grown to appreciate the labor of these young parents. Two kids and two dogs for five days were the maximum this grandpa could handle.

After a brief sleep in my own bed, I officiated a wedding at noon on Saturday. The Beatles were right. "Life goes on."

## MAY

Easter 2011 fell on May first, very late in the year. My resurrection sermon came from John chapter twenty, where Jesus tells doubting Thomas, "Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

After Easter I was ready for another break. My associate pastor, Ken Hillard, agreed to cover the next two Sundays for me. My four-day road trip to Death Valley was just a tune-up for my big road trip to Texas.

I was a vagabond from May 3 to 18, stopping by streams, building campfires, listening to music, and watching mile markers whizz by. Jody and I visited my friends in Lubbock, my sister-in-law in Dallas, and my ninety-year-old uncle in San Antonio.

Zachary flew into Dallas, and together we tramped back to California. My kindred spirit slept in the top bunk of the camper while I slept below. I relished his company, cheering when he followed my good traits and groaning when he copied my bad ones.

We visited the Alamo, the UFO museum, the Sonoran Desert, the Joshua trees, and Pismo Beach. We spent a few pleasant days in Hayward, then Zachary flew back east.

Kim was never far from my mind. How she would have enjoyed Zach's intellect and wit. And how she would have scolded him when he discussed dropping out of grad school!

As the month ended, Frank and Lelia flew down for Memorial Day. We walked to the top of Mount Davidson, the highest point in San Francisco. As we sat, talked, and prayed. I told Frank, "I am returning to Rwanda to commemorate the one-year anniversary of the car crash—not so much out of desire, but out of duty. I feel derelict in her death. I must be diligent in her memory."

I explained to Frank my plans to build a roadside memorial for Kim at the point of the crash. As I spoke, I could see relief in his face. "Good for you," he said.

I shared with Al my intention to return to Rwanda. He read me his favorite verse: "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint".

He added, “Sometimes we soar like eagles and that’s a great feeling. Other times we run without getting tired. That’s wonderful too. But sometimes the best we can do as Christians is to stumble along—just put one foot in front of the other and not give up. I’m glad your feet are leading you back to Africa. Maybe it’s eagle time again.”

## JUNE

As I continued my practice of walking Jody while listening to audio books, I came across a recording of a true Christian hero: Joni Erickson Tada. In 2010 she released a book—on audio only—called *A Place of Healing*. I listened to it twice.

Talk about a suffering saint! Joni’s forty years of quadriplegia and her recent bout with chronic pain pushed my own suffering into perspective. Her wise exegesis of Scripture renewed my hope in a God who cares. It also engendered in me a stronger faith in Christ, who knows what it’s like to suffer.

Joni spoke of a time when she addressed a seminary class at Biola University on the topic of God’s redemptive purpose in suffering. By the end of her lecture, she was in acute pain. A student asked her why God permitted her to suffer.

“Why? I don’t know why,” she replied. “Maybe God has allowed it so you can hear this testimony and witness honest tears.”

And maybe that’s why God has allowed me to suffer as well, so I can minister to a hurting world. Christ’s suffering was redemptive. Perhaps mine could be too.

On the third Saturday in June, my church held a parking lot sale to raise funds for Africa.

Knickknacks covered a dozen tables, clothes were stacked on blue tarps, and old furniture sat in rows. Jody and I hung out from nine a.m. to five p.m. At the end of that long summer day we’d hauled in \$952.50.

Clearly yard sales and pledge drives could not raise the funds needed to complete the Light House. So, using my Mill Valley property as collateral, I applied for two line-of-credit loans: one from my insurance company and another with my local bank. I figured Kim paid for half the house. Why not pour her portion into Africa to establish a Bible institute in her name?

I continued to preach from 1 Peter. Back when I had introduced this book, I proclaimed that Peter’s major theme was *endurance under suffering*. By the third message, I corrected myself. No, the real theme was *joy in the midst of suffering*.

How is it possible that Saint Peter, under threat of death, could write these words to other suffering saints? “Though not seeing Him now, you believe in Him and rejoice with inexpressible and glorious joy.”

O God, fill me with this joy in the midst of my sorrow. In my quiet time I composed a reflection upon 1 Peter 1:8 called "It's All about Joy."

Happiness is joy experienced in the moment.  
Hope is joy anticipated.  
Sorrow is joy departed, now remembered.  
Praise is the overflow of joy.  
Peace is the in-working of joy.  
Love is the out-working of joy.  
Holiness is the bedrock of joy.  
Faith is the attitude of joy.  
Hell is the ever-absence of joy.  
Heaven is the ever-presence of joy.  
I rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

## JULY

On July 1, I ordered a forged aluminum plaque, three feet wide and two feet high. Holy Sepulcher Cemetery provided the extra ceramic photo of Kim. I mailed the photo to Florida along with the check for \$1080.

The oval photo would be embedded in the center of the plaque. Across the top would be "Dr. Kim Hyun Deok Foreman" and under it "February 20, 1951–August 3, 2010." I wrote the following words to put on the right side of the memorial plaque:

At this point, on this road on July 31, 2010, Dr. Kim Hyun Deok Foreman suffered a fatal car accident. She died in Kigali on August 3, 2010. Kim was a beloved wife, a loving mother, and a faithful servant of Jesus Christ. Kim loved the people of Rwanda. She will forever live in our hearts.

Under this tribute were words of Scripture. "For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory [Colossians 3:3–4]." On the left side of the plaque, the same words were written in the Kinyarwandan language.

I wanted to be with family on Independence Day, so I packed up the camper and headed north on July 3. Jody and I spent the night at the Weed rest stop and arrived in Turner, Oregon, the next afternoon. I visited Kim's sister and nephew and sat with them for a few hours at the Turner Market. I struggled to make conversation. Kim was the glue that bound me to this family and without her I felt my Korean in-laws drifting away.

My next stop was Canby, Oregon, to visit Jeanne. I talked with my sister for a while and then we went to see fireworks over Lake Oswego. That night Jody and I slept in the camper in Jeanne's parking space.

On July 5 I visited my brother Frank in Vancouver. My two Washington State sisters dropped in for lunch. I headed home on the sixth, grateful for the family God had given me and resigned to the gradual disengagement of Kim's family.

On July 9, the plaque arrived at the UPS store. I unwrapped the package and smiled at Kim's ceramic face smiling back at me. On the following Monday, I carried the plaque to GriefShare. After a two-month absence, the bereavement group was delighted to see me, but Jody more so.

The day was approaching for my July 18 departure to Africa. I met with my associate pastor, Ken Hillard, to discuss the three weeks he would fill the pulpit. I brought the memorial plaque to church on July 17 and asked the congregation to pray for me as I sought full reconciliation with Franc at the roadside dedication.

I encased the plaque in bubble wrap and packed it into a folding wardrobe bag. Then I dropped Jody off with Diane. Her husband, Charles, drove me to the airport. I stopped en route to spend a short night with Zachary in Virginia. The next morning, he drove me to Dulles where I boarded Ethiopian Airlines. I changed planes in Addis Ababa, and after another ninety minutes in the air, I landed in Kigali.

What would I say? How would I act? I knew I could control my outward demeanor toward Franc, but what about my visceral response?

Paul and Franc met me after I claimed my luggage. Paul exhibited enthusiasm while Franc stood in silence. I noted the ugly scar on the crown of his head.

After Paul hugged me, I reached out my hand to Franc. He shook it with vigor but without a word. Finally, he asked, "How was your flight?" I believed we were both striving to strike the right tone.

Paul explained he had business in Kigali and Franc would drive me back to Butare. Was this a setup? I never asked.

Franc showed me his replacement vehicle, a beat-up clunker that was half the car of his demolished CRV. I stood frozen for a few moments, then I closed my eyes, gulped, and sat next to Franc.

He gripped the steering wheel, looked straight ahead, and intoned, "I will drive carefully."

After an hour we entered Gitarama. "Franc, let's pause for a moment at the accident site."

He acknowledged, and after several minutes, pulled over and stopped.

I didn't recognize the roadside at first, but when I turned to face north, the accident scene rushed back. We crossed the blacktop and strolled in silence. I stooped to the asphalt and ran my fingers along the gouge mark, undiminished after a year.

Franc bowed his head as tears flowed from my eyes. I put my hand on Franc's shoulder. "Let's put the past behind us and work together for the glory of God."

He pointed toward a mound of dirt. "Over there. I talked to the property owner. He's agreed to sell us a little piece of land. That's where we'll put the memorial."

I walked to the spot, and with outstretched arms I twirled three-hundred-sixty degrees. "This will do fine."

On Sunday morning Paul invited me to preach at his church. His congregation welcomed me with respect and encouragement. I spoke about hope, choosing as my text Hebrews 6:18, "We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure."

On Monday and Tuesday, I taught classes in our front-yard classroom. I spoke from the book of Job. Several students described the trauma of the genocide. I shared a reflection with my Rwandan students. "For the past year I have been comparing myself to Job. Satan visited Job twice. The first time, he stripped Job of his wealth and children. On his next visit, Satan ruined his health. Even Job's friends turned against him. Who knows the only thing Satan did not remove from Job?"

A student in the back raised a hand. "His wife."

"That's right. Unlike Job, I didn't lose my health. I escaped the car crash without a scratch. I didn't lose my wealth. As a matter of fact, I'm richer now than I was before. I didn't lose my friends or my sons. The only thing I did lose was my wife. You can call me the 'Un-Job.'"

A few days later a CASR student greeted me. "Hello, I really enjoyed your class. Do you remember my name?"

I paused with embarrassment.

"Well, I remember your name. You're Doctor Un-Job."

On Wednesday I supervised the design of Kim's roadside memorial. I told the builders I wanted the plaque to be at eye level and suggested they use corrugated iron as the concrete mold. Late in the day, a dozen workers carried bags of concrete and rocks to the roadside.

On Thursday, the Light House construction foreman took charge of this mini-project and on Friday, we set up the cylinder mold and wired it into the foundation. It was about four feet high and three feet in diameter.

On Saturday, we added two more feet of concrete and embedded the aluminum plaque. At Paul's suggestion, we added two metal flower holders to the left and

right of the plaque. We were now prepared for the dedication scheduled to take place at two o'clock the next day.

On Sunday, exactly one year after the terrible crash, two hundred Rwandans gathered for the dedication of Kim's roadside memorial. The old man with the sharp knife showed up and I thanked him once more for cutting me loose from my harness. A short magistrate gave a long speech about reconciliation between the Hutu and Tutsi people. CASR handed out a dozen goats to nearby widows. Celebration was in the air.

Franc spoke of July 31 one year earlier. With sorrow in his voice, he asked for my forgiveness. I repeated several times, "Franc, I forgive you. Franc, I forgive you."

I spoke about Kim and how she had labored for the gospel in Rwanda. I shared my memories of that fateful day, gesturing toward the nearby road.

Finally, I turned toward Franc and said, "Brother Franc, forgive me for my hard heart. I know the car crash was an accident and you had no intention of harming Kim."

Franc's eyes teared up. "I forgive you."

We embraced and I held up Franc's arm like a prizefighter, proclaiming him to be my friend and executive director once more.

Upon hearing the translation of my words, the large crowd burst into applause. The biggest embrace I received during the entire ceremony came from Franc's wife. Claudine's tears of gratitude moistened my cheeks.

Franc crossed the street to the concrete memorial. The three of us joined arms posing for photos as Kim looked down from her cast-aluminum plaque. I thanked my friends, visiting dignitaries, and local citizens one more time. July ended in the restless solitude of my bedroom. One year had passed since the devastation of Kim's loss.

## AUGUST

On the first day of the month, two big events were behind me. I had dedicated a memorial to Kim and I had reconciled with Franc in public. I could finally exhale. I began an early-morning walk through the University arboretum. My thoughts centered on the day just past and stretched back 365 days further. I resolved to do two things: write my story to tell about my great love and my great loss; and relocate to Rwanda as a full-time missionary.

One chore remained undone. On the morning of the dedication, the memorial concrete had been too wet to paint. I wanted to complete this task before returning home. On Tuesday afternoon, Paul and I visited a paint store.

"What color do you want?" he asked.

"Let's make it one-part red, one-part blue, and two-parts white. That should make a kind of lavender, which Kim liked."

“That’s also the color of most genocide memorials here in Rwanda, so it’s appropriate.”

We bought four buckets of lavender paint and drove to the memorial. Franc followed in his car with Jane aboard.

While we were painting, Franc talked with me. “I appreciate you coming back to Rwanda and forgiving me. But can you guess the first time I felt your forgiveness?” He paused as I looked in his direction. “It was when you sat in my car at the airport. I felt like your son again.”

“That almost didn’t happen. I came within an inch of grabbing my bags and running away.”

Franc laughed. “I half expected you to do that.”

“Franc, I was angry for a long time, but God healed my heart. I still ache for Kim every day, but I can see that what happened was an accident. This has been a test for you and me. Can we forgive each other as God has forgiven us?”

He gestured to the other side of the road. “I think that process began right over there a few days ago.”

Only two buckets were needed to complete the job. Paul gave the remaining paint to the old man with the knife, explaining to me, “This neighbor has accepted the role of custodian for the small parcel of land. He will tend the flowers and paint as needed. We’ll put a few coins in his pocket whenever we pass by.”

Franc turned his car around and returned to Butare with Jane. I continued to Kigali with Paul. We had booked a single night at the Bon Jeur Guest House.

On August 3, Paul drove me to King Faisal Hospital. As we approached the building on the one-year anniversary of Kim’s death, I could not hold back the tears.

We walked to the front desk and I asked, “Can you call Dr. Carlos for me? He’s in neurosurgery.”

The woman looked through her directory. “I’m sorry. There is no one on my roster by that name.”

Paul talked to a hospital official in the lobby, then returned to me. “He says Dr. Carlos went back to Cuba several months ago.” Paul shrugged. “What do you want to do now?”

“As long as we’re here, I’d like to see the place one last time. Let’s walk up to the intensive care unit.”

As we moved through hospital corridors, sights and smells summoned the ghost of Kim. I walked down a corridor and peered through a familiar screened window. I saw another bandaged body in the bed once occupied by my wife.

I sighed with resignation. *This is as it should be. People move on and I must move on. I can neither recapture nor undo this event. Let the past stay in the past. Let the dead bury their dead.*

Paul dropped me off at the airport, waving goodbye as I passed through security. My mind returned to the early-morning walk of a few days earlier. Yes, I will return to Rwanda as a missionary. And yes, I will write a book.

During my eight-hour layover in Ethiopia, I decided to get started on my memoir writing. Where to begin? Maybe with my church column. I thought about Elisabeth Kübler-Ross and her five stages of grief. I felt I had reached the final stage of acceptance. At last, my head had traversed the one-cubit span to my heart.

As I continued my journey home, I began to write about my journey to forgiveness. The first step was *forgiveness by the Book*. I knew full well that Jesus said, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." I also knew this forgiveness was not superficial but from the heart. I first had to become obedient to the truth I understood. Above all, forgiveness was a question of will.

The second step for me was *forgiveness from the mind*. Whenever my imagination grew bitter and I clenched my teeth at the thought of Franc, I mentally reminded myself, "I have forgiven him in obedience to Christ."

The third step in my journey was *forgiveness with the lips*. I had to confess to myself and say aloud to others, "Yes indeed, I have forgiven Franc." That positive confession reinforced the thoughts of my mind.

The fourth step was *forgiveness from the heart*. When waves of grief made my body tremble and tears flow, it became natural to lift Franc up to God rather than curse him. Heart forgiveness occurred when I consistently applied the same standard of grace to Franc as I applied naturally to myself.

The two final steps reached beyond forgiveness, because forgiveness describes what takes place in the heart of one person. *Reconciliation* is a kind of mutual forgiveness. I have forgiven Franc in public for his involvement in Kim's death, and he has publicly forgiven me of my hard heart. We are reconciled.

*Restoration* occurs when the offender is returned to a position of trust and authority. I think of the way Jesus restored Peter to his leadership role after he denied his Master three times. Yes, I had restored Franc to his previous position in Rwanda, but it took me a full year to reach this stage of forgiveness, even with focused effort.

An occasional flash of unforgiveness still enters my mind. These thoughts I count as temptations, and as they occur, I take them captive and give them to God.

I believe there is one additional step in my journey to perfect forgiveness. I call it forgiveness of the redeemed. I'm not sure what it will look like, but perhaps I will experience it at journey's end in eternity.

Somewhere over the Atlantic Ocean, I put these thoughts to paper for my September *Pastor's Corner*.

When I arrived back in the States, Zachary was at Dulles Airport, waiting to pick me up. The next day we drove to DC to visit the Catholic University of America. I met with Julie, the diplomat who was now re-assigned to the capitol.

In the afternoon, Zachary dropped me off at the Bolt Bus Company. I traveled to Penn Station where Simon met me at a Manhattan Starbucks. My heart gladdened when I saw his familiar presence emerge from the crush of urban strangers. We talked until our paper cups emptied. He spoke with joy about his two children, but with sadness about his wife. He and Dilia were talking about separation.

I spent two nights with Simon in Queens where I held Gia in my arms, marveling at this little bundle of wonder. In the hot daytime I walked with Lorenzo to the corner park. Little Lolo squealed in the squirting water and splashed his feet in puddles while Gia squirmed in her stroller. As I sat on the park bench, thoughts of Kim shadowed me. How she would have loved these moments! Yes, more than anything else this world had to offer.

On August 10 Simon and I left his house and walked to the subway. After a few stops, I hugged my son, stepped off the train, and continued on a different line to La Guardia Airport.

My year of mourning had passed. Any obligation I held to Kim was complete. It was time to move on with life. But what did that mean? Another job? Another home? Another romance?

After a three-week absence, everyone was happy when I returned from Africa—my church, my neighbors, but especially my dog. Back in the condo, I sorted through three weeks of accumulated mail. One letter was particularly discouraging. My local bank had declined my application for a line of credit. This was doubly disheartening since my insurance company had turned me down a month earlier. How could I possibly raise construction money for the Lighthouse?

My misfortune continued. Another letter informed me that my credit card had been compromised. I telephoned the Visa rep. She explained that the fraudulent charges could be reversed, but Visa had to reissue a new credit card with a new number. That was a hassle because I had several recurring charges on auto-pay.

One of the minor auto-pay charges was for USAA Life, a holdover from my military days. As I recalled, the charge involved something Kim had signed up for ten years earlier. I remembered her saying, "I want a life insurance policy in case something happens to you. You never know."

I figured the pay-out couldn't be much because the charge was only \$18.80 per month. After Kim died, I had searched through her personal papers but couldn't

locate the original insurance contract. Preoccupied with grief, I had let this irritant slide month after month.

I sat in my office on August 22, dealing with a backlog of chores. Last on my to-do list was to call USAA Life Insurance and give them a new Visa number. I dialed the insurance rep, identified myself, and explained that my credit card had been compromised. After reading him the new number, I added, "Oh, yeah. I also need to change the beneficiary from Kim to my sons."

"Why?" he asked.

I got teary eyed. "Because Kim died in August of 2010."

"Oh, I'm sorry to hear that. Okay, I'll make the changes." He paused while tapping in new data. "By the way, how'd she die?"

"In a car accident."

After an extended pause, he said, "Didn't you know both you and your wife are covered on this policy?"

"No," I confessed. "I couldn't find the contract."

With astonishment he added, "The policy is for accidental death only. And it's for one hundred thousand dollars."

I gasped.

After I recovered my composure, we talked for several minutes. He promised to send me forms; I agreed to mail him a death certificate stating *car accident* as cause of death.

I hung up the phone in disbelief and raised my hands to heaven. "Thank you God and thank you Kim."

I walked to Caryl's desk and waited until she glanced up from her work. "You'll never guess what just happened."

Her eyes widened.

I related details of the telephone conversation. "So, what do you think?"

"Jehovah-Jireh."

"What?"

"Jehovah-Jireh," she repeated. "It means 'the Lord provides.'"

"You're right. And one hundred percent of that Jehovah-Jireh money is going straight to Africa. It will be used to build an institute that will be named after the woman who had the foresight to purchase an insurance policy ten years before she died. How ironic is that?"

I returned to my office and glanced at the picture of Kim hanging on my corkboard. Her smile seemed broader than ever. The Lord does provide.

A few days after this providential miracle, I shared with Caryl my intention to resign in one year and move to Africa. She looked puzzled. "Don't use the word *resign*. That's too harsh. You'll be sixty-two by then. Let's just say you'll retire in one year."

The church held its deacon meeting the following Wednesday. I showed the deacons the retirement letter I had drafted. After Deacon Al read it, he said, “Chris, we’re sad about this, but we understand. To be honest, I can’t believe you stayed on this long after Kim’s death. You know, I’ve never heard of a pastor giving a one-year notice before leaving. Usually, it’s just a week or two.”

I made fifty copies of my letter and took them to our quarterly business meeting on August 28. I passed them out, then read the statement aloud.

My tenure as pastor was set at six years—four years with Kim and two years without.

I began to plan my relocation. Wanting to ship my household goods and construction material to Africa, I looked into the costs of sending a cargo container from our church to Butare.

I also looked into relocating Jody to Africa with me. She was my rescued dog; I was her rescued human, and I wanted to act in her best interest. I knew it would be difficult to take her to Africa but equally difficult to leave her behind.

August 31 fell on a Wednesday, the day of the church fellowship meal. Thirteen months had elapsed since Kim left my life. Driving home, I spoke aloud, *God, I have kept my vow as best I could. I did not move my residence. I have my job as pastor for another year. O Lord, can I now begin to search for another woman? I don’t think You designed me to live the single life. I’ve waited a full year, even adding an extra month for good measure. Lord, I long to love and to be loved.*

I was still wearing two wedding bands: one on my left ring finger and one on my right pinky. I removed the rings with deliberation and placed them in a jewelry box that had belonged to Kim. *O Lord, help me as I plunge ahead.*

I switched on my iPad and tapped the web browser. I entered *eHarmony.com* and downloaded the app for one-tap access. I stayed up late that night completing the compatibility questionnaire, posting pictures, and devising clever words for my profile.

Under the heading *the most important thing I’m looking for in a person*, I wrote, “I want to find a woman who loves me. That’s sensible. But I also want to find a woman who loves God more than she loves me. That’s extraordinary.”

With trepidation I tapped the *send* button. My profile was posted. I had cast my bread upon August waters. I wondered what September winds would blow my way.



## Chapter 26

# RECONSTRUCTED

September 2011 to December 2012  
Hayward, California

*I will restore to you the years that the locust has eaten. You shall eat in plenty,  
and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God,  
who has dealt wondrously with you.*  
*(from Joel 2:25 & 26)*

Thirteen months after Kim's death, my identity flipped from widower to bachelor. I put my future into the hands of my loving Father who knew better than I about my hunger for intimacy and my thirst for spiritual connection.

After meeting Liz, I experienced a battle between passion for a wife-to-be and loyalty to a wife who once had been. I wondered how I could de-couple from Kim in order to couple with Liz. Could the broken shards of my life be reconstructed?

This chapter is an abbreviated re-telling of my story as written in *Forgive like a Rwandan*. For an expanded account of events, please refer to my memoir of love, loss and letting go.

### 2011 SEPTEMBER

A few moments after I awoke on the first of September, I trotted into the living room, where my iPad was charging. I was startled to find five responses to my eHarmony posting. I responded to a few of the matches with a *smile*. As I peered into online faces, I thought, Kim is my past. Could this woman be my future? I wasn't looking to replace a wife. I wished to reclaim a life. Didn't God say, "It is not good that a man should be alone?" Did He intend this pronouncement to apply only once in a lifetime?

I called Frank and told him about my eHarmony endeavor. “The Internet helped me find a dog. If it could find me a woman with half the devotion and disposition of Jody, I would be a lucky man indeed.”

Frank laughed then informed me about his sixtieth birthday celebration. I told him I’d try to make it.

On Friday, I checked out twelve more matches on eHarmony. I began to correspond with a woman identified as *Liz from San Mateo*. In one of her online pictures, she posed with a pit bull. *This lady looks nice enough, but is my dog compatible with hers?*

I gave Liz a smile and answered a few structured comments. Through her responses, I discerned that Liz held a serious Christian commitment. It seemed to me that we were *equally yoked*. I soon settled on her as my best prospect.

On Sunday we exchanged a flurry of messages. I couldn’t sleep that night. My heart was a runaway freight train. Could I possibly be in love with this woman after two days? I hadn’t even met her. Heck, I hadn’t even spoken with her! I’d heard of love at first sight, but *love at first click?* God, why did You make me like this?

At three a.m. I sent Liz a quick message. “I’m awake—tears in my ears. I cannot see around the corner, but I suspect something wonderful is there.”

About ten minutes later, my iPad chimed. “Me too.”

I phoned Liz on Labor Day morning and heard her voice for the first time. I learned her name was *Jean Elizabeth*, but she went by *Liz*. She was eight years younger than I, divorced, and childless. She owned a home in San Mateo, worked for Visa corporation, and attended Central Peninsula Church in Foster City.

When I asked her about the pit bull, she laughed. “That dog doesn’t belong to me. I posed with it at my friend’s house.” As the conversation continued, Liz and I agreed to meet in the evening at a Starbucks not far from her home.

On Labor Day I fretted about my first date in thirty-seven years. I parked at Starbucks at seven thirty on the dot. I scanned the tables inside and recognized the woman from the eHarmony photos: hazel eyes, auburn hair, petite frame, and a casual but well-groomed look.

Her first words to me were “I thought our date was at seven fifteen.”

Argh! Not a good way to begin a relationship.

The date improved. Liz was easy to talk to and we covered miles of conversational terrain. She told me I was her fifth date of the three-day weekend. She had left guy number four at seven o’clock. “I’m on eHarmony, Christian Cafe, and Christian Mingle.”

“Wow! I posted my profile on Wednesday and it looks like I’ve got a keeper on Monday.”

Liz considered for a moment, then smiled.

After an hour we left Starbucks and strolled toward her Honda Civic. I bowed a polite good-night. Did she expect more?

We met again on Wednesday which confirmed the joy of Monday was no fluke. There was definite chemistry between us. Liz asked, "So, where do we go from here? Do you want to be exclusive?"

"Is that like going steady?"

She giggled.

"I was never the kind of guy who dated several girls at the same time. Let's go steady and see where God leads us."

I walked Liz to her car, gave her a shy kiss on the forehead, and rushed away. I glanced over my shoulder. Liz stood gazing in my direction. Did she expect more than a quick smooch?

On Friday, I decided it was time for Liz to meet my family, so I brought Jody along. We rendezvoused in the Starbucks parking lot and Liz drove the two of us to her house for dinner.

When we arrived, Liz asked me to sit on the sofa while she arranged the kitchen table. "I wanted to do something simple," she said, "so I prepared meatloaf and baked potatoes. I hope you don't mind."

"Oh, no. Simple is good."

When the table was set, she invited me to sit and then to pray for the food. "Dear Lord, I thank You for the opportunity to share this meal with Liz. I ask you to bless the food and to guide us as we move forward in our relationship. May all things be done to Your glory. Amen."

When the meal was complete, I helped her move the dishes to the sink. Then together we moseyed to her sofa. I told Liz about my long-term plan to relocate to Africa. She reacted with calm, saying our relationship was in God's hands and she trusted him for whatever might happen. I then told her about my intent to return to Rwanda for a two-week mission trip in January. She asked for the exact dates, so I flicked on my iPad and e-mailed her a copy of my travel itinerary.

"Are you seriously thinking about going with me?"

"I don't know yet. I'll have to pray about it." She shimmied closer to me.

Thinking about how I had bowed to her on the first date and pecked her forehead on the second, I decided this lady deserved a real kiss. As I put my arm around her petite frame and puckered up, my dog jumped onto my lap. Jody looked at Liz and licked her face.

"I can't believe it," I said. "She kissed you before I did."

"I understand. She's been the number one girl in your life and she's not used to sharing you."

Jody may have given the first kiss, but it was my pleasure to deliver the next dozen. After a series of passionate embraces and quiet conversations, Liz said, "It's getting late. Let me drive you back to Starbucks."

I returned to Hayward about nine. After parking in the basement garage, I took Jody for a walk across the empty campus. When I put the back of my fingers

to my nostrils, I inhaled the fragrance of Lizzie's hand. I was smitten. My sister Charlotte would call it *twitterpated*. I closed my eyes and thanked God that once again a special woman was in my life.

I couldn't sleep that night. My mind was a tornado of whirling possibilities. I sent Liz an e-mail.

She replied immediately. "What are you doing awake? I've been up since three thirty reflecting on our closeness last night and not wanting the evening to end. I am going to try to go back to sleep now."

Liz was a scheduler. Several months beforehand, she had planned a getaway with her girlfriends on the Sonoma coast. I was spontaneous. At the last minute, I decided to drive north to celebrate Frank's sixtieth birthday. It just so happened that Liz's destination was en route to mine.

On Saturday, Liz drove to the Sea Ranch and on Sunday I headed up coastal Highway 1 in my Westfalia camper. I met Liz at her friend's beach house. Her companions were concerned about Liz and paid careful attention to the new man in her life. She had been disappointed before.

I stayed only a few hours. But before continuing my road trip, Liz and I walked along the beach hand-in-hand. "You got the thumbs up," she said with a giggle.

The six hundred miles to Vancouver were consumed with thoughts of Liz, but also thoughts of Kim. Loyalty to my late wife battled passion for my new girlfriend. O God, Your Word informs my head that my intentions are honorable. As a single man, I am permitted to pursue a single woman. Please pass the word to my heart as well.

I stayed with Frank for a few days. Our three sisters joined us at Sherri's Restaurant for his birthday bash. I passed onto him a few of the gag gifts I had received for my sixtieth: a cone-shaped hat with *60!* in red letters and a T-shirt with the words *old geezer*.

I understood that Liz was serious about our relationship when she sent me this e-mail on September 22: "Hi dear one, I just purchased tickets for Africa. We are traveling together. This is really a step of faith for me since I don't sleep on long plane trips. The Lord will have to provide me with enough rest."

I called her the next day. "I'm surprised that you're going to Africa with me. I think it will be a time of testing for both of us."

"I surprised myself," she said. "Yesterday I shared the news with my friend, Carolyn. She questioned my sanity. 'But you've only known this guy three weeks!'"

After a Saturday dinner, Liz offered to share details of her past. "Ask me anything. I'll try to answer all your questions."

She told me she was born in Denver, where her mother was a flight attendant and her father was a businessman. Her sister, Tricia, was born a few years after her.

Her dad's business moved the family to Pennsylvania, Oklahoma, and Illinois. When Liz was twelve, the four of them settled in San Mateo, California.

She told me that her father, Bill, and her mother, Becky, squabbled for as long as she could remember. She often escaped to her grandmother's house while they were fighting. They divorced just before Liz entered UCLA in 1975.

Her mother remarried, stayed in San Mateo, and lived nearby as a recent widow. Liz was in contact with her mother a few times a week.

Her father stayed in the area for twenty years, but after retirement, he moved with his second wife to Asheville, North Carolina. Liz told me her father was not in good health and didn't leave his house much. She was in phone contact with him almost every weekend.

Liz grew tearful as she discussed her own past. She had married Matt when she was thirty. He had been a church leader—an ideal husband, she thought. But in the following years, Liz struggled with her husband's infidelity and addictions. After seven years of misery, they divorced.

Liz dated for a while then met Phil. She hoped he was the right man for her, but he abruptly broke off their engagement a month before their wedding day. She felt humiliated and abandoned. "I hope you're my omega man," Liz said.

I answered, "We're a lot alike. Neither of us went on to eHarmony looking for dates. We went looking for mates. I realized from the start that our goal must be marriage. I'm okay with that, but let's take it one step at a time. I'm hoping that you'll be my omega woman."

She snuggled next to me.

I looked into her eyes. "I love you, Liz. What more can I say than that?"

"I feel the same way toward you. But the word *love* is hard for me to say. I'm divorced, my parents are divorced, my sister's divorced, and most of my friends are too. I've seen what happens when you give your heart away."

"Not all the time, sweetheart. Not all the time."

## OCTOBER

Liz and I knew that before we came together in marriage, we first had to come together as friends. That was no easy task. We were both set in our ways. I had once preached a message about friendship to my San Lorenzo congregation. I presented the definition of *friend*, listing three aspects: knowledge, trust, and affection. The affection aspect of our friendship was certainly in place. But we needed time to grow in knowledge of each other so we could fully trust.

Liz's mom had been out of town for a few weeks, and she returned to San Mateo on October 2. A few days later, she invited us to her home for dinner. I drove Liz across town to her mother's house. Jody stayed in my car.

Becky was eighty-one, but appeared much younger. As we talked around her dinner table, she told me about her Pilates classes and favorite TV shows. After dessert she led me upstairs to show me a jigsaw puzzle that was almost complete.

Then we went into her living room, where we sat and chatted a while longer. After calling it a night, Liz and I said our goodbyes. As we walked onto the front steps, I said to Becky, "Let me get my dog so you can meet her too."

I opened the car door and lifted Jody into my arms. "Liz really likes this dog. As a matter of fact, she can't decide if I'm the prize and Jody's the bonus, or Jody's the prize and I'm the bonus."

Liz bumped me with her shoulder. "Of course, you're the prize, sweetie."

I thanked Becky for the meal and we drove away. In the car, Liz said, "So now you've met my mother. Why don't you meet my father too?"

On Saturday, she asked me to set my iPad on the coffee table and use Skype for a two-way video conversation. I sat on the sofa with Liz at my side and Jody at my feet.

We talked about ten minutes. Bill was wearing a baseball cap. His wife, Sybil, popped in and out, managing the technology. Bill talked about thunderstorms in Asheville and a loose bear in the neighborhood.

I told him about my church in San Lorenzo and my ministry in Africa. Then I moved Jody into camera range and talked about my dog.

Liz explained to her father and Sybil how we had met on a dating site and told him we enjoyed hiking together.

After the call ended, she said to me, "I didn't want to tell him that I'm going to Rwanda. He'd worry about me like I was still his little girl."

Late in the evening, back in my condo, I thought about Kim's brothers and sisters. I was sad that they were slipping out of my life. But was that void being filled by a future set of in-laws? God loves to restore relationships.

Liz had visited my church office a few times, but she was reluctant to attend a Sunday service. She said she enjoyed her own church and would feel uncomfortable at mine. "I don't want to be compared to Kim," she confessed. However, October 23 was Pastor Appreciation Day and Liz promised to attend, as long as she could keep a low profile.

Since Caryl knew Liz from her office visits, I asked her to keep an eye out for Liz. As she entered the church, Caryl gave her a bulletin and sat with her in the last row of pews.

After closing the service with a benediction, I reminded the people of the reception in the fellowship hall. As the crowd started to move, Caryl escorted Liz up the center aisle to stand next to me. I shook hands with a dozen friends and

introduced them to the woman at my side. “This is Liz. She’s the one I’ve been dating for a few months.” I wasn’t surprised that most had already guessed the identity of this mysterious visitor.

I walked Liz to the reception, greeting people along the way. Before cutting the cake, I spoke into the handheld mike, “I want to thank all of you for allowing me to be your pastor for the last five years.”

I turned to My right. “This lady is Liz. We’ve been seeing each other for a few months and I thought it was time for you to meet her.”

She waved shyly to the forty people in the fellowship hall.

“Be sure to make her feel welcome.”

A dozen people flocked around us to meet Liz.

Some said to me, “Pastor, congratulations for five years of service.” Others said, “It’s good to see you smiling again.”

## NOVEMBER

With Liz working ten-hour weekdays and me focused on Sunday preaching, we established a weekly pattern. I drove to her home for dinner on Tuesday, and on Saturday we hiked in the open spaces of San Mateo County. On occasion we broke this pattern, but our lives were full to bursting.

Cargo preparation for Rwanda consumed my work days. I boxed up most of my church library, sorting books in an empty classroom. I moved many excess items from my condo into the same church classroom.

On November 20, Zachary came into town, and on November 21, Home Depot delivered a truckload of construction material to the church lot.

Just after one p.m. on November 22, a forty-foot cargo container pulled into the church parking lot. A dozen volunteers carried items from storage and packed them in the container. Construction material, classroom furnishings, book boxes, and rummage sale items entered the cargo hold. Kim’s heavy gravestone was wheeled into a back corner.

I loaded my Japanese bed and bookcases with extra care. When I relocated to Rwanda, I wanted these comforts of home undamaged. I thanked everyone for their help and watched the truck pull out, taking the cargo to the port of Oakland for its ocean voyage to Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

On November 23, Zachary picked up Simon and Lorenzo at the San Francisco airport. The four of us were gathering for the Thanksgiving holiday. Our plan was to spend one night in my condo and then travel to Calistoga, in the Napa Valley wine country, for a holiday dinner. Liz and her mother would meet us there.

I anticipated challenges with the get together. I wanted more than anything for my two sons and Liz to hit it off. I prayed that Zachary and Simon would accept a *significant other* in my life who was not their mother. I prayed that Liz would accept my sons and not perceive them as rivals for my affection. And I prayed for wisdom as the man in the middle of this complicated dynamic.

On Thanksgiving morning, we headed to Calistoga. Zachary drove my camper, with Simon in the shotgun seat. I was in the back entertaining Lorenzo in his car seat.

The turkey dinner for six provided an atmosphere for pleasant interaction. As the adults talked, Lorenzo grabbed his fork and spoon and banged the table.

The boys stayed in my condo for a few more nights. On Saturday we shared dinner at Liz's house in San Mateo. During the return drive, I asked my sons what they thought of Liz. Zachary responded, "Dad, I don't know much about her, but I can see she's good to you. What more can we ask?"

## DECEMBER

After the flurry of Christmas events, Liz and I prepared for our first visit to Portland as a couple. Lizzie would meet my brother and sisters and I would meet her sister.

On December 28, I left Jody with Diane, picked up Liz, and drove to the airport. Once in Portland, we headed to Southwest Hills in a rental car.

I enjoyed the evening with Tricia and her husband, Jim. They prepared a delightful vegetarian meal in their gourmet kitchen. Sachi, their pit bull mix, had the run of the house and Tricia demonstrated his ball catching prowess. Liz spent the night in the upstairs guest room while I slept on an air mattress in the basement.

We wanted some time to ourselves, so on Thursday we booked a hotel suite. We drove to Multnomah Falls and hiked the surrounding trails. A light rainfall added to the adventure of the day.

We spent Friday with Frank and Lelia. The four of us walked through the drizzle in the afternoon and talked about Africa in the evening. Liz went to bed early and I stayed up late conversing with Frank.

"She's different from Kim," Frank said. "But that's good. You shouldn't try to duplicate what you lost. She appears to love you and to love God. And she's a lot younger than you too. What more could a guy ask?"

On Saturday afternoon my three sisters dropped by Frank's house for a New Year's Eve party. Charlotte brought a cake and lit four candles in the shapes of 2-0-1-2. Liz and I were the center of attention as together we blew out candles that symbolized the new year—a new beginning.

Each of my sisters, independent of the other two, took me aside and whispered, "It's so good to see you smiling again." I knew that Jeanne, Charlotte, and Eileen had loved Kim. Yet, they valued the happiness of their little brother. Like Frank,

they understood that my agenda was not to replace my late wife, but to reclaim my shattered life.

As I drove our rental car to the airport, Liz said, “Your sisters are so joyful. Love just oozes from them.”

“Yes, they’re a hoot to be around. Each is so different, but the imprint of God makes them alike.”

Our flight left at nine p.m. on December 31 and landed in San Francisco a few hours before midnight. I was so tired when we arrived in San Mateo, I spent the night at Lizzie’s house. Her living room couch opened into a twin sized bed and I settled into sleep. Just after I closed my eyes, a burst of fireworks announced the arrival of a new year.

## 2012 JANUARY

Near Year’s Day fell on a Sunday. I had to rise early in San Mateo to cross the seven-mile bridge into San Lorenzo. Diane brought Jody to church for a handoff. The dog jumped into my arms. “Jody,” I said, “I haven’t seen you since last year!” Everyone in fellowship hall laughed.

After my forty-five-minute sermon, I was exhausted and headed straight home. I slept through the afternoon, then phoned Liz. We talked until dark

Liz grew anxious about our trip to Africa. She spoke of long flights, bugs and snakes, food poisoning and malaria. It all made her apprehensive. She strove to keep a positive attitude, but as the departure day approached, her worry increased. I could tell that Rwanda was way outside her comfort zone. It was also clear to me that Liz was making this sacrifice on my behalf, testing the waters to see if she could actually survive in Rwanda as a missionary’s wife.

“Lean on me,” I told her. “God has not only given me thick rhinoceros skin; I’ve got the full rhino package.”

We boarded British Airlines on January 9 and spent one night in London. The next day we boarded the flight to Addis Ababa. Liz was already grumpy with travel fatigue. We spent one night in Ethiopia, where I could see Liz was struggling. While I was coming into my element, Liz was leaving hers.

Paul and Franc met us in Kigali and drove us to Butare. Liz was polite in public but cranky in private. She complained about dirty rooms, unsanitary toilets, terrible food, and the red dust that clung to just about everything.

“What did you expect?” I groused back. “This is a mission house in Rwanda, not a five-star hotel.”

On Friday we quarreled and she threatened to return to the States without me. I couldn't understand why she wasn't hardy, like me. She couldn't understand why I didn't empathize with her misery.

At the close of a very bad Saturday, I pleaded, "Liz, we are being tested—not so much about Africa, but about each other. Can we persevere as a couple under this stress, or do we give up on each other?"

After the church service on Sunday, her disposition improved. "I'll stay here for the duration, but I could never live in Africa for the long term. The people I've met are fine and the Christian worship was inspiring. But I'm not called to be a missionary in Rwanda." Her eyes filled with tears, "I'm sorry. I want to do it, but I just can't."

I sensed her tender spirit and asked if we could pray together. After asking God to lead us according to His will, I said, "Let's just enjoy the next eight days as if we're tourists. We can talk about our future on the way home."

"I think I can do that," she said. "But please don't judge me too harshly. Give me grace and try to understand how difficult this is for me."

That afternoon, I began teaching in the front-yard classroom. I stood with my back to a chalkboard, facing twenty students seated in white plastic chairs. Liz sat in the back, observing.

I taught from John, chapter 13, the story of Jesus washing His disciples' feet. I taught that love and humility are the twin faces of the same coin. When I concluded, Liz told me, "You're a great teacher and missionary. If you feel called to do this, I won't stand in your way."

On Tuesday morning, Liz and I walked the forested trails across university property. As we turned a corner, I whispered, "Look, Liz, there's a monkey." As we approached, the animal scampered away. We followed it and found ourselves in the midst of a monkey forest. There must have been thirty of the little creatures. They were hanging from tree limbs and playing in pairs. Lizzie's face shone with joy at the unexpected sight.

A few days later we walked in the woods again. This time carrying a dozen finger bananas. Soon we faced our troupe of vervet monkeys on the walking trail. We tossed a few tiny bananas their way, which they quickly consumed. Then they lunged at the bananas Liz was carrying. She was startled at their aggression and we retreated down the trail.

At noon I addressed two hundred students at the outdoor university stadium. Liz sat in the front row with Jane. I spoke about sexual integrity and Christian dating. One male student rose to ask me a question. "What is the line in dating? How far is too far?"

I chuckled. “All of you guys, I want you to know you have a God-given warning apparatus. Please stand and look above your head.” All the men stood and looked up to the metal roof. “Now look straight down between your legs.”

The men looked down and the women giggled. Liz put both hands over her mouth.

“You are looking at your built-in thermometer. When you cross the line with your girlfriend, your internal temperature gets hot and your thermometer starts to rise. That’s how you know if you’ve crossed the line. If your thermometer goes up, then back off. If it doesn’t, you’re fine.”

After we concluded, Jane was still laughing as she and Liz approached me. “This is your ministry,” Liz said. “You have a gift for speaking to young people about dating and sex.”

As the event wound down with exuberant singing, an invasion began. About one hundred vervet monkeys of all sizes closed in on us. They climbed in the rafters, rattled on the tin roof, and walked up the aisles. One monkey scampered to a loudspeaker and yanked on wires. A guitar player chased it away. Then, as quickly as they had appeared, the troupe scampered across the soccer field and disappeared into the forest.

After the lecture Liz and I talked about the monkey incursion. She offered a practical theory. “The monkeys appeared because I fed them bananas the day before and they sought me out for more.”

I counter-offered a spiritual theory. “You were hoping to see monkeys again today and God met your desire—to overflowing.” Whatever the explanation, Liz marveled to see this handiwork of God close up.

On Sunday after church, Liz and I visited the Rwanda National Museum, and on Monday Pastor Paul drove us to Kigali to begin our journey home. We flew from Rwanda to Ethiopia on Tuesday and once more spent the night in Addis Ababa. We squabbled most of the time.

During our twenty-four-hour stopover in London, our fighting grew intense. Liz criticized everything I did. My rhinoceros’ skin was wearing thin. The only thing we seemed to have in common was our faith in God, and it was only by His grace that we survived Heathrow Airport as a couple.

As we flew over the Atlantic, I shared my heart with Liz. “If I have to choose between you and God, you know I’ll choose God every time.”

Her body tensed.

“But I don’t see that as a necessary choice. I just have to decide if I’ll serve God in Rwanda without you or serve God in California alongside you.”

She reached for my hand.

“I made a commitment to live in Rwanda. And I believe I could thrive there... but not without you. God help me, Liz, but I choose you over Africa. You’re my priority. I love you. I can visit Rwanda on short-term missions. Sweetie, you don’t have to live in Africa.”

She put her head on my chest and spoke softly. “I’m sorry for my behavior. I’ve just been so anxious and scared for the last few weeks. Every day—every minute—I’ve been thinking about us. I only saw two alternatives. I could either live in Rwanda with you or live alone in California without you. Can you understand why I’ve been miserable? I don’t want to lose you. I’m so glad God spoke to your heart this way.”

When we arrived home, Liz and I fell back into our pattern of one weekday meal and one weekend hike. We had each seen the other at our worst and we had survived the test. It seemed we were over the hump. Our friendship—affection, knowledge, trust—all began to flourish.



## FEBRUARY

When I returned from Africa, I called my brother, telling him I had dropped my plans to move to Rwanda. “I had to choose between Africa and Liz; and I chose Liz. As I look back now, it appears so obvious. Liz could not have functioned in Rwanda. It’s not her calling. I was foolish to even ask her.”

“I understand,” Frank said. “Lelia would never want to settle in Africa.”

“You’re right,” I said. “Kim—who visited Rwanda ten times—never wanted to live there full time. Two weeks a year was enough for her. How could I have expected Liz to leave her home and friends in San Mateo and spend two years in Rwanda? I should not have put that expectation on her shoulders. Maybe I confused my personal desire with God’s call.”

As much as I tried, I could not escape the gravity of Kim's birthday. On February 20, I stopped by her grave site and talked to her about Liz. "My lovely Kim, I am so conflicted. I see your ageless face in porcelain and read your name etched in granite. How can I cease loving you after thirty-six years of devotion? Can I turn love off like a spigot? It hurts my heart to be unfaithful to you. How can I treasure you and pursue Liz at the same time? My love, if you are truly with Christ in God, please ask Jesus what I should do."

## MARCH

Liz and I often spoke of marriage. For practical and personal reasons, we agreed to wait until after I retired. From a practical perspective I still worked as a full-time pastor. I loved my job and the position required that I remain local.

On a personal level, we agreed our friendship required more time to mature. I told Liz, "Things look positive now, but I don't want to do the touchdown tango until we reach the end zone." Marriage made more sense after September.

I spent March 23—the thirty-eighth anniversary of my wedding to Kim—in silent contemplation. I did not visit her grave site. My past life was slipping away. I doubted Zachary or Simon was marking this day. It was my memory alone now. "Lord, what would You have me do? Help me turn the page of my life story."

Liz and I began premarital counseling with Dr. Curry in San Mateo. He helped us work through our issues. Liz sought to tamp down her temper and I sought to improve my communication skills. When responding to Liz, I tried to practice the acronym LUVe: listen, understand, validate, empathize.

I also met one of Liz's male friends. Allen Kennedy had been a part of her life for the past thirty years. Allen was retired from the NFL, having won two super bowl rings (1982 and 1985) as defensive end for the San Francisco Forty-niners. At six-feet-seven, Allen dwarfed my petite girlfriend. I would occasionally get together with him and Liz for a hike or a meal.

