

Trail's End



By: Jack Scott

Characters in Trail's End

Jack Scott: Counselor, Youth Authority Parole Agent I and Classification Counselor

Lee Farnsworth: Parole Agent Supervisor (Pasadena/Covina District)

John Geisbauer: Supervisor of rehab office (Norwalk/Covina District)

Doyle Montz: Junior High School teacher and supervisor of Audio Visual Crew

Frank Glen: High School machine shop instructor

Pomona Junior High Teachers: Edwin Bamber, Fred Cutler, Anne Juhl, Maxon Wade, Adrian Wright, Agatha Palmer, Mr. Weide

NOTE: Persons listed who were in my story while at Youth Training School and Vocational Rehabilitation are the important characters.

Youth Training School

I hardly know where to begin my story at YTS. I suppose you need to know first of all what kind of school it was. YTS was a training school for delinquent boys between the ages of fifteen and twenty-one. They had committed a crime (s) convicted, and made “wards of the state.” As a result, they were committed to the institution. Most of them were sentenced for nine months.

When I began working there the young men were incarcerated for minor crimes-incorrigibility, joy riding, chronic truancy, assault, and various misdemeanors. Boys who were convicted of purse snatching were automatically given a year. The longer sentence was given because they snatched purses from older women. Sometimes they fell and were injured so it was considered a serious offence.

While incarcerated the boys were expected to attend school or learn a trade. The state had agreements with their home schools to accept work they completed at YTS. If they completed graduation requirements, they were given a high school diploma from their high school.

More than thirty trade training programs were available: carpentry, welding, auto mechanics, and electrical trade, typing, printing, building maintenance, cooking and baking, groundsman, and a number of others.

Many of the instructors had outside contracts with labor unions and employers, when their graduates left the school they were able to place them on jobs.

The boys had an opportunity to attend either the Protestant or Catholic Chapels. Outside groups came in to present entertainment as well as spiritual growth programs. Counseling was offered at the chapels and on the living units.

They had access to a fully equipped gym, swimming pool, recreation yards, and intermural sports. A full range of athletic

activities was available, including football, basketball, and baseball. We had a great track, but apparently it was not looked on as “macho”, because it was seldom used.

On the living unit, crafts, games, and TV, were available every evening. They could build model cars and planes or race slot cars. They could engage in dominoes, checkers, or cards.

Many of the institution staff brought in things for to them to do. I brought in tile for them to make mosaics and wood for a slot car track.

They had a lot to do in their spare time. Most of them took advantage of it. On two different occasions, I received plaques from the boys for things I did. They were very appreciative.

Understand however, YTS was not one big happy family. It was a jail in spite of its fancy name, its training, and recreational activities.

There were three primary racial groups: Blacks, Mexican-Americans, and Caucasians. There were some Orientals--very few. Each company on a living unit was divided up racially—50 Caucasians, 25 Blacks, and 25 Mexican-Americans.

On the “streets,” many, if not all of them, were gang members. They fought over “turf” and any other thing they could think up. They brought these grudges and racial feelings to the institution, so we were constantly on guard against fights and riots. We tried to control them by additional time. A fight usually meant another 30 days. Repeated fighting or rioting could result in a year extra time.

Fights had to be broken up quickly before others became involved. So, we had at least one Youth Counselor in the dayroom at all times. The dining hall was considered the most dangerous place. There were 100 boys in there at one time and had access to potential weapons. Four to six counselors were assigned to the dining hall.

I started working as a Youth Counselor assigned to 50 boys. My immediate boss was a Senior Youth Counselor who was in charge of the staff on one shift. I worked all shifts at one time or another. I

preferred the 4:00-12:00 shift because I could continue going to college.

I changed my college major to Sociology shortly after going to work at YTS. I don't remember going through any "gut" wrenching decision about it. I thought maybe my "calling" was to work with delinquent youth. So, Sociology seemed like a normal course of study. In addition, it would be beneficial in working with people of any culture.

I still planned a minor in Spanish. As it turned out, I only needed six units of Spanish literature to graduate with a Spanish major.

One year after going to work at YTS, I was promoted to Senior Youth Counselor. When I completed college, I qualified for a Parole Agent position. I passed the state test and chose to become an Institutional agent--working inside the institution.

As Parole Agent I, I kept the institutional records of 100 wards. I was involved in their assignment to school or trade. I took part in all disciplinary actions. I monitored their progress on the living unit, school, and in trade. Every three months I reported activities to the Youth Authority Parole Board. I assured the appropriateness of recommended time cuts or additional time in the program. When time came for parole consideration, I summarized the ward's progress and made recommendations.