## APRIL

Liz and I began attending an evening class called *Love and Respect*. The biblical basis for this course was Ephesians 5:33. "To sum up, each one of you is to love his wife as himself, and the wife is to respect her husband."

My favorite concept from the ten sessions was something called the crazy cycle. "If a woman does not feel loved by a man, she reacts by withholding respect. Without respect, the man reacts by withholding love." So, the couple continually spirals downward. Which partner can break the crazy cycle? The one

who considers himself or herself more mature. It should be a race for grace. Lord, I prayed, let me win this competition!

While sitting through *Love and Respect* sessions in the church classroom, my mind alternated between Kim and Liz. In one lesson, as the video narrator related a story, Kim flashed into my mind. When the speaker expounded on a different principle, Liz leapt into my thoughts. “Lord, my mind is a jumble. Help me sort this out. I don’t want to step outside Your will. Help me step inside Your peace.”

On April 22, I began my terminal sermon series at First Southern. I would preach through the Upper Room Discourse of John, chapters 14 to 17. As I meditated upon this last supper, I was again astounded that the Son of God stooped to wash the feet of his followers. *O God, I prayed. Give me this love that stoops to serve.*

## MAY

It was not something I had expected, but Mother’s Day turned out to be a day of mourning. I did not grieve for my own mother who died in 1999. But Zachary and Simon commemorated the loss of their mom. My sons might forget her birthday (February 20) or our anniversary (March 23), but how could anyone in America forget Mother’s Day? It was promoted from coast to coast as a day to honor moms.

Simon called me on Sunday morning. “Dad, I just sent some flowers to Holy Sepulcher Cemetery. Can you drop by and make sure they arrived?”

Zachary called that evening, as I was heading for church. “Hey, Dad. It’s still light in California, right? Can you pick up some flowers for Mom? I’ll pay you back.”

I was happy to accommodate both of my sons’ requests.

I was determined to build a legacy for Kim in Rwanda. Closure with the past dictated it; Embrace of the future required it. At the end of the month, I bought flights to Kigali. For this mission trip, I planned to teach and preach, but mostly I wanted to evaluate construction of the Lighthouse.

## JUNE

As Liz and I moved toward marriage, my end goal came into focus. I wanted to become one with this woman. I felt I had achieved oneness with Kim, and I now looked forward to the day when Liz and I would enjoy the same level of spiritual intimacy.

As I considered the words becoming one, I recalled a book written by my old friend Dr. J. Kenneth Eakins called *Becoming One: How One Couple Forged a Love to Last a Lifetime . . . and Beyond*. I located the book and opened it to the inside cover. Ken had inscribed, “To Chris and Kim. Forge a love to last a lifetime.”

My heart warmed with memories of Ken. When we lived in Mill Valley, this college professor had been my mentor and advisor. Kim and I soaked in his teaching Sunday after Sunday. I considered the two of us much alike.

After I finished re-reading his book, I was struck by our profound differences. I sought to process my grief by letting go of my lovely Kim; Ken said letting go of Marian was the last thing he wanted to do. I sought healing through closure with the past; Ken reported conversing with his deceased wife every morning and evening. Remarriage was at the forefront of my agenda; Ken was offended when a friend suggested he remarry.

Ken's central proposition was this: when a Christian couple attains a *oneness marriage*, they remain a couple despite *the intrusion of death*. No doubt this prospect of an eternal bond brought comfort to Ken, but it appeared to me as bondage. If Ken were correct in his theology, then either Kim and I had been a oneness couple and therefore I should not remarry. Or my marriage to Kim lacked the quality of oneness, allowing remarriage to be an option. I was not thrilled with either prospect. *Lord, help me to sort this out.*

On Saturday, as Liz and I hiked the Edgewood trail near her home, I broached the topic. "I don't think I ever talked to you about Ken Eakins. He was my spiritual advisor when I was in seminary. Ken's wife died when he was about my age, and he wrote a memoir about their marriage. I re-read it yesterday and was surprised by what he said."

She took another step. "What did he say?"

"Ken wrote that when a couple has a special marriage, the bond lasts forever, even after one of them dies. He suggests that in heaven they will remain a devoted couple forever."

She stopped and turned around. "Is that scriptural?"

"The Bible says there won't be marriage in heaven. But Ken says a devoted couple can maintain their exclusive bond."

We walked a few more steps side by side, and then I said, "If what he says is true, then there's something wrong with us."

Liz stopped, put her hands on her hips, and faced me. "I don't read that in the Bible. I think it's just his opinion and that's what worked for him. Who is that guy to imply his love was superior to ours?"

After we walked in silence for a while, I said, "Maybe it's like this. Ken needed to let the world know it's okay for a widower to remain single unto death, to stay devoted to his deceased wife. He wrote down his own love story and with it gave permission to those who want to hang on to a beloved spouse. I think God will honor that."

"But my love story is different from Ken's. If I ever write a memoir, it will have a Kim part and a Liz part. I need to let the world know it's acceptable to lament the death of a first wife, but then wonderful to embrace a new one. A second holy marriage doesn't dishonor a first."

## JULY

One of my distractions became the collection of nostalgic popular music. As a basis of this collection, I used *The Billboard Book of Top 40 Hits: Complete Chart Information about America's Most Popular Songs & Artists, 1955-2003*. I not only wanted to gather these songs for my own enjoyment, but to share them with my family. It took me a week to burn ninety-nine recordables CD for distribution. In anticipation of an upcoming August family reunion, I wrote this note titled *A Family Reunion of 1111 Songs*:

A few months ago, I began collecting musical friends. First, I picked up a few odd CDs at Rasputin's—my neighborhood record shop. Next, I ordered some *best of* CDs from *amazon.com*. Still, I couldn't round up all my buddies. So, I began downloading them one song at a time. It cost me some coin, but now my ears are enjoying their company.

There are 1111 songs that are attending my family reunion, all comfortably situated on eleven MP3 CDs. Some are old folks and some are young—although none are babies. Some are black and some are white. There is a good mix of men and women. A large contingent of my friends hale from England. You must understand that some are quirky friends and odd-balls indeed. Some of them even parody others of them. There is no accounting for taste. Nonetheless, I hope that you too may become re-acquainted with some of YOUR old musical friends. That's why I am passing these 1111 songs along to you. Enjoy!

On July 9, Al dropped me off at the airport and in thirty-six hours I arrived in Rwanda. For this mission, I focused on construction of the Lighthouse.

The cargo container I had sent the previous October had arrived in January. American doors and windows were now installed, one of the classrooms was complete, and the peaked rooftop was nearly bolted in place. There was still much to do, but with walls and paint, I could see the contours of something glorious.

On my first Sunday in Butare I met with twenty missionaries from Trinity Church in New York City. Over dinner I shared my vision of CASA and the Light House, as well as my own spiritual journey. This was the first time I'd spoken in public of Kim's death and my struggle to forgive Franc. I couldn't believe the overwhelming response. People were in tears and asked me how they could help.

After this outpouring of emotion, I determined to get started on my memoir. Could I redeem my grief to God's glory? Could I touch souls through the written word? I felt God was opening this door for me. I just needed the courage to walk through it.

I taught a few Bible classes under the iron sheet roof. My intention was to raise their theological understanding, placing it somewhere between Sunday school and seminary level. I wrote four words on sheets of construction paper: *evil, choice, love, God*.

I held up the word *evil*. “Why is there evil in the world?” I quired my students. “Because there is choice. God did not create robots. He gave us the freedom to choose Him or reject Him. The greatest gift a human being possesses, the attribute that sets us apart from animals, is moral choice. There is evil in the world because God in His goodness granted each of us freedom to follow Him or reject Him.”

I then held up the word *choice*. “Why is there choice? Because there is love. God desired creatures who would love Him, not out of compulsion but out of choice. Love cannot be forced. Can you imagine genuine love without the option of rejection? I can’t. Love must be bestowed without coercion or it is not love at all.”

Next, I held up the word *love*. “Why is there love? Because there is God. Love is the cardinal virtue, a defining characteristic of God Himself. The Bible tells us in 1 John 4:8 that *God is love*. Before the foundation of the universe, the Father, Son, and Spirit existed in a community of mutual love. And when God created man and woman in His own image, love was intrinsic to that image.”

I held up the word *God*. “Why is there God? There must be God, because we have breath and are able to utter the question ‘Why is there God?’ God is a self-existent being, beyond explanation; a non-contingent being, beyond finding out. Job 34:14–15 tells us that if God should ‘gather unto himself his spirit and his breath; all flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust.’”

I reversed the order of the four cards, displaying them one after the other. “God exists; therefore, love must exist as well. Love exists; therefore, choice must exist. Choice exists; therefore, the opportunity for evil must exist. In a roundabout way, I recognize the goodness of God because I experience the pain of evil.”

I summarized my talk by paraphrasing my favorite radio apologist, Ravi Zacharias. “We may not live in the best possible world, but this world we live in may be the best possible means into the best possible world to come.”

After the students left the classroom, I pondered what had come out of my mouth. I realized that God had given me those words as my own benediction. The evil of Kim’s death continued to haunt me, and through this chain of reasoning, I caught a glimpse of how my suffering might be a logical outworking of God’s perfect love. God did not create me to be happy, although that may happen. He created me for something much higher. God’s goal is to make me holy; and that is an entirely different matter.

After church on Sunday morning, Paul drove me to Kigali for my return flight. We stopped at the roadside memorial. The old caretaker noticed our car and walked up to me. He pointed out the bed of flowers and a circle of painted stones

surrounding the lavender concrete pillar. I thanked him for his care and put five thousand Rwandan franks into his hand.

Soon I was back in Hayward, picking up my life where I had left it three weeks earlier.

On the last day of the month, I visited Kim's grave site. This Thursday marked the second anniversary of her fatal car crash. I considered the forty-eight glyphs encompassing her birth and death dates.

"To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven." I had often viewed my own life as following the seasons of Solomon, but never Kim's. Yet there they were, forty-eight seasons etched in stone.

I counted her seasons: in Korea, America, Washington, Wisconsin, and California; at Kyung Hee University, the University of Wisconsin, and San Francisco State. I saw her seasons of technology, dance, and travel. I touched an overturned car as her concluding season.

I studied the husband half of the gravestone. I could visualize some of my forty-eight glyphs. There would be emblems of my little dog, of Gia, and of Liz. I would have to rely on my artistic son to complete the right side.

I knelt in the grass and talked to Kim about my struggles. I asked her about Liz. "What do you think, Yobo? You've been away for two years and nothing can bring you back. Is it okay if I ask Liz to marry me?"

I didn't hear Kim say *yes*. But neither did I hear her say *no*.

## AUGUST

As my days at First Baptist Church dwindled, I delegated more responsibility to my associates. Ken Hillard covered for me while I traveled on two family outings. On August 4, Liz and I went to New York State to visit her mother's family. Then, on August 10 we traveled to Washington State to visit mine. These get-togethers were important to us, because knowing our families of origin increased our understanding of each other. How far did the fruit fall from the tree?

I attended these two events back-to-back, flying a triangle from San Francisco to New York City to Portland and return to San Francisco. Liz was not so fortunate. Her job requirements demanded that she fly to New York, return to work for a few days, and then join me in Portland.

Our first family gathering was *the 145th Annual Bull Family Reunion and Picnic* held in Campbell Hall, New York, near the Hudson River. Six hundred people sat under canopies, ate from picnic baskets, and renewed acquaintances. It was a treat to meet Liz's close relations. We posed for pictures with her mother, two aunts, two uncles, three cousins, and two second cousins.

Our second event was in Longview, Washington, at Lake Sacajawea. About forty people shared food, song, conversation, and laughter. Each of my sisters and my brother set up a folding table and decorated it with photographs and memorabilia. I distributed a sketch of our family tree squeezed onto a single sheet of paper. The schematic showed a tree trunk (my deceased father and mother), six limbs (their children), twenty-four branches (their grandchildren), thirty sticks (great-grandchildren), and ten twigs (great-great-grandchildren).

One by one the five surviving limbs stood to address the assembled branches, sticks, and twigs. I closed the gathering with prayer, asking grace upon every piece of wood—both natural and engrafted.

I distributed my CD collections to Debbie, Jimmy Walker, Jim Francis, Eileen, Frank, Zachary, and Simon. I shared with Zachary this thought about the nature of music:

In some theological volume I once read about the nature of time. What light could Scripture shed upon the fourth dimension? In the afterlife will time exist or will time be no more? These are deep theological questions. In a footnote someone opined that, although Holy Scripture does not address the nature of time directly, the Bible does provide hints. One hint is music.

Scripture abounds with music: angels singing, harps playing, the music of the spheres. Music was there at the beginning.

Now, the thing about music is that it requires time—or something akin to time. Music doesn't make sense in a realm void of time. Maybe one can drink in visual art with one optic gulp, but music exists in a sequence of notes and in the silence between.

So, will there be time in heaven? I can't say for sure, but I can speculate. If redeemed humanity is to experience redeemed music, we would have to apprehend it in something like a *redeemed time*—and I'm betting that *eternity* is what Christians term that redeemed musical time.

As I considered my family reunion the next day, I didn't recall much conversation about Kim. Her name appeared on the Foreman family tree, but people did not feel compelled to console me or to beatify her. The topic of Kim's death was not avoided, merely absent. Rather, people wanted to talk about Liz. She was a great conversationalist, and my extended clan treated her like a member of our family.

When I returned to my church office, I prepared my final three sermons. I focused on the two great commandments: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." I considered this statement to be Christ's prime directive: to love God, to love our neighbors, and to love ourselves.

On August 19, my message was about the third love. “Loving yourself means placing yourself at the bottom of the love pyramid. You put others and God above you. Humility is the word that best describes this Christian mode of love. You do not think less about yourself. You think about yourself less. That is what it means to love yourself.”

On August 26, my message was about the second love, love of others. “This is the middle of the pyramid, sandwiched between love of self and love of God. The spectrum of spouse, family, friend, stranger, and enemy all fit into this center space. It takes holy wisdom to prioritize this collection of people, but Christ teaches us that every human being deserves a share of agapé love.”

Liz and I went shopping for her engagement ring in mid-August. The purchase was mine, but I wanted to get the exact ring she desired. Liz was looking for a simple silver-gold band with three diamonds—a larger center stone with two smaller stones on either side. She said, “This symbolizes God in the middle with you and me on the sides.”

## SEPTEMBER

On September 2, 2012, I presented my last sermon to the congregation at First Baptist. This message was about the prime love, the love of God. “What does the love of God look like? We can’t give Him things. We can’t plant kisses on His cheek. So how can we love God? We give Him glory and we give Him priority. We place allegiance to God above all else.”

I mentioned the three Ts: time, talent, and treasure. “Where do you spend your time and with whom? Are you using your talents to bring glory to God? Where does your money go? These are not proofs of your God-love. Rather, they are indicators for assessing your heart condition. Love of God is an attitude of the soul. It is evidenced in obedience to His Son as revealed by His Spirit through His Word.”

The last slide I showed to my faithful flock revealed a photo of my VW camper. Printed on the tailgate was my parting exhortation. “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.”

The after-church fellowship was a somber celebration. I showed a ten-minute video I had composed of my six-year tenure. Kim was a big part of it, but so was Liz.

On the next day, as a retired pastor, I dropped by Liz’s house and we sat at her kitchen table. A small box sat in front of me, where a dinner plate would normally appear. I jammed the box in my pocket, saying, “Let’s go for a walk.”

With Jody secured in the garage, we walked out her front door. Hand in hand we strolled to the end of the street. When we turned into Laurelwood Park, I saw mothers pushing strollers, men mowing grass, and dogs scampering everywhere.

“Let’s find some privacy,” I suggested.

We pivoted up a flight of wooden stairs and ambled a few dozen steps into the woods. Under a black oak tree, I fell to one knee. With extravagant gestures I took the jewelry box out of my pocket, removed the dainty ring, and gingerly attached it to a low-hanging bough.

Liz looked down at me with amusement.

I held her left fingers in my hand. “Liz, my beloved, you would make me the happiest man in the whole world if you would be my bride. Lizzie, darling, will you marry me?”

She laughed at my romantic affectations. “Of course, I will.”

I removed the ring from the branch and twisted it onto her finger. “Then it’s official.”

As we walked back to her house, she glanced down at her left hand every few steps. “I still can’t believe you want to marry me.”

“Of course, I do, silly. I can’t believe I waited a full year to ask you.”

September 11, 2012, was the eleventh anniversary of the terror strike against America. It was not a happy day for my new fiancée. About nine in the morning, I read a one-line text from her:

“I was laid off today. I am heading home to sort this through. I would appreciate your prayers.”

I phoned her immediately and asked if I should come over. “No,” she said. “I need some time alone to process. But please come over this evening. I need your support. And your prayers.”

When I arrived at her house, I gave her a long hug.

“It was such a shock,” she said through tears. “When I got to work this morning, my boss called me into her office. She told me she was sorry, but I was being released.” Liz took a deep breath. “I’ll be okay. You know how stressful this job’s been for me. I was just hoping to hold on until January.”

She laughed. “It actually turned out in my favor, though. They gave me a generous separation package. Much better than if I had retired.” She sniffled. “It just hurts that they did it to me rather than me doing it to them.”

I rocked her in my arms. “It’s okay, it’s okay, it’s okay.”

It's an unwritten rule among Baptists that when a pastor leaves his position, he doesn't return to visit for an extended time. This gives space for the succeeding pastor to establish his own style of leadership. A few weeks after I left First Baptist Church, Pastor Tim arrived in San Lorenzo. I never attended a service to hear him preach, but I did drop by the office to meet him, greet him, and offer assistance.

I began worshipping with Liz at Central Peninsula Church in Foster City. It was a radical step down for me. A month earlier I was a senior pastor, sitting at the desk where the buck stopped. Now my primary task on Sunday was to hold Lizzie's hand.

On the last Thursday morning of the month, I attended Men's Fraternity at CPC. I felt at ease sitting at a table with eight men. Bob Mitchell was table leader and I could assist as needed.

## OCTOBER

Liz and I knew we would be getting married on January 1, but we didn't yet know where we would live. We considered settling into my condo, but she eliminated that option with a scrunch of her nose. Liz liked her home in San Mateo, but I preferred a neutral place, somewhere we could start fresh. Our search centered on Half Moon Bay. We both loved the beach and the proximity to San Mateo.

We looked at several rental homes on the coast but nothing seemed to click. Then we found a great home in a gated community at a reasonable price. I loved it, but as I sat with Liz back at her house, her voice trembled. "All this is too stressful for me: losing my job, getting married, us moving in together. Can we please just stay here for a while?"

I was not a happy camper. "But you said we would find a place together. You promised."

She looked at me with tears in her eyes. "I know. But this place is so nice. And I don't have the emotional bandwidth to relocate anytime soon."

After sitting in a funk for a few moments, I finally said, "Okay, sweetie. We can live here. It will be a sacrifice for me. You'll be both my landlady and my wife. Can you handle that? This will be your house, but please, it must be our home together."

Liz smiled weakly; I was left shaking my head. *How can this possibly work?*

We settled on a simple wedding ceremony. Ken Hillard agreed to officiate, and Diane and Charles consented to stand as witnesses. They would also care for the *best dog* during our wedding and honeymoon. Liz suggested Leo Ryan Park in Foster City as the venue.

"Won't that place be cold on a January morning?" I asked

“It may be cold, but we’ll only be there for a short time.” Then she added with a twinkle in her eye, “And we’ll warm up at the Ritz-Carlton on our wedding night.”

I wasn’t going to argue with that.

Since our wedding would be small with no photographers, Liz and I sat for official engagement photos at a shop near the Baptist church. After posing, shifting, and smiling for a dozen flashbulbs, I brought in Jody from the car for a final photo. That one turned out to be my favorite.

In preparation for moving in to Liz’s house, I began the colossal task of winnowing. Along with my own stuff, I had boxes belonging to Kim, Zachary, and Simon. My goal was to get rid of most of my furniture and half of my storage containers. I wanted to compress all of Kim’s keepsakes into one footlocker box.

I pulled out twenty cardboard boxes filled with papers, journals, pictures, and memorabilia. I spent many solitary evenings sorting through the flotsam and jetsam of forty years. From time to time I wept at the discovery of a lost gem.

Decades earlier, I had written a thirty-three-word poem in rhyming palindrome. I called it “Forgiveness Begets Forgiveness” and dedicated it to Kim. I was surprised to find she had preserved it in a notebook.

Me and you together forever, you and me. I am sorry. How could I . . . ?  
Should we try? We should. I could. How sorry am I! Me and you forever together, you and me.

As I read the faded words in reverse order, I recalled the quarrel, the inspiration, and the reconciliation. Yes, Kim, you and me together forever. I’m so sad that forever ended in your fifty-ninth year.

On October 20, Liz and I traveled to Asheville, North Carolina, to visit her father, Bill, and his wife, Sybil. These were the final two pieces that completed her family puzzle. We stayed in her dad’s house for three nights, talking about the Smoky Mountains, favorite restaurants, and Bill’s regimen of medicine.

Back in California I continued to downsize. In my last days as a Baptist pastor, I had received permission to store items in the church and then ship them to Africa. I carried a dozen camper loads of excess possessions to the church. On October 30 several of my Baptist buddies helped me load material into a twenty-foot cargo container. I was glad to see these odds and ends travel across the world for a second life.

## NOVEMBER

Most of the time Liz and I got along well, but on one issue we remained at loggerheads. “Lizzie, Kim was my best friend for thirty-six years, and I want you to see her final resting place, just once.”

“I have no interest in going to the cemetery. She was your wife and I never knew her. You can go there whenever you wish, but I don’t want to go. It’s creepy.”

“Sweetie, I want closure with Kim. Don’t you want that for me? I know it sounds weird. Maybe it is. But please, do it as a favor to me.”

Liz relented and agreed to visit the cemetery with me the following week.

As I drove her through the iron gates, I described the funeral and the burial. We walked to Kim’s gravestone, where I wept. I held Lizzie’s hand and pointed to each of the forty-eight glyphs, explaining the meaning of each.

I spoke to Kim. “Yobo, I want to introduce you to Liz. She is the love of my life. I want you to meet her, not to gain your approval but to let you know my life continues. I’m so sorry you died. Your stream of life ended, but mine continues to flow. It must.”

Liz looked on, teary-eyed.

I bent down and touched the porcelain picture of Kim. With a sigh I said to Liz, “We can go now.”

As we drove away, she said, “That wasn’t so bad. And I understand why you brought me here.”

“Life is so complicated,” I said. “I loved Kim, but now I love you. I’m so glad Christ said, ‘When they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven.’”

“I’m glad I came.” After a pause, she added, “But I don’t ever want to come here again.”

Though I’d been putting off the sorrowful task, it was time to examine Kim’s personal journals. I could not keep all thirty of them. I had to discard some.

I set aside the ones written only in Korean. I later gave them to her sister in Turner, Oregon. A dozen journals contained just one or two written pages. I smiled. It was so like my *absent-minded professor* to start a journal, misplace it, and start another. I clipped out the writing and tossed out the remainder.

Over several days, I looked at every page of her English writing. I wept bitter tears as Kim came to life through her words. I preserved several letters to pass on to Zachary and Simon. I transcribed one handwritten entry that Kim had composed on February 12, 1997, at the Denver airport:

Let's talk about love, love that conquered everything, love that enabled me to go on when I was lonely. God was my only refuge. When I was lost, God sent me comfort. That was Chris, then Zach, then Simon. My children were my constant source of joy. I love You, Lord. I love you, Chris. I love you, Zach. I love you, Simon.

What can I do for You, God? I give all my heart to You. What can I do for you, Chris? You gave unwavering devotion to me. Do I deserve all your attention and adoration? I gratefully receive your love. I hope I can repay in a little way. Your smile, your image, and your fragrance will be with me forever. You are my friend and companion. You have given me such deep joy that I cannot explain it or even express it with words, other than to say, "I love you with all my heart, with all my soul."

Let me have you for the next twenty years. The past twenty have been tumultuous and extreme at times, but such is life. You made my life bearable and, toward the end, you made my life adventurous. I never thought my life could contain such joy with you alone. How could a human being make this possible?

You are a wise man indeed. Sometimes I have been such a fool, but you were patient. You didn't get angry. Your unwavering love sustained our marriage. Your constant care and serving heart made me realize the world I live in is not always a wicked place. It can be a wonderful place. It's up to me. I have the power to change how I view the world, then live in the world as I see it. You gave me eyes to look at this world positively. You are the one who made this possible.

What could I do other than weep at those words?

With November came the 2012 Presidential elections. The hoopla was only of minor interest to me, because my life was full of transition. I voted for Mitt Romney although without much enthusiasm. I wasn't surprised when Obama won a second term.

Frank and Lelia flew down to visit me over the Thanksgiving holiday. I asked Frank to help me go through the last of Kim's personal effects. My brother asked what it was like marrying for a second time.

"Marrying at sixty-three is a world different from marrying at twenty-four. Kim and I had youth, vigor, and decades of future ahead of us. We had no money, few possessions, and we were building our lives together from scratch."

"With Liz it's different. Most of our life is behind us. We don't have decades of shared memories, but we do have money, houses, and stuff—too much stuff. It gets in the way. We understand that our physical bodies are past their prime. I'm

glad Liz insisted I join the San Mateo Athletic Club and exercise with her. She's a good woman."

We were silent for a while as I gathered my thoughts. "Love in the autumn is different from love in the spring. But when I hold Lizzie in my arms and close my eyes, it's springtime once more."

## DECEMBER

Christmas was approaching, but both Liz and I were distracted by the onrushing tide of events. We were about to be married; we were merging households; we were shedding furniture; we were managing a myriad of daily details. My entire life was under reconstruction. On top of all this, I was preparing for a January mission to Africa.

Lizzie had her own year-end frenzy. "I want to complete my book of devotions before Christmas so I can present it as a gift." Her yearlong labor of love was appearing in print. After several title changes, she'd settled on *Thirty Reflective Devotions for Time-Pressed Women*, published under the pen name of Joy Fry.

We visited a jeweler so I could choose the wedding band Liz would place on my finger. "Get the exact ring you want," she said. "I want you to be happy with it for many years to come. I'm going to inscribe some words on the inside, but you can't see them until our wedding day. They won't be typical wedding words. They'll reflect my heart."

I picked a ring, tried it on to make sure it fit, and handed it to Liz, agreeing not to see it again until January first.

We decided to keep the ceremony private, with only a bride, a groom, a pastor, and two witnesses. If we excluded all guests, we figured none of our friends or family members would be especially offended. To compensate for the private ceremony, we scheduled two receptions in the months after our wedding, one in San Mateo and one in Portland.

When I met with Ken Hillard to go over details of the ceremony, he handed me a large wardrobe bag explaining, "Sorry your going-away gift took so long to arrive. Try it on."

I donned the heavy robe of a PhD, the bi-colored hood of a theologian, and the fancy cap of a doctor. Now I could do graduation ceremonies at San Quentin and at the Lighthouse adorned in my proper academic regalia.

During the last week of the year, Liz and I were overwhelmed with managing our countdown lists. I spent much of the time in my home, preparing my heart for the adventure ahead. At last, my three-bedroom condo looked empty.

Two days before my wedding I scrolled through my vows on the computer screen. On January 1, Ken Hillard would say to me, “Chris, do you take Liz to be your lawfully wedded wife? Do you commit yourself to her growth in holiness and her usefulness to God’s kingdom? Do you forsake all others in favor of Liz? Do you promise to love her, honor her, trust her, and serve her, in sickness and in health, in adversity and in prosperity, as long as you both shall live?”

My joyful response would be “I do.”

The *forsaking all others* part grabbed my attention. I had never approximated the words *forsake* and *Kim*. “O God,” I gasped, “Am I expected to forsake my lovely Kim?”

I searched an online dictionary and discovered that forsake means *to abandon, to renounce*. Strong words indeed. What would it mean to forsake the woman who loved me for thirty-six years, who was always a faithful wife, who bore my two sons, and who died in service to God? Could I really say “I do” to forsaking Kim? Did Liz expect this of me? Did God? Was I even capable of such a thing? In my distress I sought the Lord with multiple questions.

“Dear God, do the words ‘forsaking all others’ apply to the dead as well as to the living?”

Yes, God said to my heart. As a widower I was not compelled to remarry, but since I chose to do so, I had to forsake all others, including my departed wife. A man’s heart must not be divided.

“Dear God, isn’t *forsaking* the same as *betraying*?”

No, came the answer. I could not betray a woman to whom I was no longer married. My vow to love and honor Kim ended with her death. I could have no guilt about romantic or sexual involvement as long as my conduct aligned with Scripture.

On March 23, 1974, in front of witnesses, I had solemnly promised to be faithful to Kim *until death do us part*, and on August 3, 2010, death did us part. I had to exercise caution when I chose to remarry, but I was at liberty to do so without a hint of betrayal.

I understood that this was simple in concept but challenging in execution. I had to completely abandon Kim as my wife. I would never renounce a successful marital relationship nor deny the love we once held for each other. But I had to speak of Kim in the past tense—not *I love Kim* but *I loved Kim*. I would never abandon my two sons, but their mother and their father’s wife would now be distinct people. I had to declare that my one-time union with Kim was null and void.

“Lord God, soon my spoken vows to Liz will supersede my expired vows to Kim. Teach me to esteem Kim-as-my-sister only to the extent that it does not cause conflict with Liz-as-my-wife. Give Liz peace in the knowledge that I have truly forsaken Kim in the biblical sense of the word, and grant her courage to accept the boundaries of that forsaking.”

After much internal grappling, I accepted that for me obedience to God's truth meant I had to forsake Kim as my wife. Only then could I pledge to love Liz for life. Other widowers might come to other conclusions, but I knew this was the right path for me.

I wrote a list of last-minute chores to accomplish on the day before my wedding. To that list I added "Visit Kim's grave." I felt convicted that I must say goodbye to her before I could say hello to Liz. I scheduled this visit for ten a.m.

I drove through the iron gates of the Catholic cemetery, past the likeness of Michael the archangel slaying the serpent. Accompanied by sorrow, I parked my car on the roadside, a dozen steps from Kim's gravestone.

I stood in tears before Kim's grave and thanked Kim-my-sister for her faithfulness and kindness to me through thirty-six years of marriage. I thanked her for giving life to our sons, Zachary and Simon Peter.

Although I stood just above Kim's mortal remains, I looked to the heavens, where her immortal soul was lying hid with Christ in God. I trusted I would see her again, not as wife, but as sister in Christ, both of us clad with bodies incorruptible and immortal, and both being the brides of Christ.

I congratulated Kim for her union with Jesus and I asked her to bless my upcoming union with Liz. To the heavens I said, "Kim, I forsake our marital bond in the name of Jesus. You are the bride of a man so much greater than I."

My obligation was complete. My new life could now commence.

# Chapter 27

## RE-WED

January 2013 to December 2013  
San Mateo, California

*I have seen the travail which God has given to the sons of men to be exercised therewith. He has made everything beautiful in His time.*

(Ecclesiastes 3:11)

I had counted 885 days since Kim crashed into eternity. Throughout that time, I resided in *The Land of What If*. “What if I had grabbed the steering wheel?” and “What if Kim had lived?”

My life narrative had become “Kim was Plan A, but an unspeakable evil occurred. Then God in His mercy provided Liz, who became Plan B.”

*O Lord, banish these unworthy thoughts. Purge this false narrative. You are a God of verities, not a God of contingencies. From the foundation of the world, Liz and I were part of your eternal plan. Liz and I were always Your Plan A.*

### 2013 JANUARY

With anticipation I went to bed early on the last day of 2012. There was no need to stay up to view the celebration; my pyrotechnics with Liz would light up the skies on the following evening. I opened my eyes at midnight when pops and cheers roused me from sleep. A new year had begun.

I rose from bed before dawn and soaked in the tub for thirty minutes in preparation for my wedding day. My charcoal-colored suitcoat was pressed and my rental car waited in the tuck-under garage. I savored the slow-moving morning before dashing out the door at nine a.m. The air was frosty and I returned to retrieve my black overcoat.

I arrived at Leo Ryan Park in thirty minutes. I didn't see Liz, Ken, or the Varadys in the parking lot, so I strolled along the boardwalk.

*O God, I brooded. I'm still perplexed by the circumstances that bring me to this time and place. I love Liz and I know You provided her for me. Yet I wonder. Do I wish Kim had lived and I remained her husband, or am I glad Kim died, freeing me to marry Liz?* I knew this was a sinister question. Are hypothetical questions ever fair?

These melancholy thoughts vanished when I spotted Jody darting toward me. She leapt at my legs and I bent to lift her wriggling body. Soon I was helping Diane arrange a ribbon choker on our *best dog*. Then I saw Lizzie pull up in her car.

At my approach she smiled. "I forgot how cold a January morning can be. I'm going to leave my coat on. I'd freeze in this chiffon dress." She gestured toward the recreation center. "I'm going to wait in there until we start and join you when you're ready for me." Diane walked beside her to assist in whatever a bride may need.

Charles and I stood in the empty concrete amphitheater, making clouds with our breath as we talked. I grew concerned about Ken. It wasn't like him to be late. Just as I fumbled for my phone, I saw him puffing toward me. Ken pointed down the waterline. "I've been waiting for you at that shelter over there."

Ken, Charles, and I took our places at center stage. Ken stood opposite me with his Bible open. Charles backed off several paces, with Jody on leash. Once we were set, I waved my arm for Diane and Liz to join us. The ladies strode down the center aisle. Diane joined Charles, and Liz stood to my right. Her face was radiant. The frigid morning blushed her cheeks with a hint of red.

Ken began the traditional words of the wedding ceremony. Liz and I vowed our lives and love to each other. When Ken asked, "Chris, do you forsake all others in favor of Liz?"

I thought about my graveside visit on the previous day. I replied "I do" with confidence.

Without songs, candle lighting, or speeches, the ceremony zipped by. We exchanged wedding rings and soon it was time for me to kiss Mrs. Foreman. Once again, I was a married man. Hallelujah! My overwhelming emotion was gratitude, coupled with exuberance. I had received the pledged love of a righteous woman.

We walked across Shell Boulevard to the Mariotte Hotel lobby. Liz removed her coat to reveal a beige chiffon dress with a floral pattern. We posed for pictures in front of a glittering Christmas tree, Liz holding a single white orchid. Ken signed the marriage certificate as officiator while Diane and Charles signed as witnesses. After sharing an early lunch, Liz and I thanked Ken, Charles, and Diane, then headed to Half Moon Bay for our one-night honeymoon.

We arrived at the Ritz-Carlton about one o'clock. Liz walked to the front desk and asked for an early check-in. "By the way," I chirped, "today is our honeymoon."

“Oh, Chris,” Liz said with a blush.

“You mean your anniversary?” the desk clerk replied.

“No, honeymoon,” I repeated.

Her blush deepened.

“How would you two like an upgrade to the third-floor honeymoon suite? It faces the ocean. No extra charge.” The clerk examined her book. “It should be available by two thirty. Feel free to use the spa until then.”

As we stowed our bags behind the desk, I whispered to Liz, “Sometimes it’s good to share your exuberance.”

After the spa and dinner, we lounged in our upgraded suite. Liz and I snuggled on the window sofa overlooking the Pacific. I cracked open the pane to take in the sounds and smells as well as the sights.

Waves crashed as the artful sun painted the winter sky a palette of pink pastels. Hotel guests mingled below our window, soaking in the seaside ambiance. A piping Scotsman in kilts regaled his outdoor audience with “Amazing Grace.” Shimmering Christmas lights enhanced the magic of the moment.

Liz hugged her knees, sighing with contentment. “We have the best seat in the whole hotel!”

“Oh, no,” I corrected with affection. “We have the best perch in the whole world. God makes all things beautiful in his time.”

Much more could be said about the honeymoon celebration, but such things are by nature private. Liz and I were a passionate couple, yet we did not consummate our love affair until we had spoken our wedding vows. We counted the bliss of our honeymoon night as God’s wedding gift to us for honoring Him with our bodies.

I couldn’t fall asleep after such an extraordinary day. As Liz closed her eyes with fatigue, I grabbed my iPad and stepped into the lobby.

I remembered Liz had inscribed words on the inside of my wedding band. At last, I had the opportunity to read them. “To my love: Psalm 33:20–22.”

I located the reference in my NIV Bible. “We wait in hope for the Lord; he is our help and our shield. In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name. May your unfailing love be with us, Lord, even as we put our hope in you.”

“Yes, Lord,” I whispered. “We put our hope in You.”

I reflected on the day sixteen months earlier when I joined eHarmony. I had listed as the most important requirement: “I want a woman who loves me, but who loves God more than she loves me.” For sure, Liz was that one woman in ten thousand.

Unable to unwind, I wrestled with thoughts of God’s purpose and alternate reality. Could my life be a cosmic illusion? Maybe in the morning when I turn over in bed, I’ll find Kim and not Liz. I cross-examined myself. Did this speculation thrill me with hope or stab me with disappointment?

By an odd twist of thought, my mind lurched to another couple: Abraham and Sarah. According to the Genesis account, this couple was married about a hundred

years. Abraham buried Sarah with great grief when she died at one hundred twenty-seven. This should have marked the end of the story, but chapter 25 begins, “Then again Abraham took a wife, and her name was Keturah, and she bare him six children.”

I wondered. *Did Abraham count Keturah as plan B after so many years with Sarah, his plan A? Or were both wives part of God’s eternal scheme?*

As I rose to return to the honeymoon suite, my mind raced back to Africa and to Kim. I recalled the Thursday evening—887 days earlier—when Kim and I addressed students at the National University of Rwanda. I played the role of Adam while Kim played Eve.

Then the thought struck me. *What if our first parents had not sinned? What if the apple had stayed on the tree? Would Jesus have been superfluous?* I pictured Christ, rubbing His hands, waiting in the wings just in case Adam screwed up.

*What an absurd thought! Christ was slain from the foundation of the world. God saw everything from beginning to end before it ever happened. Jesus was always God’s plan A—and Liz was always my plan A. Forever it was His divine intent that Chris Foreman should have two wives, Kim first and Liz second. There are no might-have-beens with God, only certainties. And Liz was certainly my wife.*

I entered our hotel room without switching on the light and slipped into bed.

Liz and I wanted the most from our expensive honeymoon suite and so lingered at the Ritz Carleton until past noon. We walked nearby trails and along the shoreline. On this January 2, workers were busy dismantling the extensive Christmas decorations.

I spent one night in Lizzie’s big bed, then returned to my condo. There was still much to do before I could rent it out. I sorted things and cleaned some, but life was full; In just four days I was leaving on my nineteenth mission trip to Rwanda. On Wednesday, Liz and I picked up our wedding certificate at the county courthouse in Redwood City, then on Thursday I drove Liz to Moffett Field to claim her military ID.

After a day of preparation and prayer, Frank arrived at SFO on Saturday morning. My brother and I boarded an Ethiopian Airliner and were off to Rwanda to lead the *First Annual East Africa Christian Apologetics Conference*.

Once we landed in Butare, Frank and I moved into our rented house in Mukoni. We had a few days to recover from jet-lag because our conference wouldn’t begin until January 10. For three days, we watched anxiously as workers scrambled to remove timber scaffolding from the exterior of the Lighthouse. Franc told us, “My friend the building inspector will not let us meet in this place until the outside looks complete.”

I talked with Pastor Paul on the top floor of the building looking over the lush valley. “This is an amazing piece of real estate,” I mused. “It’s an oversized corner property right next to the road and near the university. Just a few years ago I saw the foundation bricks of a ruined house. Why was it a vacant wasteland for so long?”

“Oh, I never told you the story?” Paul laughed. “We really had trouble getting title to this plot. Believe it or not, this land once belonged to Theodore Sindikubwabo. He was president of Rwanda during the one hundred days of genocide.”

“What?” I interjected. “The head of the genocide government was living here when he was leading the war?”

“No, the story goes like this. When Dr. Sindikubwabo was on the faculty at the National University, he lived in this house. He owned it. For many years he was a teaching pediatrician. He then became the minister of health. Then he got elected to parliament. When Juvénal Habyarimana was killed in 1994, military officers made him president. He was just a puppet.

“Anyway, the Patriotic Front chased him into the Congo and he died there. The army demolished this big house and removed all the pieces. To get a clear title to this property we had to get the signature of his daughter who was a member of the Rwandan assembly. It took over a year.”

I marveled that on this lot of genocidal hatred Christian love now flourished. On the ground where terror once spread, the Gospel multiplied. To Paul I said, “It reminds me of the Samson proverb: ‘Out of the eater, something to eat; out of the strong, something sweet.’”

Paul, who also knew his Scripture, responded, “What about what Joseph said to his brothers? ‘You thought evil against me; but God meant it for good.’”

As we set up in a big classroom, doors were not fitted, electrical cables ran across concrete floors, and the smell of plaster wafted in the air. However, we were holding our own conference in our own facility. We praised God for that!

The official program listed seven speakers. Along with Chris Foreman, Frank Foreman, Franc Murenzi, and Paul Gasigi, the program included: Salim Ndugu, once a devout Muslim, currently a Christian teacher; Gibson Anduvate, a pastor from Nairobi who ministered to university students; and Dr. Kyungil Ghymn, principal of a business school in Dar es Salaam. Jane and Florida helped the effort, serving as *protocol*.

One hundred-fifty students attended the three-day conference with contingents arriving from Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, and Congo. The flavor was certainly international. Frank shared with me, “It’s true that the primary purpose of this conference is to teach students how to defend their faith, but I think nearly as important is the mixing of young people from neighboring nations. I heard a

Burundian student saying this is her first opportunity to interact with a Christian student from Uganda.”

The big four topics were: *What is apologetics?*; *Why are so many intellectuals atheist?*; *What are worldviews?*; and *From Islam to Christ*. Frank and I either taught or co-taught each of these topics with the Africans proving to be excellent speakers.

On January 12, The Kim Foreman Bible Institute held a graduation at the university auditorium. Thirty-five robed students marched together from the Lighthouse, through the back gate of the National University, and onto campus. I wore my new doctor regalia as I preached and handed out diplomas. Frank, David, Paul, and Franc were decked in robes and helped with the proceedings. The Vice Rector spoke as the guest of honor, congratulating students for their diligent study of the Bible.

Frank and I did a lot of Bible teaching in Rwanda, but I learned as much gospel truth as I taught. The kindness and generosity of my Rwandan friends often *taught* me by surprise.

On the last day of the mission, I was walking down the dusty roadway with Jane. We were talking side by side, when she noticed a ragged-weary woman slumped against a brick wall. The woman signaled her to talk.

Jane spoke with kindness, “How can I help you?”

“I have this load of charcoal. I can’t carry it anymore. You see it’s worth eight thousand Francs. I will sell it to you for only seven thousand. I need the money now.”

Jane examined the bag. “Yes, I can see. It’s a full bag worth eight thousand francs, but I just bought a bag yesterday. I don’t need it. Sorry.”

Suddenly Jane looked behind her and saw a close friend following. Jane whispered to her, “Hey, would you like to buy this charcoal for seven thousand? It’s a bargain.”

Her friend was delighted. “Yes, I was just going to market to buy charcoal. Thank you so much.”

She gave cash to the desperate woman and then carried the charcoal home. Once more we were walking together. Jane flashed a great smile of accomplishment.

I was troubled. “So, Jane, why didn’t you buy that charcoal for CASR and take it back to the house? It was quite a bargain.”

“Pastor Chris, I didn’t need it. We have a full bag. Didn’t you hear me say that?”

“Yes, but charcoal doesn’t spoil. You could have bought this second bag and saved it for next week and saved one thousand francs.”

Jane looked puzzled like she didn’t comprehend the comment. “Yes, I see, but the poor woman was happy to get some money. My friend was happy to get a bargain for charcoal and I was happy because I helped my friend.”

“But you lost one thousand francs in the process.”

Jane looked askance unsure how to respond. I thought to myself: *one-thousand Francs versus three people happy. WWJD?*

My brother and I enjoyed ministering as partners in Christ. We knew each other at a deep level and respected the competence, maturity, and godliness of the other. Frank and I knew when to speak out in truth and when to defer to the other. Our collaborative decisions seemed superior to any we might make in isolation.

I had been serving as director of CASA, but asked Frank to remove me entirely from hands-on involvement, preferring the low-profile role of *founding board member*. Frank shared that he had recruited his nephew, Javin Bakke, to help with the purchasing and shipping of building materials to Rwanda. He was soon promoted to director.

On January 18, we flew Ethiopian Air from Kigali to Washington, D.C. Frank traveled on to Portland, but I deplaned for twenty-four hours. Zachary met me at Dulles Airport, then I treated him to dinner at a Korean restaurant called *Honey Pig*. I slept a long time, then on the way back to the airport, he showed me around his studio called *Elegant Dancing*.

After I landed in San Francisco, I shuttled to my condo in Hayward. I only rested for one day because I had a lot to do. I had coordinated with Liz to move into her place on February first and that was just ten days away. I hired house cleaners, ran a rental ad on Craig's list, and moved possessions to San Mateo. Many tokens of my previous sixty-three years found their way into the condo debris container. It was time to start fresh.

Liz and I negotiated what I could put into her home. My leather couch, chair, and ottoman were adopted into the living room; into my upstairs quarters, I moved my bed, three-piece curio cabinet, and computer desk. My clothes dresser fit just outside the room. I also commandeered the garage attic for my multitude of boxed items, camping gear, Kim's memory box, and left-overs from Zachary and Simon.

On the last day of the month, I rented my condo to a woman named Blanca. She was accompanied by two adult sons, a daughter-in-law, and a baby. They would be paying \$1500 per month. I helped them as I could with the moving.

## FEBRUARY

On the first of the month, Lizzie became both my wife and my landlady. We agreed upon a set amount I would pay her each month while we split common household expenses. My new abode at 3416 Chris Lane was part of a homeowner's association and street parking was limited. My little Honda Insight fit into the garage, but the VW camper posed a problem. After parking on De Anza Boulevard for a few weeks, I rented a space in a nearby parking garage, located beneath a tennis court. It cost me \$100 per month, but was just a ten-minute walk.

Both Liz and I hoped to share a bed, but that proved untenable. I was a thrasher, constantly moving from left to right side. Liz was a light sleeper; once roused by sound or movement, she found it impossible to resume her repose. We found peace by me sleeping solely in my bed and she in hers. That was okay. We knew how to find each other when so inclined. Separate rooms also accommodated our nighttime habits. Liz generally turned out the lights at eight o'clock while Jody and I often stayed up past midnight.

Life took on a rhythm. I kept my calendar full with a daily ritual, a weekly cycle, and monthly events. On a daily basis, I read the San Francisco Chronicle in the early morning, walked Jody in the late morning, then spent an hour at the gym on the fitness machines. Afternoons were frittered away on various tasks, then in the evening I focused on my memoir, especially after Liz turned off her eight-o'clock light.

Working out at the San Mateo Athletic Club (SMAC) four days a week, I kept a daily record and learned the machines from a trainer named Pete. I lost about ten pounds in one month, dropping from 218 to 208 pounds. Liz said she could feel my new muscles. In my effort to walk ten thousand steps a day, Jody and I tromped through Laurelwood Park most every day. My habit was to listen to music or books as a pedometer logged my steps.

My weekly routine included Sunday morning with Liz at Central Peninsula Church; Monday morning tossing horse shoes with Charles Varady in Hayward; Thursday morning at Men's Fraternity; and Saturday traveling to San Quentin Prison to teach seminary classes.

Liz was busy achieving her own post-retirement ambitions. She began taking college classes to become a certified fitness instructor. Her goal was to teach Pilates at local gyms. Lizzie's days were filled with Human Biology homework and meeting fitness qualifications.

## MARCH

Three planned events occurred in this month. On the second, a dozen guests showed up at the house to congratulate Liz on the publication of her book *Devotions for Time-Pressed Women*. She was exuberant with the turn-out and conversation.

From March 8 to 11, I visited Simon, Dilia, Lorenzo, and Gia in New York City. It was heart wrenching to see this beautiful family falling to pieces. The few times I saw my daughter-in-law, she was gruff and avoidant. At four and two, my grandchildren were rambunctious and oblivious.

My son was no longer living in Queens with Dilia, but was holed up in a tiny studio in Manhattan. Simon suffered from emotional abuse and uncertainty. He showed me hateful texts Dilia had sent, filled with profanity, venom, and threats.

Simon was coping as best he could. He loved his kids with a passion and fought with all his might to stay in their lives.

Videos of that time showed me at the Queens apartment while Dilia was away; Looking after Lorenzo and Gia at a snow-covered park in Manhattan; and strolling along the East River, kicking sand and throwing stones into the water. I wouldn't see them in New York City again.

My life was busy, but about to get busier. From March 22 to 26, Liz and I attended the Christian Writer's Conference at Mount Hermon. I was motivated to push full speed ahead on my memoir. I envisioned a narrative scope of 888 days, from the day before Kim's death to the day I married Liz. I had completed a few tentative chapters, but after the conference, writing became an obsession. I projected thirty chapters and was plowing ahead with about three chapters per month. My working title was, "Seasons of Solomon: An Anthem to God's Sustaining Grace".

My memoir included this dedication: "to Dr. Kim Hyun Deok Foreman, born in Asia, flourished in America, died in Africa; once a citizen of this world, now a citizen of the next. And to Jean Elizabeth Foreman, love of my life, healer of my heart; partner and fellow sojourner on this, my earthly pilgrimage."

## APRIL

As the month began, Liz and I flew to Asheville to spend quality time with her father. Bill's health was failing and my wife wanted to hang out with him and Sybil. We sat in the house for hours, talking, eating, watching Bill as he consumed his regimen of medications.

Liz and I also drove our rental car to local sights; spending a full day of exploring at the Biltmore Estate; walking up to Chimney Rock; traveling for an overnight stay in the Smoky Mountains; and touring of the *Cove* with Bill. Liz's father struggled to walk through the grounds of Billy Graham's conference center. Liz told me the time was tedious, but she was glad to be close to her father, maybe for the last time.

I had been a faithful table member of Men's Fraternity for several months and one of my table mates was named Grisha. I shared with him my plan to visit Death Valley in my camper from April 24 to 29. He voiced an interest in the road trip and joined Jody and me on the expedition.

We spent the first night at Deer Creek RV Park near Porterville, then paused at Lake Isabella for lunch. Grisha and I entered Death Valley and sheltered one night on the desert floor at Furnace Creek and the next at Wildrose Campground in the mountains. It was fun to explore the wasteland and photograph the harsh environment.

Leaving Wildrose, I chugged up a steep dusty road. The 1987 Westfalia was pushed to its limits. Just as I approached the summit, I heard a pop, saw a trail of steam pouring out the rear end, then observed the red engine light flashing. I decided to drive another hundred yards. At the high point, I turned off the engine and let the engine cool down for several minutes. Then the VW coasted downhill until it rested at a sign which read on its backside “Welcome to Death Valley”.

Yikes! We were stranded in the middle of nowhere; as nowhere as nowhere could be. I parked by the roadside, tried the cell phone, but I was out of range. We flagged down several vehicles and asked the drivers to call 911. It was a tense few hours as we paced for assistance. Grisha and I had sufficient food, water, and shelter. Yet I had no idea how things might work out.

Finally, two guys in a pickup truck stopped at 6:30. Brian and Ed looked under the VW rear engine and said, “We can fix this. No Problem”. What a relief. What a miracle! They certainly seemed to know what they were doing. Brian worked from below and Ed from above. They explained a piece of PVC pipe had blown a cap and all the coolant had gushed out. There appeared to be no other damage. In about forty minutes they had managed to remove the attached hoses to get the piece out. I took a video while these *guardian angels* did their work. It turned out these guys were off-the-road enthusiasts, having set up camp a few miles away to race their ATVs.

Grisha, Jody, and I traveled in the back of a pick-up to their remote outpost. Ed actually had a woodshop under a canopy replete with a grinder and lathe. He explained it was his hobby to fashion walking sticks from desert scrap wood. He fashioned a wooden plug and wired it into the hole saying, “It’s not a permanent fix, but it will get you into Bishop.”

After dark, we returned to the camper and with flashlights my rescuers refastened the hoses and installed the jerry-rigged pipe. They also donated a half-gallon of coolant and, although dribbling water, my limping camper made it to their circle of vehicles. We spent an interesting night with our new acquaintances, lighting fireworks, drinking beer, and sharing laughs.

We left at sunrise to avoid the heat of the day. We carried five gallons of water and every ten miles or so, we refilled the reservoir. I knew the VW mechanic in Bishop—150 miles away—and he repaired the camper for \$330. We spent the night outside of Bishop in a campground, then drove up Highway 395 to Mono Lake then to Lake Tahoe. One more night in the mountains and my big adventure was over. I was never so glad to get home.

## MAY

I began the month with a sojourn to Vancouver. I drove the Insight six hundred miles north while Liz flew into PDX. On May 4, my family held a wedding reception for us at Frank’s house. My four siblings with spouses were present

along with Tricia and Jim. It was a great celebration. I also met with Javin and the CASA board as a cargo container prepared to leave from Kelso for Rwanda. The great iron box was filled with ceramic floor tiles and lumber.

After a hectic pace of travel, I returned to the routine of San Mateo. Liz and I traversed the Santa Cruz mountains on three college hikes led by Tom Tabor. I kept in touch with Zachary and Simon via Skype. My first son spoke about his ballroom dancing and my second about his kids.

I finished my seminary semester at San Quentin with a graduation wearing my new regalia and delivering the closing prayer. A reporter from the Marin IJ wrote this:

Gospel music rang out Friday from the small chapel at San Quentin State Prison as seven inmates celebrated their graduation from the GGBTS prison program by singing and praying—and one even proposed to his girlfriend. About twenty inmates and ten members of the public gathered in the chapel to commemorate the milestone, standing in the pews and singing along with the prison's praise team. Inmate graduates donned black graduation gowns over their prison-issued blue uniforms. They received diplomas in Christian Ministry, which constitutes twenty-four semester hours.

## JUNE

My road trip to Death Valley convinced me the time had come to sell my Westfalia and buy something more reliable. At mid-month I advertised the Camper on Craig's List for \$14,500 and sold it ten days later. With the proceeds, I bought a 2006 VW Passat Wagon. I took the mustard-colored Wagon on its maiden voyage to Samuel Taylor Park in Marin County. Sleeping in a small tent with an air mattress seemed retrograde, but more like true camping.

## JULY

I loved my little Honda Insight, but needed only one car. Sadly, I parted with my silver bullet on July 6. A few days later I packed my Passat for a big camping adventure—a road trip to Yellowstone National Park. Jody and I spent the first night at the Rye Patch Reservoir in Nevada then the second at Massacre Rocks near Pocatello, Idaho. Over three days within Yellowstone, I toured as much as I could. I remember multiple geysers, caldrons, and hot springs, sticking around Old Faithful long enough to observe two of its spoutings. My campsite was overrun with imperturbable bison. At one point, I couldn't enter the restroom because a giant bison stood in its entrance way.

On the return trip, I camped at Grand Teton National Park, gazing at the jagged peaks. I continued south past the Great Salt Lake and stayed a night at a motel in Wendover, Utah. It was too hot for a night in the tent; The shower and restaurant meal proved refreshing. After a night camping near Donner Pass, I returned home to my lovely wife. Altogether I had driven 2335 miles.

As I assembled my Yellowstone photos onto my website, I wondered what life force compelled me to journey into the woods. I remembered a quote from my college days that had haunted me for decades. It had to do with *deliberate living* and *sucking all the marrow of life*. I found via google it was Henry David Thoreau who described my wild spirit.

I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practice resignation, unless it was quite necessary. I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and Spartan-like as to put to rout all that was not life, to cut a broad swath and shave close, to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms.

About this time Delia snatched Lorenzo and Gia from Queens and settled in Pembroke Pines, Florida. Simon was stunned at this development, but there was little he could do. My son said she did this for three reasons: to get away from him, to relocate in a warmer climate, and to live in the midst of a Venezuelan community. He was determined to stay in the lives of his kids and so began bi-weekly trips from JFK airport to Fort Lauderdale. Simon did the best he could, helping Delia find a suitable rental and giving her money even though there was no requirement to do such. Simon settled into a tiny studio apartment on Third Street in Manhattan, just two subway stops from his workplace.

## AUGUST

As the month began, I started a new class at San Quentin called Biblical Preaching. The prison program was in flux. The Baptist seminary was relocating to Southern California and sponsorship of the program devolved from the resource-rich campus to a small church in Marin. Under new management, I could discern my role was diminishing.

My overnight campouts continued at Big Basin, Half Moon Bay, and Lake Chabot. At the end of the month Liz and I headed to Crater Lake in Oregon. My

wife flew into Medford where I picked her up in the Passat and drove to the Crater Lake lodge. It was a spectacular four days as we hiked along the caldera rim.

I considered it a miracle that ten of my family managed to gather in one place at one time, but there we were: Don and Jeanne, Charlotte and Jim, Eileen and Terry, Chris and Liz, Frank and Lelia. I had planned it, but was surprised to see it actually take place. We ten had time to walk, to talk, to pray, and to share about family. Char and Eileen talked about their newlyweds; Jael Walker had just married Kevin Hawkins and Joshua Brotherton had married Lauren.

My brother spoke with sadness about Johnny. In 2011, he was diagnosed with Ankylosing Spondylitis, a form of auto-immune arthritis. He was having so much discomfort in his hands, he lost his dream job as a programmer of computer games. He had moved in with Joshua and spent much of his day cloistered in his room. John was certainly on our prayer list.

Liz and I rested in San Mateo for one week only. Then we began an adventure called *Iceland Tours: Volcanoes & Vikings* sponsored by Classic Journeys. I counted this international travel as the second for Liz and me, our first being the mission trip to Rwanda.

On August 29, I dropped off Jody with the Varadys and the next day Allen Kennedy drove us to SFO. We flew Icelandic to Vancouver, BC, then on to Iceland. We landed in Reykjavik on Saturday, August 31, spending one night at the Sky Hotel and recovering from travel. This marked our Day Zero.

## SEPTEMBER

Day 1 ~ Sunday, September 1 ~ Rally in Reykjavik.

The next day, we strolled the local sights, inspecting monuments and dropping into a coffee shop. In the afternoon we hooked up with our group leader and met the three couples who would be our companions for the next week. Atli drove a huge ATV with eight passenger seats. By means of this rugged vehicle we would traverse a few hundred miles of Icelandic landscape. On this first day of the tour, Atli drove southeast along the coastline stopping at Hotel Ranga where we stayed our first three nights. I particularly enjoyed the tubs filled with geothermal water.

Day 2 ~ Monday, September 2 ~ Day in the Wilderness.

After breakfast, we moved inland through the wilderness, stopping near Mount Helka. At a view point called Seltun, we donned our hiking boots and grabbed our walking poles to navigate a mile of stony trail. The air remained cold and breezy, while the exotic landscape bubbled with steam, hiss, and sulfur fumes. The scenery was austere when we stopped at a seaside church to observe a monument dedicated

to Icelandic fisherman lost at sea. We returned to the hotel which was built in log-cabin style with an excellent reputation for its food, accommodation and service.

Day 3 ~ Tuesday, September 3 ~ Westman Islands.

Atli drove us in his ATV to a dock where we boarded a boat to the Westman Islands. Our first stop was an archeological site called Herjolfur's Farmhouse. The structure was a re-creation in stone and sod of a ninth century Viking house. We then went to an observation point called Vestmannaeyjar, famed for its nesting puffins. However, none of the birds were to be seen. We did, however, walk past a flock of wooly sheep.

We looked in the distance to view an island called Surtsey. This bit of volcanic earth had emerged from the sea in 1963. Iceland is still growing! Finally, we toured the town of Heimaey. This location is famed for a volcanic eruption that submerged half of a town in slow moving lava. A few structures were preserved as monuments to the destruction.

Day 4 ~ Wednesday, September 4~ Whale Watching and Coastal Walks.

On Wednesday we drove to the center of geyser country stopping on a blustery hilltop, taking in a panorama of spouting geysers. I paused at the original namesake geyser labeled as *geysir*. We then sat for a long drive to the Snaefellsnes Peninsula where we relocated to Hotel Budir for two nights. The view out my room window framed a glacier-capped volcano. In the evening we hiked along Whale Fjord, but no spouts were spotted.

Day 5 ~ Thursday, September 5 ~ Glymur Falls and the Logretta

After breakfast we traveled to Glymur Falls—the tallest in Iceland. Our tour group then dropped by Rainbow and Golden Falls which were fed by a massive glacier. In the afternoon, we stopped at Pingvellir National Park. Here the tectonic plates of Europe and North America are slowly drifting apart, causing molten rock to rise to the surface. Near this point we visited the *Logretta*—which marked the location of the world's first parliament held in 930 AD. I found the history as interesting as the landscape.

Day 6 ~ Friday, September 6 ~ Viking Sagas

Leaving Hotel Budir, we traveled toward Reykjavik to walk through an exhibition called *Egilssýning*. Here the old Viking myths were recited and displayed. I loved the Nordic re-telling of ancient sagas. After lunch, our group of nine hiked through a rock-strewn valley examining sinkholes of steaming water. A rare species of tropical fern grew in the recesses of these caldrons. We stayed the night at Hotel Glymur.

Day 7 - Saturday, September 7 - Reykjavik and the Blue Lagoon

On Saturday our group toured Reykjavik. I learned Iceland was famous for hot dogs, so I bought two from a street vendor. Liz deferred, so I feasted. On the outskirts of town, a geothermal power plant pumped its excess hot water into an artificial lagoon. This was the source of the famous *Blue Lagoon*. At a few acres in size and neck deep in warm water, the spa was the most visited tourist destination in all Iceland. Our group of eight lounged and splashed for a few hours in the steamy waters. I learned the spa was favored by both honeymooners and same-sex couples. Our tour then ended and we bid farewell to Atli.

Day 8 - Sunday, September 8 - Return home

We had a few spare hours on Sunday morning, so we visited the Cathedral of Christ the King, a neo-gothic structure build in 1929. Liz and I sat in the pews as I read scripture. The view from the belfry was awesome—ocean, mountains, winding streets. In the plaza stood a monument to Leif Erickson, presented in 1950 by the USA on the one-thousandth anniversary of his birth. Bidding adio to Leif, we then caught a bus to the distant airport. Soon we were back in California and only Icelandic memories remained.

I grew to enjoy my Thursday mornings at Men's Fraternity. I typically got out of bed before six o'clock and was out the door by 6:20. Once at CPC, I grabbed one boiled egg and one sausage, filled a paper cup with coffee and spent twenty minutes in conversation with six men at my round table. Bob Mitchell was my excellent table leader.

At that time, we were working our way through a book called *A Man and His Design*. I was impressed with the video lessons and posted to my bedroom door *the four principles of authentic manhood*: Take responsibility, reject passivity, lead courageously, and invest eternally. *Lord, help me to do this.*

## OCTOBER

Since the Writers Conference in March, I had been negotiating with *Guide Post Magazine* to print an article based on my memoir. In the November issue, *Guide Post* published "A Pastor's Test", a four-page encapsulation of my Rwanda forgiveness story. Having received a payment of \$400, I thereby became a professional writer.

At the CPC outdoor service on October 6, I shared this same faith story. A few hundred listened as I spoke about Kim, Africa, Franc, and forgiveness. In closing, I called Jody forward who leapt into my arms. I was pushing all I could to gain CPC sponsorship for CASA.

From October 8 to 13, I attended an apologetics conference in Charlotte, North Carolina. I attended lectures by such notables as Gary Habermas, Hugh Ross, Josh McDowell, Norman Geisler, and Oz Guinness. I had two purposes for this trip: First, to educate myself as I planned for ministry in Africa and second, to visit my in-laws. I stayed three nights at a hotel as well as one night in Asheville visiting Liz's family.

I continued my regimen of camping, staying overnight at Prayer Mountain, Half Moon Bay, and Big Basin. At the end of October, Jody and I headed north on an expedition to camp, socialize, and preach. In Longview, my sibling reunion took place at Eileen's house on Saturday and on Sunday I preached about Africa at the Baptist Church in Kelso.

## NOVEMBER

About a month later, I undertook my first flight to Florida to visit my son and my grandchildren. Simon, Lorenzo, and Gia met me at the Fort Lauderdale Airport. I knew Simon's life was in turmoil and his finances tight so it was my pleasure to cover the costs of this six-day rendezvous. Zachary joined us after a day, so father, two sons, and two grandchildren were on holiday together.

Simon and Dilia had come to an understanding that for the eight days a month he was in Florida, Simon would care for the kids as well as stay in Dilia's house for a few nights. After all, Simon was then covering half the cost of her rent.

On Thanksgiving Day, the five of us went to a local lagoon to swim. Zachary created a turkey sculpture from the wet sand using palm fronds as tail feathers. In the evening we partook of our Thanksgiving meal at a Boston Garden.

Dilia spent Thursday night with friends so we occupied the house. Simon posted this note on the refrigerator door: "Super important things for Lolo: You are always in Popi's heart; We are best friends forever; Always listen to mommy; Always protect Gia."

On Friday we five went on a hydroplane tour through swampland sawgrass. It was odd to see my grandson terrified at the engine roar but my granddaughter squealing with excitement. On Saturday and Sunday, we stayed at a luxury hotel enjoying the pools, slides, and waterfalls. All too soon it was time for me to return to California.

## DECEMBER

With December came the flurry of Christmas events. As a CPC van driver, I led a dozen people to Mount Hermon for a festive dinner and concert. Liz and I visited downtown San Francisco to view the window displays and holiday lights. Liz's mom and Ryan dropped by for a holiday meal. For a Christmas present, I

bought Liz an extravagant tea-bag humidor. She said it was one of the few things she wanted, but didn't own.

Frank dropped by San Mateo with his nephew Javin. My brother had appointed him as CASA's executive director. We hung out together for a few days before Javin caught his flight to Kigali.

On my birthday the old Beatles song kept rattling in my head, "Will you still need me? Will you still feed me when I'm sixty-four?" It seemed as just a moment ago when Paul McCartney crooned those words into my ears. Had forty-six years really elapsed?

As the year ended, I completed the first draft of my memoir manuscript. In all it was thirty-two chapters and 225 pages. After several flip-flops, the working title became *Seasons of Solomon: An Anthem to God's Sustaining Grace*. The grunt work was complete. The polishing, editing, and publishing lay ahead.

And thus, ended my first year of marriage to Jeanne Elizabeth Foreman. It was a passionate tumultuous twelve months. It was not always easy living in the same house with her. She and I had different backgrounds, experiences, temperaments, and expectations. Sometimes emotions were raw. Jody often eased tension by serving as a calming presence and court jester. We were also blessed in that we shared the same Lord and Savior. Without God, we may not have survived that first year. I scotch-taped this excerpt of my marriage vow onto my bedroom wall:

Ken to Chris: "Do you take Liz to be your lawfully wedded wife? Do you commit yourself to her holiness and her usefulness to God's kingdom? Do you forsake all others in favor of Liz? Do you promise to love her, honor her trust her, and serve her in sickness and in health, in adversity and in prosperity, as long as you both shall live? Will you love Liz as Christ loved his Church and gave Himself completely to her in sacrificial love?"

Chris to Ken: "I will."

Liz asked about the paper. I told her I posted these words as a memo to self. "When love is thin, vows must be thick."



# Chapter 28

## RETIRED

January 2014 to October 2015  
San Mateo, California

*Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden,  
and I will give you rest.*  
(Matthew 11:28)

My work life had come to an end and one year of marriage was complete. Retirement had crept upon me slowly. I volunteered my time, but had no desire to seek paid employment, enjoying a comfortable life style underwritten by an army pension, a California State pension, social security, and rental income.

My life of retirement was regulated by a succession of:

1. daily routines like newspaper, Bible study, dog-walks, gym exercise, dinner, and writing;
2. weekly cycles like church, men's fraternity, and San Quentin ministry; and
3. monthly events which I recorded on my calendar like camping, road trips, hikes with Liz, and flights to kids.

I added a *Retirement* page to my website titled, "Life in Retirement—or who needs to work when you have such a great dog, wife, and grandkids?"

### 2014 JANUARY

The first day of the year coincided with my first anniversary. Liz and I spent a few nights in Capitola near the Pacific, then drove coastal Highway 1 to Wilder Ranch State Park. The winding hike to Fern Grotto along the crashing oceanside was picture perfect.

Just a few days later, I departed to Rwanda for the Second Annual East Africa Christian Apologetics Conference. This mission was doubly special. First, we planned to officially dedicate the Kim Foreman Bible Institute. Second, Zachary and Simon accompanied me as guests; plus, CPC pastors, Mark Mitchell and Neil Benson, were on hand to evaluate CASA as a possible mission partner. Javin

was already residing at the Lighthouse, so when Frank and I arrived in country, there were seven on our mission team.

The Lighthouse was not yet ready for prime time; the rooftop space was not enclosed, gravel and rock surrounded the foundation, and timber scaffolding ascended the structure's side. Construction could not outpace funding and money was hard to come by. Because of the unready state of the building, we held our apologetics conference in the university auditorium even as we seven missionaries occupied unfinished guest rooms. About ninety students were in attendance from six East African countries. Jane and Florida assisted as protocol.

The ten conference speakers included five Americans (Chris, Frank, Mark, Neil, and Zachary) and five Africans (Franc, Paul, Zura Esther, Gibson Anduvate, and Dally Mwamba). I spoke about the importance of apologetics using 1 Peter 3:15 as a launch point "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect." Mark and Neal also taught apologetics.

Frank spoke about heterodoxy and the dangers of the prosperity gospel while Zachary presented a lecture on logical reasoning, using scriptural examples. Zura was a convert from Islam and talked about her faith journey; Gibson spoke of his ministry in Kenya and Dally of his Congo ministry. Various dignitaries dropped by and marveled at the international flavor of the gathering.

A big event of the mission was the dedication of the Kim Foreman Bible institute. I was delighted her two sons were present to participate in honoring their mother. We unveiled the wall-embedded tombstone and spoke of Kim with her large Joy-of-God portrait smiling in the background. A dozen local dignitaries sat in a semicircle. My sons and I spoke first, then Frank closed with these words:

It is in memory of her joy that my brother returns to dedicate this Bible institute. It is in memory of that love that her sons, Zachary and Simon, return to witness that dedication. And it is my great privilege as brother and uncle to watch and smile at the grace and love and joy of God.

Simon carried out a special assignment. I had tasked him to create an installation piece to fill the open atrium of the Lighthouse in honor of his mother. He decided to use the classic form of Rwandan baskets and hang large sculptures from the ceiling rafters. He hired local welders to fabricate the metal framework of one basket. My son visualized the center space as filled with seven such hanging baskets, each of a different size and floor height. The metal frames would be wound about with hemp rope to simulate the baskets.

Mark Mitchell was unhappy with his sparse speaking schedule so Pastor Paul arranged for him and Neil to preach at several additional venues and at the soccer stadium. I spent an unexpected day at the university dentist office. One of my molars had broken at the base and a local dentist tried to re-cement it in place. My dentist brother stepped forward and took over the procedure when the local guy seemed a bit intoxicated.

Frank, Javin, and the CASR board signed papers with the Mortgage Bank of Rwanda to borrow \$250,000. The rate was 16.5% interest over seven years. Our hope was to pay off this loan by 2018 in order to get the Lighthouse complete for both ministry and business.

On my last day in Butare, Pastor David and I visited the homes of two widows who lived just down the gravel road from the Lighthouse. As we walked, David said, “The women are so pleased you could see them before you leave. They really wanted to thank you in person for the CASA pigs you provided the funding for.”

He explained pigs were not the traditional meat source for Rwandans. They raised goats, cows, and chickens for food. But pigs provided two added benefits. They devoured garbage and produced large litters. “Pastor Chris,” he commented, “we had twenty women in our group, but only enough money for six pigs and everyone wanted one.”

This was the first I’d heard of that issue. “How did you determine who would get the pigs?”

A smile broke on his face. “I invited all the women to see the pigs at my house. Each was in its own cage made with sticks and twine, all material that can be found in the bush. When the widows arrived, I told them, ‘I will visit each of you next Sunday after church. Whoever has built a pen like this will get a pig.’ Five days later, when I went to their homes, only four women had made stout pig pens. I gave each of them a pig. I still have the other two at my home.”

As we approached the first residence, a woman escorted us into her backyard and proudly showed me her cage. As I stared the pig in the face, I thought, *It’s charity to provide my Rwandan friends with resources, but wisdom to allow a godly man like David to distribute them.*

On the return trip to Kigali, we paused at the roadside memorial. With fresh paint and flowers, the crash site looked well maintained. Simon, Zachary, and Frank prayed as Mark, Neil, and I looked on. Soon six of us were on our way back home. Javin stayed behind to oversee construction and allocate resources.

Returning from Africa, I picked up my life where I had dropped it a month earlier. Liz and I enjoyed our Sundays sitting side-by-side at Central Peninsula Church. On Wednesdays, she volunteered to be a table leader for Women’s Bible

Study and on Thursdays I continued my leadership at Men's Fraternity. I began to teach a Friday morning class at San Quentin on Biblical Preaching.

I also resumed my gym routine, working my way through fourteen machines on the exercise floor. I began the habit of showering at SMAC rather than at home. Part of my motivation was an ongoing drought. I became a *Winter Warrior* earning enough credits to receive a free coffee mug and a tee shirt.

Liz was also passionate about fitness, earning a Pilates certificate and teaching classes at five different locations. After discussing the matter, we agreed that Liz was fitter (thinner), but I was more robust (fatter).

About that time, we began our Netflix habit, watching about two flicks per week. Our first batch was five DVDs of the *Number One Ladies' Detective Agency*. Liz liked recently released romantic comedies, while I preferred historical fiction and mysteries.

## FEBRUARY

At the beginning of the month, I hiked the San Mateo County open space with Liz and made a quick trip to the Northwest. While in Kelso I shared a reunion meal with my brother and sisters at Izzy's. When I returned home, my new Pinnacle pop-up tent waited for me on the front steps.

A few days later, I headed to Mount Diablo to check out this new camping accoutrement. I stayed at the Juniper Junction Camping Area on an exposed hill side. About 4:00 Jody and I began a long walk to the summit. The views of the Bay Area were magnificent, but on the return route, I led my dog on a shortcut. Getting lost, we walked down steep gullies and followed shadowy deer trails. By the time I reached blacktop again, I didn't know if I was above or below Juniper Junction.

I trudged uphill as darkness descended. Finally, a ranger pickup approached; I explained my predicament; and he drove us downhill to our campsite. After dark, the wind picked up. I anchored the tall tent at midnight with strong rope, but the fabric sides soon sagged. Then about 2:00 am, the tent totally collapsed. I slept the rest of the night sheltered in my Passat, the car bucking in the gale-force wind. When I returned home the next morning, I told Liz I had enough of camping for a while.

## MARCH

At mid-month, I made a four-day trip to Florida to connect with my son and grandkids. We had a wonderful two days at the Hotel Key Largo. Lorenzo mispronounced our "hotel" as "show and tell". We frolicked in the ocean and in the pools; We rented fishing poles and kayaks; We crammed all we could into forty-eight hours.

While eating in a diner, I noticed a new tattoo on Simon's left forearm. He followed my eyes as I crooked my head to read it.

"I got it a few weeks ago. Can you figure it out?" He lifted his elbow, making his arm horizontal.

I squinted and shook my head.

"It has to do with Mom."

I read the digits out loud: "-02.14443333 +29.74838333." I was still clueless.

"They're coordinates." He smiled.

A light dawned. "Ah! Minus zero-two indicates two degrees south of equator, so I bet it has to do with Africa."

His smile broadened. "That's right. They're the coordinates for the accident site in Rwanda." He held up his other arm. "Now I'm balanced. I have Lorenzo's and Gia's names on my right arm, and Mom's on my left."

I didn't understand the younger generation's fascination with body art, but I certainly saw the love in this one. I took a picture of Simon displaying his left arm.

All too soon it was time to return to Pembroke Pines, to return Lorenzo and Gia to their mom. Dilia phoned Simon to attain the exact time of his arrival.

When we pulled up to her house, my son was in for a surprise. As he parked along the curb, I began to unpack with the kids. He walked toward the front door and was greeted by a stranger who asked, "Are you Simon Foreman?" After a positive response, my son was handed a packet. The man said, "You are hereby served with a divorce decree."

Simon returned to the car with a face of astonishment and told me what had just transpired. After a pause, he added, "I think it's better this happened in Florida rather than in New York."

He left the kids with sneaky Dilia who was peeking through a window, then we two went to a hotel for the night. The potential had become actual; Except for the legal paperwork, their marriage had dissolved.

Franc Murenzi was on his first tour of America. After spending a week with my brother in Vancouver, he flew down to the Bay Area, staying with Diane in Hayward. He spoke at Men's Fraternity and was interviewed by Neil during a CPC morning service. Franc and I also spoke at my old Baptist Church in San Lorenzo.

I wanted to treat my African son to a wilderness experience so we spent a few days touring Yosemite and Lake Tahoe. It was along the lake shore that we had a long and difficult discussion about Pastor Paul Gasigi. Franc reported he was misusing funds and held a terrible reputation in Butare. I responded, "If the entire board agrees with you, then he must go."

After hearing a unanimous negative report from David, Florida, Ben, and Jane, I conferred with my brother. I sent a sealed letter back with Franc to present to Paul which included the words:

This is difficult for me to do. You have been a good friend and ally in Rwanda, especially at the time of Kim's death. Yet, my obligation is to God first and to the building of His kingdom. I am sad to say that at this moment you cannot be a part of that kingdom-building.

A few weeks later, Paul stepped down as CASR chair and Franc assumed leadership.

## APRIL

As the month began, I attended the Mount Hermon Christian Writers' Conference, focusing my energy on my memoir—now called *Vicissitudes*. I enlisted the help of two professionals: Karen O'Connor to help with the general content and Kathy Ide to red-line the manuscript line by line. I worked with these women for the next few months until satisfied my book was as good as I could make it.

I continued my camping—a few nights at Bodega Bay and a sojourn to the Northwest, where I enjoyed a BBQ at Eileen's home with her extended family.

Liz and I relished our college hiking class, walking with Tom Tabor at Montera Mountain, Windy Hill and San Bruno Mountain. We also toured the Legion of Fine Arts with Liz's mom to view a collection of Impressionist art.

I became increasingly involved with Men's Fraternity and continued to lead a table of eight. I was an occasional platform teacher, speaking once about forgiveness and once about marriage. Cheedo, who was also a table leader, spoke one Thursday morning and his message struck close to home. I wrote this piece as a blog:

A few mornings ago, I was challenged. At 6:00 a.m. I attend a group called Men's Fraternity at Central Peninsula Church in Foster City. Typically, one hundred guys gather in an auditorium and meet around circular tables. Seven other men sit at the table I lead. We enjoy a half hour of breakfast, fight to stay awake through a half hour of speaking or video, then share our lives around the table.

Last Thursday, Cheedo spoke to the group about friendship and about the need for men to have other men present in their lives; men with whom they could be accountable and bare their souls. "Males develop in to men in the presence of other men," he pontificated.

Then he said, "Stand up if you have a best friend in your life." Along with most in the room, I stood up. Next, he said, "If the best friend you're thinking

about is your wife, your dog, or Jesus, then sit down.” The room filled with laughter and sheepishly I took my seat.

I grew introspective as he continued his lecture. I thought about Lizzie. She is a good wife and my confidant. We can talk about anything. I know her buttons that I dare not push and she knows mine. We were getting along pretty well these days. And my dog, Jody! What a joy she is. She provides company without breaking solitude. I can understand why people say, “Dog is man’s best friend.” And of course, there’s my faith in Christ. We used to sing, “What a friend we have in Jesus, all my sins and griefs to bear! What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer!” I do spend a lot of time in contemplation and prayer.

Yep, I thought. Those are my big three. But I guess I’m wise enough to know that my trio is not sufficient. I do lack trustworthy men in my life. I have my brother, Frank, and talk with him by phone. He’s a best friend. Still, I need local men—just a few—to keep me grounded, to keep me honest, to challenge me, and to remind me that God created me to live in community. And I need more than Facebook friends.

So, I called Steve yesterday. He and I will continue meeting over the summer, even though Men’s Fraternity is on a three-month hiatus. I invited Ken to go camping with me in June. It’s uncomfortable, but I need to stretch. Maybe if Cheedo asks the same question in 2015, I will remain on my feet.

## MAY

At the San Mateo Athletic Club, I began to attend aqua-fitness three days a week. I splashed my body in continual motion for one hour straight. One time as I was strutting in the pool, *Satisfaction* sounded over the loud speakers. My mind reeled back to 1965, when The Rolling Stones strutted to their hit song. As I glanced around at my fellow geezers, my antics seemed bizarre. Had fifty years really passed so quickly? Pimples to wrinkles in the blink of an eye.

I drove my Passat to Pinnacles National Park, setting up my tall tent. After one miserable day of one-hundred-degree temperatures, Jody and I drove to the Pacific side of the park for marine-layer relief. Being a committed camper meant suffering excess wind on one weekend and excess heat on the next.

## JUNE

Since Liz and I did not make an international trip in 2014, we decided to spend some quality time in Southern California. We visited the Getty Museum and the Huntington Gardens. Liz liked the flower-filled fields while I preferred the inside antiquities and artwork, especially *Blue Boy*. We also visited UCLA where Liz studied for four years as an undergraduate.

## JULY

On July first I flew to Orlando, Florida, to hook up with Zachary. After one night in a hotel, we drove to the Kennedy Space Center where we passed a day in blissful rocket gazing. I hadn't before recognized the four phases of space exploration that were on display: Mercury, Gemini, Apollo, and Shuttle. We walked through all the exhibitions then drove the hundred miles south to meet up with Simon in Pembroke Pines.

The situation was difficult with Dilia so we spent most of the week at hotels. We never knew where we would spend the night. About noon, Simon would open *hotel.com* and see which place was the cheapest. We got some real bargains. Over five days, we stayed at five different locations. On the official picture we were known as Gia, Lolo, Gwampa, Papi, and Tio Zac. I took a hundred photos of swimming, diving, beach combing, and water park sliding. I enjoyed being with my family!

After sixteen months of continual issues, I decided to sell the condo in Hayward. My renters morphed from two adults into five, each of whom owned a car. Every month, the home owner's association sent me a complaint of excessive noise or illegal parking. Often a fine accompanied the complaint. I tried to pass the expense on to Blanca, but she made excuses saying the condo was picking on her because she was a minority. As condo owner, I was stuck in the middle of this unhappy dynamic. In April, I gave Blanca thirty days to move out and on July 12, I dropped by the condo for its open house.

Louise Lovewell sold my place for \$380,000 and after paying off the mortgage, I put about \$250,000 into my bank account. I sent a good chunk of that to CASR to speed construction of the Lighthouse.

On July 23, I headed north for a camping-rafting expedition. After a night at Harris Beach State Park in Oregon, I drove to Frank's house in Vancouver. There we hooked up with Shane Foreman (Frank's grandson) and Eric Heinlein (his nephew-in-law). The next day, our party of four climbed Beacon Rock along the Columbia River then settled into camp at the Oklahoma Campground near Salmon River.

The highlight of the outing was a white-water adventure down the Little Salmon River. We armored up in wetsuit, helmet, and life vest before a guide accompanied us down six miles of rapids. I know Shane enjoyed the plunging and pitching in our rubber raft. I suppose Eric did too. For Frank and me, we survived the ordeal with smiles. After stops at the Ice Cave, Natural Bridge, and Multnomah Falls, we headed back to Vancouver.

It was a memorable trip capped off by a visit to Jeanne in Canby. She brought me to Marquee Village, a long-term care facility, where I dropped

in on Don. Jeanne told me after a bloody tumble in the house, she could no longer look after him. My sister was delighted the care center was less than a mile from her apartment.

On the last day of July, I visited Holy Sepulcher Cemetery. Once again, I thought about my funeral message. In contemplation, I studied my chiseled name with a birthyear followed by an open-ended dash. What am I doing with my life? Am I living up to the engraved Bible verse? *We have glorified God on the earth. We have finished the work He has given us to do.*

*O God, this is my heart wish. Help me to live a life that pleases you.*

## AUGUST

As the month began, I enrolled at the College of San Mateo taking a class called *Creative Writing 1*. Professor Kathleen Steele was a few years younger than me and about to retire. For fourteen weeks I attended noontime classes on the college campus. My life experience and interest in nostalgic memoir set me apart from the young undergraduates. I took this class to provide me with skill to polish my never-ending saga, now titled, *A Time for Every Purpose: A memoir of Love, Loss, and Letting Go*.

I ended up writing five stories and five poems. This poem was called *Ars Poetica*:

Not written for eyes but spoken to ears.

Speech predates text by ten thousand years.

Not seeking the mind, but aimed at the heart.

It's one-part science, but nine-parts art.

Not food for my body, but drink for my soul.

Not bits of my person, but for me as a whole.

Like songs without singing, chant without tune.

It's not about talking, but meant to commune ...

through my ears, at my heart, into my soul. Poetry.

I was weaving travel time with classroom time. Liz and I drove up the coast to spend a weekend at the Sea Ranch. We rented a cottage not far from my friend, Steve Wilson, and his wife, Judy. We shared a close up look at sun-bathing sea lions. As August progressed, I also made a camping trip to Mount Lassen and an outing to Coit Tower to celebrate Lizzie's fifty-seventh birthday.

## SEPTEMBER

My major road trip for 2014 was planned for September 13 to 21 to experience the *Mighty Five* National Parks of Utah—Arches, Canyonlands, Capitol Reef, Bryce Canyon, and Zion.

On the first day, Jody and I traveled from San Mateo to Rainbow Basin, California. The temperature rose to 102 at the Owl Creek Campground near the Mojavi Desert. The night cooled enough to sleep comfortably in my pinnacle tent. On the next day, I drove past a giant solar array near Las Vegas, then on to Kershaw Ryan State Park. I had the well-manicured facility to myself and refreshed my sweaty body in a wading pool. On day three, I drove to the far end of Utah to experience the Mighty Five east to west. I pulled into Arches National Park about dusk. The landscape of sandstone was other-worldly, with arches, tunnels, balancing rocks, and the odd-looking hoodoos. I could not have asked for a more picturesque campsite. It presented as a movie set.

I wasn't able to park overnight in Canyonlands, but drove through the sandstone formations stopping at the Singletree Campground near Capitol Reef. Jody and I had a grand time walking through the Capitol Gorge, pausing to view the fantastic colors of the sandstone walls. We also walked down the Grand Wash which posted the warning, "Do not enter if storm threatening."

By this point in my road trip, my tall tent had broken a support beam which I bandaged with duct tape. My air mattress also went flat. So, I decided to rent a cabin at an RV park for thirty-four dollars. It proved to be a refreshing break from tent living. We then traveled to Bryce Canyon. This park was small but mighty. At Inspiration Point I could view a hundred hoodoos sprouting to the sky. One section was called Fairy View because the gigantic formations appeared as castle spires. Jody surprised me as I was hoodoo gazing. I had to scold her for leaping through a partially opened car window and sniffing her way to my leg-side.

I moved on to Zion National Park, purchasing a new air mattress along the route. It was hot in southwest Utah; 95 degrees when I arrived at 6:00 p.m. and never below 85 during the night. I used ice packs to keep myself cool. In the morning, I wanted to take the bus tour, but I was running late, it was still hot, and there was no place to stash Jody during a two-hour bus ride. Thus, I missed the choice parts of Zion which were off limits to private cars. I left Zion about 9:00 and drove across Nevada to camp at Oh Ridge Campground near June Lake.

On Saturday morning, I began a final six-hour leg to San Mateo. I soon grew concerned. My Passat began to make a grinding noise when I shifted gears. I chugged to the summit of Tioga Pass on Highway 120 at 9905 feet. I thought I was home free, but the car stalled a few times going through Yosemite. I nursed it as far as the mountain town of Groveland, where the VW refused to budge. I asked a service station guy what he thought. After revving the engine, he muttered, "transmission." Not good.

It cost me \$285 to tow the clunker to Ralph's Transmission in Modesto. They accepted the Passat, but said they couldn't examine it until Monday. I slept at a Motel 6 with Jody and on Sunday drove a rental to San Mateo. On Monday, the transmission shop reported the repair estimate to be \$4500. I was disgusted with the vehicle and decided to unload it. I had possessed it for only sixteen months.

On Wednesday Charles Varady followed my rental in his own car to Modesto. The Blue Book for the VW was \$5000 and so I traded my title for \$750 cash. I turned in one rental in Modesto and picked up another in Hayward. My 2014 camping trip turned out to be an adventure, albeit an expensive one.

I needed to buy another car in a hurry. After a few days of research, I settled on something new, reliable, and fuel-efficient. For \$26,000, I purchased a white pearl Toyota Persona Prius at Toyota 101 in Redwood City. I was fortunate in that I had cash remaining from the sale of my condo.

## OCTOBER

As the month began, Frank and Lelia flew into SFO to spend a few nights in a hotel. Together we drove to San Jose to see a staged production of *The Great Divorce* by C.S. Lewis. Afterwards, Frank and I quizzed each other on the various phantom encounters included and omitted from the original book. I was blessed that my brother's mind worked liked my own.

A week after that I decided to test out my Prius as a camping vehicle. I visited Prayer Mountain, Big Sur State Park, Pfeiffer Beach, and Garrapata State Park. I was surprised how well my camping paraphernalia fit in the back of the Toyota. As October closed, the SF Giants won their third World Series in five years, and I received a drive-thru flu shot at Kaiser Permanente.

## NOVEMBER

I welcomed the midterm election results. Republicans swept the House winning seats 244 to 180. A strange story emerged about a former deacon at my Baptist Church. Mike Fortner had always bragged about being a Navy Seal. An Oakland newspaper revealed him to be a blowhard fraud. I was saddened but had always suspected exaggeration.

Liz and I hiked at Pulgas Ridge. My wife led while another woman served as sweep. Five of us enjoyed the trails staggered between the two. Liz certainly enjoyed her outdoor life as an open-space docent.

I finally got my memoir complete and began the self-publishing process with Believer's Press. At the last moment, I changed the book's title from *A Time for Every Purpose* to *Forgive Like a Rwandan*. The process had advanced from writer, to editor, now to publisher. Ahead lay the most difficult role for me, marketer.

In late November, Liz and I went north to Portland. I drove the Prius and she flew. After leaving Jody with Charles and Diane, I headed north, spending the night in the back of the car at the Rogue River rest stop. This was doable, but uncomfortable. Liz flew into PDX and I joined up with her at the Spring Hill Marriot near the airport.

The next day I ate breakfast with Frank at his down-sized apartment in Vancouver. Across the road from his temporary dwelling lay a construction site. My brother explained how he had sold his big house and dental practice to finance his grand plan: a double-sized lot with house for him and Lelia as well as a separate unit for Lucinda and her caregiver. The property was just being cleared and Frank, in near proximity, could keep an eye on it during construction.

Liz spent the day with her sister and after the movie I drove to her place for a Thanksgiving dinner with Tricia and Jim. For dessert we shared a birthday cake. It just happened to be Tricia's fifty-fifth birthday.

As November ended, I got some good news from Zachary. During a phone call he shared that he had met a woman named Ruth. They were serious. He pointed me to a Facebook post where I saw the two of them smiling while picking apples. Hurray for my son!

## DECEMBER

Rain finally returned to the Bay Area on the first of the month. I enjoyed walking through down pours at Laurelwood Park decked out in my 49's rain suit, listening to the roaring stream, splashing through puddles, and avoiding the many trail-crossing banana slugs. Liz considered my rainy-day antics as particularly eccentric.

I completed my creative writing class now inspired to pursue a writing career. I re-configured my website, drawing a lifetime of written work into one place. I was surprised to discover so much of it on various parts of my computer. I hired a web developer to market *chrisalanforeman.com* as my blog site and I developed an HTML version of *Forgive Like a Rwandan*. I did all I could think of to market myself as a Christian author—"shaping souls through the Christian word".

Christmastime was a joyous yet exhausting season. I gave Liz a spreadsheet of eleven days—December 20 to 30—detailing the activity of Chris, Liz, Simon (with kids), and Zachary. On Saturday, I picked up Simon, Lorenzo, and Gia at SFO. They checked into the Foster City Marriott where I presented the kids with sleeping bags as Christmas gifts. Liz dropped by the hotel to greet them and share a meal.

On Sunday morning, we all attended CPC with Liz and her mom. After church the four of us headed to Half Moon Bay then up the coast to stay a night at Prayer Mountain in Scotts Valley. We used a thick-wick candle as our campfire.

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The next morning, we hung out among the drippy redwoods before heading north to Hayward. We paused at the Holy Sepulcher Cemetery where Gia and Lorenzo wrote notes to put on their halmoni's gravestone. I explained each of the forty-eight glyphs, from Kim's birth to her death. After that, we went our separate ways. Simon borrowed the Prius to spend a few nights in Marin with his buddy, Danny, while I rented a car to return home. On Tuesday, I rested.

On Christmas eve, Simon drove from Mill Valley to San Mateo, making tourist stops along the way. In the evening we five drove down to Round Table Pizza to celebrate my sixty-fifth birthday, sticking a candle in the pizza pie. Liz invited my son and grandchildren to sleep one night in the house. They stayed in my room while I slept on the downstairs couch.

It was a joy to watch my grandkids rip open gifts on Christmas morning. Liz helped Lorenzo build with Legos and she read a Jesus book to Gia. Becky dropped by the house to take part in the festivities. About noon, we headed north in the Prius, staying the night at the Extended Stay Lodge in San Rafael. Zachary—landing late at SFO—arrived at the hotel after midnight. It was a busy Christmas Day.

The next morning, I stashed my Prius and rented a mini-van for the long haul north. We arrived at the Railroad Park Resort in Dunsmuir just after dark. I rented the caboose—the premier spot—for one night. The kids took delight in the railroad-themed setting now knee-deep with snow. In the morning we continued up I-5 to Turner, Oregon. Zachary and Simon were pleased to visit their aunt Hyun Hee and cousin Stephen.

After a night in Salem, we headed to Longview. My extended family held a holiday party at the Zimmerman abode. I did learn some bad news. On a routine blood test, Terry was diagnosed with smoldering multiple myeloma. It was a condition correlated to his agent orange exposure in Vietnam. My brother-in-law still appeared healthy, but reported he tired easily. The photo of the front steps shows twenty-five in attendance: Eileen, Terry, Jenny, Jeff, Laura, Jonathan, Frank, Lelia, Joshua, Shane, Charlotte, Jim, Shelley, Jeanne, Don, DJ, Stephanie, Shae, Riley, Genna, Chris, Zachary, Simon, Lorenzo, and Gia.

We stayed in a Longview hotel for the night then headed south; first to visit Dong Hyun at his Lewisville Market & Deli, then to drop off Simon at the Portland Airport. Zachary and I headed to California about six o'clock, spent a few cold hours snoozing in the back of the mini-van, then pulled into Mill Valley as the sun rose. Zachary remained to return the mini-van and visit with Robbie Elem. I got home in my Prius an hour later, feeling a bit sick and thoroughly exhausted. December 31 was a day to recover from eleven days of non-stop activity.

## 2015 JANUARY

The new year began with an anniversary brunch at Subway Sandwich. Liz had her tuna melt while I enjoyed my Black Forest Ham. As the month progressed, we hiked at Wunderlich County Park, the Edgewood Trail, and along the Pacific coast at Half Moon Bay.

I resumed my teaching at San Quentin, this time leading a class in Church History. I required students to memorize these nine ages as pegs upon which to hang historical events:

The Church begins with the resurrection of Christ in 33 AD

1. The Apostolic Church-to 70 AD destruction of the temple
2. The Persecuted Church-to 312 AD conversion of Constantine
3. The Established Church-to 590 AD Fall of Rome
4. The Medieval Church-to 1517 Protestant Reformation
5. The Reformation Church-to 1648 Peace at Westphalia
6. The Enlightenment Church-to 1789 French Revolution
7. The Revival Church-to 1914 World War I
8. The Modern Church-to 2001 Terror Attacks
9. The Global Church-to present

I did all I could to market my memoir. I hired an agency called Susie Q to phone-counsel me concerning my platform. I contracted Donnie Rabbit to build a WordPress blog site at *chrisalanforeman.com*; All to no avail. I enjoyed the writing process and desired with all my heart to market my book, but I was unable to conjure the passion to create a platform. After nine fruitless attempts to gather *a tribe*, I abandoned hope. *I Stand Admonished* was my final blog:

I give up. I throw in the towel; I hang up my spurs; I call it a day. Yippee! I'm free to use these clichés again because I quit my writing career!! That's right. Now I can use all the exclamation points I please!!! Take that you \$80-per-hour editor!!!!!!!