Recidivism (relapse into crime) was always high and became a statewide concern—a political hot potato—so the Youth Authority decided to modify its "treatment" mode.

Youth Counselors were reclassified as Rehabilitation Counselors. They were taught how to conduct small group counseling sessions based on Glasser's Reality Therapy.

Contrary to the psychological theories then practiced, Glasser promoted the idea of individual responsibility. No matter how you were raised or treated, he said you were responsible for your actions.

Every ward, without exception, was required to attend small group sessions where Glasser's theories were discussed and promoted. The way they responded in the groups was noted and made a part of their progress reports. Consequently, they tried to participate in a positive way to get a favorable report.

A Treatment Team Supervisor (TTS) position was added to facilitate the new "treatment" mode. It was supposed to free up time for counselors. I don't think it did, but it provided promotional opportunity.

The TTS was in charge of two one-hundred boy units. He supervised the treatment program and staff. I took the exam, passed and was appointed immediately.

In spite of the new treatment methods, the situation at YTS continued to deteriorate. The new methods, however, were not solely to blame. Older, hard-core inmates were transferred from other institutions and they brought with them the same problems they experienced in the adult institutions.

About that time, the Muslim religion, which was active in the Black community, was allowed to enter the training school. Their services were used to recruit black inmates for their "religion". Actually, they became a black gang within the institution and racial problems escalated, including racial riots.

One day, a riot broke out in the trade area and spread quickly to the entire institution. In the confusion, many inmates climbed the fence and escaped.

I attempted to persuade some of them to remain inside, by promising that I would escort them to their rooms and testify on their behalf when discipline was meted out. Their only response was, "Mr. Scott, we don't want to hurt you, but don't try to stop them from climbing over the fence." Needless to say, I took their advice and proceeded to the trade area where most of the riot was taking place.

On the way, tear gas was shot into the area. A 55mm tear gas canister landed on the field just in front of me. I noted where it was and on my return to the unit, I picked it up (I still have it). About six hours later, the riot ended. Those who had escaped were either gone or had been caught and locked up.

In my office, I looked at the tear gas canister for a long time. Finally, I said to myself, probably as much of a prayer as anything else, “Lord, this is not what You called me to do.”

I had no desire to stay at YTS. I had come to another bend in the road. “But, where God? What is my calling? Lord, I am at the end of road. Help!”

At that time, I had more than ten years in state service—good salary, excellent medical benefits, permanent employment, and great retirement. With all that going for me, I didn’t want to leave state service. I didn’t take time seeking God’s will. A way out of the institution was my focus. And what I thought were my own efforts turned out to be the hand of God at work.

Through friends, who had previously worked at YTS, I heard about the Depart of Rehabilitation, the agency that trained and helped disabled individuals find employment. They were really excited about the promotional opportunities. I checked it out and liked what I found.

First Principles: Department of Rehabilitation

1971-1996

I transferred to the State Department of Rehabilitation in Pasadena, California on November 15, 1971, and began work as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor in the Covina Branch.

Contrary to popular belief, most disabled people—blind, deaf, quadriplegic, mentally disabled, slow learners—can perform full time. Studies have shown that they can perform as well as the regular working population, if given the opportunity.

It takes special training and it takes longer to prepare them, but once they are trained and placed on a job, statistics show they perform equally as well. Their welfare benefits are dropped and they begin to pay taxes. Within three years they pay for the cost of training them. That is not to mention the improved sense of self-worth.

A young deaf woman, from a poor family in Kentucky, was brought to my office by her sister. She was immediately sent for an ENT hearing evaluation. He reported that her hearing could be restored completely with a simple surgery. And within a few days she was ready for training. She was very bright and completed training quickly. A job soon followed and she was ecstatic.

Other rehabilitations were a source of great satisfaction. I thoroughly enjoyed working with a truck driver who lost his arm in a boating accident. He was an experimental machinist who lost his

manual and finger dexterity. Several blind people were taught to use a computer. Mentally challenged individuals were placed in controlled work situations. Hundreds of disabled people were put to work.

The Rebels

The Department went through reorganization and I was transferred to the Norwalk District. The professional and clerical staff there were great people. I was on “easy street.” But then, a problem arose in another branch office. The District Supervisor felt a change in supervisors was necessary, so I was picked to go.

The branch was known as an office of rebels. They had their own ideas about rehabilitation and didn’t want any interference from administration. Fearfully, I agreed to go.

I prayed a lot about my first meeting with them. I really didn’t know what to say. The more I prayed and thought about it, the more an unacceptable speech came to mind: “Tell them the story about the good shepherd. Tell them about the shepherd’s life, about how he looked after his sheep, how he led them to good pasture and still water. Tell them how he brought his sheep into the fold and at night and lay down across the way to keep them safe from predators. Tell them how he would search for just one lost sheep and not rest until he was found. Then, conclude by telling them about the shepherd’s love and that all he wanted in return was sheep that produced little lambs and lots of wool.”