I'm so over searching for my voice, striking adverbs, and conjuring fancy phrases—all to the yawn of an indifferent universe. Who needs it?

“Is my point of view consistent?”

“Am I showing and not telling?”

Yada Gena yada.

Look. I'm sixty-five years old, okay? I'm on Medicare, happy in my dotage, have a loving wife, and enough money to accompany me to the grave. Why am I banging my balding head against a brick wall?

Should I admit it? Okay. I'm a cranky curmudgeon. I hate social media, blogs, tech-talk, and pop culture. There are more than enough sparkling, thought-provoking, and un-read books to fill my remaining years with bliss. Why should I suffer rejection after rejection?

One publisher said, "This writing is good but lacks literary quality." What? You mean it's not *War and Peace*?

Another said, "We love your manuscript, but we are not publishing memoirs at this time." Note to publisher: I checked. Your last three titles were memoirs.

I shouldn't complain though. At least those two were kind enough to respond. Twenty others must have re-purposed my stamped envelope. And remind me again. What was that definition of insanity?

I do take pleasure in writing, but I don't want to build no stinkin' platform. I know, I know. My semi-well-written memoir will melt away into the innards of a slush pile.

Here's an irony for you. I strove to improve my writing by reading more widely. But the more widely I read, the more inadequate my own writing appeared. There are so many gifted authors out there with so many well-crafted words. I'm told Amazon uploads 3,500 creative works each day. That's over a million books per year! Earth to Chris: What makes you think your piddling contribution will splash more than peeing into the Pacific?

In my quiet time I've been consulting with a famous writer named King Solomon, the preacher of Ecclesiastes. He tells me my book-writing business is vanity and vexation of spirit. "My son," he counsels, "be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh." Amen and amen!

I get it. I stand admonished. I hereby renounce Christian writing. Let others "shape souls through the creative word". That's not my job, man!

But hold on. . . Then why am I publishing this on my blog?

The Bay Area was experiencing an extreme drought. On February first, headlines read, "San Francisco gets no rain in January for first time in 165 years." Hills that typically glistened green remained dusty brown.

## FEBRUARY

This was a month of transitions. Simon and Dilia were officially divorced under the laws of Florida. In order for Simon to visit Lorenzo and Gia, he began commuting via Jet Blue from New York City to Pembroke Pines twice a month. My uncle Stanley Dydek died at age 97 and Eileen's mother-in-law, Velma Zimmerman, died at 94.

I continued my life of pleasant retirement, tossing horseshoes with Charles in Hayward and hiking with Liz at Pulgas Ridge. On February 20, Liz and I attended the West Coast Christian Writers' Conference in Castro Valley. Although discouraged, I tried my best to market my book sitting in on a class called "Platform and Marketing." I heard their spiel. I understood the necessity. Yet, I was not able to motivate myself to the degree where I might be able to motivate others.

A week later, two hundred paperback books arrived at my doorstep. I carried the heavy boxes to my room and began a plan to distribute them. After a few months, I had given away one hundred copies of *Forgive Like a Rwandan*. I was also able to sell a few dozen at speaking engagements and another few dozen through the Amazon bookstore. I could project I wasn't going to get rich marketing my memoir.

## MARCH

On the first Sunday of the month, Liz and I began attending Western Hills Church. There was a push away from CPC as well as a pull toward WHC. For me, the push involved Mark Mitchell's unwillingness to support CASA; Jody being forbidden to enter the church; and Dan Reid not willing to partner with me in an accountability group. All this soured me. The pull was first proximity—WHC was a mere mile away. Also, with just a hundred in attendance, the setting was more intimate. Finally, I knew and liked Karl Ortis, the pastor. Liz had her own set of reasons.

Two of the pillars of WHC were Ken and Shirley Hardy. As leaders of the mission team, I was soon talking to them about accompanying me on a trip to Rwanda.

Liz was writing for an on-line magazine called *Joyful Living*. In March we published side-by-side articles. I wrote *Who Rescued Whom* and Liz *Five Tips when Preparing an On-line Dating Profile*.

My brother flew down to discuss Africa Mission 2015 and to meet Ken and Shirley. Frank stayed with the Hardys one night, then we camped out together, first at Lake Chabot then at Big Basin. It was good brother hobo fellowship.

On March 21, Liz and I traveled to North Table Mountain near Oroville, California. The brochure read, "An ecological reserve decked out in more than one hundred kinds of wildflowers. Bloom starts in February and peaks in March. Guided tours are offered".

We stayed one night north of Sacramento, then spent a full day on the mountain. This gigantic cow pasture was described as an elevated basalt mesa

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with vistas, waterfalls, lava outcrops and vernal pools. The landscape and flowers were a marvel to behold. We even cornered a few newts in the springtime streams.

I wrote this after a Saturday visit to San Quentin:

So, what do Gavin Newsom and M.C. Hammer have in common? Well, both spoke at the Garden Chapel in San Quentin State Prison yesterday. I pulled my car into the near lot but found it packed. I had to leave my Prius at the Richmond bridge parking. I walked through the sally gate ten minutes late.

Inside, my library classroom was inundated with visitors. This was all for a prison program called *The Last Mile* which encouraged inmates to become entrepreneurs. My seminary class in Church History relocated to a small office, but with only three students in attendance that was okay. I did note that the lieutenant governor wore blue jeans into prison—a strict no-no. But I suppose no one could refuse him entrance.

On the last day of March, Jody and I set out for Pinnacles. I left aqua-fitness at nine in the morning and arrived at the National Park about one o'clock. It was hot on Monday, near ninety, but cooler on Tuesday. During the night the temperature sank to thirty-seven degrees Fahrenheit. Jody and I walked the trails; I caught up on reading; and cooked over a campfire; just normal camping stuff.

## APRIL

Men's Fraternity was still a big part of my life. On April 2, I took the stage at CPC and shared my story about Rwanda and forgiveness. I sold about ten books and generated interest in CASA. A few guys talked about joining me on the next mission.

In mid-April, I flew to Florida to encourage my son and to weave myself into the lives of his children. Simon picked me up at the Fort Lauderdale airport and we headed directly to the *Hyatt Regency-Coconut Point Resort and Spa* in Bonita Springs. The place was expensive but with a private waterpark and beach the three-night stay was worth the price. Also, since Simon did not have his own home in Florida, we both wanted our hotels to be first class.

We played putt-putt golf, bean bags, and football toss on the extensive lawns. Lorenzo beat me twice at the Timber Tower unstacking game. In the collection of pools, the kids enjoyed waterslides, lazy river, and squirt guns. I took full advantage of my underwater camera, snapping photos of puffed cheeks and air bubbles. We ran on the sandy beach; played with shaggy dogs on the cable cars; and launched a helicopter drone in the lobby. The visit was brief, but the time fantastic.

On the last day of April, I sat down with two pastors. First, Liz and I met with Karl Ortis about joining Western Hills Church. Of course, he was delighted. Then,

a few hours later, I sat in Mark Mitchell's office. I didn't want my appointment to degenerate into a gripe session, but I believed the honorable action was to explain why Liz and I were choosing to fellowship elsewhere. He was gracious, and I think, appreciated my words. Although we were worshiping at another church, I would continue with Men's Fraternity and Liz would continue with Women's Bible Study.

We began a newcomer's class at WHC and on June 28 we were officially welcomed as new members. I was happy with this congregation, the pastor, and with the elders: Kent Flynn, Ken Hardy, Mike Sanchez, and Keith Sanders. As an official member, I joined the missions committee and began to substitute teach the adult Bible class.

## MAY

For the first week of the month, I had the house to myself as Liz flew to Asheville to commune with her ailing father. I loafed, read, and completed a couple of home projects. I became a subscriber to the San Mateo Symphony Association and attended four classical concerts over the course of the next year. I welcomed Becky, my mother-in-law, to join me for a few of the evenings.

Zachary invited me to attend a celebration of his fortieth birthday. Since Ruth's thirty-fifth birthday was just a few days behind his, they co-joined the events terming it *Zacharuth 75*. I flew into DC aboard a red-eye and arrived on May 22. Zachary and I drove into the capitol, posing in front of the White House, then stopping at Elegant Dancing. I was exhausted so I napped the rest of the day. My son showed off his new gadget called *Alexa*, commanding room lights to turn on and off. I asked if I could just use the light switch.

On Saturday morning, we returned to the District to meet up with Simon at the NYC-DC bus depot. We did more touring of sites, stopping off at the Lincoln Memorial, Washington Monument, and Korean War Memorial. The high point seemed to be a Korean-BBQ food truck. We each ordered a kimchi burger and chowed it down by the reflecting pond.

While drinking a herbal concoction at Teatism, Zachary spoke at length about Ruth. She was one of two children, her brother being a few years younger. As Zachary explained it her brother's life had gone off the rails. Ruth had been married once before—briefly and the marriage had been annulled. Her father had passed away several years earlier and her mother lived in Pittsburgh. Both Zach and Ruth were ardent Catholics and shared a love of ballroom dancing.

The big party was in the evening at Zachary's place. His eight roommates were present, along with a cohort of dance and Catholic friends. I met his girlfriend for the first time and we conversed just a little. My first impression was positive. Ruth was a nurse practitioner, earning her doctorate at Columbia University. Her life was hectic overseeing an emergency clinic at a local mall. *Zacharuth 75* was a pleasure to attend, especially rubbing elbows with two sons and a possible

daughter-in-law. On Sunday, Zachary, Ruth, Simon and I visited Arlington Cemetery, then Zach drove me back to the airport for my return flight.

On May 30, Tricia and Jim came to San Mateo. We posed for group photos at Becky's home after enjoying a Sunday dinner. My mother-in-law was thrilled to have her two daughters with husbands around her dining room table.

## JUNE

This was a camping month. Ken Napier, my friend from Men's Fraternity, had formed a church affinity group for people who liked the out of doors. On June 1, Jody and I headed to the Ice House Reservoir, fifty miles east of Sacramento in the Sierra foothills. With Ken, Linda, and Kevin along, the dynamics certainly changed. I was no longer a lone wolf. Ken was a former Boy Scoutmaster and he knew how to prepare and lead hikes. I accomplished some things I would never have done if it were just me and Jody. He taught me *the ten essentials*, the items every hiker must pack when heading down a trail. I joked, "An alternative might be to hike with somebody who carried the ten."

I stayed in a cabin at Prayer Mountain for two nights so Liz could host a big house party, then on June 19, I was in the woods with Pillars again; this time at Big Basin. Ken led us on a few hikes through the tall redwoods. Something about the outdoors, sitting around a fire, walking in the woods, just being away from the routine of home life, has a magnetic draw upon my vagabond soul.

In June I became a basketball fan. The Golden State Warriors beat the Cleveland Cavaliers in the championship series four games to two. That capped a great year for Bay Area teams with the Giants winning the World Series in September and the 49er's making the quarter finals in January.

I was still promoting my memoir and on June 26 I taught a literary class in the CPC library. About a dozen people filled the chairs as I worked through this outline:

1. The three basic elements of any story are: Setting. Evoke a vivid sense of place and time; People. Make your characters round not flat. Make them real. Make them with flaws; and Plot. This is the story's organization and structure. Construct an arc for the narrative. To keep the reader's attention, include conflict and resolution, tension and release. In memoir the reader moves through your experience as you perceived it.
2. Remember Point of View: In memoir POV is naturally first person. The narrator is you, the author and protagonist. Be careful not to violate POV. Don't slip into omniscience.

3. Discover your voice: Your voice is the way you speak in public at your practiced best. Make your voice confident and confiding. Use humor and irony. When dealing with a painful subject, try not to *wallow* but to *bear witness*.
4. Word Choice: Verbs carry meaning. Nouns should be concrete. Use modifiers (adverbs and adjectives) sparingly. Metaphors, similes, and symbols enrich meaning, allowing readers to see something in a new light. Avoid clichés.
5. What is memoir? Memoir tells your story and muses upon it, trying to unravel what it means in the light of current knowledge. Biography is the story *of* a life. Memoir is the story *from* a life. A memoir is circumscribed by the facts, while fiction is circumscribed by what the reader will believe.

I closed the session by projecting a picture of Oliver Cromwell, Lord Protector of England from 1653 to 1658. I asked the group, “Why do you think this portrait is famous?” After some shrugs, I answered my own question. “As he took his seat to pose, Cromwell is purported to have told the artist ‘Paint my face warts and all.’ Your memoir—your self-portrait—is an act of vanity for posterity. Do your best to also make it an act of honesty.”

## JULY

On July 4, Liz and I hiked in Wunderlich County Park. I took photos of her posing under the redwoods, because her on-line magazine requested pictures to accompany her articles.

Two big things happened on Sunday, July 12. At church, Ken, Shirley and Mei Wan committed to the September CASA mission to Africa. With Frank and me that would make five missionaries. I also received a message with pictures. Zachary had proposed to Ruth on the steps of a cathedral. In the follow-up FaceTime talk, my son was full of joy.

Jody and I went on a road trip to the Northwest from July 16 to 21. Frank and I camped out for three nights with Shane at the Lazy Bend Campground in the Mount Hood National Forest. We talked, hiked, and cooked around the campfire. We traversed the Clackamas River Trail for ten miles, stopping at Pup Creek Falls. Jody posed in front of the Pup marker. Frank and Shane hiked to the top of the falls while I snapped pictures of them from below.

On the way home, we stopped in Canby long enough to share breakfast with Jeanne, Nancy, Terry and Eileen. Then, on the drive home I parked overnight at Sims Road campground near Shasta City. I totally enjoyed these combo road trips, communing with nature and with family.

After two day’s rest, family visits continued. On July 22, I flew the red-eye to Fort Lauderdale. Simon had the kids in a rented SUV and we headed south toward

the Florida Keys. The four of us stayed one night at Cheeca Lodge on Islamorada Key, and on the next at the Key West KOA, renting a cabin. In the darkness, Simon taught his kids the fire-stick dance, the same one I taught to my two boys thirty years earlier. This campground, located on a shallow lagoon, provided a water trampoline and inflated climbing rafts. We splashed and dipped in the salt water.

The next day we spent a full twelve hours wandering around the city of Key West. We visited a pirate museum and an aquarium. Chickens seemed to wander everywhere. We boarded a glass-bottom boat to cruise the port where all four of us jumped overboard to swim in the warm waters. Gia reported that fish nibbled her toes. On the return drive we stopped at Shell World then at Boomers where the kids raced go-carts around a track. I made it through this entire four days without once dropping by Dilia's place.

I learned a few weeks later that Dilia had grown tired of living in Pembroke Pines and moved with the kids to West Palm Beach, about an hour north. There was little my son could do except follow her. Simon helped his ex-wife find a new place near East Olive Elementary school. Simon reported the setting was less suburban, more traditional Florida, and a short stroll to salt water.

## AUGUST

I resumed teaching at San Quentin; this time leading a class in Biblical Preaching. As an introduction, I asked four inmate-students to stand as volunteers. In the center position I placed the preacher. The person at his left hand, I designated *Scripture* and the person to his right I called *contemporary culture*. I explained "As preacher, your job is to put one hand on God's Word which never changes, and transmit its substance through your body onto your appropriate audience which is in constant flux. To accomplish that you need the Holy Spirit at your back with both hands on your shoulders". That simple illustration always seemed to make an impression on would-be preachers.

In addition to the required text, I passed out copies of my favorite book on the subject: *Preaching for God's Glory* by Alistair Begg, which emphasized the value of expository preaching. I developed my own twenty-question evaluation sheet with three categories to examine:

1. Text (foundation of the message)
2. Sermon (content and structure of the message)
3. Delivery (how the message was communicated)

In addition to holding this two-hour class in the library, I met one-on-one with Chris Scull for an additional hour of supervised ministry. Sometimes I commuted to the prison just for this conversation.

Liz accompanied me on one of these outings, passing through the sally gate, listening to me teach in the Protestant Chapel, and gaining insight into what her husband had been doing for these many Saturdays.

Also in August, I treated Liz to a birthday hike at Mori Point near Pacifica. Jody accompanied us dashing up and down the sandstone paths. Afterward we enjoyed a meal at Puerto 27—a Peruvian restaurant.

I finished up the month camping at Bodega Dunes Campground. My site lay along the beach and the tall tent shivered in the strong wind. Jody and I drove at the Point Reyes Lighthouse for a hike. This had to be the windiest place I had ever walked in my life. I could barely stand upright. I later met up with Steve and Judy Wilson at Point Arena north of Sea Ranch. The views were spectacular atop a Light House build in 1870.

## SEPTEMBER

Soon I was on my way to another Lighthouse, this one still under construction in Rwanda. My brother arrived in San Mateo on September 2 and we shared a noon meal with Karl Ortis at the Hunan Chinese Restaurant. After finishing my last noodle, I couldn't believe the note in the fortune cookie. It actually read, "Prepare for an exciting trip soon to come your way."

In the evening, Ken, Shirley, Mei, Frank, and I caught our Turkish Air flight at SFO. Thirteen hours later we arrived in Istanbul. I rested as best I could before our second leg brought us into Entebbe, then to Kigali. I shared with my brother along the route some personal doubts. "Are we really doing any positive good in Rwanda? Have we any means at all to objectively evaluate our missionary effort?" How could I tell if our few hundred graduates were really acting as a pinch of leaven in this African loaf of ten million people?

Arriving at the Rwandan passport control, I handed my documents to the man in the booth. He glanced at the name then looked into my face. "Oh, I know you. Pastor Chris. It's good to see you again in my country. I took a Bible class from you. Do you remember me?"

After responding in the negative, he introduced himself as *Phillip* and chatted until the next person stepped forward. I smiled to myself. *Perhaps this is God's way of letting me know that CASA students are establishing themselves as agents of positive change.*

We stayed in Kigali one night and in the morning headed to Butare. We stopped at Kim's roadside memorial where I re-enacted events to a throng of locals. Soon we were checking into the Lighthouse. Frank and I shared the missionary apartment, while Ken and Shirley booked into a double room, and Mei into a single. I handed over to Franc our \$5000 in mission fees.

The next day was Sunday. We all walked down the unpaved road behind the Lighthouse to Eden Church. We sat through the first part of the service singing the songs and clapping to the dancers. I knew Shirley and Mei were antsy to leave after their introduction in order to depart and teach the legion of little children.

On Monday, our focus shifted to the atrium of the Lighthouse. Three sculptures of Rwandan Baskets had been fabricated with rebar wound about with hemp rope. Ken supervised the installation as a team of workers hung baskets from the center beam of the structure. On this day we also hooked up with an Anglican missionary who was staying at the house. Mavis Crispen was a friend of Pastor David and a resident of London. She graciously became an honorary member of our teaching team.

On Tuesday we held a graduation for nineteen students of the Joy of God Bible Institute. Decked in cap and gown, the group posed for pictures, then marched around the building each sporting a new pair of sunglasses donated by CASA. On Wednesday Franc arranged for a building dedication with a dozen bigwigs in attendance, including the governor, mayor, and a two-star general. Franc was a great schmoozer and these events, especially with muzungus present, were important in a country which values supportive patrons.

The Fourth Annual East Africa Christian Apologetics Conference began late on Wednesday and ran until Saturday afternoon. Our four topics were: Orthodoxy, Christian Cults, Islam, Heterodoxy, and the Future of Faith in Africa. Along with Frank and me, guest speakers were Amon, Mavis, and Garry Friesen. The rooftop of the Lighthouse proved to be an amazing venue for the conference.

Our Statement of Faith had included ten items, mostly derived from the Apostles' Creed. We introduced this eleventh statement at the conference:

We believe that God is sovereign over the affairs of men and women, that He blesses His children with health and prosperity according to His divine will and not according to our human will. We believe in healing and the power of prayer. However, we reserve to the Sovereign One the place, time, and manner of all blessings.

Once again, the event was populated by students from Rwanda, Uganda, Congo, Burundi, Tanzania, and Kenya; in all, about 120 participants.

In addition to the apologetics conference, several other events took place. 1. We had a baby-naming ceremony. Franc and Claudine handed their son over to me and I blessed him and declared his name to be *Chris*; 2. We celebrated the marriage of Jane to Charles, treating them to a meal at the Ibis Restaurant; 3. I experienced an onslaught of vervet monkeys and took a lot of cool pictures from my balcony window; 4. Frank celebrated his sixty-fourth birthday, by cutting a

cake and getting sprayed with a bottle of bubbly. After this festive occasion three of us guys received a colorful African shirt.

After a Sunday morning at the Anglican Church, Frank, Ken, Shirley, and Mei headed to Kigali for their flight home. I stayed another two days to debrief with the CASR board. Before boarding my return flight, I approached passport control for my exit stamp. After two steps forward and before examining my documents, the agent cried out, "I know you. You're Mzee Foreman. You taught a Bible class to me."

I was flabbergasted. Jan-Luc shook my hand and told me how much he had appreciated the theological training. Ten days earlier, I had asked God to provide a means of evaluating the effectiveness of my missionary effort. He had not only provided one voice upon entering Rwanda but a second upon departing. I remembered the scripture, "At the mouth of two witnesses is the matter established." *Thank you, Lord, for establishing this matter.*

I was home for only eight days when a second adventure launched. This was advertised as *The Greek Isles Getaway* with Oceana Cruise Lines. For Liz, who termed herself a *planner-face*, our cruise had been in the works for a year. This international travel marked our third trip abroad (after Rwanda and Iceland).

We departed separately to Istanbul because my wife flew non-stop first class while I transferred in London flying coach. We were supposed to land about 11:00 p.m. on September 25, but my flight was delayed and I didn't get to our downtown hotel until 2:00 a.m.

Day 1 ~ September 26 ~ Together in Istanbul.

We slept in until noon local time, then Liz and I took a Big Bus tour of the sprawling city. We crossed the Bosphorus Bridge and strolled a few hours wandering the Central Plaza in old Constantinople. We didn't enter the Hagia Sophia or the Blue Mosque because lines were too long. Rather, we admired the architecture and ambiance from the outside. When we returned to the downtown hotel, we grabbed our bags and taxied to the Karokoy Port Hotel arriving just before dark.

Day 2 ~ September 27 ~ Boarding the *Riviera* in Istanbul.

Still recovering from jet lag, we emerged from our room about noon the next day. We pulled our luggage a few hundred yards to where the *Riviera* was docked, put our Oceania tags on the handles, then toured the nearby streets. Liz especially liked the spice markets and the wandering cats. On board at five o'clock on Sunday, we checked out the *Riviera* before settling in our suite. We had the muster training, dined at the elegant Red Ginger, then pulled out of harbor at dusk. Liz and I had

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enjoyed our first stop in Istanbul and looked forward to the next eight: Volos, Kusadasi, Patmos, Rhodes, Iraklion, Santorini, Mykonos, then Athens.

Day 3 ~ September 28 ~ Volos, Greece, and tour of Meteora Monasteries.

We cruised for 332 nautical miles arriving at our first stop on Monday at noon. Volos was not a tourist destination, but the Meteora Monasteries certainly were. While Liz stayed near the ship, I took a long bus ride to the interior mountains. Several castle-like Orthodox structures sat atop pillars of rock. I toured the Holy Monastery of Saint Nicholas, marveling at the magnificent frescoes and breathtaking views. I returned to the ship after dark, just before it left port.

Day 4 ~ September 29 ~ Kusadasi, Turkey, and Tour of Ephesus.

Liz and I had both signed up for a tour of ancient Ephesus. I was surprised at how far inland this once-seaside metropolis then rested. We followed the lollypop past a mile of ancient stone, cut into cubes, columns, archways, and images. I rested in a stone-hew stadium seat and studied the stage. I wondered if the Apostle Paul ever stood on that platform during his two years of residence. Our defining photo-of-the-cruise was taken of Liz and me posed in front of the re-constructed library of Ephesus. An indoor museum housed a bust of Socrates and an image of Artemus.

Day 5 ~ September 30 ~ Isle of Patmos.

The brochure called it “a significant Christian pilgrimage site. Its Cave of the Apocalypse is where John of Patmos is said to have written the Book of Revelation.” An 11<sup>th</sup>-century monastery dedicated to the saint overlooked a hillside of whitewashed houses. Liz and I entered the cave and imagined John in his old age, dictating his apocalypse. I loved the frescoed icons festooned with Greek letters. This place rung all my bells with wonderful scenery, history, and theology.

As September closed, I thanked God for allowing Liz and me to visit this part of the world. The quality of Oceania service was outstanding, the food was fantastic, and our accommodations with a private balcony were first-class. Liz liked the gym while I favored the pool. We both liked the elegant string quartet and the circular walking track.

## OCTOBER

Day 6 ~ October 1 ~ Isle of Rhodes.

Liz and I followed the lollypop as the guide walked throughout the medieval city, once administered by the Knights of Saint John. In the center of the walled city was an ancient castle converted by Mussolini into an Italian palace. Liz was over-filled with antiquity and returned to the *Riviera*, but I toured the ancient ruins of the Athena Lindia Temple.

Day 7 ~ October 2 ~ Town of Iraklion on the Isle of Crete.

I began to suffer from *ruins fatigue overload*. The palace of Knossos was the center of Minoan culture, the oldest in Europe. We saw the oldest throne, oldest road, and oldest mosaic. Once in town, we sought out a newer place, one with ice cream cones and Wi-Fi. At a roadside market, I bought a pink butterfly scarf for Lizzie.

Day 8 ~ October 3 ~ Isle of Santorini.

A volcanic eruption in the 16<sup>th</sup> century changed this island's shape from conical to crescent. Because of the steepness of the caldera rim, Liz and I took a cable car from the boat dock up to the town. It was extraordinary to walk through this town of whitewashed buildings always viewing the Aegean Sea, a few thousand feet below our pathway. We also followed the lollypop on a tour of the prehistoric town of Akrotiri.

Day 9 ~ October 4 ~ Isle of Mykonos.

This place was advertised as a locale with “sand-side bars that blare thumping music”. Needless to say, we avoided this noise by walking a shoreline past five picturesque wind mills. We were growing tired of islands and rested on the ship.

Day 10 ~ October 5 ~ Arrival in Athens.

We arrived in the Greek capital after a total sea voyage of 1340 nautical miles. We checked out of our suite at 8:00 a.m., boarded a bus and checked into the Hotel Grand Bretagne. At \$500, the room was expensive, but since Liz and I split the cost on everything, it was a good deal. We had a full day ahead of us and so hired a private tour guide. We were only a mile from the Acropolis and there was a lot to see.

The guide spoke excellent English and walked us past the Greek parliament, Hadrian's Gate, and the columns of Zeus. The Acropolis was a crumbling marvel. Huge cranes and scaffolding appeared in every corner. We walked in and around the gigantic Parthenon which appeared to be an ongoing construction and excavation site. Everywhere I read small plaques that called attention to a monument erected for a Greek deity.

Finally, we walked to Mars Hill—the Areopagus. I commented to the guide, “Oh, that's where Paul addressed the philosophers.” She was delighted I knew such a fact. I shared that I was a pastor and she confided she was devoted in her Orthodox faith. She then bubbled over with Biblical commentary, pointing out the basalt slab that contained the Apostle's words from Acts 17. I asked her to read the Greek and she joyfully accommodated me.

Liz became tired of antiquities and walked with the guide back to our hotel. I stayed behind an hour to tour the Acropolis Museum and view the valuable relics rescued from the hilltop site. Our room was elegant and we savored every moment in it. We also walked to the rooftop at nightfall to see the Acropolis flooded in light—marvelous.

Day 11 - October 6 - Return home.

The next day, the hotel provided a bus to the airport. Together we flew to Istanbul, then non-stop to San Francisco. Liz flew first class with me sitting in coach. She snuck back to steerage a few times to present me with first-class treats.

We arrived back in San Mateo on October 7 and spent a few days recovering from our whirlwind journey. I gathered my papers and pictures to make a lasting memory on my website. I told Liz, "There are three parts to every adventure: Anticipation – the look ahead; Actualization – the look around; and Recollection – the look behind. Getting these three parts right makes for the perfect journey."

Fleet Week was always a special occasion for Liz and me. After full recuperation, we spent a Saturday in San Francisco, heads cranked upward, thrilling at the acrobatics of the Blue Angels.

A few days later, Liz asked me to accompany her on a shopping spree to Lucy's in Burlingame. She was looking for a Pilates outfit. This Wednesday outing was dubbed a *family event* so Jody could tag along. October 14, 2015, would be a day forever etched in my memory.



## Chapter 29

# SUSTAINED

October 2015 to September 2017  
San Mateo, California

*Even unto your old age and gray hair I am He who will sustain you.  
I have made you. I will carry you and I will rescue you.  
(Isaiah 46:4)*

Success arrives through steady perseverance; Whereas disaster strikes in a heartbeat. On October 14, 2015, Liz and I were struck down in a pedestrian crosswalk. We were fortunate to survive the vehicular assault. God sustained me and carried me through this valley of the shadow of death. Yet, it took two full years to get past the trauma.

### 2015 OCTOBER

On the morning of Wednesday, October 14, I splashed to aqua fitness music and in the afternoon did computer work. About four o'clock, Liz and I left in my car to Burlingame Avenue. After we parked, I put Jody on leash and we walked to Lucy's.

Liz turned into the shop and Jody led me about 3000 steps. I poked my head into Lucy's at exactly five and checked my pedometer. *Great. 10560 steps for the day.*

We left the store, turned right and walked a short distance to the zebra striped crosswalk. I was on the left. I held Jody's leash in my right hand and my dog was a step ahead of me. Liz was to my right. The signal turned green. I looked both left and right and saw no cars in motion.

After three steps, a large dark car leapt upon us from nowhere. My first flash of thought was that Jody would get squashed. I yanked hard on the leash and flung her backward airborne. At the same instant I felt the car's right tire crush over my left leg. I seemed to remember that my left heel was planted and the car passed over the leg. I spun like a top on my right heel and my broken leg pointed away from traffic at an unnatural angle. At the moment of impact, I heard Liz cry out in pain.

The car had struck her left side, flinging her into the air. She hit the pavement on her right hip. Bystanders insisted we lay still, making it impossible to view each other. Someone told me Liz had survived the impact but she was in pain. I hugged the ground, cheek to pavement, as onlookers gathered around us. I saw the dog was safe in the lap of a young guy near the Gap store.

Emergency services arrived quickly. A policeman took personal information from my driver's license. Paramedics removed my shoes, then with scissors cut me free from my shirt and trousers. I lay on the street in my underpants. The cop said, "Give the man some privacy." Liz had managed to contact our neighbors, Nancy and Larry, who later retrieved my parked car and my abandoned dog.

Both Liz and I were placed on stretchers with heads immobile as a precaution. I-Vs were pushed into our right arms. Once in the back of the ambulance, I was administered morphine. We were rushed twelve miles to San Francisco General hospital. The road was bumpy and the jostling needles caused pain, especially for Liz. Still, we managed to hold hands and pray.

We were admitted to the trauma center about six o'clock and both of us received x-rays. Liz was discharged about nine o'clock because she had no broken bones and could still walk, albeit with pain. My left leg was severely damaged and I was placed in a pre-surgery room. It was too late in the day to summon a surgical team, so I spent a fretful night on a gurney with a morphine drip and catheter.

I was wheeled into the operating room about 6:30 the next morning. I remember a dozen people encompassing me as I drifted into dreamland. The chief surgeon was a professor and several of his medical students attended. The operation took about ten hours because of the difficulty in repairing the multiple breaks. A titanium rod was implanted in my tibia and a titanium clamp held my fibula together. Because of the great swelling, an eight-inch incision was cut on the outside of my calf. This was a fasciotomy to combat compartment syndrome of my lower leg.

After I left the operating room, Liz was waiting near my hospital bed. I was still on the morphine drip and catheter for that evening. I was uncomfortable, immobile, and in pain. I was given injections of Enoxaparin to resist blood clotting. A suction vacuum was placed on my broken leg to remove excess drainage from my open wound. A compression pump pulsed on my right calf to assist blood circulation.

I vaguely remember a host of well-wishers dropping by that evening and the next day: Dan Reid, Karl Ortis, Jim Walker, Kent Flynn, Steve and Judy, Charles and Diane, Greg and Carolyn. My sons sent get-well balloons and many others sent cards. The attending surgeon dropped by a few times to review my progress. He passed on to me the before and after x-rays of my mangled leg. Doctor Saam Morshed was proud of his work.

From Friday to Tuesday, I remained in the trauma ward, sharing a room with a fellow who fell from a ladder. Enoxaparin injections continued every day. On Friday, the catheter and arm drip were removed and I was given Oxycodone to relieve pain. The weekend was a blur. Various people came in to visit me and I was able to email using my iPad. I ate a few morsels, but the medication dulled my appetite. Liz remained at home. She was banged up herself.

On Monday morning, I received a second surgery to close the open wound. This surgery lasted about two hours. The vacuum and compression pumps were then removed. I had hoped to be released on Monday, but I was unable to use the crutches. My leg throbbed as I sat upright.

I again hoped to be released on Tuesday morning, but I nearly fainted as I tried to walk down the hallway. Finally, on Tuesday evening I was stable enough to walk the hallway and climb a few stairs. I was discharged from SF General about 9:00 p.m. and Steve Wilson drove me to San Mateo. I hobbled up the stairwell into my bedroom about ten o'clock. My official discharge papers stated:

Both your tibia and fibula were broken near the middle of the lower leg when you were hit by the car. A potentially serious complication of fractures like this is a condition called Compartment Syndrome, where blood comes out of the bones and makes the leg swell. This can cause damage to muscles and nerves.

Your treatment consisted of fixing the bones by putting a metal rod inside your tibia and putting a metal plate and screws on the fibula. We also made an incision in your leg that was left open under a vac for a few days to make sure that you did not develop compartment syndrome. When we were satisfied that you were no longer at risk for that condition, we closed the incision with sutures.

The last eleven days of October were difficult, because I was confined to my bed and Liz could not care for me due to her own injuries. Charles Varady showed up at the house to install a raised toilet seat, a shower-head extension, and to set a mini-fridge in my room. I wore a big black boot on my left leg twenty-four hours a day and I gave myself once-a-day self-injections of Enoxaparin. I gulped down bone-building calcium pills.

Because Kaiser Permanente (KP) was slow to provide a care giver, I hired a helper out of pocket to assist in bathing. He made eight visits until I could shower myself. I brought home twenty Oxycodone pills, taking two before bed time to ease the throbbing night-time pain. Two kind neighbors dropped by for doggie-duty. Maria and Gayle made sure Jody was able to exercise.

A physical therapist from KP came by on Monday to show me sit-in-bed and rubber band exercises. She also asked me to rotate my ankle. I learned the word *dorsiflexion*. The next day a collapsible wheel-chair was dropped by the house. While my weight bearing capacity was near zero, I used two crutches to get from my bed to the staircase, then switched to the stairwell handrails, then plunked into the chair near the front door.

I decided to hire a personal injury attorney that I had heard advertised on KFAQ radio. Neal Kuvara dropped into my room on Wednesday and we discussed my case. He was sympathetic but explained his attorney fee was capped at 39% of the settlement. If my maximum recovery were less than fifty-thousand dollars, he advised me to accept a settlement offer. He also informed me I could collect damages for up to two years after an accident, suggesting I rest and heal. It was better to wait at least a year to gauge the extent and permanence of my injuries. I signed a retainer and Neal promised to dig deeper into my case.

I was supposed to be in Florida for Halloween day for trick-or-treating with my grandkids. Of course, that plane ride was cancelled. Instead, I Face Timed to see Lorenzo as the Black Knight and Gia as Maleficent.

## NOVEMBER

On November 2, I honored a commitment to teach at the Neighborhood Church in Castro Valley. My audience was my old Grief Share Group and my presentation was *Forgive Like a Rwandan*. Liz thought this outing was premature for my injuries, but I argued for a return to normalcy. Steve Wilson drove me to Castro Valley and packed my wheel chair. He remained for the two-hour session. I spoke of my journey of 888 days through seasons of Joy, Grief, Sorrow, Restoration, and Celebration. The group loved my presentation and I was greatly encouraged.

Liz continued to suffer from bone contusions and, as she recovered, many friends dropped by to commiserate. Allen, Carolyn, Lisa, and others visited her with cards, gifts, and food. She spent hours a day vetting orthopedic surgeons and talking with personal injury attorneys.

On November 4—two weeks after the accident—my sutures were removed at the KP hospital in Redwood City. My fasciotomy was still oozing blood. A few days later, I consumed my last Oxycodone and thereafter relied on extra-strength Excedrin. Physical therapists continued to drop by my room every couple of days. On November 12, I finally walked out the front door and with crutches ambulated to the corner and back. I still suffered pain, but much was due to my clumsiness in using the crutches.

After spending a month on my back, fiddling on my three-year-old tablet, I decided to purchase a brand-new iPad Pro. Unable to drive, Larry-next-door took me to the Apple Store in the Hillsdale Shopping Center. I loved my new thirteen-inch screen and improved sound quality.

It was then I rediscovered the joy of Classical music. While convalescing in bed I could summon whole orchestras into existence. Could kings of old ever do such a thing? Via You Tube, I was absorbed into sublime visual and musical performances of Beethoven, Mozart, and Vivaldi. My favorite concert—one into which I became emersed day-after-day—was Harpsichord Concerto D minor BWV 1052 by Johann Sebastian Bach. I remarked to one of my FaceBook friends, “When I report into heaven, I’ll asked to be assigned to that section where J.S. Bach is capellmeister.”

Liz and I returned to WHC where I hobbled upstairs to teach Sunday school. I was pleased to complete the final chapters of the Acts of the Apostles.

Zach and Ruth came for a visit on November 20. I put them up at the Foster City Marriott and they drove my unused Prius. Zachary chauffeured me to a follow-up appointment at SF General. Unfortunately, my excellent surgeon was not an excellent appointment scheduler. After an hour of confusion, Zachary wheeled his frustrated father back home.

As the month ended, I returned to KP for a new broken-bone evaluation. Lori Shaw judged me to have a weight-bearing capacity of 50%, gave me the green light to walk without a crutch and drive my car. She said in-home physical therapy was no longer needed, but my fasciotomy was still scabbing, so there would be no aqua-fitness for me. My weight at the end of the month had dipped to 197 pounds.

## DECEMBER

As the month began, Liz remarked about a *miraculous provision of food*. She listed the names of a dozen people who had dropped off meals over the previous forty days. Some grocery boxes lasted a week. So many were so kind to us over the months of our confinement.

Frank flew into Oakland Airport on December twelfth. Since it was my left leg that was broken, I didn’t have much trouble driving to pick him up. We ate dinner with Charles and Diane Varady then went to Half Moon Bay for the night. We spent the next day sharing life like brothers, driving to Sam Donald Park and Devil’s Slide. I asked about Lucinda. He read me his blog post of her recent birthday:

On Friday we celebrated Lucinda’s 38<sup>th</sup> birthday with Aletha and Michela. It ran its usual ten-minute course. We set up her gluten-free cake and candle and lit them. We put out her little presents and plates and cups. Then we call her out of her bedroom. She grunts as she comes out and stands by the table as we sing *Happy Birthday*. She blows out the candles, wolfs down the cake and drink, and rips into the presents. Then she does her favorite part. She takes all the wrapping and paper plates out to the garbage can and files them where they

belong. We hug her and praise God for the good care that He has provided for her for another year. Thank you, Aletha!

My sixty-sixth birthday was made special with a long call from Zachary and Ruth and a wonderful video rendition of Lorenzo and Gia singing me birthday songs. Liz and I stayed home on a rainy Christmas day. She, her mom, and Jody all wore red sweaters, my Santa cap complementing the colors. Just before dark, our regular dog walker dropped by. I paid Nancy her last twenty-dollar bill and resumed my dog-walking duties.

On December 27, I preached at Western Hills Church about “Breaking Down Barriers” based on John 4:1-9, and on the next day, I caught a flight to Portland. This was my first time in the air since the accident but I felt well enough for the ordeal. Steve drove me to the airport and an attendant pushed my wheel chair through security and to my gate. Alaska Airlines was kind when they saw my black boot and promoted me to a first-class seat.

The purpose of this visit was to celebrate my mother’s centennial birthday on December 30. Jeanne, Charlotte, Eileen, Frank, and I gathered at her crypt at Longview Memorial Park. We held hands in a circle, sang church songs, and shared remembrances. We thanked our mom for providing us with life and love. Later in the day, I visited with Eileen, Jeanne, and my great niece, Stephani Sobottke. When I arrived home on December 31, I crashed into bed, too tired to hear the booming welcome of another year.

## 2016 JANUARY

For our third anniversary, Liz and I limped along the shoreline at Half Moon Bay. Then we shared a sandwich at Subway. I spent much of the month indoors due to the rainy weather and mending leg. I played solo Scrabble every day and watched hours of You Tube videos.

On January 10, I attended a funeral in Los Gatos for an old Korean friend. Kim’s sister, Pam, showed up along with her male companion, Ilka. It was odd to interact with her after so many years. My former sister-in-law talked incessantly about insurance money.

My leg was x-rayed once again at Kaiser. Improvement was slow and the femur continued to show a gap. I learned this malady was termed a *non-union*. Finally, the fasciotomy stopped oozing blood and I was able to rehab my leg in the warm instructional pool at SMAC. I also bought a small leg splint at Rite Aid that I wore in lieu of the big black boot. I now limped with a cane rather than a crutch and began phase two of my physical therapy—learning to walk again.

In January, my attorney sued Michael Irusalimsky, the driver of the car, along with his insurance company. Neal Kuvara learned that the insured had a

substantial policy with State Farm and the case was worth pursuing. I turned upbeat; perhaps I would be getting a healthy settlement. As I walked out of doors, I began the habit of waving at stopped cars before I proceeded through a pedestrian crosswalk. It seemed the prudent thing to do.

With time on my hands, I reconfigured my web presence. Up to this point *glory4ever.net* was my personal repository while *chrisalanforeman.com* functioned as my business-author site. I abandoned the former and embraced the latter. I planned to reside at this cyber location unto the decease of Chris Alan Foreman. My new start page headings were: Missionary, Retirement, Travel, Photo Journal, Blog, and Archives.

My nephew, Jim Walker, had recently relocated to the city of Napa, an hour's drive north in Sonoma County. He had made an effort to visit me while I was in hospital so I made a point to visit him in a vineyard where he worked. Jim shared with me the surprising twists and turns of his life: the loss of his legal practice; the harassment from the state of California; and his back-and-forth sojourn to Kansas City where he became involved with IHOP (International House of Prayer). I got the rundown on his four kids: James, Josiah, Jael, and Julissa. Jim and Valerie were certainly a couple who lived by faith.

## FEBRUARY

Liz and I were active at Western Hills Church. My wife served as a volunteer prayer partner on Sundays, while I led the adult Sunday School class. I also helped at an informal get-together called *Café B*, and at a Chinese New Year celebration on February 8—year of the monkey. Although my church allegiance was at WHC, I still led a table at Men's Fraternity.

On February 11, I caught the redeye to West Palm Beach to celebrate two birthdays. A backyard party was planned for Lorenzo's seventh and Gia's fifth. Each grandchild had a theme. Lorenzo was Bruce Lee and his cake and background were decorated with gung-foo paraphernalia. Gia was Princess Elsa and *Frozen* characters populated the grounds. About a dozen kids showed up with several adults. Lolo won the sack race. Simon and Dilia cooperated to make this event a success. Their partnership impressed me. My son stared at me hobbling around the party site snapping pictures and remarked, "Dad, for the first time I see you as an old man."

I responded, "I'm sixty-six with a broken leg. I take that observation as a complement". After three nights in a local hotel, it was time to return to San Mateo.

Liz encouraged me to publish in *Joyful Living*. Our articles appeared side-by-side in the online magazine. She wrote, "Joy in Exercising: Five Tips for Getting

Started” and I wrote “Building a Three-Dimensional Friendship in Dating”, addressing the components of knowledge, trust, and affection.

The remainder of the month passed with a Skype conversation with Liz’s dad and Sybil; a church video promoting Rwanda Mission 2016; another movie outing with Steve Wilson; and a wedding invitation from Zachary and Ruth. I immediately ordered my eccentric wedding gift: a bobble-head replica of newly-weds.

## MARCH

As the month began, I put away my cane and began to walk without assistance. On March 7 and 8, Liz and I went to Capitola for our first getaway since the accident.

The next week, I visited my physical therapist for a final time. He took measurements on weight machines and said my left quad muscle was about 80% and my left calf was at 50%. I received a list of PT exercises. I also consulted with my primary physician who said my leg would always have a bulge around the fasciotomy and surface numbness would persist around the incision scar.

I resumed teaching classes at San Quentin. At this time, I was commuting with Kevin Sneed, pastor of Village Baptist Church in San Lorenzo. I would drive over the San Mateo Bridge, swing by his parsonage, drive over the San Rafael Bridge, then together we would pass through the front gate into the prison. Kevin was leading a seminary class in systematic theology.

I enjoyed the company of Liz’s mom, helping her to glue together a kitty-cat jigsaw puzzle, turning it into a wall hanging. She also accompanied me to the Peninsula Symphony to hear *Night on Bald Mountain* by Mussorgsky.

I traveled to Lake Chabot for my first camp out in seven months. I was pleased to sleep in my tent with Jody, cook over a blazing fire, and walk under the tall trees—even though my steps were labored. In March, wildflowers appeared in the open spaces. Just a short walk from our front door, Liz and I strolled the Overlook Trail. My wife was thrilled to meet her annual color-laden friends.

Upon the advice of my attorney, I sought out an orthopedic surgeon outside of KP, driving across the Bay to the office of Ben Busfield. This specialist informed me a second surgery was a distinct possibility. The operation would involve removing the existing metal rod, screws, and clamps; then reaming out the tibia to insert a larger rod. As he spoke, my heart sank. I cringed at the prospect of going through this pain and suffering a second time. *Oh God, please no!* The day was Good Friday, but it was not good for me.

I visited the KP surgeon on the following Monday. She confirmed the break was a non-union but down-played a second surgery. She prescribed a bone stimulator—a handheld device that I placed near the non-union that sent sonic waves to promote the mending process.

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## APRIL

I continued to lead Table One at Men's Fraternity. Ron Marshall was active in our group of seven. He invited Table One to his fancy Foster City home for a ride on his lagoon boat. Six of seven enjoyed a few hours of cruising the water. He was concerned that one tablemate was unable to join us. Gil was wheel-chair bound and couldn't seat himself into the craft. I was delighted to see Ron and Gil develop a friendship in which Rob built a special hoist to move Gil's chair onto the craft.

Liz and I drove to Edgewood Open Space to admire the magnificent bloom of Spring wildflowers—yellow-white tidy tips, purplish blue dick, and orange California poppy. I also went to Pinnacles and camped with Ken and Linda. The temperature dropped to 28 at night and rose to 90 in the afternoon. It was remarkable I could fit all my camping gear into my Prius to include tent, canopy, sleeping bag, blankets, cook stove, chair, and firewood, as well as provisions for me and Jody.

On April 22, I met with Neal Kuvara. He said the lawsuit had uncovered an umbrella policy of one million dollars and explained he had partnered with a second lawyer named Steve Brady who specialized in litigation against State Farm insurance. "He's a rottweiler," Neal said and was optimistic about settling, but counseled patience.

I told him I was concerned about a second intrusive surgery. He was sly about that saying, "sometimes we need to present the worse-case scenario to the jury." I took that to mean that a second surgery was unlikely, but its possibility provided ammunition in settlement talks.

The big event of Spring 2016 was the wedding of Zachary and Ruth. On Thursday, Liz and I headed out from SFO at seven in the morning and arrived in D.C. about four o'clock. We taxied to the Marriott in Fairfax and lounged the remainder of the day. Also staying at the Marriott were relatives: Frank, Lelia, and Joshua; Simon (accompanied by Dilia), Lorenzo and Gia; and Sung Yung. I visited with them until late at night.

On Friday, I went on a tour of the Capitol with Frank, Lelia, and Joshua while Liz rested in the hotel. In the evening we attended a rehearsal at Queen of the Apostles Catholic Church in Alexandria. Lorenzo practiced as ring bearer while Gia strawed pretend flowers along the bridal path. In the late evening I attended a subdued bachelor party at Zachary's place. I drank a daiquiri in honor of Zachary.

The Saturday wedding was a by-the-book Catholic mass with special observances, songs, and liturgy. Zachary's seminary friend, Father Dismiss, co-officiated the sacrament. About one hundred witnesses joined in attendance. I wore my dark blue suit and Liz her golden wedding dress. As they exchanged solemn vows, I was in tears to see the look of love between Zachary and Ruth. My only regret was in that Kim could not be present to see her forty-one-year-old son finally marry a godly woman.

Afterwards, various wedding groups posed for professional pictures. In the church basement we partook of a catered lunch. A few hours after the wedding, festivities resumed at the Elegant Dance Studio, just a few blocks away. It was a rip-roaring time in a space designed for just this kind of merriment. Many of Zach's studio pals dropped by to celebrate and dance with the newly-weds. Zachary cut the big cake with a sword and fed a piece to Ruth. The giggling couple teased open many of their gifts, including my custom-made bobble-heads.

Then came the dancing. The bride and groom were expert and wowed spectators with a well-rehearsed performance. MC Dogger served as sound MC stationed in the studio, spinning tunes, and asking those present to speak affirming words to the newly-weds. Lolo and Gia slid across the large dance floor. The entire event was well planned and executed.



## MAY

After a jam-packed four days of celebration, Liz and I caught a one-hour flight to visit her father in Ashville. We stayed at their house for a few days; just long enough to talk, hike, and wish Sybil a happy birthday.

A week after their wedding, I received honeymoon postings from Zachary. He and Ruth were at the Vatican. Zach wrote, "Papal audience! Ruth held Francis's hand for a minute and gave him flowers."

May became a month of hikes and camps. As a couple, Liz and I scaled San Bruno Mountain to seek out her favorite plant, hummingbird sage. A week later, as a family, Jody joined us at the top of Mori Point. From May 13 to 16, I camped with the Pillars church group at the Olema Campground on Point Reyes. Two irregular campers joined Ken, Linda and me. One tried to cook his microwave meal over flames. I was not surprised to see the plastic melt. The company, scenery, and fresh air provided four days of mental renewal.

A long-time acquaintance of mine was named Jonathon Snook. He was the son of a church friend in Tiburon. At forty years old, Jonathon was a brilliant schizophrenic. I first ran into this young man when I had pastored in San Lorenzo. He knocked on the church door, asked for a handout, we talked, and I recognized his identity.

Over the next decade, we maintained an on-again off-again relationship. One month I visited Jonathan as he performed at a harpsichord recital and the next month, I delivered fast food to him at a psych ward. He became a ministry project of mine. In May, I went camping with Jonathan at Lake Chabot after picking him up at the Bay Fair Mall. I think he was off his meds. We spent a few hours cooking food around a fire pit. He claimed I was boiling his potato in holy water.

After I returned him to the mall, I never saw him again. I later talked to his father, who said he had abused a female case worker and had been committed to a long-term mental facility. Jonathan flickered into my life, flickered away at times, then flickered off for good. I keep you in my prayers, Jonathan.

Men's Fraternity held its final session on the last Thursday of May. My table of men was growing close and I hated to break apart for the summer. The group photo showed about a hundred of us guys standing together on the platform. I continued to meet with Steve Wilson almost every Thursday morning at eight o'clock for an hour walk at Seal Point. Often *Homeless Ken* would join us and I would listen as he explained to me the unfairness of life.

## JUNE

This was a perfect vacation month with one outing for each of the four weeks. On June 2, Liz and I coordinated our calendars to manage a trip to the Northwest. First, I dropped off my wife at SFO, then my dog with Charles and Diane. Liz stayed the night in Portland with her sister, while I sped north. After an overnight at Rogue River State Park, I joined Liz about four o'clock on Friday. We spent one night together.

On Saturday, we attended a BBQ at the home-farm of Marcus and Stephanie Sobottke. The four girls—Riley, Shea, Jenna, and Isla—escorted us around the property. Liz marveled at the collection of exotic chickens in the coops. After the meaty meal, my wife and I stayed the night at an airport Marriott, and the next morning went with Frank to his church. After the service, I dropped Liz at the airport and passed the day with my brother. Construction on his dream home continued slowly. We walked around the area sandwiched between Interstate 5 and Salmon Creek. I slept on Jeanne's sofa on Sunday night, then in my tent on Monday. I got back to my own bed, after picking up Jody, on Tuesday afternoon.

During the second week in June, I camped at Mount Madonna County Park. Just to the west of San Jose, this gem was shrouded in coastal fog. Moisture collected on tall eucalyptus, dripped upon smaller oaks, then splashed into puddles along the walkways. Jody kept chasing the tiny pings. On a Monday hike, I traversed eight-thousand steps with Ken and Linda.

During the third week of June, I undertook a lightning trip to Portland. This was to participate in a *West Coast Wedding Reception* for Zachary and Ruth. Upon landing there was a mix-up. My son was supposed to meet me at PDX at ten in the morning. After he didn't show and I couldn't reach him by phone, I decided to walk from the terminal to the *Econolodge Hotel*. It turned out to be 10500 steps. I roused Zachary from his slumber and he told me he thought my arrival time was "ten in the evening". I accepted his explanation with a shrug and thanked him for the exercise, although it was challenging to pull a suitcase down a roadside.

Zachary had invited all his Portland-area relatives to a Saturday reception at Siena Hall. Father Dismis hosted the event and Laura Umfleet organized an hour of activities. About thirty people showed up. We shared a meal, toasted the newlyweds, and Zachary told everybody about Ruth. We filled Ruth's shoe with paper money and my sisters presented her with a Polish apron embroidered with babies. The honored couple honored us with an extravagant ballroom dance and we all posed for photos. I posted on the wall an enlarged print of Kim with the words "Congratulations, my Son Zachary".

I was happy that so many of my family were able to meet Zachary's bride. Heather—Joshua Foreman's wife—seemed to especially connect with her new cousin by marriage. I sat in on part of the conversation as Heather explained to nurse Ruth about her medical condition called *Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome*. She showed Ruth the scarred hands of her connective tissue disorder. Frank dropped me off at PDX a few hours after the reception. I was in town for only thirty-six hours.

During the fourth week of June, I camped at Half Moon Bay State Park for three nights. Jody and I took long beach walks for each of those days. We also hiked along trails of wild flowers. Liz joined us on Wednesday morning and we walked along the Wave Crest trail toward the *Ritz Carlton*. As I stood facing the roaring ocean watching proud waves vanish into the sand, I quoted from Job 38:11.

Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb and said "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?"

## JULY

I stayed up late on July 4 to see the Foster City fireworks from the college hilltop. The event was too late and cold for Lizzie and proved hardly worth the effort. The distant pops were muffled and the flashes barely cleared the horizon.

During my monthly leg x-ray visit, I learned I had a *screw loose* meaning a clamp screw in my fibula had snapped. The doctor reported it as a good sign since the metal was firmly embedded in bone and the bone was growing stronger than the steel.

My July camping trip was to Sequoia National Park. I left the house about eleven o'clock on Monday morning and arrived at Coy Flat in the national forest about six. The drought in California had been severe and many evergreens were brown with death. The place was a fire waiting to happen. I set up my campsite, fixed a dinner and settled in for the night. Stacks of firewood appeared throughout the campground because of tree removal, but a stage-two fire restriction was in place which meant no campfires were permitted.

Tuesday was my day to visit the National Park. The drive was ninety minutes to enter the park gates, then thirty more to reach the famous General Sherman Tree. I walked the area for a few hours before returning to Coy Flat. Jody and I stopped several times along the serpentine route to drink in the vistas. I stayed two more nights at Coy Flat, then headed home on Thursday.

At church, our Mission Team 2016 began to form. I purchased a small toy monkey and hid it in the recreation hall. The poster read:

Find Miss Monkey! She's hiding somewhere in the church. Where can she be? Capture this elusive Rwandan vervet monkey on your picture-taking device and you are guaranteed to win ONE of the three prizes listed below:

1. An all-expense paid trip around-the-world;
2. A brand new 2016 Tesla Model X;
3. A Hershey kiss.

Show your picture to Chris, Shirley, Ken, or Margarita, to claim your fabulous prize!

During my months of convalescence, I watched hours of You Tube videos. My favorite speaker became William Lane Craig of *Reasonable Faith Ministries*. I admired his logical apologetic, his adherence to Scripture, as well as his unflappable demeanor. I watched a dozen of his debates with celebrity atheists and memorized his four arguments for the existence of God.

1. The Kalam Cosmological Argument: God is the best explanation for the cause of the universe.

2. The Leibnizian Cosmological Argument: God is the best explanation for a contingent universe.
3. The Teleological Argument: God is the best explanation for the appearance of design in the universe.
4. The Moral Argument: God is the best explanation for objective moral values and duties which are independent of the human mind.

I decided to take an apologetics course through *Reasonable Faith*, spending many hours in July reading in detail the thick book and filling out a sixty-page notebook. To me, all this effort was amazing fun.

I wrote a letter to Dr. Craig about ontological objects. I had identified four-and one-half categories all beginning with a letter M. Was I on target?

1. Mind. An unembodied mind in capital letters for God: MIND. *Mind* in lower case for the immaterial aspect of His sentient creatures. Mind is primary. All ontology flows from mind.
2. Material. If you're a materialist, that's all there is: matter, energy, time, space.
3. Morality. Right and wrong, good and evil. These seem to be objective and exist outside the material universe. Are they like the "right brain" of God?
4. Math. These abstract Platonic objects seem to exist independent of material and human mind. Are they the "left brain" of God?
5. Message. This category seems to be a hybrid of Mind and Matter. The words that you are now reading do not exist in ink and paper nor in mind, but by means of the two in combination. Message, media, or symbol is a half category.

## AUGUST

The month began with a robbery report from Fairfax, Virginia. Ruth posted:

Zachary Foreman just saved my life tonight from a home invasion. The intruder walked into our apartment and tried to rob us. Zachary wrestled him and held him in a headlock until police came. God clearly brought him into my life and he is my protector. I am extremely grateful to the police who came quickly to our aid. We prayed tonight for the young man who attacked us in our home. Pray for us as well.

My son said he had received teeth bites and rug burns during the takedown. Ruth and Zach attended the sentencing just 17 days later. The sixteen-year-old Ethiopian youth was sentenced to two years in Juvenile Custody.

I was sad to learn from Zachary that Ruth had suffered a miscarriage at two months. He called the unborn his *honeymoon baby* and bestowed upon him the name of Polycarp.

One of my top priorities was to stay connected with my grandchildren as they were growing up. With this in mind, I traveled to Florida on August 11 and stayed in West Palm Beach for three nights. I stayed a few hours at Dilia's house—230 Deville Road—playing board games with the kids. About four in the afternoon Simon opened his hotel app, entered his information, and got a great deal on a local place to stay.

On this trip, the big deal was *back to school* on August 12. During the East Olive Elementary open house, I stood in the background as Gia met her kindergarten teacher and Lorenzo his second-grade teacher. I smiled to see my grandkids squeal with delight as they re-united with buddies they hadn't seen in months. The two raced around the playground pavement on their penny boards. I was brought to tears, just watching them play. I love them so much!

I did enjoy the ambiance of West Palm Beach more than Pembroke Pines. Simon and I hung out with the kids in the funky downtown area. We bought them wooden flutes which they played sitting on the sidewalk. Lorenzo spotted a dog sculpture made of lacquered rope. Gia exclaimed it looked *just like Sammy* so they had to buy it. Their mom loved the gift.

Once again it was time to hug Gia and Lorenzo good bye. During my flight to and from Fort Lauderdale, I listened to six hours of Lewis Carroll. In *Through the Looking Glass*, Alice stated that she was exactly "seven and one-half years old". Was that the optimal age of wonderment? Lorenzo was exactly that age when I played board games with him.

As the days of August passed, I celebrated Lizzie's fifty-ninth birthday, prepared for the upcoming Africa Mission, casually followed the summer Olympics in Brazil, and walked with Liz to the Fern Grotto at Wilder Ranch. The off-shore rocks were filled with seals.

I noted on FaceBook that on August 23, I turned two-thirds of a century old! The month ended with a quiet three days at Lake Chabot. I lounged, read, hiked, and listened to audio books. I was preparing my heart for Africa.

At the end of the month, Neal emailed me saying a court date had been set concerning *Foreman vs. Irusalimsky*. If the matter were not settled beforehand, a trial would take place in San Rafael in May 2017.

## SEPTEMBER

On September 5, Liz and I attended a Labor Day picnic at Western Hills. Jody was the star of our show, doted upon by teenagers in the grassy back lots. I met with Ken, Shirley, and Margarita, compiling a packing list for our Africa mission. A few days later, I drove to Redwood City for another leg x-ray. Dr. Bradley reported the bones were healing and the non-union was closing. That was positive news.

I received a phone call from Jeanne. She told me Don's health was failing and he may not survive long. I felt bad about the situation, because I was in Rwanda when Jack had died and I hated for the same thing to happen if my brother-in-law were to pass away while I was overseas. I told my sister I would create a tribute video to show just in case I was out of the country when a memorial occurred.

Liz and I hiked at Pillar Point in Half Moon Bay. To the west we gazed over the vast Pacific and to the east over farm fields full of orange pumpkins. The renown festival was a week away. Just before leaving on Mission 2016, I re-arranged my Prius to accommodate my dog by lowering the backseat, spreading an army blanket, and setting up her dog bed and food bowl. I affixed a sign that read, *Jody's Car Kennel*. Then I began my twenty-second missionary journey.

The four of us arrived at the airport on Thursday morning, September 15. Frank soon joined us flying in from Portland. As we passed through security, Margarita ran into a problem. Her passport was set to expire in five months and a new rule required six. Alas! She had to stay behind and it took three days of scrambling for her to catch up with us in Butare.

For this mission we flew KLM—San Francisco to Amsterdam to Kigali. We arrived in Rwanda just twenty hours later, then shifted our clocks nine hours ahead. Franc and David met us at the airport. After an overnight in Kigali, we headed to the city of Butare which had since been redesignated the city of Huye.

Upon leaving the big city, I did a very stupid thing. I left my precious iPad Pro on the roof of David's car. After searching and not finding, we pulled to the side of the road. I eventually located my tablet stuck to the rooftop. Was it a miracle? David suggested an angel had kept a finger on it, but I discovered it was the magnetic cover. The iPad had remained attached across one hour of bumpy roads. Once more, God's grace overcame my carelessness.

At the Lighthouse, Mavis Crispin joined us as a co-teacher. It was a delight to have her again as a team member. For Mission 2016, we focused on two conferences, one for local pastors and a second for international students. As a curriculum for fifty pastors, we made use of the "Thirty-six Panels of Redemptive History through the Life of Jesus Christ." It was fun to teach these two days with my two partners. I selected twelve panels, Frank twelve, and Mavis twelve. Each of us served as a back-up teacher. This curriculum was great because each panel included a statement of one-hundred words written in Kinyarwandan. I opened with panel one—creation and concluded with panel thirty-six—final judgement.

The *Fourth Annual East Africa Christian Apologetics Conference* ran from September 21 to 23. Eighty-three students registered from seven nations: Rwanda 41, Uganda 13, Burundi 12, Congo 9, Tanzania 6, Kenya 1, and South Sudan 1.

For this curriculum I reworked a sermon series based on John Stott's book, *Why I am a Christian*. Frank wrote a journal of the mission and reported:

Chris led the Wednesday morning session focused on the first reason: *I am a Christian because the Claims of Christ are true and reasonable*. He showed four short YouTube video clips with the classic apologetic arguments for the existence of God. In the afternoon, Mavis led the second session: *I am a Christian because Jesus sought me and I needed saving*. Chris followed with the third reason: *Because the Holy Spirit witnesses truth to my spirit*. Other teachers added in as they felt led and the questions from the students were on point.

Some of the Ugandans, who had driven all night, nodded a little. But overall, the focus of African university students is far superior to American students over the 6-7 hours of presentations. Yet as in all African Christian meetings the beginning of every session and end of every break included loud enthusiastic singing, dancing, keyboard, and drumming. The energy vented in the process seems to enable them to focus for another couple hours.

On Thursday morning Mavis started the session with reason four: *because the Human Condition is best reflected as a shattered Image of God*. Chris then presented reasons five and six: *because without God the world is absurd and because the Cross of Christ demonstrates ultimate love*.

At first, I was a little disappointed with the reasons that I ended up with. Reasons seven and eight are: *because human joy is best discovered as a disciple of Christ and because human freedom is best discovered as a follower of Jesus*. Yet, as I prepared, meditated, and prayed over the topics, I found them to be reasons of the heart and not head; reasons that seem very counter-intuitive.

Finally, Mavis presented reason nine: *because I have nowhere else to go*. I concluded with the final reason why we are Christians: *because Jesus invited me and I accepted*. This was a call to evangelism. Franc helped me with reason ten, concluding our conference by encouraging these Christian students to be evangelists and witnesses on their campuses.

During our two conferences, Ken, Shirley, and later Margarita were under the care of David Nahayo. He escorted them to all the local ministries in which CASR was engaged. Ken also assisted in four building projects I had outlined: 1. Organize the storage room, 2. Set up the last two giant basket sculptures, 3. Oversee the installation of two solar water heaters, and 4. Get the new generator working.

I was so disappointed with the results of this fourth project. At the expense of four-thousand dollars CASA shipped a high-end generator to the Lighthouse. After multiple efforts, the contraption never worked. Finally, much to my chagrin, we

discovered the generator could not run on gasoline, but required natural gas—of which there was none in all of Rwanda. Frank said, “So much effective mission work is just overcoming the curse of the Tower of Babel. Miscommunications abound.”

Frank, Mavis, and I were supposed to hold a meeting on Saturday, but the event was cancelled. With a full day suddenly available we undertook an adventure. Frank wrote this:

We actually got to be tourists in Rwanda. On Saturday Pastor David drove Mavis, Chris, and me two hours west to *the Canopy*. That's what they called the rain forest at Uwinka Overlook in Nyungwe National Park. It's at a 6600-foot altitude and marks the north-south continental divide in Africa. We left early in the morning and arrived in time for the 10:30 guided tour. It was a vigorous hike for 70-year-old Mavis and us gimpy Foreman brothers. We were all challenged but it was a blast.

The tour guide pointed out the rain forest plants and the calls of chimps, monkeys, squirrels, and birds. The main attraction was the metal towers and three connecting suspension bridges that allow a breath-taking view of the canopy forest. The largest of the single file bridges was about 200 feet long and 180 feet above the bottom of the ravine. In the high altitude we needed to stop and take some fairly long rests. That was fine with me. Mavis, Chris and I loved to talk as well as walk.

Of course, my days were filled with other activities: I preached on two Sundays; visited two bush churches; met with local leaders and Western missionaries; paused at Kim's roadside memorial; fought off a monkey invasion; and even experienced an earthquake.

Frank was most pleased to discover Michael and Kelsey staying in the Lighthouse. As students on assignment from Virginia Tech, they committed to build a Lighthouse website and link it to our CASA site.

During a mission debriefing, Ken and Shirley admitted to feeling neglected. They observed that Frank and I sucked in all the attention of CASR leaders. They were right. Ken desired to return on Mission 2017, but on a scheduled tangent to ours. I returned to California joyfully fatigued.

## OCTOBER

After a busy September, the paced slowed. Our mission team reported to the church congregation on October 9, which was billed as *Rwanda Celebration Sunday*. The following Sunday after church, Liz and I went to san Francisco to the Blue Angels. We enjoyed the gaze up and the gaze around.

In the Fall of 2016, the presidential election heated up. Hillary Clinton was the Democratic candidate while Donald Trump surprisingly won the Republican nomination. I harbored a fondness for Clinton, since Kim was such a big fan of hers. To me Trump was a vulgar bully. I had to switch off listening to the Hillary-Donald debates. All I heard was name-calling and got-cha. Would I vote for the policy or the person? I didn't know.

On October 14, Liz and I returned to the site of our pedestrian accident in Burlingame. I pointed to a few locations and took a few pictures, but Liz didn't want to linger; too many bad memories. The next day, I loaded up the Prius and headed to Calaveras Big Trees State Park. The skies were growing dark.

Raindrops followed me from San Mateo into the mountains. My weather app reported it was the remnant of a Pacific typhoon. I hooked up with Ken and Linda and we did some rain hiking. He posed in the center of the Tunnel Tree. The redwoods were colossal. My favorite spot was dubbed the *Palace Hotel*, which was the burnt-out basement of a redwood tree, large enough to house a card table with four chairs surrounding.

The downpour made my two-night stay miserable. After thirty-six hours of unrelenting rainfall my blue canopy collapsed. I used the fabric as a second layer of protection for my sagging tent. Before climbing into my sleeping bag on the second night, I dug a drainage ditch around my perimeter. Jody slept in the car just to be safe. I did manage to stay dry throughout the night but at sunrise I flung my soggy tent into the Prius and dashed for home.

During the last three days of the month, I was in Fairfax, Virginia, visiting Zachary and Ruth. Zachary showed me the site of the home invasion and reenacted the scene. Together we enjoyed an evening out eating Yemeni food and a Halloween night at Elegant Dancing. I wore my pharaoh hat as costume. Zachary and I stopped off at Ruth's workplace, *Medical and Urgent Care*, then toured the nearby Meadowlark Botanical Gardens. The place was filled with Korean statuary and pagodas. I read some of the hangul words to Zachary and wished his mother could have been present to read every word. All in all, it was a fun time to visit my newly-wed son.

## NOVEMBER

I returned to SFO on November 1, and used a new iPad app to book my first-ever Uber driver. The ride home cost me \$13.99. On November 2, the Chicago Cubs won their first World Series in seventy-one years. Go Cubbies! On November 3, I spoke at Men's Fraternity about the blessing of grandchildren; and on November 6, I drove Liz to Levi Stadium where she joined Allen and Carolyn

for a 49ers football game. Then on November 8 came a big surprise. Donald Trump won election as president of the United States. I stayed up past midnight following the amazing results. (After internal back-and-forth, I ended up voting for Hillary Clinton. Yet I wasn't disappointed with the outcome.)

At midmonth, Liz and I hiked at Bean Hollow State Beach, about an hour's drive south of Half Moon Bay. Lizzie's friend Lisa joined us. The moniker was appropriate. Along the shoreline were strewn large boulders. These stones were pock-marked with small round cavities about the size and depth of bottlecaps. In these hollows rested small pebbles, many the shape and size of navy beans. *Bean hollow*, indeed!

On Thanksgiving Day, Liz and I shared our table with her mom and Allen. I tried to FaceTime Zachary and Simon, but to no avail. That was okay, since they each called the following day to report on their holiday activities.

A big event of personal consequence occurred on November 28. Liz and I were deposed by lawyers from State Farm Insurance. I drove to a corporation building in Dublin where we were met by my two attorneys, Neal and Steve, as well as by Liz's attorney, Todd Emanuel. I was given some pointers earlier about the deposition like "Be truthful, but don't minimize the trauma and pain" and "Don't be witty or humorous. He's not your pal."

It took a few hours of recorded questions and answers to get through the entire session. I spoke; then Liz spoke; then the lawyers spoke without us; then we all spoke together. Walking out the door, Neal Kuvara said it went well for us. Now it was up to State Farm. Would they fight the case before a jury in court or would they settle? We would have to wait.

## DECEMBER

The weeks leading up to Christmas were wet. I continued to lift weights at the SMAC gym and do aqua-fitness a few times a week, but it was often too wet and dark to enjoy a walk through Laurelwood Park or hike to the summit of Sugarloaf Mountain. I was getting my *Winter Warrior* card stamped every day in order to earn a SMAC mug and t-shirt. Sometimes, I dropped by just to take a shower.

Someone posted on FaceBook "cogito ergo sum"—*I think therefore I am*. Since I was emersed in philosophy, I considered what might constitute my personal credo. My thoughts turned to the story of the Velveteen Rabbit; an inanimate object (stuffed animal) that only became real when it became worn with love. "Amor ergo sum"—*I am loved therefore I am*. That fit me best.

I had also been a longtime reader of a magazine called *First Things*, a Catholic publication of the Institute on Religion and Public Life. For several years I had been savoring the content and quality of the articles. Through the magazine,

I advertised for a ROFTers group—*Readers of First Things*. On December 6, I met at the Hillsdale mall with Mark from Stanford and George from Lafayette. I wanted to discuss an article called “Transgender Conformity”. We met a few times then dissolved. They were commuting from too great a distance and the discussions wandered too far afield.

On December 7, I drove Liz to the Millbrae BART station where we commuted into downtown San Francisco. This was our yearly trek into the city to catch the Christmas Spirit. We walked down Market Street to view the window displays, entered hotel lobbies to view decorations, and posed in front of over-sized Christmas ornaments. At Union Square we strolled around Macy’s great tree.

A few days later, Jody and I headed north for a family get-together. We celebrated an early Christmas dinner at Denny’s in Canby. Then at Jeanne’s place, Jim Francis and I blew out sixty-seven birthday candles. Frank showed me his metal-framed house under construction, explaining the draining issues. The news was not good about Terry. His smoldering multiple myeloma began to flame. Over the course of the next year, he would undergo chemotherapy then radiation. We continually held him up in our prayers.

Upon my return to San Mateo, Liz treated me at Round Table Pizza for my birthday meal. My joke of the day was this: “How does Good King Wenceslas like his pizza? Deep pan crisp and even.” On Christmas morning, we paid a visit on Liz’s mom and the next day she dropped by to see us.

On December 29, Simon, Dilia, Lorenzo, and Gia arrived in town. The plan was for them to spend a few days in San Mateo, a few days in Mill Valley, then a few days at Lake Tahoe. With Dilia resting at the hotel, Simon and the two kids dropped by my house to open belated Christmas gifts.

The next day I met them at the Foster City Marriott and we all spent an afternoon at the San Francisco Exploritorium. The kids had a wonderful time dashing through the place and checking out the attractions. At one display, Lorenzo and Gia sat across a table from each other with a special glass between them, part transparent and part mirrored. Dilia laughed to see a facial image half her son and half her daughter. Simon’s family went on to Mill Valley and I returned home. It was a fun way to end the year.

## 2017 JANUARY

On the first day of the year I wrote, “I am retired and looking for a challenge. I can’t climb to mountaintops, visit multiple countries, or collect more junk. I have visited all fifty of the United States plus D.C. so my Everest-like project is to visit all fifty-eight counties in California during the calendar year of 2017. Of course, my first county achieved was that of my residence—San Mateo.”

From January 3 to 6, I added six counties to my total while on a vacation to South Lake Tahoe. Liz and I dropped off Jody in Hayward, then headed east. Snow was in the air and I put on chains to scale the final summit. Our A-frame rental was in Pioneer Village about five minutes from the shoreline. I had booked the vacation home for three nights for six people.

Simon arrived with Dilia and kids about an hour after we opened the doors. Everyone loved the place; blankets of snow on the outside and blankets of wool inside. With a few hours of daylight left, the kids frolicked in the side yards, making snow angels and throwing snowballs at icicles. Liz and I shared one room; Dilia and Gia another; while Simon and Lorenzo slept on a downstairs couch. It worked out well.

On Wednesday four adults went to a snow park to watch two children run up and sled down a hill side. Their grandpa was busy taking videos as they slid by waving their mittened hands. Lorenzo and Gia did three cycles of this: romp in the snow—warm up in the lodge—romp in the snow again.

On Thursday, we drove to Stateline Avenue for breakfast. Lorenzo peeked into a Casino, but that was as close to gambling as he got. In the afternoon, I helped the kids make a snowman and snow fort in the back yard. They used sticks, sleds, boxes and tarps. Then they snuggled inside the shack as conquerors to eat a sandwich. Liz and I remained in our rental, but Simon took the kids to an ice-skating rink. I saw his videos. My grandkids were amazing on ice.

The weather report called for a major storm blowing into the Sierras, so we scrambled to leave early on Friday morning. Before heading home, I received a belated birthday card. Dilia wrote this: “Mr. Chris, I really appreciate everything that you have given us, especially on this holiday. Being in California has been a blessing for me and it happened because of God, Simon, and the two of you. Thank you for being such a loving and caring grandfather.”

Rain fell during most days in January. Between drops, Liz and I participated in a church hike along the Crystal Springs trail and I added San Francisco and Marin to my list of counties. I camped for two nights at Half Moon Bay, posting on FaceBook: “My first camping of the new year was a really great walk-in campsite just 100 steps from my parked car and overlooking the sandy beach. It was cool at night, warm and breezy in the day with two gorgeous wood-smoked evenings. Jody and I are blessed.”

As the month ended, I got word that my daughter-in-law, Ruth, was expecting a baby and Don Rose, Lelia’s father, had passed away. Once again, the words of the preacher came to mind: “a time to be born and a time to die.”

## FEBRUARY

Neal Kuvara called at the first of the month and told me State Farm wanted to settle the lawsuit. Both Liz and I would receive all the money in the pot. The Brady Law Group mailed me an explicit animation of the accident complete with breaking body visuals and crunching bone sounds. If the case ever went to trial, the gruesome video would appear as exhibit A.

On February 7, Liz and I drove to downtown San Rafael to meet with our attorneys and representatives from State Farm. We all talked together for a while, then the lawyers discussed among themselves. Liz and I strolled the old Mission San Rafael just next door. When we returned after lunch, a stack of papers waited for our signatures. I think it was the rottweiler and his video that clinched the deal. We exchanged hearty handshakes with our attorneys, left for home, and waited for our settlement checks to clear the bank.

February proved to be one of the wettest months on record. Three of my past camp destinations experienced storm damage. First, the Oroville Dam overflowed. Liz and I had stopped there a year earlier. Second, The Tunnel Tree at Calaveras toppled. Ken had recently posed in the tunnel; and third, the cement ship at Sea Cliff State Park broke apart in a storm. A few years earlier, Liz and I had strolled that beach.

Also, in February, we joined Liz's Uncle Al and Lorraine at Becky's house for a dinner. The next week I tagged along as Liz led a hike along the soggy Edgewood trail. On the drive to the annual Men's Fraternity retreat at Mount Hermon, I added the counties of Santa Clara and Santa Cruz.

## MARCH

On the first day of the month, my settlement check landed in my Wells Fargo account. I paid off a line of credit with Union Bank, set aside sixty thousand for CASA, gifted a small amount to my sons, and invested the largest chunk in USAA index funds. That was all practical stuff. This was the fun part; I allocated fifty-thousand dollars for a camper.

Bill Becker took a turn for the worse and Liz flew alone to Ashville to be with her ailing father and with Sybil. On the same day that Liz departed, Franc Murenzi arrived. My African son was on an American tour flying from D.C. to Chicago to San Francisco then to Portland. During his six-night stay in the Bay Area, he was hosted in four homes. His crowded itinerary included meal providers, drivers, and tour guides. We called him a *hot potato* because he was constantly being shuffled from person to person. My brother dropped by for a few days and was able to stay

in my house since Liz was away. Frank, Franc, and I spoke at three Western Hills events and two functions at CPC.

On March 17, I began volunteering at the San Francisco Airport for the USO. This culminated a month-long process of getting badges, passing tests, and scheduling times. I liked helping military folks as they hustled from place to place. My shift was three hours; about half that time, sitting at the front desk admitting and directing people and the rest of the time standing behind a food counter passing out treats. I enjoyed the comradery of fellow military retirees and USO volunteers. I planned to schedule the *USO@SFO* about twice a month.

Liz found a friend in the neighborhood named Robina. She and Liz would walk the side streets a few times a week. Liz joined a private club called Filoli—a local historical house and garden not far from home. I went there a few times with Liz and Robina to walk the grounds and marvel at the flowers.

Liz received the news on March 21. Her father William Becker had died in Asheville, North Carolina. He was eighty-six. I held Liz in my arms as she broke the news to me. I was glad my life had overlapped with his—at least for five years.

After teaching my seminary class at San Quentin on March 25, I continued on a road trip to the Northwest. I set up my umbrella upright tent at Sugarloaf Ridge State Park near Santa Rosa. Unfortunately, two more of the spokes broke and the tent was useless. I disposed of it in a dumpster and slept in the back of my Prius. It was a tight fit.

The next day I continued up I-5, pausing for a few hours at North Table Mountain—the spot Liz and I had sought out a few years earlier. I then continued north to the Rogue River State Park. I was glad I had reserved a Yurt because the night rain was relentless. Jody and I slept snug inside. My dog ignored the sign that read *no pets allowed*.

I spent Monday night with Eileen in Longview. Terry did not look well. He shared with me his regimen of chemotherapy. We five siblings got together at Izzy's Buffet in Kelso. Frank brought Shea Sobottke to the restaurant who said she was interested in a missionary career and asked to join us for Africa Mission 2017 coming up in October. During this road trip, I added several California counties to my count.

## APRIL

A few days after returning from my road trip, Liz and I flew to Asheville for her Father's memorial service. We stayed with Sybil and I met a few of Liz's cousins. Bill's older brother could not attend due to infirmity. The service was held on Sunday afternoon at 2:00 on April 2. I met Sybil's sister Sara and a few other relatives. As officiator, I made a few of my own remarks then read this remembrance from Liz.

Dad was a devoted and generous father. He was dependable, honest, and trustworthy. When he gave his word that was it. Whether picking me up from swim practice in high school, or flying to LA to help me drive my new stick shift car home from college, dad was all in. He actively supported my activities growing up and into my college years. From driving the girl scouts to camp or taking the family on a weekend getaway driving up the north coast of California, you could count on him to make it happen.

I learned cheerful giving from my dad. In the second book of Corinthians, it says “God loves a cheerful giver.” Dad was the person who came to my mind when I read that verse. It brought dad delight to share. Whether it was the neighbor who needed to do laundry when his washing machine broke, or the single parent neighbor who needed a listening ear, dad was there to help. Dad’s company sold office products and he loved to share the extra samples with friends and family. Just last week, a friend told me he still has binders my dad gave him.

Dad always made time for family and friends. Some of my favorite memories are watching dad cooking burgers on the outside grill during family gatherings; teaching me to make lasagna; and enjoying dinner together on the screened in porch while he lived in Asheville. In addition, before moving to Asheville he and Sybil hosted a family vacation on the Kona coast of the island of Hawaii. Dad loved to introduce family and friends to the best snorkeling spots in Kona and he knew them all.

Dad, I miss you and your letters which were always signed: YLD, Your loving Dad. But I know you are in a better place.

The memorial concluded with a video retrospective and his favorite hymn *The Old Rugged Cross*. A reception was held at the house for family and in the evening, Sybil brought out a few boxes of dusty photos. She presented me with one old photograph of Liz and Tricia and one reel of 8mm movie-film. Sybil insisted I take home a few of Bill’s old clothes, so Liz picked out two sweaters and two belts. We stayed Sunday night and left the following morning.

On April 6, I headed for Pinnacles National Park with Charles Varady. He was several years my senior, but in great shape. After all, he had always skunked me at horseshoes. The weather was unpredictable; as high as sixty as low as thirty with occasional high winds and rain. We managed to stay dry with the assistance of several tarps and even completed an over-extended hike. In truth, the two of us got lost, looking at a map but not knowing our position. We hiked up and down unknown trails from two o’clock to six and when we finally found our way back to the campsite my pedometer read 25725 steps. At least I added my 22<sup>nd</sup> county, San Benito.

After the cold and wet camping experience, I finally decided to pull the trigger on a nice camper. I had looked at all the sites and considered all the options. Finally, I decided on a refurbished 2001 Volkswagen Eurovan Camper sold by Pop Top Heaven in Yucaipa. At \$46,000, the engine, camp accessories, and body were all like new. The pop-top VW Camper was an icon among camping aficionados. I paid for it on April 17, but it wouldn't be ready for pickup until June.

For months, Liz and I had been planning our fourth overseas adventure, advertised as: *Palms in Paradise*—A sixteen-day voyage with Oceania Cruises aboard the *Regatta* from Miami to San Francisco, including seven ports of call.

On April 22, I flew to Miami for an overnight Marriott stay with Simon, Lorenzo, and Gia. I had a great day romping with my grandchildren. On April 23, Liz joined the party and the five of us shared a dinner.

Day 1 ~ Monday, April 24 ~ Miami, Florida.

Simon dropped us off at the Miami cruise terminal at noon. We checked into our suite an hour later and enjoyed a scrumptious meal. At 6:00 we watched the Miami skyline fade into the sunset.

Day 2 ~ Tuesday, April 25 ~ Key West, Florida.

After breakfast, we walked the streets of Key West then joined our excursion called *Key West by Land and Sea*. I noted loose chickens, distinctive architecture, and the homes of Ernest Hemingway and Harry Truman. We left the key at 1:00 p.m.

Day 3 ~ Wednesday, April 26 ~ Cruising the straits of Florida.

The *Regatta* passed between small islands on its way to South America. I followed the on-board map as we skirted the coast of Cuba. En route our WIFI connection failed.

Day 4 ~ Thursday, April 27 ~ Cruising the Caribbean Sea.

In the morning I checked my now-working Facebook account and learned Don Zelen had died the day before, on April 26. I sent Jeanne an email:

I'm in the middle of the Caribbean Sea approaching Columbia and just learned that Donald had passed away. I'm so sorry. The last words you spoke on Monday were light-hearted. It must have been quick for him which is a grace of God. Liz and I send you our condolences and if there is anything we can do from this distance, let us know. We send our love and conviction that Don is now in the mighty grip of God, who will never let him go. ~ Chris and Liz.

Jeanne responded that Don's death was unexpected. They had shared lunch, laughed, and he had drifted off to sleep. The director called a few hours later to inform her of his passing.

Day 5 - Friday, April 28 - Cartagena, Columbia.

After breakfast, we debarked into bright sunshine. I was in a new country and on a new continent. Liz and I walked the streets on a city excursion. It was a hot humid day and we paused often to drink up bottled water and drink in the exotic sights and sounds. I bought a tiny hand-knit dress for my granddaughter-to-come, thinking it might be appropriate for her infant baptism. We re-boarded at noon. Our shipboard amenities were spectacular; great suite, wonderful buffets, and grand ballrooms. The elegance fit Lizzy, but was leagues beyond my hobo standards.

Day 6 - Saturday, April 29 - Panama Canal Transit.

We approached the Panama Canal at daylight. I did not actually set foot on dry land, but I did enter Panamanian waters. While I paced around the ship to get different views—stem to stern/port to starboard—a navigation expert provided commentary over the speakers. We slowly made our way through the locks, lakes, and watercourses, as well as under the Millennium Bridge. I had never grasped the troubled history and stupendous magnitude of this project. When it opened in 1914, the canal was certainly the grandest human undertaking of all time.

I hung out by the rails most of the eight hours it took to pass from the Atlantic to the Pacific, except during a brief thundershower. I earned a *Panama Canal Transit Certificate* and count the experience as a highlight of my world travels. I was reminded of my favorite palindrome concerning Teddy Roosevelt: “A man, a plan, a canal, Panama.”

Day 7 - Sunday, April 30 - Cruising the Pacific.

The last day of the month was occupied shipboard steaming up the Pacific coast. Liz and I sat on the veranda, conversing as sea, sky, and clouds swept our view. I splashed in the pool while Liz favored exercise classes led by a man we designated *terminator*.

## MAY

Day 8 - Monday, May 1 - Puntarenas, Costa Rica.

Liz had been to Costa Rica once before and enjoyed both the people and wildlife. We docked at 8:00 a.m. and debarked for an excursion titled *Eco Mangrove River Cruise*. On the boat we looked left and right for the flora and fauna our tour guide constantly pointed out, but which I never seemed to locate. In the evening we dressed in our best for a fine dinner at the *Red Ginger*. When we returned to our suite, our chocolate treat appeared as custom on our pillows.

Day 9 - Tuesday, May 2 - San Juan Del Sur, Nicaragua.

Our excursion involved a long bus ride to the Masaya Volcano. Liz and I played games while on board using my iPad. Upon our arrival, our guide warned we

could stay no more than one hour because of poisonous fumes. We walked to the rim of the caldera, whiffed the sulfur-laden fog, and were buffeted by up-rushing winds. It was a spectacular full-sensed experience.

Day 10 ~ Wednesday, May 3 ~ Puerta Quetzal, Guatemala.

We docked at noon. Our excursion brought us to the national wildlife refuge. As Liz and I walked the trails, we stepped among a variety of colorful parrots, peacocks, and lizards. At a distance, we viewed giraffes, lions, monkeys, and leopards. The pace was casual and the greenery lush.

Day 11 ~ Thursday May 4 ~ Cruising the Pacific Ocean.

Liz and I enjoyed our sea days. I wore my hip pedometer and managed to get my ten thousand steps per day by walking the hallways and stairwells of each deck. Our room was compact and private; portside; fifth from the stern; at level five—lowest for guests. I accommodated Liz's sleep schedule as best I could. After eight o'clock lights out, I rested in silence covertly listening to podcasts.

Day 12 ~ Friday, May 5 ~ Acapulco, Mexico.

We debarked in Acapulco after breakfast. Liz and I did not book an excursion. Rather, we walked the shoreline road, pointing at the legions of cats that surrounded fish stands. Since I was interested in history, I paid a fee to enter *Fuerte de San Diego* and *Museo Historico de Acapulco*. I discerned my perfect cruise was a balance of guided excursion and free wander; of onboard splendor and offshore color.

Day 13 ~ Saturday, May 6 ~ Cruising the Pacific Ocean.

The next day was spent on the high seas. We sat on deck chairs, watched matinee movies, and made a point to sit in the lobby whenever the string quartet played its repertoire.

Day 14 ~ Sunday, May 7 ~ Cabo San Lucas.

After thirty-six hours of sea travel, we arrived at the tip of Baja California. This was the only occasion when we traveled from anchorage aboard a tender into the town. Liz and I walked the perimeter of the lagoon, pausing at shops to sit and look at the harbor waves. For one dollar I picture-posed with an iguana on my shoulder; Liz passed the opportunity. We returned to the *Regatta* by noon where I led a Sunday church service in the muster room. About a dozen folks showed up as I spoke a few words about the time when Apostle Paul undertook a stormy sea voyage from Antioch to Rome.

Day 15–16 ~ Monday–Tuesday, May 8–9 ~ Cruising the Pacific Ocean.

We were now in a dash to make our American terminal. This final leg encountered two days of heavy seas. The pool was closed due to sloshing water. Liz learned the

laundry room was the best place to avoid sea sickness—mid-ship/low level. The help desk was passing out free Medi-Meclizine to help passengers cope.

Day 17 ~ Wednesday, May 10 ~ San Francisco, California.

About ten in the morning, we passed under the Golden Gate Bridge. I thrilled to see American flags and to hear the ship horn shriek as we passed under the landmark structure. We left the cruise at terminal plaza, caught an Uber home, and thus concluded our great Panama Canal cruise.

For the remainder of May, we stayed close to home. Our Men's Fraternity group held its final session and I oversaw a major cleanup at my Ashton Lane property. On Mother's Day, Becky came by to receive the gift of a jigsaw puzzle. Later that same day, I drove to Hayward to confirm that bouquets sent by Zachary and Simon actually rested upon their mother's grave.

Becky and I shared a date at the Peninsula Symphony. The performance of *the Planets* was odd, in that after each of the seven pieces, a college astronomer commented on the particular planet. Mars should have been less about the sphere and more about the pagan god.

I went to see Doctor Bradley, the orthopedic surgeon, asking about further surgeries. Parts of my skin were numb, my calf was misshapen, and after long walks my leg throbbled. Fixing my ailments was not worth the risk of removing metal. He advised me to let well enough alone.

The San Mateo Athletic Club continued to be an important part of my daily routine, passing through its doors six of seven days. Liz and I were featured in a SMAC newsletter in which we praised the club for its role in helping us rehabilitate from our traffic injuries.

## JUNE

This month was jam-packed with camping. I drove the Prius in a circuitous route to Fallen Leaf campground, adding additional California counties to my tally. Ken Napier had expanded our circle of fellowship by joining forces with a camping *Meetup.com* group. Peter, Val, and Deb joined Ken, Linda, and me for three days of fun in the woods.

We hiked to a waterfall, visited a heritage site, and marveled at an abundance of pink Snow Plants which poked through barren ground cover. Jody was my faithful companion as I walked along the shoreline of Fallen Leaf Lake with snowcapped mountains providing a glorious backdrop. By the time I returned home, I had added eight counties to my total; now up to thirty.

Liz showed amazing patience with her camp-obsessed husband. The day after I returned to San Mateo, Steve drove me to SFO to catch a flight to the Ontario,

California, airport. I caught an Uber and after forty dollars arrived in Yucaipa at *Poptop Heaven*. I spent a few hours with nice salespeople who walked me through the workings of my vehicle.

I drove from 5:00 to 11:00 to arrive at Camp Saint Luis Obispo. For one night I camped in the military overflow lot for five dollars. I got home the next day with a *new-to-me* Eurovan Camper, adding seven counties to my total. I was fortunate to re-acquire a spot in the parking garage in which I once stowed my old Westfalia. It cost me one hundred dollars per month; a lot, but this was my retirement hobby.

Life was full. On June 16, I wore my academic cap and gown to a graduation ceremony at San Quentin Prison. On June 17, I traveled with Liz to Walnut Creek to support Carolyn in a march against breast cancer. We then partook in a BBQ at their Lafayette residence. Then on June 18, I preached at Western Hills Church about apologetics in Africa. I spoke of the great I AM and explained the word *aseity*, which means “self-existing”. Several in the congregation talked to me afterward about how the message encouraged their faith.

I went forth in my VW on June 19 to encamp with Ken and Linda. I left the house at dawn and got to the Sonora Pass about noon. Jody and I paused at Mono Lake where I walked and she sniffed. I pulled into Old Shady Rest Campground about three o'clock. Rather than a crummy tent, I popped my top and enjoyed a restful evening in a first-rate vintage VW camper.

I had extra time the next morning before meeting Napiers, so I indulged my obsession and drove fifty miles round trip to cross into Inyo County. The county line was truly in the middle of nowhere. In the afternoon, I met up with Ken and Linda at Convict Lake, a beautiful hidden spot surrounded by towering mountains. My friends showed up just before dark and we shared campfire and conversation.

Our big event occurred the next day, traversing the five-mile perimeter of Convict Lake. Linda and I hiked on dirt while Ken hugged the shoreline in a kayak. The place was majestic, but soon the trail turned to mush, because snow run-off had flooded portions of our pathway. Not having an alternative, Linda and I removed our boots, rolled up our pantlegs and plunked gingerly through one hundred yards of cold water. I portaged Jody in my arms. It was an adventure to remember.

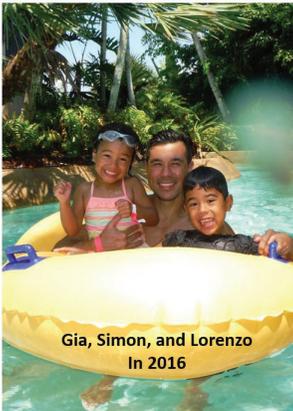
On Thursday, I drove with Ken to Heart Lake. After a few miles up a mountain trail, we had to turn back because deep snow made parts impassable. That was okay. As a hobo camper, I was perfectly content hanging around our basecamp, reading, snacking, and rocking near the campfire. On Friday, I broke camp at dawn to return home. I was now up to forty of sixty-eight counties.

After two days' rest, I headed north, speculating my frenetic pace was due to pent up demand caused by an extended convalescence and the purchase of my camper. After church with Liz, I drove up I-80 and I-5 to stop at the Sims Road Campground. Heading up the Central Valley my temperature gauge registered 109 degrees. After a warm night along the Sacramento River, I continued up I-5 arriving in Canby about 3:00 p.m.

To celebrate Jeanne's eighty-second birthday, I treated her to dinner at the *Wild Hare*. Sue and Don, Nancy, Steve and Nickolas, along with DJ joined us. I stayed Monday night in the camper parked in Jeanne's driveway. Frank had a few days off work and we hung out together, talking a lot about Africa Mission 2017. He decided to accompany me and Jody on our return trip to California.

After passing the night on his construction lot, we visited Eileen and Terry who hosted a BBQ get together for the five siblings. I felt bad for Terry. As the BBQ-master, he struggled to flip meat on the outside grill. Seven of us laid hands on him after dessert. I could see his health was quickly going downhill.