I assumed the thoughts were from God, but they were so unusual I wasn’t convinced. “Lord,” I prayed, “You know I can’t go into a meeting with government employees—a bunch of rebels—tell them a Bible story. That’s not the way it’s done” I prayed some more, but He didn’t answer. All I could think about was the story of the good shepherd. “OK,” I said, “I surrender. Give the story to me as you want it told.”

I told them the story as if it were a common talk. When I finished, they just sat there. No one said anything. I looked around for some sign of acceptance. There, on each face, was what I was looking for, a smile, a friendly smile, smiles that said, "we are with you."

That great "flock" rallied immediately. To the administrator's surprise, they began to conform to what was expected. Every month they exceeded expectations. The quality of their work was phenomenal.

I became totally involved in my work. Helping disabled people go back to work was very rewarding. And the people in my office were as dedicated as I.

At last the day came when I had to say goodbye to those great people. It was a dark day for me. It was dark because the staff and I were very close. And too, it was the end of my work life; that was a scary thought.

In my closing days at the office, I looked at the various bends in the road that had led to this point. There were bumps in the road, but overall, I was pleased with the results. I didn't feel the twenty-five years had been wasted.

At my retirement luncheon, my supervisor sent me a memo which read: "You have been an exemplary Rehabilitation Counselor, Management Assistant, and Program Supervisor. More even than that, you have been our moral compass to keep us on track and to remind us of "First Principles." He sent me there with that in mind. He could have chosen someone else. He didn't. He chose me.

He is Sovereign, designer of the road that we take, including the bends in the road. Our plans may include promotion, a salary increase, or perhaps position status. Yet, if we follow the Lord with all our hearts, He chooses the path we take.

Roads End? Not Yet: Retirement

May 31, 1996

Shortly before retirement, we put our home up for sale. That was a difficult thing to do. It was the first home we owned. We had put in a lot of landscaping and had decorated it just like we wanted. We loved that place. Sadly, it was sold the day after we put it up for sale. We had to move quickly.

Tim and Dana, were living in Kansas City and that is where we planned to go. We preferred a slow, rural-type environment, but being near them was more important.

Our plans called for Tim and Dana to find a reasonably priced home for us to rent. They soon found that the better homes required a one- year lease. We agreed to that arrangement and they located a home rather quickly in North Kansas City.

We were fortunate enough to sell a few pieces of furniture. Things that would have to be sold at a yard sale, were all sent to Mexico. A couple we knew made regular trips taking food, clothing, tools, and toys. We packed our, clothing, and everything else into a rental truck and trailer. Then Grandma flew to Kansas City to get the home ready.

Meanwhile, Tim took a few days off work and flew out to California to help with the two vehicles. He drove the truck. I drove our pickup and pulled a trailer.

I believe it took us four days to get to Kansas City. Of course, I was to blame. The forecasts called for severe weather on the northern route, so I convinced Tim to take the much longer southern route. He hasn't let me forget it.

When we arrived and unloaded, we found the house was too small. Luckily it had a basement. A lot our stuff was stored down there until we moved to Nixa.

We became rather active that first year. We bought a Jayco Fifth wheel trailer and a Ranger Bass Boat. We joined our family at Truman Lake. Earl and Oleta, June and Junior, Juanita and Everett, Earl and Melba Blansit, and other relatives, were camped there. We stayed until it was time to leave for the winter.

We fished days on end, but Grandma and I had little to show for it. I bought all kinds of fishing equipment and fished hard. Grandma on the other hand, just slipped under the umbrella and drifted into La-La land. She couldn't have cared less.

Our time together however, was great. We took lunches on our boats and met in quiet coves to eat, linger awhile, and talk about where fish could be found. In the evening, we gathered around our trailers to eat fish, share fish stories, and remember the "good ole" days.

Climbing Our Family Tree: Genealogy

While living in Kansas City, I started to take genealogy seriously. There was a large genealogy section at the Mid Continent Public Library in Independence. Grandma became involved as well and we spent hours working on the Bradford/Belk and Scott/Morrow lines.

The more information we found the more we wanted to search. We visited: Dekalb County, Missouri, White County, Tennessee, North Carolina, Butler County, Kansas, Van Buren County, Arkansas, Kay and Harmon Counties in Oklahoma, and several counties in Texas.

Genealogy became a consuming passion and took up a lot of our time. If I had not become involved in it, I would have gone crazy.