I stayed the night in Frank's lot again and on Thursday morning, my brother and I headed south. It was great to let him drive the camper as we chatted away the miles. We stopped in Crescent City to visit Jael, her husband, Kevin, and two little boys. After a night in the camper, we continued south stopping for lunch in the Humboldt redwoods. On the last day of the month, I left Frank at the home of Ken and Shirley Hardy where he stayed for a couple of nights.



Gia, Simon, and Lorenzo  
In 2016



Chris with Camper in 2017

## JULY

After Frank returned north, I returned to June Lake just in time for the *Red, White, and June* festival at Gull Lake Park. This July 4 celebration included a pancake breakfast, flea market, live music, dunk tank, and BBQ.

The next day I worked off my holiday meal by hiking 30,000 steps with Ken to the top of Reversed Mountain. I was pooped when I returned to Jody. On Wednesday, I left June Lake to visit Bodie State Historic Park, a gold-mining ghost town. It was an odd site, at the end of a dusty road with deserted streets, shops, schools, and factories. Once populated by ten thousand souls, the town was preserved in a state of *arrested decay*.

On Thursday, I hiked to Palmer Lake with Ken and Linda, then got to sleep very early because on Friday I awoke at 3:30 a.m. and was on the road by 4:00. My goal was to see the wonders of Yosemite at sunrise. And I did. I pulled into the national park just as beams were peaking from behind Half Dome. I stayed long enough to hike along a cascading Yosemite Falls and take a two-hour nap. The early wake-up was worth it. I got home, got un-packed and took another nap. As a retiree, napping proved to be my special gifting.

After three days of re-acquainting myself with Liz, I caught a jet to New York City. Simon and the kids met me at Grand Central Station. Lorenzo called his dad's Manhattan apartment *the little house*. This week turned out to be an outstanding grandfather-grandchildren quality time. Simon had just toured up the coast from Florida and needed to focus on his employment. That meant four daily outings for Gwampa Chris.

On Tuesday, Lorenzo, Gia, and I traveled together on the subway for the first tour of our four-day pass. We boarded the *Intrepid*, a sea, air, and space museum complex. It was so cool just to direct their paths yet allow them to run in the lead. Lorenzo was expert at fidget spinners and I bought one for each grandchild.

On the second day of our pass, we took the Big Bus to Battery Point across from the Statue of Liberty. We walked up Wall Street where Lorenzo gaped at the anatomically correct Bronze Bull and Gia posed next to the Fearless Girl. We dropped by the 9-11 memorial and finally found our way back to the little house.

This Wednesday happened to be July 12 and I received an important email from Zachary: "Genevieve Azelie-Marie! Or Zelig to her friends was born at 8:14 a.m. at 7 lb 9 oz." Good timing! I would be seeing her in just a few days!

Our tour on day three was an afternoon at the Museum of Natural History. The kids liked the dinosaur bones best. They often became impatient with their grandpa who liked to study all the historical descriptions. On day four, we took the subway to *Ripley's Believe It or Not* in Times Square, a place dubbed the *oddtorium*. The kids had a blast wandering from exhibit to exhibit: gorilla made of tires, live giant cockroaches, pseudo severed head in a jar, distorting mirrors, and a "John Lennon Dog Hair Portrait." Gia bought a slip-over tattoo sleeve to shock her papi.

On Friday evening we rented a car and drove to Washington, D.C. Arriving late, we spent the night at an *Extended Stay* on the Beltway. The next day we

wandered the grand mall, taking in sights from the Lincoln Memorial to the Capitol Building. The kids splashed their feet in the reflecting pond until a uniformed man asked them to desist. We were all quick to sleep after we checked in to the downtown *Hampton Hotel*.

On Sunday morning, Simon worked out in the gym while I walked to the White House. The streets were barricaded so I couldn't get near President Trump. We continued our tourism by parking near the Supreme Court. After walking through the Capitol Rotunda, Gia had to visit the little girl's room. The closest privy was located at the botanical garden and so we scurried there. It was a good choice. The garden provided hands-on digging for the kids. After a literal dash-through of the Portrait Museum, we walked to the car and headed south to Virginia.

Finally, I was able to see Zachary, Ruth, and four-day-old Zelig. That encounter was brief because Ruth was fatigued. Zach joined us on a lightening trip to the Air and Space Museum. Lorenzo liked to sit in the flight simulators while Gia's favorite display was the astronaut diaper. That night we stayed at a different *Extended Stay* and on Monday morning I dropped off Simon, Lorenzo, and Gia at Dulles Airport. My flight west didn't leave for several hours so I made a quick dash back to Fairfax to finally cradle my newborn granddaughter. I returned the rental at Dulles and got home about 11:00 p.m. I was exhausted as my mind recalled the day's events.

For the remainder of July, I decompressed from my camping and travel. Liz vacationed in Lake Tahoe with friends; I volunteered for the USO@SFO, and bought upgrades for my Camper. I signed a new rental contract for the Ashton Lane property. Diana Byars and her new male companion would be paying \$3600 per month beginning on the first of the month.

## AUGUST

I continued to unwind, mostly going to the gym and walking the dog. I received results from a *23andMe* genetic testing kit. I turned out to be 99.1% European and 71.3% eastern European. No surprise. They reported I had 1261 DNA matches of up to fifth cousin.

I did go camping one time, but it was mostly to check out the road-worthiness of new equipment to include window shades, table storage, rolled mat, rocking chair, seat covers, and plate holders.

Times roiled at Western Hills Church. Karl Ortis stood accused of abusing staff, misdirecting funds, and ignoring deacons. I liked Karl, although he did appear to be more dictatorial than collaborative. I was on the peripheral of church politics, but took the view that if a unanimous deacon board wished Karl to resign, then he probably should.

On August 18, Liz and I began our fifth overseas adventure. Our high-end vacation was sponsored by Tauck and called *Canadian Capitols Tour*. It launched from Toronto and ended in Quebec City. Allen drove us to SFO at 7:00 am, from whence we flew to Chicago then to Toronto. We arrived dog-tired, checking into the *Fairmont Royal York* at 8:00 p.m. This was Day Zero.

Day 1 ~ Saturday, August 19 ~ *Welcome to Toronto*.

We had most of this day to ourselves, walking along the lakefront and visiting a botanical garden across town. Liz loved all-things-Canada and often said if she couldn't be American, Canada was her second choice. Her favorite restaurant was Tim Horton's and we dined there a few times while north of the border. In the evening we met our tour director, Genevieve Thibault, at the hotel lobby and ambled a short distance to the *Royal Ontario Museum*. Once inside, we introduced ourselves then received a docent-led tour with dinner in the Eaton Court. There were forty-five people in our group—which approximated one full busload.

Day 2 ~ Sunday, August 20 ~ *Niagara Falls and Toronto As You Please*.

After breakfast, we gathered at the base of CN tower then took the elevator to the viewing deck, at a height equivalent to 147 stories. We then journeyed by coach to Niagara Falls. We cruised by catamaran to the plunging waters donned in pink raincoats to protect us from the misty spray. We lunched at the quaint town, Niagara-on-the-Lake. The day marked the sixtieth birthday of Liz. She wanted to keep the event low key so in the evening I presented her with two health bars, stuck through with a six-shaped and a zero-shaped candle.

Day 3 ~ Monday, August 21 ~ *On to Ottawa*.

After checking out of *Fairmont Royal York*, we left Toronto, traveling by coach along Lake Erie for a luncheon cruise of the Thousand Islands. We ventured into American waters just long enough for our cell phones to connect. We happened to be on the boat tour when a major solar eclipse occurred. Somebody on board had the special glasses so I took a look and saw the crescent sun. It was pretty cool even without the total darkness of north Oregon. We arrived in Ottawa at the *Fairmont Chateau Laurier* just before dark.

Day 4 ~ Tuesday, August 22 ~ *Canada's Stately Capital, Ottawa*.

After a leisurely morning, our group went on a guided visit of the city's grand Parliament buildings. The vaulted ceilings, marble floors, stone walls, and gargoyles demonstrated Old World craftsmanship. In the afternoon, our visit continued to the Canadian Museum of History. Liz grew tired and walked back to the Fairmont. The artifacts captured my interest so I continued for a few more hours, stopping off at the War Museum to peek at Hitler's armored Duesenberg.

In the evening, Liz and I strolled along the banks of the Ottawa River, observing the scurrying muskrats—what the locals called *marmots*.

Day 5 ~ Wednesday, August 23 ~ *Meet a Mountie En Route to Montreal.*

After an early morning walk, we boarded the coach for Montreal. We first stopped at the RCMP academy where Mounties acquired and trained their horses. Then we stopped for lunch at the Chateau Vaudreuil, set in sumptuous gardens on the shores of the Lakes of Two Mountains. We arrived in Montreal late in the day, and Guy, the coach driver, circled the metropolis stopping at a few viewpoints. Liz was a bit disappointed. We were supposed to check into the *Fairmont Queen Elizabeth*, but we had to settle for the *Place Bonaventure*.

Day 6 ~ Thursday, August 24 ~ *An Epicurean Twist to Vieux-Montreal.*

With listening device and ear buds, Liz and I joined a walking/tasting tour in the oldest part of the city. We strolled down cobblestone streets lit by gas lamps. We broke from the group to step inside Notre Dame de Montreal. Liz bussed back with the group while I took a long walk near the river front. Along the way, I visited the archeology museum; site of the first French settlement. Later in the evening we dined at a popular restaurant in old Montreal.

Day 7 ~ Friday, August 25 ~ *A Sugar Shack, Montmorency Falls and Quebec.*

We boarded the coach after breakfast and rode east along the Saint Lawrence River to Trois-Rivieres. This was our guide's hometown and she introduced us to some of her family. We then stopped for lunch at a traditional sugar shack. The abundant maple trees were not producing sap in the late summer, but the trees were vivid in reds and yellows. I bought a few bottles of maple syrup as gifts. We continued to Montmorency Falls for a guided tour and gondola ride. Guy was pushed to the limit of his skills as he maneuvered the coach through the narrow streets of old Quebec City to our hotel, the Fairmont Le Chateau Frontenac, which sat majestically on a bluff just above the old city.

Day 8 ~ Saturday, August 26 ~ *Quebec City and Île d'Orléans.*

Liz and I passed the morning exploring the fabulous Fairmont Le Chateau Frontenac. Then we walked with our guide through old Quebec City. We paused at the La Citadelle de Quebec, the largest British fortress in North America. I walked along the Plains of Abraham, where the British army defeated the French to claim rule of Canada. In the afternoon we travelled by coach to Île d'Orléans, an agricultural island in the Saint Lawrence River. In the evening I partook of a local dish called *Poudine* (potato fries with cheese and onion). Not surprisingly, Liz opted for the lobster.

Day 9 - Sunday, August 27 - *Historic Quebec City Your Way.*

Liz and I enjoyed an unscripted day in Quebec City. We boarded the *verticular* transporting us from the hotel bluff to the riverside. We visited the Seminaire de Quebec, meditating in the inner court and celebrating God's goodness on this Sunday morning. The huge sundial on the white wall displayed the Latin: *Dies Nostris Quasi Umbra*—"Our days are like shadows". Indeed and Amen!

In the evening, our group of forty-five met for a farewell party in the chandeliered chateau ballroom. The decor was sumptuous and the sunset over the plaza was breath-taking. It was a great way to end this Tauck Tour of the Canadian Capitals. We could have headed home after the party, but finagled an extra night at the Fairmont Le Chateau Frontenac.

Day 10 - Monday, August 28 - *An Extra Day.*

In the morning, Liz and I walked the old streets to about noon, then headed to the Airport Marriott. Liz enjoyed the gym as I walked the streets, far from downtown. We shared dinner at a Tim Horton restaurant for a last time.

Day 11 - Tuesday, August 29 - *Return to California.*

The next morning, we taxied to the YQB airport. Somehow, Liz and I disconnected at Newark Liberty Airport and traveled different flights to SFO. Someone had told Liz she could just make the flight while someone told me I was too late. In any event, we landed about the same time, met up, and took an Uber home to complete our Canadian adventure and the month of August.

## SEPTEMBER

This month served as a transition between Canada and Africa. It began with record-breaking heat—up to 105 degrees. Liz slept on the downstairs couch, while I sweltered nearby on an air mattress.

Western Hills Church held a business meeting to determine the future of Karl Ortis. He hung on with 45 members in favor of dismissal and 52 against. After the vote, four of five deacons resigned on the spot. I stuck around a few more Sundays, but Liz and I decided to return to Central Peninsula Church. I later sat with Karl at Starbucks where we prayed and parted ways.

From September 7 to 9, I attended a Disaster Relief Chaplains' Retreat. At Camp Oakhurst, Gary and Mary Nell McCoy led the training. I was pleased to meet up with these old friends and renew our acquaintance. From this outing, I returned home for a night, then traveled north to Mount Lassen. This was a MeetUp group, hosted by Ken and Linda. At the National Park, I joined a hike to the summit crater of Mount Lassen. Five of us made the two-hour trek uphill

and the one-hour descent. Most of my twelve-thousand steps were in volcanic pumice and gravel.

After we re-camped at Lake Manzanita, I took a day away from the group, driving three hours to pass through Plumas and Modoc counties. With these additions, I was up to forty-nine. Before returning home, Ken, Linda, and I ventured into an unusual site called *Bumpass Hell*. We walked on wooden platforms through acres of hydrothermal ground replete with steam vents, mud pots, and boiling springs. Linda chuckled as I joked, "In Baptist circles we would call this place 'Bumpass H-E-double toothpicks.'"

I frittered away the remainder of September. Liz and I got into a serious Netflix habit. After we returned one DVD by mail, another would arrive a few days later. That made for about two per week. Liz once asked if we had already seen a certain movie, so I pulled up our entire viewing history; as of 9/13/17, the total was 213 DVD movies. I could remember most of them.

I was still substitute teaching at San Quentin on an occasional Friday. The program had drastically altered since the Baptist seminary had relocated to Ontario, California. About half the classes were offered in Spanish. My last day inside the walls was September 23. I met and had lunch with Craig Singleton to commemorate our prison years together.

I began to prepare for the *Fifth Annual East Africa Christian Apologetics Conference*. The theme would be the ten "I am" sayings from the Gospel of John.

I posted pictures of Zelig being baptized on September 17 as well as Lorenzo and Gia surviving Hurricane Irma. I produced a video compilation in which they squealed with excitement stepping out of the hotel lobby into the blasting gale.

Finally, as the two-year anniversary of my broken leg approached, I went into Kaiser Permanente for a final x-ray. The bone was healed; the flesh was scarred; my muscles were damaged; but I had survived the ordeal. God had sustained me during twenty-four months of trauma and trial. To Him be the glory!



# Chapter 30

## RESOLVED

October 2017 to December 2019  
San Mateo, California

*I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:  
Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.*

(2 Timothy 4:7 & 8)

As I passed deeper into my sixth decade, I grew more aware of Apostle Paul's challenge to Timothy "to fight the good fight." Like Paul, I wanted to finish my life-course in style, not stumble at the finish line. I posted four resolutions on the walls of my bedroom.

First, I resolved to keep my wedding vow to Liz, no matter what; to love her as Christ loved His church.

Second, I resolved to keep my ordination vow according to 2 Corinthians 4:1 to 8; not to lose heart, but to be a faithful follower and minister of Christ.

Third, I resolved to follow the four principles of authentic manhood: Reject Passivity, Accept Responsibility, Live Courageously, and Invest Eternally.

Finally, I posted the quote from Henry David Thoreau about going into the woods. I resolved to "live deliberately, to live deep, and to suck out all the marrow of life." Over the next twenty-seven months, I did a lot of deliberate living, much of it through traveling, camping, and cruising.

### 2017 OCTOBER

The month began with my twenty-third mission to Africa. On October 3, I met Frank and Shae at the Oakland Airport, drove them around the Bay for a tour of the Golden Gate Bridge, then dropped them off at SFO. I returned home, kissed my wife and dog good-bye, and rejoined my traveling companions. Twenty-five hours later we arrived in Kigali. By that time, the Compassion Team composed of Ken, Shirley, Kent, Bev, and Margarita had already been in Huye for a week.

The plan was for the Apologetics Team—Chris, Frank, Shae, and Mavis—to overlap five days, allowing the Compassion Team a week of their own space to focus on

the local community. It worked out well for all concerned. We had a great overlapping time when all nine of us *muzungus* got together for a meal. I posted this on FaceBook:

*A Tail from Rwanda:* For excitement this evening, a gecko appeared on the wall of Bev's room. She called for security (the girl at the front desk) who brushed it off the wall with a broom. The expendable tail fell to the floor wiggling. Then Kent, her hero-husband, carried the lizard body out the door. I offered the still-wriggling tail as a snack to Shae, saying it was a Rwandan delicacy. She didn't accept my tale.

During our combined mission, we attended an alumni gathering of former Lighthouse students and participated in Sunday church services. I was pleased to see the facility, ministries, and personnel all functioning to the glory of God.

After the Compassion Team set off for the USA, my teaching ministry began. Frank and I led a three-hour conference for local pastors on Tuesday. I talked about the statement of faith for CASA/CASR so churches in the area could understand our theological positions. Frank spoke about spiritual problems in America, warning pastors not to believe every religious word that emanates from Christian sources. While we were teaching men, Mavis and Shea were in another part of the lighthouse leading a ladies' seminar. Florida served as their interpreter.

Our big event was the Fifth Annual East Africa Christian Apologetics Conference, running from October 10 to 12. This conference began with only twenty students present, but one hundred showed up for day two. I subsequently learned a rival evangelist was in town and had paid students to attend his crusades. I had to remind myself of a truth spoken by Mother Teresa, "God's desire for us is not to be successful, but faithful." *Oh, Lord. Help Frank and me to be your faithful servants. Help us not to become discouraged.*

The 2017 conference featured the "I Am statements of Jesus" from John's Gospel. Our outline looked like this:

Introduction: Who is God? I AM that I AM as revealed to Moses.

Part 1: Who is Jesus Christ? I AM Jesus of Nazareth; King of the Jews; before Abraham.

Part 2: What does Jesus do on our behalf? I AM Bread of Life; True Vine; Good Shepherd; Gate.

Part 3: Is Jesus unique in who He is and what He does? I AM Resurrection and Life; Light of the World; Way, Truth, and Life.

Conclusion: First and Last from Revelation. Alpha and Omega.

I presented the Introduction and Conclusion; Frank Part 1 and 3, and Mavis part 2. I always counted it as a blessing to teach God's nourishing truth to his famishing people.

Just as we were finishing upon the first day, a furious thunderstorm drove into the Lighthouse. Electricity went out and the peals of thunder were overwhelmed by the pounding of the downpour on the steel roof. It made hearing impossible. After an hour the storm let up. Frank then read from Psalm 29: “The voice of the Lord is upon the waters; the God of glory thunders.”

Frank and I developed daily walks. The first was out the back door of the Lighthouse. This walking trail cut through the valley with an occasional bicycle to dodge. Astride were banana trees and a brick kiln. Our second walk was out the front door and to the left. This led us down Cyarwa Road for miles. We couldn't get lost even when lost in conversation. The third was out the front door and to the right. This walk took us down a paved road which led to a girl's seminary. These hour-long walks proved to be both our means of exercise and our morning planning session. Shea and Mavis sometimes joined us. My great grandniece took as a role model our friend and Anglican missionary, Mavis.

In the days that remained, we visited rural projects like a cooperative banana plantation, mushroom sheds, and a mud-brick house that the Compassion Team had begun. Frank and I oversaw the graduation of ten students from the *Joy of God Bible Institute*. Pastor David gathered women from the cooperative together to distribute sacks of rice, medical insurance, and one cow. The woman who received the beast named it *Shae* after the missionary who had purchased it and gave it away.

At the CASR board meeting, Franc thanked me for the \$20,000 I had donated to the Lighthouse. I pulled up my pant to the knee to expose my left leg. “Thank this generous broken leg”, I chuckled.

After preaching in the Kigali Assembly of God, we boarded our Ethiopian flight to America. Frank and Shae traveled straight home, but I stopped in Virginia during a ten-hour layover. I posted on FaceBook, “I just completed a mission trip to Rwanda. During my return flight, I paused at Dulles long enough to visit my son in Fairfax. If this mission trip were a piece of cake, Zachary and Ruth would be the icing, and my new granddaughter the cherry on the top.”

When I returned to San Mateo, smoke filled the air. Terrible wildfires had devastated Sonoma and Napa Counties. I volunteered for deployment to the fire zone, driving to the Petaluma Baptist Church, where I spent a night in my camper. For two days I wore my yellow cap and tee shirt, aiding with disaster relief. No chaplains were required, so I worked at a mass feeding site in a mall parking lot, washing and carrying food containers.

Downloaded from *Audible.com*, I began listening to *The Civil War: A Narrative* by Shelby Foote. Volume one, two, and three. Each download provided thirty hours of unabridged listening enjoyment. After this audiobook, I moved on to the unabridged autobiography of Ulysses S. Grant. It became a habit to walk the dog while listening to Civil War narratives.

Toward the end of October, Liz and I met with Shirley from Holy Sepulcher Cemetery in Hayward. My wife was getting her end-of-life issues in order, and after investigating several options, she decided to choose my neighborhood as her *rest in peace*. I would be buried above Kim at grave site SLR3-45 and Liz in a space about one hundred feet away. I could have never predicted that!

On the last day of the month, I received Halloween photos of grandkids. Lorenzo and Gia at a pumpkin patch haybale fair and Zelig dressed as a three-month-old wonder woman.

## NOVEMBER

During the first four days of the month, I camped with a *MeetUp* group at Mount Madonna. Rain disrupted some of the hiking, but we made up for it by sampling wine at the Hecker Pass Winery. Ken and Linda selected the samples, since my unsophisticated palate was tuned to Manischewitz. I did not purchase drink, but I did buy Jody a doggie tee shirt which read *happy camper*.

On November 11, Liz and I hiked at Anno Nuevo State Reserve with twenty-four folks in a Tom Tabor class. A ranger who accompanied us pointed out the activities of elephant seals. I was fascinated to see how the bulls aggressively protected their harems.

On November 16, I was the featured speaker at a Men's Fraternity session, looking at a man and his design. My topic was "the king is a righteous leader" and "the warrior is a courageous protector". I showed the group a video clip taken from *Back to the Future*, a scene which exemplified the transformation from wimp to warrior. I quoted C.S. Lewis, "Courage is not a virtue in itself. It is every virtue at its testing point."

It was time for me to make my quarterly trip to Florida. I caught the redeye on November 16 to West Palm Beach and early the next day took Uber to the house. Dilia was away, so as Simon worked, I snoozed on Gia's bed. Simon and I then picked up the kids at East Olive for a one-week school break.

I spent Friday night at a hotel where Simon and the kids met me on Saturday morning. I learned that Lorenzo had breathing issues, so we all went to a *salt room*. It was supposed to dry him out. The kids played video games while I spoke with my son. Soon we were on our way. Lolo had a full day of activity at a friend's birthday party, so Simon and I spent the day with Gia. We treated her to a strawberry waffle lunch. Gia's front baby tooth nearly fell out in her food, but she was too scared to yank hard. We then paddled kayaks to the secret island and visited the teepee made of branches.

On Sunday we headed to the Hyatt Regency Coconut Point Resort and Spa. It was expensive even with a discount, but since it included a waterpark and other fun things to do, it was worth the price. I presented my grandchildren with gifts

of towel hoodies; Lolo as a pirate and Gia as a princess. The day proceeded in water activity. Simon shared that it was hard with Dilia. She says she has to be the mean disciplinarian while Simon gets to spoil the kids at fancy hotels. We played and relaxed a second day at the Hyatt then it was time to return to the Atlantic coast. On Monday evening we visited Barefoot Beach just as the sun was setting. The kids drew sand pictures as the Gulf of Mexico swallowed up the setting sun.

The day after I returned home, Simon sent me a grinning photo of Gia with front tooth absent. The following day was Thanksgiving and the news was not good. Terry Zimmerman had unexpectedly passed away during the night. It was a mercy. My brother-in-law had been suffering with cancer, kidney failure, and the debilitating effects of chemotherapy and radiation. Terry had recently gone on a morphine drip and was glad for the relief. I sent Eileen a picture of her husband with the caption: "Terry Zimmerman. 1946–2017. Faithful to his country; faithful to his family; faithful to his God. He ran the good race." A memorial service was set for December 2.

Time was getting short for me to achieve all fifty-eight California counties. I set four days aside to cover seven counties on a southbound road trip. After church on November 26, I headed down Highway 101 to Vandenberg AFB, getting there just after dark. On Monday, I shared lunch with Neil Benson at Coastline Community Church in Ventura County, hoping to spark his interest in an Africa mission. I then continued south, braving the Los Angeles traffic. I struggled to cross the mountains of San Diego County. Just over the line into Imperial County, I spied a gravel parking lot. The desert landscape howled all night with emptiness.

The next day, I drove to the Salton Sea, where my altimeter read -235 feet. This place was uniquely weird. Salton City was once a thriving resort town on fresh water, which had since devolved into a salty wasteland. A few ramshackle homes sat on deserted streets designed for thousands of inhabitants. I drove north and after several hours stopped for the night at Lemoore Naval Air Station. I got home on November 29, having covered 1230 miles passing through seven counties.

## DECEMBER

On December 1, I flew up to Portland, arriving at 2:30 p.m. Frank picked me up and we headed straight to Longview Memorial Park, the same place in which dad and mom are interred. Eileen and some of her family were there setting up the chapel for the next day's memorial service. I stayed the night with Eileen. She spoke with strength about Terry's fight with multiple myeloma. She explained how he had worked so hard during his last months to make sure everything was in proper legal and financial order.

In the midst of this grief, I was delighted that Zachary, Ruth, and Zelig could make it to this funeral. They had flown into SEA-TAC where Joshua Foreman looked after them for a night. My nephew drove them to the memorial on the next morning.

The celebration of Terry's life began at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday at Steele Chapel. Frank gave the eulogy, Laura sang two hymns, and I preached a message on the hope of the resurrection. My favorite tribute was the combined reminiscence of five grandchildren: Joanna, Joshua, Marc, Alison, and Levi. The memorial served as a reunion in a sense, with lots of family in attendance.

A reception was held afterward at the home of Jeff and Jenny Brotherton, and after that I passed a pleasant afternoon with Zachary, Ruth, and Zelig, who were only in town for thirty-six hours. I did get a good photo of my granddaughter Genevieve Foreman in front of the crypt of my mother Genevieve Foreman—the two born one hundred years apart. I stayed a second night with Eileen, went to morning church with Frank, Lelia, and Lucy; and returned home on Sunday evening.

Liz and I decided to celebrate our fifth anniversary early. We dropped Jody at Becky's house and then headed to Capitola for the weekend. We stopped at Mount Herman where Liz was thrilled to find a five-fingered fern. We walked along Capitol beach, ate dinner at Las Palapas and walked to Seascapes to take in a gorgeous sunset. We passed the night at the Capitola Marriott and stopped off at Bean Hollow on our drive back up Highway 1. On this December 10, the temperature rose to a warm 72 degrees.

I lacked two counties in my quest to visit all fifty-eight. I drove north on December 14 reaching Whiskeytown, west of Redding, before dark. I camped overnight at Oak Bottom Marina and the next morning entered Trinity county (number fifty-seven). I promptly doubled back and headed south along I-5. I entered Lake County (number fifty-eight) about two o'clock and Clear Lake State Park by four. Jody and I romped around the lake and continued south the next day. I made it home before dark.

I asked myself a question. "What did I learn from visiting all fifty-eight counties in California?" First, California was a large and diverse state. Second, I am a weird and obsessive sixty-seven-year-old." The first part of that definition soon changed, but the *weird* part remained. Within a week, I turned into a sixty-eight-year-old weirdo.

During the remainder of the year, Liz and I visited downtown San Francisco to view Christmas lights; Becky and Ryan dropped by for Christmas lunch; and I snapped a picture out my front window of a single deer in front of my mailbox. I posted this, "Out my window yesterday a deer appeared. I wondered *did Santa put something in my mailbox and lost one of his reindeer?*"

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## 2018 JANUARY

My fifth anniversary was low key. Liz and I exchanged cutesy cards featuring little dogs. A few days later while lying in bed, I was playing solo word search. Liz plopped beside me and asked what I was doing. I didn't know she liked solving puzzles! And so, every day, we began to solve quote-falls, cryptograms, word search, and memory. *Puzzles* became a daily time of laughter and snuggling.

One evening during dinner, Liz expressed a desire to fly from San Francisco to Boston and drive to her father's gravesite in southern Massachusetts. She hinted it would be nice if I could join her. I responded, "How about if you fly and I drive?" She thought a moment then accepted this proposition. The seed was planted for a coast-to-coast-to-coast road trip.

In January, Liz and I celebrated Allen's sixtieth birthday with a restaurant bash; Attended the Peninsula Symphony with her mom, enjoying an orchestral presentation of *South Pacific*; and helped my wife publish an article called "Weak is not Meek".

My one camp-out was to Half Moon Bay where in the short daylight it was sunny and windy, but in the long darkness drippy and foggy. Simon purchased an iPhone 10 and sent me an *anomoji* greeting me with a monkey's face. Zach sent photos of his six-month-old daughter sucking on a pickle.

## FEBRUARY

I spent the first three days of the month camping in Napa County, visiting Jimmy Walker at a winery, and lunching with Craig Singleton in San Rafael. I drove through miles of burned-out countryside. The fires of the previous October had devastated the landscape.

On February 8, I drove north, passing through California, and to camp overnight at Rogue River State Park. I continued up I-5 to stay one night with Jeanne in Canby. I joined in her favorite activity—looking out a back window as finches and squirrels competed at bird-feeders.

On Saturday, I attended "Culture Conference PDX 2018" at Hinson Memorial Baptist Church in Portland. Frank and I sat through six hours of conversation sponsored by Mars Hill Audio. Of course, we liked the C.S. Lewis discussions best. I was with Eileen the next night as we joined in a five-sibling get-together. I've always counted it remarkable that three sisters and two brothers get along well enough to seek out opportunities to fellowship with each other.

I returned home driving the Eurovan down coastal Highway 1, stopping to camp overnight at Humbug Mountain and Richardson Grove. I returned home on Valentine's Day, but not before stopping to buy Liz an *I Love You* balloon. She was delighted to tell me about her hikes and to show me phone photos of a trillium and a fetid adder's tongue.

Billy Graham died on February 21 and I wrote a tribute to him which I read at a Thursday morning Men's Fraternity, closing with this:

Billy Graham was one for the ages. As I mark his death, I can't help but think of the many souls who will rejoice in heaven due at least in part to the efforts of this evangelist and due to the fact that he did not seek the lesser position of President of the United States.

I ended the month at Mount Herman attending the CPC Men's Retreat. I relished the good food and fellowship, leading a small group of eight men.

## MARCH

On the first day of the month, Tricia stopped by the house. She stayed just long enough to cavort with her sister and pose with the dog. The next day, I went to the Kaiser Dermatologist concerning bumps on my face that did not seem to heal. I got this note back from her a few days later. "Good news! The biopsy showed an actinic keratosis which was a pre-skin cancer. The biopsy should have taken care of it. If you notice any recurrence, please let me know and we can freeze it one more time." I wondered what the difference was between *no cancer* and *pre-cancer*.

On March 8, after Men's Fraternity, Steve drove me to SFO. I left aboard United and arrived at Fort Lauderdale about 5:00 p.m. I then boarded Tri-rail to West Palm Beach and got to my motel about 8:00. Simon dropped by later and we talked past midnight.

The next day we picked up the kids after school. We went to Dilia's house where Gia and Lorenzo took turns zipping up and down the sidewalks on a tiny electric scooter. We then had dinner with Dilia at *Howleys*.

My ex-daughter-in-law shared that she was newly employed, working with the federal government to determine if undocumented Spanish-speaking women should be issued green cards or be returned to their country of origin. She only had three or four clients at a time and was very grateful for her job. It fit exactly her education and interest.

Saturday was busy; fishing and playing at a waterfront pier, then hanging out at a neighborhood art space which sponsored a children's educational program. The kids had a ball building a rocket launcher out of an empty two-liter bottle and PVC pipe. They jumped on the bottle to send a foam missile high into the air. In the afternoon we drove to the Okeechobee KOA resort. I had reserved a small cabin and after dark we roasted weenies over the fire pit.

Sunday was filled with fun. The kids romped the grounds, helped drive the KOA golf cart through puddles, played tether ball, and experimented with

dry ice. After another campfire meal, we returned to West Palm Beach. Simon dropped the kids off with Dilia, staying the night in my hotel room. He shared the news that he had been promoted to creative director with a bump in pay and responsibility. The time raced by so quickly. I wished I could retain these moments when Lorenzo was nine and Gia was seven.

On March 20, Liz and I stayed two nights at the Marriot in Hollister, hiking a full day at Pinnacles National Park. I needed my hard-sole shoes, pole, and water bottle to keep pace with my athletic wife. Good Friday fell on March 30, and I helped my friend, Gil Limtengco, present a testimony at church of how God had transformed his life. He explained that being wheel-chair bound is what brought him to faith.

## APRIL

Easter fell on the first of the month. Liz and I attended First Presbyterian Church of Burlingame with her mother. Pastor Graham Baird's message from John 16:33 was titled "To Overcome All Things."

The next day I took the camper to Sacramento to pay a call on Robert Butler. He had been paroled from San Quentin a few weeks earlier and I had known him as an inmate since 2001. We called him *Bishop*, a faithful man who took more of my seminary classes than anyone else in the *incarcerated church*. I was blessed to buy him a new suit coat at the *Men's Store* and put one-hundred dollars into his pocket.

I continued on to Lake Solano Park, camping in the midst of peacocks for two days. I brought my Greek vocabulary cards along to refresh my *koine* skills. This camp out was also a dry run for the monumental coast-to-coast road trip that was just two weeks off.

I taught a session at Men's Fraternity from the text, *How God Makes Men*. Chapter eight was titled "Job: the principle of suffering for no apparent reason." I considered this Old Testament book as a worthy topic for the next Lighthouse Apologetics Conference.

A few days before my big road trip, Liz and I hiked at Edgewood open space. We counted a dozen varieties of wildflowers. Of course, her favorite spot was the familiar bend in the trail where a meadowful of tidy-tips bursts upon your eyes.

On April 19, I began my epic cross-country journey. How significant was this event to my psyche? Well, I would later publish a 126-page book about the adventure titled *Coast-to-Coast-to-Coast: My Journey into the Land of Fahrvergnügen*. The back cover provides a synopsis of my adventure and the twenty-nine chapter headings sketch out the saga.

*Coast-to-Coast-to-Coast* is an introspective travelogue of my twenty-nine-day road trip across the breadth of America accompanied by a rescue dog named

Jody and propelled by a pop-up Volkswagen camper. Together we journey into the land of *fahrvergnügen*, that wondrous place of travel joy and driving pleasure. Sightseeing, camping and contemplation fill the days; Family and friends sweeten the stops.

Unfettered, unhurried, and off leash, dog and man encounter an unscripted adventure around every bend. Across the boundless horizon of twenty-five states, the soul is free to wander the outer world and the mind open to explore the inner. What can compare to the bliss of a camper, a dog, and an endless ribbon of American highway?

Day 1: *Two Road Warriors* - Thursday, April 19 - to Bakersfield, California.

After Thursday's Men's Fraternity, Jody and I headed south on I-280. When I hit Highway 99, I noticed a yellow dash light winking at me. It turned out to be the brake pad indicator. Should I turn back or strive on? I drove into Bakersfield, found a break shop, and ordered four pads. I spent the night in a Walmart lot, not knowing what lay ahead.

Day 2: *Crazy Fred's Truck Stop* - Friday, April 20 - to Seligman, Arizona.

The new brake pads did not fit my VW, but the manager said my old pads weren't too bad anyway. After he re-installed the parts, I headed across the desert into Needles. I needed to gas up, but figured fuel was cheaper in Arizona. Unfortunately, there were no stations over the next tense hour. By the time I reached Crazy Fred's I was running on fumes. I spent the night at a Kampground of America (KOA).

Day 3: *Along Route 66* - Saturday, April 21 - to Casa Blanca, New Mexico.

I zoomed down I-40 paralleling the old Route 66. I spent the night in an Indian Casino lot, getting a hot shower and food. I decided to keep a journal of this adventure and retroactively wrote about day one and two. For the remaining days, I wrote about one hour per day.

Day 4: *Following the Blue Ball* - Sunday, April 22 - to Childress, Texas.

Heading east, I got lost in Amarillo. My ears were too enmeshed in theological disputes and I mis-followed the Google blue ball. I finally arrived in Childress, camping in a lovely city park.

Day 5: *My Brother's Bench* - Monday, April 23 - to Colleyville, Texas.

My sister-in-law, Barbara, lived near Dallas and I planned to stay a few days with her. I lost my way again and finally checked into her place about four o'clock. After poolside conversation with her and her husband, Jay, we walked to a park, sitting on a memorial bench dedicated to my late brother, Jack. In the evening, I had dinner with my nephew, Alan.

Day 6: *My Father's Cross* - Tuesday, April 24 - Colleyville, Texas.

This was a full day with Barbara. I asked her to share old pictures and videos with me in order that I might copy them and add to my digital archive. We did a lot of reminiscing about Jack and Kim. In an old box, Barbara found a cross given to Jack by my dad. She asked if I wanted it, and soon it adorned my camper dashboard.

Day 7: *April Showers* - Wednesday, April 25 - to Little Rock, Arkansas.

After breakfast I bid farewell to my sister-in-law. The drive into Texarkana was wet. While heading up I-30, I took the camper a few miles off course to visit Foreman, Arkansas. I have the photo. The overnight at Little Rock Air Force Base was fabulous—a hot shower, gym, and cheap gas.

Day 8: *Delays of Two Sort* - Thursday, April 26 - to Lebanon, Tennessee.

I ran into road construction which delayed me for an hour, but I didn't mind. I had lots of time and lots to listen to. Once in Tennessee, I was delayed again, but this time with emergency vehicles zipping by. The four-car crash delayed me another hour. I pulled into the Lebanon KOA as the sun was setting. It was a long day.

Day 9: *Winding North* - Friday, April 27 - to Wytheville, Virginia.

The drive this day was uneventful; right turn onto I-40 east, left turn onto Highway 81 north, then straight ahead into the KOA. I got to sleep early preparing for a long next day.

Day 10: *My Two Sons* - Saturday, April 28 - to Fairfax, Virginia.

I left camp at 6:00 a.m. to head for my only tourist visit, Appomattox Court House. Going down back roads, I didn't arrive at the Civil War site until ten. I was not impressed by the place. No artifacts remained from 1865. All was reconstructed. I got to my camping spot at 3:30 and got a hold of Zachary in Fairfax. He dropped by with Ruth and Zelig and we drove to town in his car.

Simon had texted me earlier that he had just arrived at the Fairfax train terminal and had hailed an Uber. He arrived at Zach's place the same moment we did. It was a joyous reunion. After a while, Simon returned me to my camper in Zachary's Mustang and he stayed the night in a motel.

Day 11: *Along the Potomac* - Sunday, April 29 - to Trenton, New Jersey.

I awoke early and met Zachary and Ruth at Saint Albert the Great Catholic Church. My favorite part of the service was holding Zelig on my lap. Afterward, we met up with Simon at *Panera Bread*. We then convoyed Zach's Toyota and my camper to Great Falls Park, along the Potomac. We shared a few hours walking along the trails and viewing a few cataracts. I didn't realize the Potomac had such magnificent waterfalls. Soon it was time to part ways and for me to continue my road trip.

Simon drove my camper a few hours north, past Philadelphia and into Trenton. There I left him at a transit stop to commute into Penn Station. I drove eighteen miles east and cozied down in a Walmart lot for the night.

Day 12: *A Night with a Nephew* ~ Saturday, April 30 ~ to Manahawkin, New Jersey. The drive to David's house was only eighty miles. I stopped for a few hours at Manasquan Reservoir, going for a long hike with Jody. I arrived at the home of my Air Force nephew at five o'clock. Melissa was home alone with the two children, Xian age eight and Kyden, age five. David soon arrived and we talked until dark. Family life with a deployed military man is not easy. I spent the night in Xian's room.

## MAY

Day 13: *Urban Landscape* ~ Tuesday, May 1 ~ to Marshfield, Massachusetts. I left the home of my nephew before dawn and headed for the Big Apple. I wanted to get past New York City before the traffic overwhelmed me. Driving the New Jersey Turnpike, crossing the George Washington Bridge, and burrowing through the Bronx Burrough, I was mostly successful. I rested a few hours in Connecticut and went my way to the Fourth Cliff Military Installation. Jody and I camped the night with the melody of crashing waves, sea gulls, and fog horns.

Day 14: *Reunion in Chelsea* ~ Wednesday, May 2 ~ to Chelsea, Massachusetts. I strove to reach the Town Place Marriott by 9:00 and barely made it. I snuck up on Liz as she was finishing breakfast. After an embrace, she asked about the dog. Would Jody remember her? After fetching her from the camper, Jody leapt into her arms.

We drove about an hour to Fairhaven Cemetery to visit the grave site of William Becker. It was a solemn time of sharing memories, strolling the grounds, and taking a few pictures.

Back at the hotel, there was a one-hundred-dollar dog fee for Jody to occupy our room so I opted to use the camper as a kennel. About 10:30 Liz received a text message that the dog was barking. Jody figured out how to stay in our room for free.

Day 15: *Emergency Room Visit* ~ Thursday, May 3 ~ to Kittery, Maine. In the morning, we headed to Peabody to visit Liz's Aunt Dix. My wife went into the retirement community to call on her, but rather than Liz returning it was her cousin Jane, who told me Dix was heading to the Salem hospital by ambulance. Aunt Dix had tumbled on her way to the car, smacking her head on concrete. We hung around the hospital long enough to determine she would be okay.

We then drove into Maine to visit Sybil, Liz's father's wife. Liz stayed in her house, while Jody and I slept in a nearby hotel.

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Day 16: *A Tour of Maine* - Friday, May 4 - to Saco, Maine.

Sybil had three events planned for the day: a hike along the rocky coast, a tour of two local parks, and a lunch twenty miles up the coast. Sybil's sister Sara served as tour guide in the shotgun seat of the camper. Maine was a fabulous state and Sybil even a better hostess. I passed the night at a KOA, which marked my far point at 4031 miles from San Mateo.

Day 17: *Outlaw Dog* - Saturday, May 5 - to Bedford Hills, New York.

I picked up Liz in Kittery and we returned to the Town Place Hotel. I had never visited Boston, so Liz volunteered to lead me on a personal tour. I wanted to kennel Jody in the camper for a few hours, but the counter girl insisted I leave her in the room at no cost.

Liz and I took public transportation downtown and I saw many of the famous sites, taking pictures of buildings, statuary, and graveyards. The day was warm and the town center packed with tourists. When we returned to the hotel, we battled with the manager, who wanted to charge us for Jody's stay. Here I parted with Liz, taking my outlaw dog and beginning the long trek home. In the rain I drove a few hundred miles west, parking the night at a rest stop sandwiched between two semi-trucks.

Day 18: *Field of Dandelions* - Sunday, May 6 - to Jonestown, Pennsylvania.

With a drive of only two hundred miles, my Sunday pace was leisurely. I passed from New York, into New Jersey, then into Pennsylvania. Jody enjoyed bullet running in circles in a vast field of dandelions. My church service was two podcasts by Ravi Zacharias. The Jonestown KOA charged forty-six dollars for one night and my site was ideal. The camper awning covered the picnic table which abutted Swatara Creek.

Day 19: *My Bethlehem* - Monday, May 7 - to Belmont, Ohio.

The campground was wet with mud and I washed a load of laundry. By accident, I soaked my electronic key fob. What a dunderhead I was! I stopped in Harrisburg where I replaced the battery for just \$5.25. At the next stop, I left the fob inside the camper for a moment and the messed-up mechanism locked my camper doors like it was bewitched. I was in a pickle! Fortunately, I had taped a second key to the underside of the carriage and rescued Jody from her predicament. Rolled up in a comfortable ball, she never even realized she had been in one.

I raced down the Pennsylvania Turnpike and crossed into my home state of Ohio. I poked around my birthplace of Bellaire, visiting the town square and the high school from where my parents had graduated eighty-six years earlier. It was sad to see the derelict buildings and shuttered storefronts. I drove to a nearby state park, settling in for the night.

Day 20: *The Eisenhower Highway* - Tuesday, May 8 - to New Castle, Indiana. I drove across Ohio listening to an Audible book from the *Learning Company* called “Decisive World Battles”. With mind occupied in history, I crossed into Indiana in no time. I soon settled into a sweet camp spot surrounded by duck ponds. I face-timed with Liz so she could see Jody racing along the shoreline.

Day 21: *Old Friends—Book Ends* - Wednesday, May 9 - to Hammond, Indiana. What a special day! Just as I was stepping out of the camper, I noticed a spectacular sunrise over Summit Lake. I grabbed my camera and took my favorite photo thus far. The rouge of sunrise filtered through willow trees, deflected off the lake, then reflected from the rear camper window.

I drove from my campsite about thirty miles to Ball State University. Arriving on Campus a few hours early, I walked the familiar streets. My freshman dorm was Shales Hall, brand new in 1968. How odd to see its demolition fifty years later. I met my old friends Mark Orewiler and Denny Harvey at the center of campus. I hadn’t seen them since college days. Their faces changed, but their eyes stayed the same.

We sat on a park bench talking about the past and sharing our stories. Mark thanked me and my sisters for his conversion to Christ in 1971. He was still walking with the Lord. I talked with Denny about our adventures in spelunking. We continued our conversation in the student union, then it was time for me to depart. Walking away, I thought to myself, *I’ve seen Mark with the face of a twenty-year-old and sixty-year-old. How will his face appear when next I see him?*

I stopped for a moment at the Christian Student Foundation, my short-term abode in 1972. I spoke with its current director of the time when the building had just opened. I then drove the 170 miles to my hometown of Whiting, Indiana. I wandered through my old haunts, pausing at my old school, and past my old house on Lake Avenue. What is nostalgia? A gut-felt yearning for times of innocence beyond recovery? If so, I was neck deep. As darkness fell, I parked the camper in the back lot of a service station, gritty but quiet.

Day 22: *Same Bricks—Different Eyes* - Thursday, May 10 - to Iowa City, Iowa. I continued my sentimental journey, driving down 119th street to Whiting Park. I thought of my high school sweetheart, Arlene, and the piercing of my heart—not once but twice. I prayed that God would heal the ancient hurt. I stood on the shore of Lake Michigan and spoke aloud, “Arlene, I forgive you.” As I walked along the sandy beaches, I accepted my old flame as beyond dousing, but upon every spark of remembrance, I vowed to make her every thought captive to God. That was my whispered prayer.

With nostalgia in my rearview mirror, I drove I-80 west through Illinois, over the Mississippi River, to camp at Lake McBride Park near Iowa City.

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Day 23: *College Town* ~ Friday, May 11 ~ to Lincoln, Nebraska.

I visited the nearby Iowa University for gas and for a haircut. I walked Jody around the campus, then continued west for 325 miles into Nebraska. I listened to *A Hiding Place* by Corrie Ten Boom. What an inspirational story. I stopped at Pawnee State Recreational Area for the night.

Day 24: *Bagatelle for Piano* ~ Saturday, May 12 ~ to Brush, Colorado.

Continuing west on I-80, I listened to classical music as the mile markers passed. When *Für Elise* sounded its first notes my mind raced to Kim. That Beethoven piece was her favorite. The memory provoked grief which turned liquid in my eyes. *Why did you take her, Lord?* But then I considered all my current blessings: my wife, my children, my dog, my health, my comfortable retirement. All these were unmerited gifts of God's favor. For the rest of the day, I ruminated on God's word to the Apostle Paul, "My grace is sufficient for thee."

After 6000 miles of travel, I stopped in Kearny for an oil change, then continued west crossing into Colorado. The city park in Bush was crowded with homeless squatters, but I found an open spot on the margin. Neighbors were unruly until a rain storm quieted the hubbub.

Day 25: *Full Day with a Fun Family* ~ Sunday, May 13 ~ to Evergreen, Colorado.

The plan for the day was to hook up with my nephew, Patrick, and his family in Evergreen. On the way to his house, I was caught in a speed trap, going 63 in a 45 MPH zone. I noted a few other victims like myself pulled to the side. Such are the vicissitudes of life.

Patrick's family of four was scattered on this Sunday. Ethan, aged 14, played in a baseball tournament; Vance, aged ten, played ball on the other side of town; Amy was arriving at the airport; and Patrick was in charge of managing all these moving parts. But the day came together and we shared a wonderful meal in downtown Denver. It was a pleasure to get to know this family. I slept in the basement on a big bed, giving thanks to God in spite of the traffic citation.

Day 26: *Mountains to Mesas* ~ Monday, May 14 ~ to Green River, Utah.

The morning was well spent. I did laundry, washed the camper, and walked the dog, all before the guys were up. I found Amy cooking in the kitchen. Then Vance left to catch the school bus. Shortly thereafter Patrick left for work and to drop off Ethen at high school. I stayed to talk with Amy for a full hour. She paid me a complement, commenting I reminded her of her late father-in-law, my brother Jack.

Jody and I were on the road again, cruising the steep grades of the magnificent Rocky Mountains. Just at the Utah border, the mountainous landscape transformed into mesas. I checked into Green River State Park just before dark.

Day 27: *Necklace for a Dog* - Tuesday, May 15 - to Ely, Nevada.

The drive through Utah was filled with layer-cake landscape and broad horizons. I pulled into a rest stop, where native Americans displayed their wares on blankets. I wasn't interested in the jewelry, but bought a necklace (ankle bracelet) for my traveling companion.

I crossed into Nevada at 3:30 and turned my watch back an hour. A casino RV park near Eli was terrible so I drove onward finally stopping at Illapah Reservoir. This turned out to be a terrific place, located in the midst of tumble weeds. Daylight remained so I walked along the shore and through endless scrub brush.

Day 28: *The Loneliest Road* - Wednesday, May 16 - to Colfax, California.

The night time temperature plummeted to twenty-eight degrees. I turned on my furnace and boiled coffee before I climbed out of my sleeping bag. After a few walks in the wilderness, I resumed by road trip down highway 50, dubbed the loneliest road in America. The drive wound between mountain ranges always rainclouds in one direction and sunshine in another. I had hoped to stay, at another casino RV lot, but they required an onboard toilet. I crossed into California, over the Sierras and to Mineral Bar Campground.

Lying in the dark, I considered the phrase, "My grace is sufficient for you." Is this a solution to the problem of pain. No. Yet maybe these are the appropriate words that a suffering saint hears when his ears are tuned to God's voice. I prayed that God would tune my ears to embrace this pronouncement.

Day 29: *The Joy of Home* - Thursday, May 17 - to San Mateo, California.

I left the campsite after finishing breakfast and bathing Jody. I continued west on I-80, passing Sacramento, finally crossing the San Mateo bridge. I re-filled the gas tank at the same place I filled it 29 days earlier. The ultimate road trip had totaled 7649 miles and had consumed 442 gallons of gasoline.

I left the land of *Fahrvergnügen* and re-entered the land of Domesticity. God had allowed me to travel from California to Maine and back. I concluded his grace was more than sufficient. It was abounding.

Jody proceeded me into the house at 2:00. I heard a squeal of joy from Liz and I was home. My wife and I played puzzles; I opened 29 days of mail; and I handed over the dog to Liz for re-acquaintance. If I had learned anything it was this: the *joy of travel* to be fully appreciated must rest upon a solid foundation called the *joy of home*.

When I returned, I got to work on composing my travelogue. I re-read my notes of twenty-nine days, recognizing the interplay of the words *journal* and *journey*.

As part of the book's intro, I wrote, "My journey served nine functions, layer stacked upon layer."

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Solitude – Time alone to escape my four walls. Highway therapy with a dog.  
Driving – Road warrior. Driven-to-drive gene.  
Listening to music and audio-books – Soundscape accentuating landscape.  
Camping – Solo hobo variety, enclosed in a cozy container.  
Contemplation – A mind free to wander behind the wheel or under the stars.  
Sightseeing – Watching the road, but also the ever-changing side views.  
Visiting – Deliberate stopping to share life with family and old friends.  
Pilgrimage – Stop off at Bellaire (my Bethlehem) and Whiting (my Nazareth).  
Accomplishment – To boast an achievement, even write a book.

During my road trip, I also collected pictures from Barbara and Sybil. I began to assimilate those into my web archive.

As the month wound down, I went for a hike with Liz at Edgewood Open Space, as well as a dinner with her friends, Carolyn, Allen, and Cindy.

## JUNE

The new month found me on the road again; this time with Ken and Linda at Mount Lassen National Park. Snow was still on the ground as I entered the gates. Along the shores of Lake Manzanita, I shared my coast-to-coast adventure, tossed horse shoes, and hiked during each of the three days.

The month was full of activity. I became a big fan of the Golden State Warriors as they swept the NBA finals. I have to admit my status as a fair-weather fan. I helped CPC at a Foster City Fair; sat for a day at the U.S. District courthouse in San Francisco; replaced windshield glass in the camper, oversaw clean-up at the Ashton Lane property; and hiked with Liz and Cindy at Pillar Point.

I wanted to review the status of my Mill Valley property so I visited the Marin County courthouse procuring a copy of my deed. I also made a long trip to the Southern Baptist Headquarters in Ontario, California. I spoke with Doug Griffin about my family trust and visited my friend, Tom Jones. I dropped into Gateway Seminary (the successor to my alma mater). The single ten-story building was certainly a different place than its rustic predecessor in Mill Valley. I stayed overnight at the Los Angeles KOA. It proved to be overcrowded, overpriced, and not a place I would recommend.

The month ended with video evidence that Zelig was taking her first steps. I also learned that Zachary was moving to Pittsburg. Ruth had accepted a position as professor of nursing at Carlow University.

## JULY

The first of July was a communion Sunday at CPC, a volunteer day at SFO-USO, and a dinner time at Becky's. Then on July 4, Liz and I hiked with Lisa at Thorngrove Reserve. Giant redwoods beckoned us to pause at every turn.

The next day, Jody and I headed to Dornan Park at Bodega Bay. I first stopped off to check on the Ashton Lane property then walked through my abandoned seminary. I was sad to see the building shuttered. On the coast, I stayed at site number 71 in the Gull Campground with a view of the sandy beach out the back hatch of my camper. I took a long walk along the beach on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. The wind was so fierce, I left the flags stowed and the awning unfurled. I returned home on Saturday with sand in my shoes.

The big adventure of July was a road trip with my brother. This journey began after church on July 15. The Eurovan was properly packed and Jody sat in the shotgun seat. It grew incredibly hot going north on I-5 through the central valley—115 degrees. In the distance I saw an odd cloud formation.

My weather app showed a storm center and temperatures an astounding 42 degrees cooler. And this was just 40 miles ahead! I raced to Shasta City, but only encountered a few raindrops on my wind shield. I had missed the cooling rainstorm. I arrived at *Tree of Heaven Campground* east of Yreka just before dark.

I got to Frank's place on Monday evening. His new house was pretty much complete, just waiting for landscape. On Tuesday evening four siblings gathered at Eileen's house where I spent Tuesday night. I parlayed on Wednesday afternoon with Jim and Char, then headed to Vancouver to rendezvous with Frank.

My brother had to remain later than planned to work with house contractors. We didn't leave Vancouver until 6:00 on Wednesday. He dropped his car at his dental office in Hood River, then we moved on to Pasco to stay the night at Lucy's house. Early on Thursday, we headed the camper to Glacier, stopping off at an Idaho rest stop for lunch. We reached Fish Creek Lake in Glacier National Park a few hours before dark.

The next day we pattered around the campsite and loafed by the lakeside. My brother was delighted to run into two old friends, Shawn and Christina Patterson. He called it a divine appointment. The evening sun was exceedingly bright. I experienced a double shadow of myself when sun rays shown directly on me and simultaneously reflected off the lake surface. The phenomena lasted just a few moments.

On Friday morning we headed down *Going-to-the-Sun Road* winding through the magnificent National Park. We took lots of photos along this route, especially of the five glaciers. This point is known as the *dome of the continent* because rainfall can flow west to the Pacific, southeast to the gulf, or north to Hudson Bay.

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We crossed the border into Canada about 2:00 p.m. and arrived at Banff about seven. We prepared a dinner at a picnic area then camped overnight at an overflow lot at Tunnel Hill Campground. The entire park was bursting with crowds and vehicles.

In the morning we ate a hotel breakfast, then drove through the crowded park. Frank and I walked to see three waterfalls, but I had to carry Jody in parts. It was like Disneyland of the north. I considered the park being loved to death. We visited the *Cave and Basin Springs*, founded in 1883, which was the genesis of the park. We couldn't find a place to spend the night, so we ended up driving onward to Golden, B.C., setting up the camper at *Whispering Spruce Campground*.

Frank wanted to see the Columbia River when it was relatively narrow, so we made a side trip to the point where Kicking Horse River feeds into the Columbia. Glacier Park in Canada was a great place to walk, many trails winding along an old Railroad bed undergirded by sturdy stone pillars.

We camped on Sunday night at Okanagan Provincial Park, learning that two days earlier the entire grounds were evacuated because of fires. When we departed on Monday morning, we made a change in plans. Frank wanted to get home early to manage construction and that was okay with me because with temperatures soaring above 100 degrees, camping was not fun.

Monday was a 480-mile drive from Okanagan, B.C. to Vancouver. We took turns driving so it wasn't too bad. We paused at Ginkgo Petrified Forest for salami sandwiches. It was a scorcher! We finally got to Hood River where Frank picked up his car to drive home. I snapped a picture of him posing in front of his dental practice, then spent Monday night with Frank in Vancouver and Tuesday night with Jeanne in Canby.

I decided to take the mountain route back home—through Bend, Crater Lake, Klamath Falls, Susanville, and Truckee. The view of Crater Lake was obscured by wood smoke from dozens of local fires. I slept Wednesday night in a casino lot near Klamath Falls. The next day was odd indeed. I wrote this note to Lizzie.

Hi sweetie, When I left the Indian casino parking lot about 9:00, I heard a big *wamp-wamp-wamp* coming from the rear of the camper. Sure enough, the rear right tire was flat and chewed up. I looked at it, pulled out the tools, but then figured I was too old for this stuff. I called USAA and in 15 minutes a truck was at the site and in another 15 minutes I was on the road. I picked up a spare for \$70 with mounting. By this hour, it was heating up.

Then the air conditioner began to rattle and somewhere just across the California state line, the air started to blow hot not cold. It was near 100 degrees and rising so I used the old trick from my Westfalia days. I stopped every half hour or so and soaked my tee shirt and ball cap then rolled down the windows. I also soaked Jody twice. It wasn't too bad. I took the camper

to an auto shop in Susanville. The guy looked at the engine and guessed the compressor gave out. I couldn't stay for a repair, but continued to drive down highway 395.

I was following the blue dot down the blue trail when a funny thing happened. I found myself on a dirt road! I guess the GPS didn't know County Road 421 was unpaved. It was strange. At points my route turned into a narrow trail. I never met another vehicle, thank goodness. I slowed behind a dozen cows who were reluctant to share the grassy lane. I honked and they began to gallop ahead of me. After a few minutes, the herd turned down a side trail. After an hour of dust and gravel, I hit black top again and was cruising at 70 MPH as if nothing had happened.

I was soon at my camp site, 30 minutes beyond the mountains near Truckee. The altitude cooled the air. I washed off the orange dust this morning and now I'll see my beautiful wife in just a few hours. We'll both be clean!

I arrived home on July 23 after an eventful adventure of 2457 miles.

After recuperating for a week, I caught the red eye for Fort Lauderdale. Once on the ground, I got frustrated waiting for a shuttle bus so I walked from the terminal to the Tri-rail station, about six-thousand steps. I finally hooked up with Simon and spent the last day of July sleeping in Gia's bed.

## AUGUST

I sheltered for six days with the Simon branch of the family in West Palm Beach. Dilia was away in Europe, so that made things easier. We could all stay in the house and use the car without anxiety.

From Monday to Friday, the kids played at FUSA (the summer school program). During those hours, Simon tele-worked while I rested and walked Dilia's two dogs, Sammy and Coco. I also made some home repairs for Dilia.

A major challenge was to limit screen time for Lorenzo and Gia. If one were not vigilant, my grandkids gravitate to a computer, hand device, or TV. One non-screen thing did hold Gia's interest. She was really into making *slime*. The formula was Elmer's glue, borax, water, and dye.

We went out to eat a few times, once at Howley's, where we all played putt-putt and once at Chili's. Both kids—but especially Lorenzo—were such finicky eaters. My grandson was vegetarian and my granddaughter was moving in that direction. One day we went to a trendy place called an *Escape Room*. The four of us were locked in an enclosure and had to follow clues to get out; interesting experience.

On Saturday we went to a local water park and on Sunday, after church, rented kayaks at the local lake. Over the week, I had time to be with Simon alone, with the kids a lot, and even some personal time to rest. On Monday morning, I caught an Uber from the house to PBI and went to see the Zachary branch of the family.

From August 6 to 8, I was with Zachary, Ruth, and Zelig. The family picked me up late on Monday at Dulles. I noted the three were in transition. Boxes were packed, and within a few days, they were re-locating from Fairfax, Virginia, to Monroeville, Pennsylvania.

Ruth worked on Tuesday, so Zach, Zelig and I commuted into the Capitol visiting the Museum of the Bible. The dioramas were great. They helped to prepare me for a journey to Israel in November. I snapped a picture of Zelig inside an olive press and I posed in front of the Sea of Galilee with all the towns labeled.

On Wednesday, I drove the Toyota to Monroeville while Zach drove his Mustang. After eight hours on the road, I checked out his new apartment. He then dropped me off at a nearby Marriott. I didn't get to enjoy the Pittsburgh hotel room, because I caught a taxi to the airport at five in the morning. I was back with Liz by 10:00 a.m. The Zachary visit was brief but sweet.

In August, I began to seriously study my Greek New Testament. By translating each word of the Sermon on the Mount, my Bible study slowed to a crawl, brought tears to my eyes, and convicted me of my own unworthiness. *God, help me to love my enemies and bless those that curse me.*

Liz celebrated four birthday parties; with her mom on the 19<sup>th</sup>, with Robina on the 20<sup>th</sup>, with me on the 21<sup>st</sup>, and with four friends on the 27<sup>th</sup>. I began to do some deck repair at the Ashton Lane house, fixed the air-conditioner in the camper, and received word from *23andMe* that I had 266 Neanderthal variants.

## SEPTEMBER

The month began with Labor Day weekend. On Saturday, I picked up my camper with the air conditioner repaired and got Jody a bath and nail clip at Scrub-a-pup. On Sunday after church, we ate dinner at Becky's and on Labor Day just rested.

From September 4 to 7, I camped at the Coast Guard Training Center near Petaluma. I hiked the Palomarin Trail four miles to the seashore. Alamere Falls was a rare tidefall, one that flowed directly into the ocean. Jody and I frolicked at Portuguese Beach, part of Sonoma Coast State Park.

While camped at the military base I wrote this to Liz:

This is what happened this morning. As I was walking down a hardtop path, a girl passed me on the way to school. The Coast Guard sound-system began to play the national anthem. It was faint. She stopped still and put her hand over her heart. I faced the sound and did the same. A tear came to my eye. It took me back forty years. I remembered saluting like that a few times a week when I was in uniform at Fort Leonard Wood. God Bless America!

I became involved in the *Sequoia Speaker Series* at CPC. Steve Yee led the senior-citizen group which would meet once-a-month on Sunday evening. I helped out by functioning as master of ceremonies and joked with elderly friends who liked to bellow old-time hymns. Maybe we can form a group called the “Jurassic Singers”.

From September 22 to 26, Liz and I traveled to Minnesota to visit Steve and Liz Quaday. She was Lizzie’s long-time friend who had retired with her husband to his hometown. We stayed one night at a Marriott in Minneapolis dropping by the humongous Mall of America. Then we traveled north by rental car to hook up with the Quadays in Park Rapids, due east of Fargo.

The couple owned a wooded lot abutting a small lake. A large homestead looked through the tall trees and overlooked the dazzling water. A trail out the back door led to a boat pier. The setting was magnificent, although Steve did admit the lake froze-over seven months of twelve. Liz and I stayed two nights, enjoying good company, meals, and fresh air.

We four went on a big outing to Itasca State Park to view the headwaters of the Mississippi River. At Lake Itasca the sign read “Here at 1475 feet above the ocean, the mighty Mississippi begins to flow on its winding way 2552 miles to the Gulf of Mexico.” Liz and I walked across a plank about twenty feet long to cross the outflow of the river. We hiked through a constant drizzle with overhanging trees reflecting yellow and red from the shiny pavement.

The remainder of September included Liz hiking with Allen and Cindy, and me continuing to upgrade my travelogue into a full-fledged book. What should I call it? *Have dog will travel?*

## OCTOBER

The new month carried on as the old. Liz and I hiked with Tom Tabor along the trails at Wilder Ranch State Park. My wife found a good hiking buddy and genuine friend in Lisa. Along the sandy trails were acres of cultivated farmland. Brussel sprouts grew as far as the eye could see. I never imagined the demand was so great for such a vegetable. I hung out with quirky Tom. “It starts with ‘S’ and ends with ‘T’ and it comes from you and it comes from me. So, what could it be? SCAT-SCAT-SCAT”

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As I walked Jody through Laurelwood Park, I listened to two audio books: *The Sleepwalkers*, concerning the lead up to WW1 and *King Leopold's Ghost*, about Belgium's brutal exploitation of the Congo. The two stories were oddly intertwined.

I began eight nights of hobo camping on October 8—one night/one place. I left San Mateo after aqua-fitness, taking my time on route to Lake Isabella. Bolder Gulch Campground was my first stop. Jody and I found a nice site lodged between giant stones. I had planned to stay the next night on a military reservation, but RV spaces sat side by side. I moved on. Fossil Falls Campground was just outside Death Valley without a soul in sight. It was perfect. The melancholy winds struck a somber chord in my own restless soul. I carried out a Facetime conversation with Simon.

I crossed into Death Valley and stopped for night three in the mountains at Wild Rose Campground. The night sounds of braying wild donkeys startled Jody and me. After breakfast we began a tour of the desert floor. At Furnace Creek the big thermometer registered ninety-five degrees on this October 11. I drove the valley roadway to *the racetrack*, a dry lakebed described as otherworldly. Moving stones left furrows in the dried mud as evidence of their action. Scientist figure it's the rapid heating and cooling that makes the stones skip magically across the desert floor. I then dropped by Ubehebe Crater, a steep depression caused by rising magma, superheated groundwater, and exploding rock.

On night four, I located a solitary spot just outside Death Valley beside a lone Joshua Tree. This night of stealth camping featured both a spectacular sunset and glorious sunrise. I then continued to Highway 395 where I spent night five at Diaz Campground. A herd of horses gazed at us from across a wire fence. The next day I drove fifty miles out of my way to visit Manzanar, the War Relocation Center. As I walked the grounds, perused the information boards and relics, I tried to imagine what it was like for the thousands of Japanese-Americans interred at this location; certainly, a dark episode in American history.

I moved on to (and up) to Mt. Whitney Family Campground. This place served as the trailhead to serious hikers intending to scale Mount Whitney. The Whitney Portal Store at an elevation of 8365 feet, served an outstanding pancake breakfast. After a cold night six, I traveled across Highway 395 to the Bristlecone Pine Forest, regarded as "the home of the oldest living trees on earth." Jody and I hiked the trails, noting the approximate ages of pines. The oldest gnarly specimen was reckoned at age 4700 years.

Night seven was passed at Tuff Campground in the Inyo National Forest where the temperature plummeted to twenty-three degrees. I then drove west through Yosemite to spend a warmer night at Woodward Reservoir in Stanislaus County. We returned home at 2:30 on Tuesday.

Life with Liz was fun. We fell into a routine of gym visits, dog walks, and weekly hikes. On Wednesdays, she faithfully attended Women's Bible Study, while on Thursdays I led table 1 at Men's Fraternity. We usually attended the 9:00 service at Central Peninsula Church, arriving as the congregational singing concluded. We gave three excuses for missing this initial part. The music was too loud, the chairs were too uncomfortable, and the dog would miss us. (All lame. Yes, I know.)

I made a quick trip up north on October 28. One night I camped at Rogue River, one night with Frank, one night with Jeanne, and one night at the Weed rest stop. When I visited Frank and family I talked with Shea, Shane, and Stephanie about Africa.

As I was conversing with my brother, I got word that Jim Francis had been transported to a hospital in Vancouver. Since I wasn't far away, I sat at his side in just a few minutes. Jim explained he had been lifting weights when he experienced chest pains. After a visit to the Longview hospital, he was transported to Vancouver. My old buddy seemed in good spirits. A nurse approached him with a questionnaire. Was he taking any prescription medication? No, he wasn't. Next question. Was he taking any supplements? For ten minutes, Jim rattled dozens of them from A (vitamin A) to Z (zinc) and every letter in between. The nurse needed an additional sheet to write all the stuff down. After the nurse left, I prayed with my old buddy and departed.

Later, I heard what had transpired minutes after I had left his side. Danny Walker posted this the following day:

For all of dad's friends, this is an update. Jim had a major heart attack, a widow maker. Because of his excellent health and lifestyle, he beat the odds and survived a quintuple bypass operation yesterday. His heart was literally removed from his chest before they returned it and sewed him back together. He is already sitting up, and his new heart plumbing is working fine. God is good. He has been and continues to be an excellent father to me. He taught me how to be a man. Love him dearly.

Jim survived with no damage to his heart but all new arteries. He returned home in a few days. Amazing medicine. Amazing brother-in-law. Amazing God!

## NOVEMBER

I opened my eyes on November first at the Weed rest stop. Mount Shasta shimmered in the morning sunlight, white with a dusting of snow. The following week Liz and I hiked with Tom Tabor at Windy Hill. This was the last of his three hikes.

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I completed publication of my travelogue. The final name was *Coast-to-Coast-to-Coast: My Journey into the Land of Fahrvergnügen*. It ran 128 pages and cost me \$1564 for my initial twenty copies.

On the morning of November 13, I dropped off Jody with Charles and Diane. The sky was dark with the smoke of a dozen wildfires. Liz and I were set to begin our sixth vacation abroad, a fifteen-day tour of Israel and Jordan! At four in the afternoon, Allen drove us to SFO. Liz traveled first class while I sat in economy.

Our flight was 13 hours to Istanbul with a 2-hour layover, followed by a 3-hour flight to Tel Aviv, then another hour to get to the David Intercontinental. We arrived exhausted before midnight on November 14. Each day of this Tauck Tour was first class, each activity well-choreographed.

Day 1 – November 15 – *Welcome to Israel and Arrive Tel Aviv.*

Thursday was a time of rest and recovery. I walked along the Mediterranean shoreline outside the hotel. Liz was not feeling well and didn't leave the room. She reported an unknown rash on her leg. At 6:30, we met our Tauck Director, Carmine, for a welcoming reception and dinner. Our tour group consisted of one bus-load of fellow travelers, about thirty-six people.

My wife felt worse in the night and together we paid a visit to Tel Aviv General Hospital. We checked in about 3:00 a.m. The situation was awkward in the foreign land. Liz was poked, prodded, and finally diagnosed with Lyme disease. She did receive some medication and felt somewhat better.

Day 2 – November 16 – *Explore Tel Aviv.*

On Friday morning Liz rested in the room while I attended a welcoming briefing about Israel's people, language, history, and custom. Then I boarded our coach, travelling a short distance to the town of Jaffe which is believed to be the oldest port city in the world. I peeked into Saint Peter's church. (It was in Joppa where Saint Peter lodged with Simon the tanner. See Acts 10:6.) As I mixed with others on the tour, I seemed to be the only one familiar with Biblical stories.

After lunch Liz joined the group for a walking tour of downtown Tel Aviv. With umbrellas to deflect the drizzle, we visited the memorial to Yitzhak Rabin at the place he was killed. We stayed a third night at the David Intercontinental.

Day 3 – November 17 – *Caesarea, Drive to Haifa.*

On Saturday morning we traveled by coach to the archeological site of Caesarea. This walking tour brought us past the remains of Herod's palace and into a Roman hippodrome. I was in my element among the ancient ruins. One stone replica made mention of Pontius Pilate. That discovery shocked Bible skeptics back in 1961.

After lunch we continued to Haifa, stopping at the Baha'i Gardens. We entered on a hill top overlooking the sea then continued downhill walking through a ring of sculptured gardens. Haifa was the home base of the Baha'i faith. We stayed the night at the Dan Carmel Haifa Hotel.

Day 4 – November 18 – *Sea of Galilee, Nazareth.*

On Sunday morning we struck out for a round trip visit to the Sea of Galilee. We paused at the Yigal Alon Museum to gaze at the skeleton of a boat recovered from the shoreline that dated back to the time of Christ. We then loaded onto a watercraft and cruised for an hour aboard. This portion of the journey was a spiritual experience for me. At the lake's center, I could look in all directions to see villages along the shoreline. I read from my iPad Bible the stories of Jesus calming the sea and walking on the water.

This was the one time I regretted being on a secular tour of the Holy Land rather than a religious tour. I would have liked to sing a hymn and partake of communion on this Sunday morning. Instead, I received a certificate verifying I had sailed on the *Jesus Boat*.

After lunch we paid a visit to a local kibbutz, founded in 1946. I listened to the stories, saw the sights, read the literature. I had never realized how absolutely secular these communes were. Rabbis were not welcome.

We next went to the town of Nazareth. I didn't realize it was most celebrated for the nativity of Mary. The large Roman Catholic Church featured on its walls giant portraits of Madonna with child, each presented from the perspective of a Catholic nation.

We returned to the Dan Carmel Haifa Hotel where we stopped to visit the central mosque replete with stray cats. In the evening, I sat in on a *prophet sharing* panel, with clerics representing communities of Greek Orthodox, Judaism, Islam, and Druze.

Day 5 – November 19 – *Akko, Drive to Jerusalem.*

On Monday we traveled north to the town of Akko, famous for the Crusader's castle of Acre. I loved the progression of history from Egyptian, to Israelite, to Greek, to Roman, to Byzantine, to Muslim, to Crusader, to Ottoman, to Bedouin, to British, to Israeli.

We then took the long coach ride south to Jerusalem, stopping at the Mount of Olives for a panoramic view of the City of David. The sun was setting and we checked into the magnificent Waldorf Astoria Jerusalem.

Day 6 – November 20 – *Explore Jerusalem.*

Tuesday was a full day of exploring the Old City. Our guide walked us through the Jewish Quarter and the Cardo. We paused for a group photo near the formidable wall, then visited a synagogue. I watched as a Hasidic father and son copied Hebrew text onto a scroll.

This walk ended at the iconic Western Wall, a remnant of the Second Temple. I joined in tradition by leaving a written prayer stuck into a crevice of this Wailing Wall. “Lord, be with my grandchildren; Lorenzo, Gia, and Zelig. Keep, guard, and protect them. May their hearts be tuned to you.”

In the afternoon, I joined a tour of the *Yad Vashem*, a Remembrance to Holocaust Martyrs and Heroes. It was a sobering place to walk through with life-size dioramas and deathcamp replications. On the outside were planted trees dedicated to the *Righteous Gentiles* who saved Jewish lives.

Day 7 – November 21 – *The Old City, Dome of the Rock.*

The Waldorf Astoria was such an opulent place, I was reluctant to leave the premises. But Jerusalem beckoned! Just outside the door, a globe sculpture occupied a corner lot portraying Jerusalem as center point of the world. Liz and I joined a walking tour of the Muslim quarter stopping at the Dome of the Rock. This was the third holiest site in Islam after Mecca and Medina. We couldn't enter the structure itself, but the surrounding grounds were spectacular to wander. Although under Israeli rule, Muslim guards policed the grounds.

Next, our guide led us to the Christian quarter to walk along the Via Delarosa, the route along which Jesus carried His cross. Meandering down narrow walkways, Liz and I paused at each of ten stations of the cross. We concluded at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, viewing inside the final four stations. Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Arminian Catholics shared oversight of this shrine, which was crowded with pilgrims and tourists.

Liz and I rested in the afternoon, then at dusk walked to the David Tower to watch a sound and light show projected onto stone walls. The visual and narrated history of Jerusalem was fantastic.

Day 8 – November 22 – *Tour Bethlehem, Explore Jerusalem.*

Early on Thursday morning we joined a sightseeing excursion into Bethlehem. We exited Israel proper, passed through a checkpoint, and entered Palestinian-controlled territory. Behind the barrier, a change was subtle but noticeable. A guesthouse abutting the wall flashed the name *Walled-Off* hotel. We de-boarded the coach in Manger Square, and began our walking tour of the Church of the Nativity. After shuffling through the interior, we stood in a 30-minute queue to enter the Grotto of the Nativity. A silver star implanted in the floor marked the spot where tradition indicated Christ was born. Each pilgrim like myself was allowed only a brief moment to view the star.

As a bred-in-the-bone Protestant, but lover of history, I held mixed feelings of the relics and holy sites. I knew historically, they were probably bogus, but did that matter? I knew that all glory should go to God and not human artifacts, but the sights, sounds, and smells did evoke a sense of the spiritual.

Back in Jerusalem, we visited a place called the *Shrine of the Book*, devoted mostly to the Dead Sea Scrolls. We walked around a huge scale-model replica of Jerusalem at the time of Herod. In the evening Liz and I had time to ourselves, so we began an off-the-leash walk through the Old City. Working our way through the crowds, we walked to the opposite end of town to visit the Mount of Olives and the Garden of Gethsemane. Liz especially liked the ancient olive trees and the thought that Jesus Himself once prayed under these gnarled limbs. We held hands and prayed ourselves.

In America it was Thanksgiving Day and we had much to be thankful for. Liz and I enjoyed these un-chaperoned few hours, passing through the Lion's Gate, bustling down crowded trails, then returning to our hotel.

Day 9 – November 23 – *Mesada, Dead Sea, Jordan.*

After four nights at the Waldorf Astoria, we boarded a coach to head for the Dead Sea. Our first stop was at Masada National Park to reconnoiter the cliff-top fortress built by King Herod in 36 BC. We rode a cable car up 1424 feet to the summit for a guided tour. The history and sites were explained by the tour guide and numerous placards. As I walked the paths, gazing into the distance, I tried to imagine the scene of a few hundred Jewish fighters resisting the onslaught of a Roman legion.

After lunch we journeyed to an inn on the Dead Sea. My iPad altimeter measured 1230 feet below sea level. Soon we crossed into Jordan, leaving behind our Israeli tour guide and picking up a Jordanian replacement. We checked into the Movenpick Resort and Spa abutting the shores of the sea. Liz liked our villa-style room surrounded by koi ponds and flower gardens.

At the seashore, Liz only walked in up to her knees, but I struggled out to my waist. At belly-button level, I couldn't walk further, because the salt water made me too buoyant. I tried to immerse myself, but was unable. I could barely push my arms and legs under the surface. I bobbed like a cork for just a few minutes, before returning to shore. There was also a tradition of covering oneself with Dead Sea mud, letting the muck dry, and rinsing it off. Liz thought I was nuts.

Day 10 – November 24 – *Tour of Jerash.*

On Saturday we boarded a coach for a tour of the ancient city of Jerash to view the well-preserved remains of Roman architecture. I loved walking through the midst of ancient rubble contemplating long-abandoned plazas, arches, and walls. I sat for a while on a collapsed pillar. Once again, the words of the Preacher came to mind, "There is a time for every purpose under heaven, a time to build up and a time to tear down".

Just before we boarded our return bus, bagpipers from the Jordanian army began to play a rendition of *Amazing Grace* and *Yankee Doodle*. It was an odd juxtaposition.

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Day 11 – November 25 – *Drive to Petra.*

Sunday was spent on the road heading south. We explored the Memorial Church of Moses with its well-preserved 6<sup>th</sup>-century mosaics and St. George Greek Orthodox Church to view an ancient mosaic map of the Holy Land. We stopped to consume an authentic Jordanian lunch, complete with a hukkah for *dessert*. I indulged in one puff of flavored tobacco and that was more than enough. An hour later, we checked into the Movenpick Resort Petra.

Day 12 – November 26 – *Explore the Pink City of Petra.*

We expended a full day in exploration of Petra—the 2,000-year-old city which the ancient Nabataeans had carved from sandstone cliffs. After passing through the payment gate, our group of thirty walked through a long, narrow, high-walled canyon. At places, niches were carved into the crumbling wall face.

Suddenly the pink city of stone appeared. The centerpiece structure—the Treasury—lay before our eyes. Liz and I followed the guide on some walks and struck out on our own for others. The structures were remarkable, appearing as typical Greco-Roman architecture, but dug into the sandstone, constructed—as I was to learn—from top to bottom.

A camel ride was included in the tour price. Liz mounted one of the beasts for a picture, but never traveled a step. She was too uncomfortable. I rode for a hundred yards or so, but the effort to remain seated convinced me it was better to walk. We both returned to the entrance by donkey cart.

As a final Tauck tour event, our group gathered at a Bedouin encampment. The food and entertainment were great, but the weather turned cold in windy. The guide commented, “I’m glad this is the last event of the year. The desert is getting cold.”

Day 13 – November 27 – *Drive to Amman.*

We left after breakfast, traveling along the King’s Highway to Amman. Liz would stay one night at the Reem Al Bawadi, but I soon had to catch a plane to Tel Aviv. I posted a photo of two porcelain bowls in the fancy bathroom. One was obviously the toilet. I asked, “For all you international travelers, what’s the function of the bowl on the right?”

After some incorrect guesses, I re-posted, “It’s a foot-washing basin for your hot dusty sandal-wearing feet. I was reminded of John Chapter 13 where Jesus washes the feet of his twelve disciples. He said their whole body is clean except their feet. Such hygiene is still important in this part of the world.”

After a meal, shower, and nap, I left for the airport at 6:30. I struggled the entire night trying to find a comfortable place to stretch out. I left Ben Gurion airport at 8:45 a.m. and caught up with Liz in Istanbul. We flew non-stop to San Francisco. My gracious wife passed me a few treats from her first-class perch.

## DECEMBER

I had to both decompress and process. The last few days of November and the first few of December were spent in sleeping odd hours and in posting the Israel and Jordan webpage. I re-lived the Tauck tour by creating a five-minute video of our adventure. It seemed much of December was anti-climactic after such an exhausting and exhilarating time abroad.

I face timed with my grandkids, walked in the rain listening to audio books, and scored 194 scrabble points with a single word—*quintars*. Liz and I engaged in Christmas events some at church and others in the neighborhood. Liz's dermatologist told her the skin rash was not Lyme disease, but more likely an allergic reaction. The family switched from a scented laundry detergent to fragrance-free and that seemed to help.

Jody and I camped at Half Moon Bay for one December night where I wrote: "The ocean waves . . . and I wave back." After Christmas, I camped at Mount Diablo for one night and shared lunch with my nephew in Napa. I always considered it a priority to remain in contact with extended family. The year ended in peace with my loved ones and with joyful prospects for the year to come.

## 2019 JANUARY

Liz and I began the New Year with an anniversary walk along the Waterdog Trail. The first few weeks of 2019 were cold and rainy, but I avoided some of that by traveling to Florida. I left on January 10 and stayed four nights in an Airbnb, a two-room apartment right next to Lake Worth. Simon, Gia, and Lorenzo stayed with me as a break from their mom's place. It made me so happy to see that Lorenzo was so happy to see me upon my approach.

I got to hang out with my grandkids at the school playground and twice at Lolo's soccer matches. He played a defender position and proved to be an outstanding dribbler and kicker. Among other activities, I photographed Gia as she waved a wand to create giant bubbles and videoed Lorenzo as he read aloud from *Lord of the Rings*.

We spent one afternoon at the Jupiter seashore aboard an inflatable raft. Lorenzo scooped for minnows while Gia swung from swamp branches as if they were monkey bars. She cut her foot on a submerged stick. For much of the time, I sat in a lawn chair watching the commotion. I wrote this meditation:

"Carpet of sand. Children at play.

Fold-out chair in the mid-afternoon.

I nod into an old man's dream, then snort myself awake.

'Where am I?' Not *there* but *here*.

Happy to savor the breeze."

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Back in San Mateo, I kept an appointment with my dermatologist. For a few years, the backs of my hands had been constantly bruised. My doctor diagnosed *purpura* and prescribed a special cream. That didn't help much and I began the habit of wearing fingerless gloves. They masked the purple and helped with accidental bruising.

As a New Year's Resolution, I began to translate the Gospel of Mark from Greek into English. I deciphered each verse, and kept a running list of vocabulary words I could not figure out. I also received a delivery from Outskirts Press; fifty copies of my book *Coast-to-Coast-to-Coast*. I was pleased with the final product, mailing out a dozen copies to people whom I had mentioned by name during the twenty-nine-day travelogue.

My only camp out during the first month was two nights on the coast, one at Half Moon Bay State Park and another at Prayer Mountain. Nothing provides perspective like tromping along the ocean shore, trailed by a scampering little dog.

## FEBRUARY

For a few weeks, I had been collecting hymns from YouTube videos. I had an app that would separate the MP3 audio from the MP4 video. I spent hours wracking my brain and searching the Internet for hymns I remembered from my youth. On the first of February, I created a CD called *My YouTube Hymnal* with 100 old time favorites. The back cover read:

Old church hymns from childhood and youth fell on my ears and stuck in my soul. They have never abandoned me. In times of trial and joy they emerge, animate my lips, sometimes causing my arms to raise, and sometimes provoking tears.

The one hundred hymns listed on the inside cover come from a multitude of sources all gleaned, culled, and compiled from YouTube videos and therefore available to the public at no cost. The 1950 edition of the Broadman Hymnal provided the base list of hymns. May they bless you as they have me.

Through Amazon Prime, I also acquired several tiny MP3 players. My initial distribution of my *hymn cubes* was to Jeanne, Eileen, Charlotte, Frank, Steve Wilson, Ken Napier, and Bob Mitchell.

About this time, I cracked off my right-bottom molar. Thus, began an eight-month process of extractions and implants. I had to make several Bart rides to San Francisco to visit my Ukrainian *implantologist*, Dr Vadim.

On February 7, Liz joined me on a road trip to Pasadena. We stopped for one night in Bakersfield, then drove bumper-to-bumper through Los Angeles. Our

first visit was at the Huntington Gardens. Liz loved to stroll through the orchids, camellias, and roses, while I particularly liked the Bonsai Courts. While I squint, they certainly appear as full-grown trees.

We stayed the night at a Marriott and the next day visited Fuller Theological Seminary. Liz was invited to attend a morning lecture entitled “Worship, Theology, and the Arts in a Divided World”. My wife had been a donor for a few years and we schmoozed with a few of the faculty over dinner.

In the afternoon we visited the Norton Simon Museum. I was drawn to a special exhibit of renaissance tapestry, as well as paintings by Picasso and Van Gogh.

On February 16 and 17, I attended the West Coast Christian Writers Conference at Cross Winds Church in Livermore. I camped with Jody in the parking lot, attending several sessions to determine what I would write next. A novel about the genocide in Rwanda? or a biography of my life? The keynote speaker was a popular Christian writer named Robin Jones Gunn. I posted this on FaceBook about her closing remarks.

Robin had recently met with a woman named Gloria. This person had a unique story to tell, but didn't know how to tell it. Her husband Mark, was in prison for murder. Gloria had remained faithful to him even after 39 years. The surprise of the story was that the murder victim was named John Lennon. As Robin continued to speak, I considered the concept called *six degrees of separation*. I later spoke with Robin, who is a friend of Gloria, who is still married to Mark David Chapman, who killed John Lennon. That's four degrees of separation from one of the icons of my youth. We do live in a small world, even among this vast humanity.

That same Sunday, I was the featured speaker for Sequoias. With about fifty people in attendance, my topic was “Relationships before Rules: Six Life Lessons from the Parable of the Prodigal Son.”

On the following weekend, I attended the CPC Men's retreat at Mount Hermon. I indulged in hikes, rest, and banquets. I also facilitated ten men in round-table discussions.

## MARCH

My brother dropped by the house on March 3. He shared that he needed a personal retreat to figure out what to do with his finances and building project. Frank was over budget and under employed which led to major stress. He and Lelia stayed with the Varadys who served as their generous hosts. We visited a Japanese Garden in Hayward and walked along Lake Chabot. Frank later thanked everyone for their

prayers. He determined to stop borrowing money, to delay further construction, and accept that Lucinda would stay in her current situation for another year.

As well as through prayer, I helped out Frank in a more practical way. I had paid down a line-of-credit on my Ashton Lane property to near zero. He assumed this loan and began to make interest-only payments to Union Bank. I was more than happy to assist my little brother in a season of distress.

In March I began to attend a Saturday morning men's group at the Presbyterian church in Burlingame. Tyce Fields led the group and twenty guys usually attended. From 9:00 to 10:30 we ate doughnuts, drank coffee, sang praise, and listened to a speaker or watched a video. The group was theologically liberal, but that was okay. The conversation caused me to think, reconsider, and learn.

On Monday, March 11, Liz dropped me off at SFO at 8:00 a.m. and Zachary picked me up at PIT at 5:00 p.m. After driving me to his home in Monroeville, there was just enough time left in the day for dinner and talk. On Tuesday, we drove to the Children's Museum in Pittsburgh. As the bread-winner, Ruth was working. Zelig set the agenda, toddling from place to place as she grew bored. There were many hands-on activities and my granddaughter was just the right age to do them. Mister Rogers held a special part in this museum. I hadn't realized his PBS show launched from Pittsburgh.

On Wednesday, I pushed Zelig in the stroller to give the parents a break, then it was time for Ruth's meeting at Carlow University. Zachary and I dropped her off, then had more time looking after Zelig; first to Chuck E. Cheese more for games than food, then to a local park where Ruth would join us at 4:00.

Like at the museum, Zelig had a mind of her own and it was just a matter of following her from swings, to slide, to tunnel, back to swings. After Ruth joined us, we headed for Bubba's, a Polish restaurant. Zachary ordered a variety of authentic dishes which we all shared. When Zelig removed her winter jacket, her tee shirt revealed, "Mommy is my Bestie". May it ever be so! I asked Ruth and she confirmed the suspicion. Baby number two was on the way. However, she wanted to wait a few more weeks to make a public announcement.

On Thursday, Zachary and I took Zelig to the Pittsburgh Zoo. I snapped pictures of my son and granddaughter in front of giraffes, lions, and flamingos. After the zoo, we went home for a rest. Then Zach and I headed out. At Walmart I bought a push cart stroller for Zelig and because it was *pi day* Zachary bought a blueberry pie. Within twenty minutes, Zelig's face turned purple. My flight to SFO departed at 6:00 and I arrived home by 10:00 p.m.

A few days later, Franc Murenzi was in town. After a coffee with Liz, he stayed one night at the Zabala House in Half Moon Bay and two nights with Tom Leibl

from CPC. He accompanied me on BART for my dental appointment in San Francisco. After speaking Thursday morning at Men's Fraternity, I dropped him off at the Oakland Airport while Jody and I continued north in the camper.

I drove the daylight hours to Rogue River State Park for an overnight, then went to Frank's house for a CASA board meeting. Javin was present with his girlfriend along with Franc, and five Sobottke girls. Franc recited his childhood story of "spitting beans" and I suggested to Lelia we write a book.

The next day Frank, Franc, and Shae headed to Idaho to speak at Geoffrey Winkler's church in Coeur D'Alene. I camped a drizzly night at Battle Ground State Park, then headed north to visit my sisters; Eileen in Longview and Charlotte in Kelso, giving each a hymn cube. We all had fun guessing each of the one hundred songs. After one night in Longview, I drove to be with Jeanne in Canby. After a wet overnight at Mims Campground I was home once more.

## APRIL

After all that traveling, I settled down for a few weeks, producing banners for Africa Mission 2019, adding sixty hymns to my You Tube Hymnal; and scheming for a *Christmas Re-gathering 2019*.

As a retired person, I looked forward to my daily dog walks; sometimes to the top of Sugarloaf Mountain, sometimes beside the Laurelwood Creek, and at other times along the Overlook Trail. Liz was always thrilled when I delivered a rundown of wildflowers I had encountered. Altogether I counted twenty-six species to include: fairy lantern, Indian paintbrush, sticky monkey, ethereal spear, Chinese houses, and scarlet pimpernel.

On April 12, both of my sons changed their housing situations. Simon moved into a nice rental house in West Palm Beach. He required furniture to fill it. Zachary and Ruth bought an old brick home in Pittsburgh for \$168,000. Both sons got a small financial boost from their dad.

On April 15, Liz and I partook in a wildflower hike at Edgewood. She was thrilled to see her familiar field of tidy tips along with infringing owl's clover. Over the next few days, I completed my Greek translation of Mark chapter six and ordered a conference banner for Rwanda: "Christian Apologetics Conference. Theodicy! The defense of God's justice in the face of human suffering. – 'Have you considered...?' Job 1:8"

On Easter, Liz and I attended Burlingame Presbyterian with her mom. On this visit, I introduced her to several of my new acquaintances from the Saturday Men's group.

On April 22, Jody and I got away to a place called "Navy Getaways: Monterey Pines RV Park." This was my wind-down time before winding-up up for my

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twenty-third Africa mission. My campsite was just across from a golf course at the Presidio of Monterey. I spent a day wandering around the Harbor. This site was the oldest in American California, containing “Landmark number 1: The Custom House”. Commodore John Drake Sloat raised the American flag over the building on July 7, 1846, marking California’s transition from Mexican to American rule.

Also, in the harbor was an interesting place called the *Salvador Dali Permanent Exposition*, containing nine hundred of his original pieces. I hadn’t realized that Dali had called Monterey his home during the war years of 1940 to 1945. As a house warming gift for Simon, I bought him a surrealistic melting clock.

While walking the dog around the navy golf course, my mind wandered to writing and family. I conceived to compose a memoir of my life and to dedicate it to my four grandchildren. My heart was to bequest to them a written legacy. I wanted Lorenzo, Gia, Zelig, and baby-on-the-way to know about my parents and siblings. I wanted them to appreciate their grandmother, Kim Hyun Deok, and put into context their fathers: Zachary and Simon Peter. I desired my grandchildren to read about their blood and their roots and to know they were loved from the moment they entered the world.

Upon my return, my focus shifted to mission. However, on the day of my actual departure to Africa, I did one of the most unfocused things of my adulthood:

I guess my mind was in La-la land on Sunday morning. On the way to CPC, I had my bag in the back of my Prius, but left my precious iPad on the roof of my car! Liz and I went to church together, then she dropped me off at SFO. As soon as I entered the revolving door, I searched for my iPad. Alas, I went on a twenty-day iPad fast.

A few days later, I received this email from Liz.

Yes, the iPad must have fallen off your hood as we turned onto DeAnza from Chris Lane. The couple who found it said it was on the sidewalk. Susan said she recognized me from the photo on your screensaver and remembered I lived on Chris Lane. I was working in the yard when she walked up on Monday afternoon. The iPad seems to be in working order. There is not a shattered screen or dents. The display is asking for a password so I can’t check out the software.

And that’s how Africa Mission 2019 started out! I met Frank and Shae at the airport and decided not to fret about my iPad. I asked myself two questions: *What can I learn from this misfortune?* And *could this be a test to see how well I can function without my digital companion?*

We arrived in Kigali as April 28 changed to 29. Jane and her airport-working husband met us as we cleared customs. After a restless night at the Presbyterian guest house, I met a woman named Makeesha Allen who had just completed a week of evangelism at the Lighthouse. Her organization had contacted Frank months earlier about ministering to the poor in Rwanda. We overlapped with this group of ten for a few hours. Makeesha assured us they would be returning for more service and evangelism. That was certainly welcome news. We arrived at the Lighthouse on the last day of the month, exhilarated but exhausted, and settled into the missionary quarters

## MAY

The month began with changes. The top floor conference room had been transformed with red and white ceiling fabric. The look and acoustics improved. Franc advised us that he had changed the time and topic of the Pastors' Conference. Because of an increasingly high divorce rate and emphasis on women's rights, local pastors asked for our wisdom on gender roles and marriage counseling. For the next few days, my brother worked furiously to get his gender role PowerPoint together, while I repurposed two old seminars; one on dating and a second on sexual integrity.