As you know, Missouri winters are cold. But having a fifth wheel trailer and good traveling companions, we were able to escape to Arizona for the worst of it.

I thought my genealogy work would be interrupted by the trips, but that was not the case. The Family History Center in Mesa was a treasure trove of information.

Those were enjoyable times, but pulling a 27' trailer across country, sometimes in heavy traffic, was not fun. I got very uptight. I think we made three trips. That was enough.

Moving On Down The Road

The longer we lived in Kansas City, the more we realized it was not where we wanted to spend the rest of our lives.

Grandma Eva's family lived in Christian and Stone Counties—rural living at its best. Besides that, the old home place and stomping grounds were there—Ponce de Leon, Abesville, and Galena. Pleasant memories of those days may have contributed to our desire to be “down there.”

We talked with Tim and Dana about it and they agreed. None of us were happy with Kansas City.

Tim was working on his Master's Degree and wanted to finish before he left. He encouraged us to look for a place down south near the family. He said as soon as he finished his degree, he would look for work down there as well.

In a few days, we made a trip to Nixa. Freda, (Juanita and Orville's daughter) a licensed real estate agent agreed to show us homes. The first one was at 301 Yosemite Dr.

The home had been on the market over a year. That was amazing, because it was beautiful—all brick, three car-garage, four bedrooms, three baths. A finished basement with a large entertainment area, and situated on a large lot at the end of a cul-de-sac.

When we walked in, Grandma said, "This is it!" She didn't want to look at another home. The house had been vacant for more than a year, no one wanted it, but Grandma thought we had better make an offer that day. "It might be sold before we get back," she said.

I finally persuaded her to look at other places. We looked at a few, not many, but none of them appealed to her. After looking most of the day, she spoke with emphasis, "Ok, let's go back to the one on Yosemite."

I was concerned with the price. Grandma wasn't. Finally, we agreed to offer \$20,000 less than the asking price. I had no idea it would be accepted, but to my surprise, it was accepted immediately.

You know what we thought? That house has been sitting empty for over a year. God was saving it just for us.

On our return trip to Kansas City, we began to prepare for the move. I don't remember the exact day, but we moved in May 1997. If I remember correctly, it took two trips to take all our "stuff" down there. Tim and Dana were a great help.

Grandma was feeling very bad. Her left side was very sore after sleeping on the floor the last night in Kansas City. It's a good thing we had lots of help when we arrived in Nixa, including a nice soft bed at Juanita's house.

You should have seen the excitement as Earl, June, Juanita, and their spouses helped us unpack. It was like a beehive.

Once we got the furniture in place, Freda and Juanita began shopping for material to make curtains. They did a splendid job

cutting and hemming the curtains. Professionals couldn't have done a better.

We were in the middle of decorating when Faye and Ted walked in. Grandma really enjoyed showing off her new home.

We lived in Nixa some time before I had all the fishing I could handle. Grandma knew I wasn't happy and graciously agreed to sell our boat. That effectively ended our fishing pastime.

We sold the boat (for more than we paid for it) and couldn't go fishing any more. But Grandma was not about to sell the trailer. So, we pulled it down to Kimberly City on Table Rock Lake.

Grandma thoroughly enjoyed spending time with her grandchildren; watching them swim, play games, rides bikes, and roast wieners.

Sadly, that too came to an end. Owners of the campground sold the park and we had to leave. We looked all over Table Rock Lake for another RV park. Nothing was available at a reasonable price so we had to sell our trailer.

I remember how hard it was for Grandma. When I went down to get it ready for sale, she would not go with me. I think she stayed home and cried. If you don't know it, let me tell—you guys are precious.

Life is like that. It's always in transition. You have to adjust to changes as they come along and give God thanks for allowing you the privilege of doing it.

We gave up fishing and camping to enter another phase of our retirement. I am spending more time writing and doing genealogy research. Grandma has more time for yard sales and work at the church. We spend more time with Earl, Oleta, Juanita, Everett, June, Ward and occasionally others.

A few months later, Tim completed his degree and began looking for work around Branson. He found a job very quickly and moved his family in November 1997.

Monday night pizza and dominoes are like planning for an exciting week-end. We go to one home and then another. The host always provides snacks.

You can't imagine how much fun we have—men against women. Of course, we cheat a little, but it's all in fun and we have lots of laughs.

It takes forever to play a game. There are stories to be told and long forgotten songs that have to be sung. If one of us has a medical problem, we have to explain it in detail. Those things take a lot of time.

One thing we don't plan for, and it comes unexpectedly—the illness and death of one of our group. Junior and Maxine have now gone. We mourn the loss, but do not grudge the fun they are having in their new heavenly surroundings.

Well, what else do we do with our time? You guessed it. Grandma goes to garage sales every Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. She will soon run out of space to store those things. She always finds something other people need.

“Early birds get the worm,” she says. So, she gets up at 6 a.m. Cold or hot, makes very little difference. I have seen her lay awake trying to talk herself out of going, but she loses every time.

Grandma does other things, of course. She raises tomatoes every year to make hot salsa. She makes so much we have to give it away. Sometimes, she buys apples and makes apple butter. This year she froze some for apple pies.

During election-time she volunteers at the Republican Party Headquarters. She answers the phone, puts up signs, etc. She has strong feelings about terrorists, education, abortion, among other things, so she works hard at election time.

Our Place of Worship: James River Assembly

When we first arrived in Nixa, we searched for a permanent church home. James River Assembly was the place. Grandma and I have been involved in several of their ministries.

Grandma worked with young children until she found it was too difficult to carry them. Now she stuffs envelopes, counts tithes and offerings, works with church community projects, and “I Love America”—our Fourth of July Outreach.

Grandpa doesn’t exert himself that much. He transcribed the pastor’s sermons for a while, but that didn’t last long. Now, he sends birthday greetings to AG missionaries (November 2001- August 2016) and ushers on Sunday.

I enjoy being an usher. If someone raises his/her hand and does not go down front to accept Christ, I ask if they would like for me to walk down with them. It is surprising the number of people who will go down if someone walks with them.

I enjoy woodwork. I have built cabinets in the garage, made a TV cabinet (for Ben) and a doll bed (for Jesse) and put a vine around her bedroom to put her Beanie Babies on.

I have a lot of wood from the old Bradford Smokehouse and some branches from the old mulberry tree where Grandma use to play. (I have got to do something with that, it is now Aug. 2017).

I have done a lot of yard work, planting trees and shrubs, building rock planters, spreading river rock, and chasing moles. I would like to build an old dry creek bridge.

We had a bad ice storm in March 2008. Our basement flooded because we didn’t have good drainage. I spent hours putting in a drainage system and building a dry creek bed. The creek bed routed the water away from the house and it is very decorative.

Mirror, Mirror, on the Wall

Whom do I see when I look in the mirror? That is an interesting thought, isn't it? We don't see ourselves as other do, so I thought it would be fun for you to read what I think about myself.

Physical Image

My sister, Toy, took me to a Light Crust Dough Boy contest when I was just a baby. At that time, I was described as "chubby." Such a description followed me all through school. When I graduated from high school, I weighed 250 pounds, somewhat more than "chubby."

My weight was a concern during my school years, especially in junior high. A big Mexican guy often grabbed me by the "boobs" and made degrading remarks. Everybody in the gym laughed. It was really humiliating. I wanted to take him down a notch or two.

I think my weight kept me from sports. I never enjoyed any activities and didn't participate in them. The high school coach tried to get me involved in football because of my size, but I chose wrestling instead. Wrestlers are supposed to be big and heavy, you know.

Weight may have been a factor in my lack of social skills as well. I spent a lot time alone and had very few close friends. It may have contributed to my lack of interest in girls.

I lost a lot of weight in college and at the Instituto Preparatorio Internacional (IPI). When I returned home from a summer in Nicaragua, I weighed 185 pounds. Home folks thought I was "skin and bones." Even Grandma took notice and I felt good about that.

I reached a height of 6' foot and maintained a weight of 210-215 pounds for the most of my adult life. My weight has not been a distraction since college.

My hair was straight until about the time I graduated from elementary school. Then, it became very dark and wavy. I kept it quite short so the waves would not look so out of place. In high school, I began to notice white hair and after graduation it was really white.

I was strong physically, but never a “bully”. Mom often cautioned me about playing too rough with others.

I can’t complain about my health. My gall bladder was removed many years ago—Tim was two years old. Chronic heartburn, caused by gastro intestinal reflux disease, was a problem until the doctor recommended Previcid. Glenn twisted my ankle once when we were wrestling and it bothered me for some time, but I haven’t had any broken bones. I almost cut my left index finger off with my table saw.

In recent months, Grandma and I have complained about “old, acky, breaky parts”, but that’s normal. God has been good to us.

Psychological Image

I have already said that I was a loner. Much of my early teen years, was spent working on gadgets in the garage. I worked on my bike and various electrical things—things I could do alone.

Self-confidence has not been one of my strong personality traits. I don’t know why I felt inferior. My weight no doubt contributed to it, but my positive traits should have compensated for it.

From earliest times, I wanted to please. I wanted to be liked and bragged on. I helped my dad and brother work on their cars. I remember distinctly trying to do a perfect job at whatever they gave me to do. I tried to please Mom around the home. I felt like I worked hard at it.