Frank's Friday presentation was well received with many heartfelt questions. When Saturday arrived sixty pastors were seated. I used Shea as a female prop, needing a young girl to counsel about dating and she fit the bill. She answered with a *yes*, *no*, a blush, or a giggle.

On Sunday morning, I preached at a rural church from John, Chapter 4, the encounter of Jesus with the woman at the well. I reflected that a hundred poor people packed into this small building exhibited a greater joy of God than ten thousand of my peers at a stadium.

Franc arranged for the two of us to speak on a live radio program at the University station. The event started at 9:00 p.m. I had to believe the Holy Spirit was guiding our words concerning the problem of evil. Frank and I made such a well-oiled team. As he spoke for a few minutes, I would gather my thoughts, then it would be my turn; on and on we alternated roles for thirty minutes.

On Monday morning, we were drinking coffee upstairs by the balcony when we heard a loud thump followed by men shouting and women screaming. We ran to the rail and observed a small school van pulled to the curb. On the corner lay a broken bike and a man splayed on the ground. Within seconds thirty people gathered around him. Within minutes the police and a truck arrived to carry him away. David told us the next day that the bicyclist had died—just outside our window.

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On Tuesday Shae and I visited the *Hope* women's cooperative. We started making a video to support a new handicraft workshop. We filmed a younger mama hoeing quickly in the field. Then we filmed a 70-year-old mama trying to keep up and saying how difficult it was after all these years. The project was designed to help Shae raise funds to purchase sewing machines for older ladies who were unable to hoe.

In spare moments I developed the narrative arc of my next book. The working title became "This Pilgrim's Progress" and would begin at birth and continue to my seventieth birthday. I wracked my brain to come up with twenty chapter titles all ending with *-ed*. My original list of twenty was: presaged, swaddled, nurtured, anchored, fledged, infatuated, estranged, reconciled, launched, wed, recruited, detoured, derailed, diverted, enlightened, ordained, actualized, bereaved, re-calibrated, and resolved.

On Wednesday, Pastor David arranged an official meeting with the Hope Women's cooperative at the Lighthouse. All 30 of these women were seated and praising God. They all remembered Kim and her love for them. Franc explained to the women that Shae had raised the funds to buy a sack of cornmeal for each of them. I then suggested that the women elect Shae as an honorary 31st member of the Hope cooperative. They loved the idea. Pastor David later gave Shae a certificate with the signatures of each woman; making her an honorary member of the co-op. Shea was thrilled.

The Sixth Apologetics Conference kicked off on Wednesday evening, May 8. This year we ran into issues with the Rwandan students. We usually had about fifty international students from the surrounding nations and fifty from Rwanda. This year Rwandan students were absent. It turned out that the days of the conference fell on their final examinations. With a few stray Rwandan students and several local pastors that snuck in, there were between forty to fifty seats filled. Frank and I trusted God to bring those who would most benefit from the teachings.

I introduced the problem of evil from a philosophical point of view: "If God is all powerful, all knowing, and all good, then how can evil exist?" I showed two video clips from *Reasonable Faith* that addressed this problem and answered multiple questions.

Frank and I decided to shuffle the schedule to accommodate Rwandan reality. On Thursday, we replicated our gender roles and sexual integrity instruction. Franc-the-director insisted university students were always in need of that. In the afternoon, we heard testimonies from David and Franc about the Rwandan genocide, and how God was able to turn evil into good. Many international students had little knowledge of the genocide and were touched by the testimonies.

Friday was our key teaching day. In the morning Frank spoke from the Old Testament, focusing on Job. He articulated how Lucinda was his cross to bear; his

example of evil in the world. In the afternoon I spoke from the New Testament, especially Second Peter. I spoke of Kim's death in Rwanda, challenging students to consider how a just God could permit such evil to happen.

I concluded that a Christian theology of evil must center upon the cross of Christ—His crucifixion and resurrection. By the time our two sessions concluded, nearly one hundred chairs were filled. Rwandan students had filtered in throughout the days. Our message of God's justice in the face of human suffering provoked many in the audience into profound thought. I engaged students in conversation past midnight.

On Saturday, Frank and I took back seats. Pastor Nehemiah from Kenya addressed the seductive doctrines of a prosperity gospel and the word of faith movement. Both of these teachings ran counter to the theodicy we had just presented. Christian comfort must be found in the arms of the Son of God, who suffered more than any of us and gave us strength to endure our own pain.

I repeated to students once again: "God's purpose is not to make us happy, but bring us to a knowledge of Himself." Frank added, "Suffering seems to be one of God's finest instruments for separating us from worldly self-contentment and moving us into our true home; His loving arms."

The conference concluded with the compelling testimony of Claudine, Franc's wife.

It was the first time that she had spoken of her experience in public. She explained how her father had run from the killers but was hacked to pieces. She, her mother, and sister hid and somehow survived for one hundred days. Her testimony concluded with a recent experience in a Gacaca court. Claudine confronted the man who had murdered her father. She said that for decades she had hated him, but after his confession, she felt release. Seeing the man's sorrow and knowing the place where her father had died had moved her beyond hatred into forgiveness.

Later in the day, we held a graduation for forty-five university students who had completed a three-year course of study at the Lighthouse—an amazing accomplishment. On Sunday we preached at Pastor Zebulon's Nazarene church then back at the Lighthouse and for the fifth time I taught a class on sexual integrity.

On Monday we headed to Kigali. Franc had arranged for us to meet with the leaders of the Rwandan Young Life. Shae and her mother had been working with the Young Lives ministry in Vancouver for several years. Both the Vancouver and Kigali ministries focused on High School girls who *chose life*, but who struggle with the daily realities of teen motherhood. The leaders guessed they may have 25,000 young teens attending their clubs in Rwanda.

We rested in a hotel room for a few hours, then caught our 1:00 a.m. flight. Frank, Shae, and I looked forward to spending five days with Mavis Crispin in London.

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We arrived at Heathrow after an all-night flight and by the Tube found our way to Finchley in north London. Each of us had a private room in her English homestead. This half-day was set aside for resting and strolling the neighborhood.

Wednesday was ten hours of walking and touring. We each bought a river boat pass, good for multiple stops. We walked through the Royal Naval College at Greenwich where Shae straddled the prime meridian. We circumnavigated the Tower of London and elevated to the top of the Tower Bridge. We walked past the beautiful Southwark Cathedral, then sat inside as a stringed orchestra practiced Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*. And if that weren't enough of a musical blessing, when we walked to St. Paul's Cathedral, the choir inside sang Evensong selections from Handel's *Messiah*.

On Thursday we met up with a friend of Mavis named Pat. She drove the four of us to the Kilns near Oxford. This was the restored home of C.S. Lewis. Since his full embrace of the Christian faith in 1970, Frank has held Lewis in the highest esteem, learning from him that a Christian need not check his brains at the door, but that reason and intellect support the gospel of Christ.

We arrived well before our 1:30 appointment and so visited Lewis' Trinity church, a short walk from the Kilns. It was a kick to both me and Frank to consider that such a hero of the faith sat Sunday after Sunday in this humble chapel. We made our way to the quarry and nature reserve behind the house. There we sat on a blanket and picnicked by the pond. I asked Frank, "That's where Lewis used to swim. Are you interested in taking a dip?"

The tour of the house was marvelously hosted. We walked the corridors pausing in various rooms. I snapped a picture of Frank as he sat at the desk of C. S. Lewis, posed with pipe in one hand and pen in the other.

We walked to his gravesite, where I asked Frank to give a prayer of thanks for the man who had so impacted his pilgrimage. My brother choked back tears before he could express his gratitude for the man and his writings. Before our return drive to Finchley, we stopped at an Indian Restaurant to share our thoughts and a meal.

On Friday, Frank and Shae returned to the city center for more sightseeing. I opted to rest, having toured London several times. I walked around the local neighborhood and meditated on the biographical narrative that was percolating in my mind. *Yes, it would be of my first seventy years.* I hoped to focus and finish it before that landmark birthday arrived in December.

On Saturday, Mavis, Frank, and Shae were pooped out from Friday's activity. We did take a leisurely stroll through the suburban London countryside, walking past a golf course and horse club to Finchley Nurseries. We sat at a snack table for refreshments before our return walk. That afternoon, the vicar stopped by to visit and discuss the next-day service.

On Sunday morning we attended St. Paul's Anglican Church where our hostess served as associate vicar. About seventy people were in attendance of every color, hue, and mixture. England had colonized the world and now the world was returning the favor. Mavis interviewed us in front of the congregation for ten minutes concerning our mission to Rwanda. Even shy Shae shared for a few minutes. After service Mavis catered a lunch at her house for the vicar's family and several church members. Her middle son came and assisted her in hosting. What wonderful company and conversation!

When the luncheon finished, we headed out again, this time to Oxford Circus and the 5:30 service at All Saints. This place was the leading evangelical Anglican church in England. John Stott was the long-time vicar, the author of *Ten Reasons Why I'm a Christian*. All three of us Americans were tired by the late hour of our return.

On Monday morning we caught the tube to Heathrow, bidding farewell to the marvelous Mavis. I arrived in San Francisco at 3:30 local time, hugging goodbye to my brother and my double-great niece. Ahead of them lay a final leg to Portland. After three weeks away, both my dog and wife were overjoyed at my safe return. I was pleased to be reunited with my wayward iPad!

For the final days of May, I rested, recuperated, and archived both my African and English experience. I especially enjoyed creating a video of C.S. Lewis. But yet another adventure lay around the corner. Liz and I began preparing for a Baltic Cruise in September, launching a two-month process to acquire Russian visas.

## JUNE

Camping resumed with two nights at Lake Chabot. Life honestly seemed to run more smoothly when Liz and I had brakes in our togetherness. Just as I enjoyed my solo road time, she enjoyed her solo home time. I created a video clip with the soundtrack of "Camping is my Life" extracted from a *Garfield* TV special.

I made the mental decision to sell the Ashton Lane property. I wasn't in a hurry, but I initiated a process. The house was in sad shape, showing the effects of thirteen year's neglect. I didn't want to install new windows, patio doors, roof, or siding. I intended to do the minimum until I actually put the place on the market. One necessity was to cut back several redwoods that infringed on the structure. That alone cost me a few thousand dollars.

Liz and I went on a few outings, one to Filoli to walk through the gardens and one with Allen to the Stanford Linear Accelerator, a marvel of particle physics. I was fascinated by the dozens of experiments still going on at the world's longest linear accelerator.

From June 17 to 25, I traveled the *Offspring Triangle*; SFO to PBI to PIT to SFO again. From Tuesday to Friday, I was delighted to stay at Simon's rented house, a few

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lots away to West Olive Elementary, a few blocks from Dilia, and a short stroll to the ocean. He said the move was “way overdue” and he should have done it “years earlier”.

My son explained at his Manhattan workplace, he was known as the GOAT (greatest of all time) for the share of revenue he generated. His two bosses agreed it was not a problem to switch to Florida as his primary residence with New York as secondary. Plus, he was using meeting software called *Zoom*—which I had never heard of—saying the conference calls made him nearly as productive working from home as in his office.

Lorenzo was really into soccer and I bought him a cartload of agility training equipment. We set it up at the grassy playground and I delighted to see my two grandchildren run, dodge, and jump. On Wednesday, Zachary flew in to join the adventures. We swam in the Atlantic, rode bumper cars at Boomers, and watched *Toy Story 4*. It was important for me to engage with my two sons together, and if they could spare the time, I could certainly spare the money.

Zachary and I left West Palm Beach early on Saturday and flew to Pittsburgh. Ruth and Zelig picked us up at the airport. I stayed two nights at their new abode, a narrow brick row house, built in the 1920s. Zachary prepared the rear of the basement as my bedroom. It was a bit cluttered—as one might expect—but it was cool, dark, and private. I went with them to church on Sunday, toured the city on Monday, and on Tuesday, Zachary and I spent the afternoon at Fort Pitt. I loved the place; full of history, battles, and George Washington. I left Pittsburgh at 6:00 and arrived home about 10:00.

Something sad and unexpected happened on the last day of June. I was on my way to camp for three nights at Ice House Reservoir. My plan called for a brief visit with Ken and Shirley Hardy, my friends from Western Hills Baptist who had recently relocated from Pacifica to El Dorado Hills.

On the far side of Sacramento, I noticed my camper acting up. The check engine light blinked for ten minutes, then the temperature gage flashed, then everything went bonkers. I managed to coast to a stop off Highway 50 at the Folsom exit. It appeared my engine had seized. I walked to a VW dealer which happened to be just fifty yards away. Because it was Sunday, sales people were on site, but not repair service.

I phoned USAA and soon someone towed my broken camper to the VW dealer. I then called Ken Hardy who rescued me. In the midst of misfortune, I was blessed in that he lived only ten minutes away. After removing essentials from the camper—like my dog—I piled in his truck to spend a night with him. Ken and Shirley were gracious hosts and a room became available. I was able to contact Ken Napier informing him of my latest mis-adventure.

## JULY

As things turned out, the VW dealer was not able to hoist my camper because of its propane tank. I had it re-towed to a repair shop called *Folsom Werkstatt*. Although their specialty was Mercedes-Benz, they agreed to check it out.

The next day, Werkstatt reported the engine had indeed blown and the estimate to rebuild it came to \$5200. I would have to leave the camper with them for at least two weeks. Alas! After a third night with Hardys, Ken and Linda picked me up on their return trip from Ice House. Soon, Jody and I were home, minus the camper.

Without the distraction of my pleasure vehicle, I focused on writing my memoir now renamed: *The Dash between the Dates: A Memoir of my First Seventy Years*. I completed chapter one called *Presaged* and chapter two, *Swaddled*. One evening I worked from six to midnight, then dreamed about my ancestors and my childhood.

I ran across a quote by Madeline L'Engle: "The great thing about getting older is that you don't lose all the other ages you've been." I figured she was right. All of my earlier ages were just a synapse of brain cell away.

As the month passed, I got word that my camper would require a few more weeks in the shop. The cylinder heads were on back order. I went on a guided tour of the retired Navy Aircraft Carrier, *Hornet*, with my retired navy friend Charles. I also virtually celebrated Zelig's second birthday.

On July 24 I headed to the Northwest in my Prius, packing a tent. I spent one night with the Hardys in El Dorado Hills and checked on my camper. I extracted several items to facilitate my road trip, then left early the next morning, driving all the way to Seven Feathers. After collapsing the back seat and pushing forward the front seats, I managed to sleep diagonally in the Prius rear.

I fellowshipped with Jeanne for one night, stayed with Frank for two nights, Eileen for two nights, then back with Jeanne for one night more. With Frank's help, I managed to rent the Marshall Community Center in Vancouver for the afternoon of December 28. Our *Christmas Re-gathering Reunion* was officially on the schedule. I was never quite sure, but it seemed my family enjoyed my company as much as I appreciated their hospitality.

## AUGUST

I awoke on August first on my back in a small tent. I surely miss the convenience of my camper. After leaving Rogue River State Park I was home by dark. I did a lot of researching and writing, completing chapter three of my memoir, *Nurtured*. I looked through old letters, report cards and photographs to re-create the years 1954 to 1960. What a blessing to have been reared by John and Jenny Foreman.

I continued my daily study in the Gospel of Mark. The Greek text seemed to pop out easier now. By chapter ten, I could digest complete verses with perhaps one word in two verses that gave me indigestion.

On August 12, the camper was delivered to my house. I was so happy to get it back. Unfortunately, the following day, there was a problem. The vehicle stalled and gasped going uphill. The same guy who dropped it off had to return a few days later to drive it back to Folsom. It wasn't until August 25 that he returned it, at no additional cost to me.

I was disappointed by this occurrence, since I had planned a four-day expedition with Ken and Linda, this time at the Silver Lake campground near the Pacific Crest trail. Instead of my camper, I reverted once again to my red tent. It wasn't too bad. The big draw back for me was that I could not stand upright.

The high point of this adventure occurred at an altitude of 8474 feet along the Pacific Crest trail at Carson Pass. In mid-August I wasn't prepared to view such a profusion of wildflowers. After all, Bay Area wildflowers had died away months earlier. The explanation was simple. Just a few weeks before my arrival the ground had been blanketed in snow. With a hot sun and cold water, wildflowers exploded. I kept muttering to myself, "Liz would love this." We walked on to Winnemucca Lake stepping around the occasional snow patch. Before returning, we stopped at the Kit Carson Lodge for a spectacular view, meal, and conversation.

Liz and I were about to embark on our seventh trip abroad, a two-week cruise of the Baltic Sea. The difficult part for my wife was leaving Jody behind. She had grown to love her *step dog* nearly as much as I did. On August 27 I received a second tooth implant; on August 28 my camper finally returned re-repaired; on August 30 I dropped off Jody at Varadys; and on August 31, Nancy and Larry dropped us off at SFO. Our Oceania Cruise was about to begin.

## SEPTEMBER

Liz and I flew Icelandair and experienced a frantic time in Reykjavik navigating between our connecting flights. We finally disembarked in Copenhagen at 3:00 p.m. on Sunday, September 1, checking into the Admiral Hotel. We arrived so completely jet-lagged, I couldn't count this as a cruise day.

Day 0 ~ September 2, Monday ~ Copenhagen, Denmark.

This was our bonus day in the Danish capital. I arose very early to walk the shore of the harbor. With map in hand, I made a point to visit the famous landmark of *Lile Havrue* or the Little Mermaid. This sculpture, inspired by Han Christian Andersen's story, appeared in silhouette against the brightening sky. I stood alone

in my picture taking. Soon I was sitting with Liz in the hotel lobby sipping coffee and munching a *Danish*.

In the afternoon, Liz and I boarded the Blue Planet Shuttle Bus for an on-and-off tour of the city. We saw the royal palace and a changing of the guards. Once again, I visited the Little Mermaid, this time in the company of my wife and a gaggle of onlookers.

Day 1 - September 3, Tuesday - Copenhagen, Denmark.

We watched our Oceania Cruise ship, *Marina*, as it pulled into dock just a after dawn. As Liz rested, I walked the harbor line again. Such a beautiful city and so many bicycles! I remembered an old song by Danny Kaye, "Wonderful, wonderful, Copenhagen, friendly old girl of the town".

We boarded the *Marina* at 1:00 p.m. and settled into our suite. The only cruise event of the evening was muster station drill, then we headed out to sea. We did reserve a meal at the Red Ginger.

Day 2 - September 4, Wednesday - Cruising the Baltic Sea.

Liz and I settled into our suite as the cruise traveled overnight to Helsinki. I felt like Apostle Paul, comfortable in whatever place I found myself; in a humble pup tent in the woods or aboard a luxury cruise ship along the Baltic coast.

Day 3 - September 5, Thursday - Helsinki, Finland.

Our excursion of Helsinki began at 08:30. We bussed to the Senate Square then walked for a few hours, passing and pausing at many of the city's landmarks. We rested at the Rock Church, its center blasted from solid basalt and topped with a copper dome. We sat for several minutes listening to an organ recital, "Be Still my Soul". We ended our guided walk at Sibelius Park, named for the preeminent Finnish composer. Six-hundred steel pipes composed the monument built to his honor.

Day 4 - September 6, Friday - St. Petersburg, Russia.

Our three days in Russia provided the centerpiece of the tour. As the royal capital of czars and czarinas, Saint Petersburg held as much splendor as any rival in Europe. As long as we were escorted by an official guide, we did not require a visa.

Our guided coach tour, called *Highlights of St. Petersburg*, began at 09:00. I found it hard to take in all that we saw in four hours, like sipping water from a firehose: Saint Nicholas Cathedral, St. Isaac's Cathedral with golden dome, Palace Square, and finally Peter and Paul Cathedral with its pink and green Corinthian columns and opulent iconostasis. Every object seemed gilt in gold. This cathedral held the tombs of the czars from Peter I to Alexander II. We traveled across the Neva River for more views of this grand and picturesque metropolis.

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Day 5 ~ September 7, Saturday ~ St. Petersburg, Russia.

Our excursion this day was called *Hermitage and Gold Room*. We toured the set of four buildings that were established by Catherine the Great in 1764 and served as her winter palace. The Hermitage was ranked as the largest museum in Russia (some say in the world) and contained an astounding collection of art—much of it confiscated from Nazi Germany who in turn had plundered it from conquered Europe.

We arrived at the 10:30 opening, then walked up the grand staircase with its golden stuccowork and white marble statues. We followed our guide as she led us into posh staterooms with gilt bronze columns and cut-glass chandeliers. The collection of art was impressive with paintings by Da Vinci, Rafael, Michelangelo. I paused to contemplate the painting of Rembrandt's *Prodigal Son's Return*. The Gold Room displayed a collection of archeological objects mostly recovered from the Caspian region of Russia.

When the official tour ended, Liz and I were able to venture on our own. For this purpose, we had purchased individual visas. The single place Liz wanted to visit was the Peterhof, a series of palaces and gardens not included in our tours. We bought tickets to enter the grounds, but not the palaces. That was okay since we had already seen enough interior opulence. We walked the grounds to marvel at the sixty-four fountains spouting into a central pool. Liz and I enjoyed our hours *off the leash* and managed to find our way back to the *Marina* without much hassle.

Day 6 ~ September 8, Sunday ~ St. Petersburg, Russia.

We enjoyed one more Russian excursion called *The Hermitage, a wealth of Art and History*. We followed the tour guide's lollypop as he led us through room after room of displayed art. The highlight for me was solitude at the czar's personal chapel, resplendent in gild and bejeweled with icons. It was Sunday and I was able to consider the greatness of God, a being whose glory outshone the surrounding glitter as the sun outshines the darkness.

With visas in hand, we left this excursion and strode to the central plaza of Saint Petersburg. The open space was immense and filled with Sunday strollers. A taxi dropped us at the port entrance where we produced our visas and walked a mile to board our cruise liner.

Day 7 ~ September 9, Monday ~ Tallinn, Estonia.

Our excursion in Estonia was as close to nature as our forays into Saint Petersburg had been removed from it. For *Glacier Memories: A Nature Reserve Walk*, we joined eight other outdoor enthusiasts to hike along a forested trail and across a mossy bog. Wood-planked walkways kept our feet dry. Our guide explained the region's natural history of glaciation. We climbed to the top of a viewing tower to check out the magnificent green landscape.

Day 8 ~ September 10, Tuesday ~ Stockholm, Sweden.

Our excursion was called *City Hall and Lake Maelaren Cruise*. After breakfast, we took a short bus ride to the island of Kunghomen. Here was situated the famous city hall which was the site of the annual Nobel Prize banquet. We walked through the Blue Hall, Golden Chamber, and outside gardens. We then went on a cruise of Lake Maelaren which wound through the inner-city canals. We glided past castles, gardens, beaches and leafy residential areas.

Day 9 ~ September 11, Wednesday ~ Cruising the Baltic Sea.

The seas were too choppy for an anchorage at Visby Island. We paused for a few hours then relaxed an unexpected day at sea. The break was good for Liz and me. We did laundry, walked the onboard track, and enjoyed the amenities of a first-class cruise. I listened to two lectures on amber—its origins, history, and how to distinguish the genuine substance from imitation.

Day 10 ~ September 12, Thursday ~ Gdansk, Poland.

Liz and I left the ship at 08:00 for an excursion called *Highlights of Gdansk*. Traveling by coach, we passed through Oliwa and the Gdansk shipyards, a place made famous by the Solidarity Movement.

Our walking tour began at the entrance into the city's Old Town. We followed the lollypop up the riverfront, then down St. Mary's Street. The scene was a delight of quaint shops and terraced buildings, all decorated with elaborate facades crowned with ornate gables. Gothic St. Mary's was the world's largest brick church, accommodating 25,000 worshippers. I observed that many of these Polish people had faces like mine. I considered my *23andme* genetic test, guessing 71% was an accurate measurement of my Eastern European roots.

Our guide explained that two world-changing events occurred in Gdansk (formerly Danzig). First, Europe plunged into World War II when Nazi troops invaded the city on September 1, 1939. Second, Soviet Communism began to crumble when Solidarity first protested communist rule in December 1970.

Day 11 ~ September 13, Friday ~ Warnemunde, Germany.

Oceania Cruises stopped in this port town to accommodate those who wanted to make a hectic dash to Berlin. Liz and I chose rather to debark and wander Warnemunde at our ease. This former East German city was still shedding its communist past, lacking the modern glamour of Western German cities. But quaintness held its charm. On our wonderings we visited a few churches, a row of shops along the North Sea, a lighthouse, and a city park. I tried to revive my German language, but it came out garbled admixed with Korean and koine Greek. We spent most of this Friday onboard ship, enjoying the luxury of our accommodations.

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Day 12 - September 14, Saturday - Gothenburg, Sweden.

We arrived the next morning in Gothenburg and joined an afternoon excursion called: *West Coast Islands – Panoramic and Walking Tour*. About a dozen of us cruisers boarded a mini-van and drove along Sweden's delightful west coast. The area was dotted with picturesque fishing villages, inlets, and coastal resorts. We proceeded to the village of Kladesholmen, center of the herring industry. This walking tour provided me with a taste of rural Sweden, without having to taste the local fish.

Day 13 - September 15, Sunday - Oslo, Norway.

Our final excursion was another walking tour called *Hike Along the Akerselva River*. Liz and I followed the lollipop from ship side to the Oslo Metro station where we boarded an underground train to the north of town. From there we walked four miles beside the Akerselva River through woodlands, green spaces, finally reaching the city and the pier. I felt sorry for the tour guide. She was knowledgeable, but showed difficulty in maintaining a pace. The group stopped a few times to accommodate her disability.

Day 14 - September 16, Monday - Cruising the North Sea.

This final day of the cruise afforded Liz and me time to recover from our outdoor activity and enjoy the on-board programs. I remember sitting deck-side and working on my memoir, codenamed LXX. I was composing my first words of Chapter Five; the day President Kennedy was assassinated. I enjoyed my last Texas burger, last ice cream Sunday, and last dip into the pool.

Day 15 - September 17, Tuesday - Amsterdam, Netherlands.

We docked at 06:00 and de-boarded a few hours later. Both Liz and I had been tourists in Amsterdam before, so we didn't plan a bonus day. In any event, we had both seen *Mannikin Pis*. We caught our Icelandair Flight at 2:00 p.m. and were back home at 7:00 the same day.

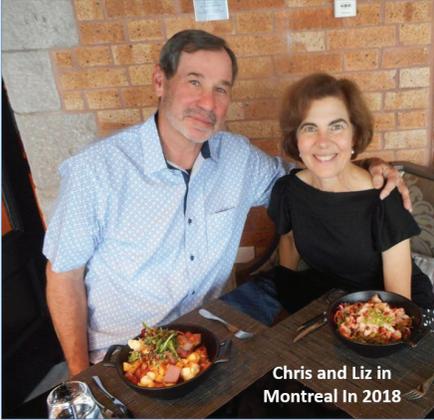
Like all international vacations, the Baltic Cruise required a full week to digest. After six months of anticipation and three weeks of realization, the week of focused recollection provided a third layer of traveling pleasure (*fahrvergnügen*). I posted pictures and words on my *Photo Journal* page at [chrisalanforeman.com](http://chrisalanforeman.com).

From September 25 to 28, Jody and I camped at Pinnacles, site 104, loop D. I went out for two hikes with the Napiers, once to an unexpected pool hidden between giant boulders and once to a bat cave. The cave entrance was barred, giving the bats a chance to recover from their diminishing numbers.

The month ended with Instagram pictures of Zelig at the zoo, Lorenzo as a fifth-grade patrol boy, Gia sitting at her third-grade desk, and a very pregnant Ruth.

## OCTOBER

Zachary texted me on October 2, notifying me that Ruth was entering the hospital for induced labor. She did not have a pleasant time for the next forty-eight hours, that is until Zofia Izabela Franciszha Foreman was born at 9:39 p.m. on October 4, weighing in at seven pounds and four ounces. We gave thanks because mother and baby were healthy and back home after a few days. *Thank you, God, for grandchild number four.*



Chris and Liz in  
Montreal In 2018



Zachary with  
Zoshie and Zellie  
In 2020

For 2019, I had a personal travel-quest. My ambition was to visit all twenty-one of the California missions on consecutive days, combining a pilgrimage of history, religion, and travel.

My travel-quest began on October 9 with a Prius drive to Mission *Delores San Francisco de Asis*. Founded in 1776 it was the oldest structure in San Francisco. I snapped pictures inside the chapel and outside in the garden and cemetery.

I drove the next day to the town of Sonoma to visit Mission *Sonoma San Francisco Solano*. This outpost was the last and northernmost in California's chain of missions. The property was operated as part of the Sonoma Mission State Historic Park.

From Sonoma, I drove south to San Rafael. I had been to Mission *San Rafael Arcángel*, yet I wanted to visit the site in context with the other twenty. I learned the structures were completely rebuilt, more than once, with the current edifice being constructed in 1949 as a replica of the old. Only the bells were original, although artifacts were displayed behind glass.

On October 12, I began the camper portion of my road trip. I drove across the San Mateo Bridge to Fremont where was located Mission *San José De Guadalupe*. This mission was one in a chain along the El Camino Real. each planned to

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be one day's journey from the other. The place was destroyed by earthquake and a reconstruction was completed in 1985, decorated as the original. A few archeological artifacts were on display.

I next drove to the campus of the University of Santa Clara to see the eighth mission, founded by Junipero Serra in 1777. Franciscans turned Mission *Santa Clara de Asís* over to the Jesuit Order who opened the first college in California in 1851. The current structure dated from 1929. I traveled onward thirty minutes to stay the night at Prayer mountain.

On October 13, I visited three missions. In the morning, I drove the short distance to Mission *Santa Cruz*. This place was more of a monument than an actual mission. The present edifice was a replica, one-third scale. I walked through the sparse interior and around the perimeter.

I then drove inland about an hour to Mission *San Juan Bautista*. The 1906 earthquake destroyed the un-reinforced walls and in 1949, it was restored to its original glory. It was a Saturday and several couples chose this mission as their wedding venue.

Next, I drove to Monterey to check out the second oldest Mission, *San Carlos Borromeo de Carmelo*, founded by Serra in 1770. The cemetery and garden were a joy to stroll; both historically and spiritually. The burial place of Junipero Serra lay on the grounds. I camped the night at the nearby Monterey Pine RV Park-Navy Getaways.

On October 14, I added three more missions. *Mission Nuestra Señora de la Soledad* was a lonely wind-swept locale. For most of its history it had lain an abandoned heap of rubble, but it was restored in 1955. Since the mission was named *solitude*, I strolled the grounds with Jody on leash, in the solitude of a Sunday morning.

At two hour's drive south, I stopped at Mission *San Antonio de Padua*. The California Historic Landmarks League rebuilt this mission in 1948 as an accurate replica of the original. With my military ID, I entered nearby Fort Hunter Liggett, filling up on gas and groceries.

Next, I tromped through *San Miguel Arcángel*, founded in 1797, secularized in 1833, and rebuilt in 1928. I continued south to camp overnight at the National Guard post near San Luis Obispo.

On day six of my pilgrimage, I drove down the road to Mission *San Luis Obispo de Tolosa* which was founded in 1772 and was situated in the heart of the city. The dioramas and displays were excellent. I walked along a creek side pausing at the statuary of bears and birds.

Moving south to Lompoc I stopped at Mission *La Purísima Concepción*. This place had an odd history. Founded in 1787, it was destroyed by earthquake and abandoned. The mission complex was reconstructed by the CCC in 1934 and reincarnated as La Purisima Mission State Historic Park.

My third mission of the day was in Solvang, *Santa Inéz Mission* founded in 1804. Like most Catholic missions it was destroyed, abandoned for a while, then re-build to resemble the original. I camped for the night at nearby Cachuma Lake just as the sun was setting.

After a camp side breakfast of coffee and cheerios, I drove down Highway 154 to visit *Mission Santa Bárbara*. I thought of Simon as I drove near Goleta. I arrived early enough to avoid school-bus crowds. After a ten-dollar contribution, I followed an “Old Mission Santa Barbara Museum and Garden Tour Map”.

As usually happened, I was lost in history and contemplation for the hour I wandered the grounds. I didn't notice the passage of time until my feet ached and I had to sit on a bench in the well-groomed garden. The giant rendition of Saint Barbara portrayed her with a point-down sword in her left hand. Zachary taught me the symbolism meant Barbara had died a martyr.

Down Highway 101 an hour lay *Mission San Buenaventura*, in the center of Ventura, California. Founded on Easter, 1782, by Junipero Serra, the mission was destroyed and rebuilt a number of times. Jody had been confined to the camper during her visit, so when I finished my tour, I walked my dog to the beach to mingle with surfers.

My third stop of the day brought me into the LA metro. *Mission San Fernando rey de España* was named for a Spanish king. A fenced section of the cemetery was marked “The Bob Hope Memorial Garden” which contained a grave for the entertainer and his wife. I drove an hour into the San Gabriel mountains to stay in a remote spot called Chilao Overnight Campground.

On October 17, I drove downhill into the metropolis. *Mission San Gabriel Arcángel* was located near Pasadena, a place Liz and I had visited a few times. Like most missions, the entrance was a combined gift shop and entry gate into a museum. Plaza Park, across the street, was an excellent lawn to walk the dog.

Because of traffic, the drive to *Mission San Juan Capistrano* was slow. The original church was built as a fortress with giant stones. This structure tumbled in the 1812 earthquake resulting in thirty-two deaths. The ruins were never rebuilt and as I walked through the rubble, I was reminded of Greco-Roman ruins. The enclosed garden was the largest of all missions, with a dozen walking paths. A monument stood to Leon Rene who wrote the song “When the Swallows Come Back to Capistrano.” Perhaps this was my favorite of all the missions.

Down I-5 and east on Highway 76 was located *Mission San Luis Rey de Francia*. After flourishing for fifty years, this mission fell into disrepair until Franciscans began restoration in 1892. The architectural style was called *Spanish-Moorish-Mexican*. After walking the grounds, I drove to Fiddler's Cove RV Park and Campground. The evening stroll led me to the Pacific Ocean on one side and San Diego Bay on the other.

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The last shall be first. After breakfast on October 18, I drove to *Mission San Diego de Alcalá*, the first California mission. Founded in 1769 by Junipero Serra, the structures were many times destroyed, abandoned, and rebuilt. Between 1850 and 1862, the U.S. Army garrisoned the grounds. I particularly enjoyed the room re-created to be Father Serra's quarters. What a brave and dedicated man he was!

My travel-quest being accomplished, I began the long trek home, arriving in San Mateo on Thursday, October 20. Here are seven things I learned:

1. California is unique in its history. Led by Catholic priests, twenty-one missions were founded over a span of fifty-seven years, intended to be one day's journey apart.
2. Traveling teams were composed of three elements—Clergy to convert, Commerce to exploit, and military to colonize.
3. Original structures were built of un-reinforced mud and stone. In a highly seismic region of course all these buildings would collapse over a history of two-hundred years.
4. After Mexican independence, the string of missions was secularized and each sold to the highest bidder.
5. Abraham Lincoln signed into law the order returning the missions to Catholic stewardship, albeit with a fraction of their original acreage.
6. The twenty-one missions run the gamete from state run to church run. All were open to the public.
7. Both church and state cooperated to rebuild and retain this important heritage. I'd like to see more cooperation of that kind.

After this pilgrimage, I stayed at home for a while. I helped Steve Yea lead a hymn sing on a Sunday evening. On October 21, I made a record of nine chores accomplished in my Prius. Stop one: at Crystal Springs, groceries at Safeway, \$300 from the ATM, vet appointment. Stop two: at Costco for shopping and pizza slice. Stop three: at Kaiser for flu shot. Stop four: at Big O to inflate Prius tires. Stop five: at Rite-Aid to repair wrist watch and by orthopedic inserts.

In October, I began to volunteer at the San Mateo library as a computer helper. I typically dropped by for two hours on Wednesdays to assist those in need. Sometimes one or two people appreciated my assistance.

As the month came to a close, I posted pictures of my new granddaughter named Zofia, Lorenzo posing with a soccer ball, and Gia with Halloween pumpkins.

On October 30, I headed to the Northwest, intending to visit family and promote CASA. Jody and I stayed one night at Rogue River State Park. That was

always such a lovely spot to rest and walk along the river banks. I then stayed one night in Canby with Jeanne. Don John was then living with my sister while he was awaiting a kidney transplant. The situation did not appear ideal, but both struggled to make it work.

## NOVEMBER

On Friday night, I stayed with Frank. We had been invited to speak at the New Life Church in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. After a good day of fellowship, we headed east on I-90 in the camper. In conversation with Frank, the seven-hour journey passed quickly. Of course, we stopped once to chow down on salami sandwiches. We stayed the night in a just-opened Marriott.

On Sunday morning we walked along the Spokane River enjoying the snowy freshness of beautiful Coeur d'Alene. We headed to church where Pastor Geoffrey Winkler met us at the door. We joined the adult class where we spoke about CASA and our ministry in Rwanda. In my sermon, I challenged the congregation to partner with us as CASA brings the gospel to Africa.

After a luncheon, we headed west on I-90 as far as Pasco, staying one night with Lucy Bakke. We visited her daughter and a handful of grandkids. I relished playing with the little ones as they chased Jody.

The next day, I dropped Frank at his house and continued north to visit Eileen. I had brought along my 1966-67 diary and read to her the day of her wedding. Frank, Jeanne, and Charlotte drove up to Longview the following day for a five-sibling get-together. Frank and Char celebrated birthdays while Jim Francis talked about old Whiting days.

I left for home the next day with an overnight stay at the Weed rest stop. How can I explain? These road trips both refresh and exhaust at the same time. The body is fatigued, but the soul is invigorated.

In November, I decided to cancel my delivery of the San Francisco Chronicle, relying solely on the digital replica version. The only complication concerned my penciling in of the daily cryptoquip. However, I learned to print that from my iPad, so after decades of newspaper delivery, I went paperless. At the same time, I was drawn in to conservative podcasts, paying for a subscription to Ben Shapiro's *Daily Wire*. With 2020 being an election year, I was sucked into a daily diet of Trumpian politics eventually viewing a few hours per day. I also continued to hike with Liz, decipher the Greek text of Mark, and speak on occasion at the Saturday morning Men's meeting in Burlingame.

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I was anxious to see my new granddaughter for the first time so on November 16 I flew to Pittsburgh. This visit had one aim in mind, to attend Zofia's baptism at Saint James Catholic Church on November 17. I was delighted to sit in the front pew, sometimes holding Zelig and sometimes cradling Zofia. During the sacrament, Zachary, Ruth, and Zelig stood up front. (Sometimes her daddy had to hold Zelig). Her god mother held Zofia as the words were spoken and a candle lit. Zofia got to wear a cool baptism sash.

After the ceremony we fellowshiped with Zachary's friends, and I spoke for a while with Father Dismis. While in town, I also accompanied the family to Chuck E. Cheese, the nearby library, and an Irish pub.

Upon my return, I made a special trip to Mill Valley to speak with my tenants about selling the property. I parlayed with Santos Hernandez about completing the front decks and with Linda Tull from Compass Real Estate to manage the sale—now projected for 2021.

On Thanksgiving Day, I volunteered at USO@SFO, offering to all in transit a turkey dinner. The month ended with a walk through Filoli with Liz, an appointment with Social Security to prepare for my seventieth birthday, and a completion of all sixteen chapters of the Gospel of Mark.

## DECEMBER

The month began with daily rain and daily writing. I had just completed chapters 6, 7, and 8 (1967 to 1972). I dreaded writing chapter nine because that entailed reading through six fat journals of my Korea experience, 1972-1974. This book was going to take much longer to write than I had anticipated.

On December 11, I had my final appointment with Dr. Vadim. My two implants checked out fine and he gave me a bottle of wine as a reward for my longsuffering. I escape-camped for one night at Big Basin, summing up the experience this way: "a long drive, a good steak, and raindrops on the camper roof. It was probably worth it."

I had been shopping for a new bed frame for a while. Liz accompanied me to Macy's where I picked out a \$1400 mechanical frame complete with remote, lights, and vibration. I learned to use just two settings: *flat* for sleeping and *zero gravity* for iPad browsing. Jody often rested in the fold of zero gravity.

At mid-month the U.S. House of Representatives impeached President Trump. This action provoked me to focus even more on partisan politics. I began to dispute with leftists on Facebook. My right-leaning podcasts and YouTube subscriptions created a kind of echo chamber that made it difficult for me to appreciate opposing views.

Also at mid-month, the front deck on Ashton Lane was rebuilt. I made a few visits to Marin County to oversee the project and withdrew \$40,000 from savings to pay for it.

I continued to work on my memoir. Since the arc of the narrative ran from zero to seventy, I felt oddly as if I were acting out the last days of my own story. I wrote a *Meditation on Sugarloaf Mountain and the Overlook Trail* on December 24, 2019.

Looking out my kitchen window on my seventieth birthday, I see Sugarloaf Mountain; a wide walking trail etched onto its southern face.

Hiking to its sandy summit with dog on leash, I gaze at a panorama of hills, homes, and highways. Lumbering aircraft circle and descend into the giant airport. The roar of engines—even at a distance of twenty miles—accompanies the steep climb of ascending jets.

Stepping down a spiral of rough-hewn steps—past thistle, sage, and poison oak—I enter Laurelwood Park. This acre of soggy grass abuts the rugged hillside. Footpaths and fire trails crisscross the woodland with warnings of coyote and cougar.

Walking past a massive coastal oak, I marvel at its lowest limb extended to the horizontal a bouncing twenty feet. I hear a waterfall tumbling down the Sugarloaf hillside. The flow enters a culvert on my right, then gushes into a deep arroyo on my left. Emboldened by winter rains, Laurelwood Creek splashes over boulders as it completes a quarter-mile journey, vanishing into an underground tunnel.

On the opposite side of Laurelwood Creek and up a steep embankment, a narrow clay footpath overlooks the stream. From this higher vantage, I walk my dog and hear indistinct conversations projected from the creek-side walkway.

My lifespan, like Laurelwood Creek, has a defined beginning which gushed into existence on December 24, 1949. Yet the start point of the creek is not identical with the origin of the water. Can I possibly trace the water to its source? Does it originate in rainfall? In a cloud? In evaporating ocean? Is it not true the actual molecules of H<sub>2</sub>O approach an indestructible everlasting?

And what about the end point of Laurelwood Creek, the point at which the stream disappears out of sight? The water must proceed onward and downward. My guess is the creek water eventually trickles into the Pacific Ocean. Is that mingling of molecules the end of the story? Indeed, is my life-stream like that creek water, disappearing into the ground for a few moments only to re-join a vast ocean of souls?

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If a flowing river serves as a metaphor for a human lifespan, then an overlook trail may serve as a narrative of my life. From its elevated vantage point, I can survey my childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and dotage. I see a topography of peaks and plateaus; indistinct images through swaying trees. I can't quite make out its vanishing point, but I know in my bones the end of one thing must always mark the beginning of another.

Christmas was a low-key holiday because Liz and I were preparing for a visit to the Northwest. For over a year, I had been superintending the *Christmas Re-gathering 2019*. This event was to combine a family reunion with a Christmas party and included a birthday for me and fellow septuagenarian, Jim Francis. I urged my siblings to promote the gathering and encourage as much family as possible to attend. This gathering might very well be the last such event.

On December 26, I dropped Jody at Varadys and headed north in my Prius. I stopped overnight at a Rogue River yurt and the next day checked into the Portland Airport Marriott. I was pleased to hook up with Simon, Lolo, and Gia. (Zachary had to cancel at the last moment because Ruth had broken a bone.) Liz arrived by airport shuttle to the Marriott by noon and our party was complete.

We met at the Marshall Community center in Vancouver at 2:00 on Saturday. In all, forty-eight people showed up: Zelen branch - 19, Walker-Francis Branch - 8, Zimmerman Branch - 11, Chris Branch - 7 (including Jim and Tricia), and Frank Branch - 3. It was an awesome get-together with singing, laughing, and over eating.

Each of the five siblings spoke to the assemblage and introduced family members. I was especially pleased to observe second and third cousins chasing and playing. I had prepared beforehand a special video clip flashing the faces of one-hundred Foreman-related people. It was a tough quiz. Laura identified the most with seventy-two.

About 5:00 Liz departed with her sister, while Simon and I headed back to the Marriott. The next day we visited my Korean in-laws in Battle Ground. My photograph shows Simon, Lorenzo, and Gia, standing beside Hyun Hee, Dong Hyun, and Stephen. I figured Kim would be happy that we were striving to keep this Korean connection alive. Simon dropped me off at the Portland airport and drove my Prius back to San Mateo to provide his kids with a snowy road trip.

I arrived home, via Uber, on the last day of 2019. After a shower, I relaxed in my bed articulated at zero gravity. Liz commented how much she had appreciated my seventieth birthday bash. Jody snuggled under my blanket, poking her paws into my side. I opened my iPad to the news of the day. The front page of the digital *Chronicle* was filled with impeachment politics. I scanned a back-page story about a mysterious virus spreading from Wuhan, China. I spoke to my dog, "Thank God it's not here in America."



## CONCLUSION

*Then shall my silver cord be loosed and my golden bowl be broken.*

*Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was*

*and my spirit return unto God who gave it.*

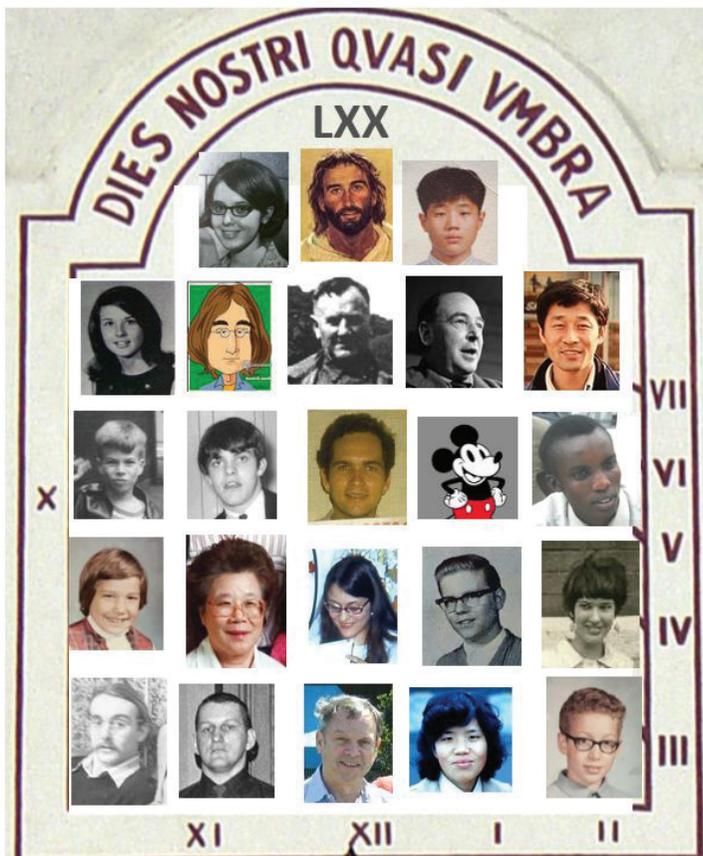
*Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity.*

*(taken from Ecclesiastes 12:6–8)*

My life story is now complete up to my seventieth year—supremely, a vanity of vanities. Yet, my capstone (or gravestone) chapter has yet to be written. My birthyear of 1949 has yet to find its bookend numeral. I cannot expect to be like Moses who wrote about his own death at the close of his own fourth book. I suspect my saga will be rounded out by my two sons who will compose a thirty-first chapter called *Deceased*. Write it well, Zachary and Simon.

Tell me, sons. Will part two be published with chapter one being titled *Resurrected*? God only knows. Yet, “I know in whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day”. Indeed, I put my trust in the One who said, “Be faithful unto death, and you shall receive a crown of life.” Lord, place a crown upon my head, that I may cast it at thy feet.

Socrates: "The unexamined life is not worth living."  
 Chris: Indeed. But concerning the over-examined life, what say you?



Arlene, Jesus, Stephen, Debbie, John, Grandpa, C.S. Lewis, Dong Hyun, Jackie, Jim the Pig, Meng, Micky, Franc, Shelley, Halmoni, Lelia, Rinehart, Barbara, Mark O, Donald, Starrett, Pam, Jimmy W.