I can’t remember trying to please my school teachers. However, there were two exceptions: Doyle Montz and M. Glenn.

Mr. Montz was my junior high history teacher and supervisor of the audiovisual crew. He was pleasant to be with and he taught me

so much. Every time I coil up an extension cord, I think of him showing me how to keep the kinks out of it. He never raised his voice in criticism. He was my kind of man, so I really tried to please him.

Mr. Glenn, my machine shop teacher, was an older man. He was so patient in showing me how to run the shop equipment. And when I mastered it, which wasn't long, he asked me to pass on my talent to other students. You can't imagine what that did for my self-confidence.

I tried to please on every job I had, from mowing lawns to working in Rehabilitation. That drive is not as strong as it once was, but it still there to some extent.

I get hurt easily. It has been that way for as long as I can remember, but I try desperately to keep it hidden. In my way of thinking, I do the best I can at every job I do. If it doesn't meet expectations, I recoil into myself very quickly.

One time a supervisor complained about the productivity of my unit. I took the criticism personally and almost came apart. It was out of character, but I told him right on the spot that I had done the best I could. And I added, "I don't take that kind of criticism lightly." Boy, did he ever back off.

Generosity has not been my strong point. I take after my dad, I guess. Like him, I don't give very much. Only in recent years have I come to grips with that shortcoming. I think Grandma has been the reason. She gives until it hurts. No kidding. Don't try to cheat her out of a penny, but ask for anything and she will give it to you. Our giving to the church, to missions, the poor, you name it, has increased dramatically since we retired. I rather enjoy it.

I have not been known for going very far out of my way to help anyone. Dad taught, "If you help someone, it will cost you." Don't take me wrong. Dad helped people who really needed it. He just didn't go too far out of his way. Apparently, I developed that trait.

Then your hillbilly grandma came along. Helping others was her way of life.

On a trip from Nixa to Kansas City, we saw a pregnant cow lying with her back downhill. Grandma said, "That's not good. She will die if she doesn't get turned around." "Huh? Huh?" I said and kept going. "Well!" She said disgustingly, "We have to go tell that farmer about it. Miles down the road we turned around and went back. By the time we got there, the cow was up and around. But that's beside the point. She went out of her way to help. Some of that is wearing off on me.

Perfectionism! I have wrestled with all my life. Avoid it if you can. When it gets to where you are never satisfied with what you have done, you are a perfectionist. You feel like just a little more work, a little more here and little more there, will make it just right. It won't. When you do it again, you find something else that needs to be fixed. Do your best, complete the task, and leave it alone.

My Mom was the most precious woman you could ever hope to meet. She was kind, loving, generous, trustworthy, and minded her own business. She never became involved in gossip, never spoke evil of anyone. Her prayer life was legendary.

I tried to show Mom how much I loved her. I did things for her I would have never thought about doing for my Dad. She had a problem with her back for years. At times, when she would reach over to pick something up, she could not get up. A doctor had to be called to give her an injection before we could get her in bed. I kept things off the floor and out of her way so she would not have to bend over. I didn't want something I had left on the floor to cause her pain.

I have not been one to show a lot of fear. I am cautious, but I don't cater to fear. I have never participated in dangerous activities, not because of fear, but caution. My idea is that there is no need to expose one's self to danger when there are other alternatives.

Some years ago, a young neighbor man, verbally accosted Grandma in the driveway. I heard it and immediately ran outside.

Before I had time to think, I told him, to “knock it off or I’ll wipe this driveway up with you.” That was a dangerous situation because the man was much younger and stronger than I. He could have mopped the driveway with me. For your information, I won the bluff.

In my youth, I liked to go horseback riding. I liked to go with Sonny to the auto races, motorcycle races and local boxing matches. Fishing took up much of the Spring and Summer. Rabbit hunting was only a sometime affair.

I became involved in the Amateur Radio Club—W6YMY—at the High School. Our 150 -watt transmitter reached much of the western world. Almost every day at noon, we gathered to talk with other ham operators. I could never learn the Morse Code, so I was unable to pass the licensing exam. If I could have, ham radio would have no doubt been a life-long hobby.

For several years I operated the projector for the Adult Education Forum at Fremont Junior High School. Most of the programs consisted of world travelers showing their films. I learned a lot about history and geography from that job.

I don’t like fiction. I don’t like movies filled with violence, curse words, and sex. I like history and good biographies. This interest probably led my interest in genealogy.

I have been engrossed in genealogy since 1994, when I took several genealogy courses through Claremont School District. It was there I learned the surname (Foak) of my great-great grandmother. She came from Germany. For the past number of years researching the Bradford and Scott lines have been my consuming passion.

Spiritual Image

What do I see in the mirror? I see a man, “whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered . . . whose sin the Lord does not count against him and in whom there is no deceit.” I see a man who

can lay his, “request before the Lord in morning and wait in expectation.” I see a man whose “God is forever and ever,” whose God will be his “guide even to the end.”

I was reared in a Christian home. My parents were born again believers, members of the Church of God, before I was born. We went to church services two times on Sunday, Wednesday night, and whenever the church doors were open.

I went to the altar in just about every revival. My final visit was at the Pomona Church of God, on the south west corner of Sixth and Linden, July 17, 1947. I was thirteen years old. I made a lasting decision to follow the Lord—the greatest decision I ever made.

I have not been a perfect Christian. I slipped many times, but I never gave up. God’s grace followed me. Every time I made a mistake, God was there to lift me up. My life is the story of God’s grace, My Times are His”tory.

If you have been reading carefully, you have already observed my spiritual profile. Actions speak louder than words, you know. I would not know how to go about describing my profile any better. Nevertheless, I still have some truth burning inside. Truths I want you to know.

Spiritual Image

“It is good to be near God” to make “the Sovereign Lord your refuge.” Sovereign is another way of saying He knows all things. He is everywhere, and He is all powerful.

Exiting the freeway one day, I moved into the “wrong” lane and came to a stop on the off ramp. I was sitting there trying to figure out how I could move back into the lane that would take me on to the expressway. All of a sudden, “Crash! Bang!” and the sound of splattering glass and crumpling metal. The car in the lane where I should have been, was hit in the rear and its occupants seriously

injured. There is no doubt in my mind that the Sovereign Lord put me in the “right” lane.

In early November 2001, I began to think about how lonely missionary life could be. I remembered how lonely we were. We were left alone in a strange country and forgotten. No one seemed to care, except our families. With that in mind, I asked God if there was some way I could help lonely missionaries.

Shortly thereafter, a woman in our church introduced me to the Missionary Prayer Net. The group publishes a booklet twice a year giving the birthdays of all AG missionaries. In addition, they e-mail missionary prayer requests.

An answer to prayer, I thought. So, I began to send birthday greetings to missionaries around the globe. Every day a list of prayer request arrives. I edited and transcribe them for distribution to the Adult Bible Fellowship classes.

Was this not the Sovereign Lord in action again? My missionary work exposed me to the loneliness of missionary work. In due time, He allowed me to use the experience to help others.

Ushering has become a very enjoyable activity. Ushers serve more than nine thousand people every Sunday morning.

An invitation to accept Christ is given at the end of the service and many people raise their hands. Some are reluctant to go forward for prayer. If an individual doesn't go forward, an usher will ask them. “May I go forward with you?” Most of the time it works. If it doesn't we might say, “Don't miss this opportunity.” Those simple comments are often enough to help them follow through with their decision. Helping an eternally lost person make a decision to go forward is like “snatching a fire brand from the fire.”

James River has contemporary worship. By that I mean songs enjoyed by the current generation are sung and the music is loud. The church is focused on the current generation. Many of the older people do not like the music. Yet, the great sermons and sinner response keep us motivated.

Grandma and I are accustomed to contemporary worship. We decided that we have had our day. It's time to reach the younger generation and we are doing that. Many people, old and young, are making decisions for Christ every service. So, the music is not near so disturbing.

A spiritual profile would not be complete without reference to one's prayer and Bible reading. My devotional life has not always been good. There were times when I went weeks without reading the Bible. Isn't that a shame? Think about it! Things the Sovereign Lord wants us to know are written in it. All, if not most of us, have Bibles in our homes. Yet, we do not take time to read it.

I used to pray while going to work. Before I left, I copied a verse to read during the day. When I thought about it, I took it out and read it again. At times, the verse never saw the light of day. God was not pleased with that half-hearted devotion.

Improved devotions are a benefit of retirement. We are not limited by time, so we can read and pray as long as we like. I get up in the morning (no matter the time) and have breakfast; spend a few minutes reading the newspaper; then I go downstairs for prayer time.

Daily devotions are not easy. I can usually read the Bible and get a lot of good from it. But my prayers are too often stagnant. They don't have any life. I find myself saying words that have no meaning. I frequently dose off. I have to fight hard for a conversation with God. But, when I do talk with Him, it's like heaven on earth.

I was sitting in my big chair one day praying. I mean really praying. I had God on the line. I prayed, "Lord, you know how I love Sonny, but he doesn't love you. If you don't talk to him, he will be lost forever. I couldn't stand that. Would you talk to him today?" "God seldom talks out loud, but He can speak to your mind. This is what He said to me, "I love him too, I'll talk to him."

From that time on, Sonny changed his attitude. He allowed me to talk to him about prayer and his relationship with God. I could never do that before. Now when I talk to him on the phone, he tells me he is praying and that is what is sustaining him through his health problems.

Sonny and I had communion together when I visited him in August 2008. He says he is ready to stand before God. How is that for the work of a Sovereign Lord? How is that for a genuine talk with God?

Sonny went home to be with the Lord on January 5, 2009. I look forward to meeting him and the rest of the family.

Spiritual Condition of America

I am concerned about the spiritual condition of America. The Satanic effort to remove Christianity from public views is alarming.

Islam is gaining a foothold in our beloved country. They are told to destroy our Christian heritage and make Islam the state religion. Anyone who does not follow their God, Allah, is considered an infidel. And, their religion teaches them kill anyone who will not convert.

There is hope. When I stand in front of the mirror, I see a man whose God is “compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness . . . righteousness and justice are the foundation of (His) throne, love and faithfulness go before Him.”

Best of all, “he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.”

That’s what I see when I stand in front of the mirror. So, “Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song. Let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker; for He is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care.”

Mirror of My Mind

My Interpretation of 31

I Have already written what I saw when I looked in the mirror, but Grandma has not. This book, however, would not be complete without it. So, from my helpmate relationship, I will print what I see in the mirror of my mind.

“A good woman,” Solomon said, “is hard to find.” But in spite of shortage, God fashioned and reserved a few for a special purpose. One of them, Grandma Eva, is now in the mirror of my mind.

God held that precious jewel in reserve just for me. He brought her into my life at just the right time and place. She is. “worth far more than diamonds.”

I trust her without reserve, and I have never had a reason to regret it. She has never been “spiteful.” And, she has “treated me generously” since first we met.

I could never tell you how Grandma stood with me when we were on the mission field. She never complained about being a missionary’s wife. She was with me all the way, “for better or for worse.” Her presence and encouragement kept me through every bend in the road. I will forever be grateful.

The woman I see in my mind, is a great homemaker. She is actually the one who makes this house a home. She is the one who does the grocery shopping and insists on keeping the pantry well-stocked.

She keeps the house in order so we are not embarrassed by visitors. She keeps the washer and dryer humming—we always have clean clothes and bedding.

She pays all the bills and keeps the checkbook balanced. Her diligence has saved us hundreds of dollars. She manages our affairs like a champ. O yes, there are slip ups, but she doesn’t give up.

She loves going to garage sales. Why, most of my clothes, shoes and garden tools are her bargains. It is true of her wardrobe too. That is not to mention all the things for the grandkids. I can't put a price tag on them, but she has saved us a lot of money.

The woman I see in the mirror of my mind is devoted to her family. Her attention is focused on my well-being as well as yours.

She thoroughly enjoys being grandma. You kids are her pride and joy. She talks often about you. The holidays and your birthdays, are great fun times for her. I think she goes overboard, but you know what she says, "They will only be kids once."

No doubt about it, she plays the "grandma role" very well. And, like the woman of proverbs 31, "her children respect and bless her." I admire and join in the words of praise.

The woman in the mirror of my mind has a very tender heart. She is "quick to assist anyone in need and reaches out to the poor." I couldn't say enough about her consideration for the necessities and comfort of others.

Grandma gives without thought of reward. Giving is a much part of her as her wardrobe. She will give "the shirt off her back," but don't try to cheat her. She won't allow it.

"Many women have done wonderful things" but Grandma outclassed them all. Charm can mislead and beauty soon fades. The woman to be admired and praised is the woman who lives in the fear of God.

That image, is what I see when I looking in the mirror of my mind. When we all get to heaven, there will not be any more mirror images. Mirrors are imperfect at best, but then, oh then, we will stand in pure light, pure truth, and see things as God sees them. Oh, happy day!

Our Times: Historical Perspective

Children are curious about the historical times in which their grandparents lived. It will interest you to know that we were born at a critical time in our nation's history. I have already mention the Great Depression. There were, however, other great events, discoveries and inventions. The way we lived, will amaze you.

I was only one-year old when the first Dust Bowl (1935) occurred, but the dust storms did not cease that year. I have already mentioned one that Glenn was caught up in. Between 1935-1939, many people from the Midwest fled to California as their farms were completely blown away. Their exodus to the West is recorded in Grapes of Wrath. You may want to read it for more detail.

When we were two years old, the first helicopter was introduced (1936) and when we were five years old the jet engine was born (1939). They must have been very primitive compared to the commercial jets and combat versions of today.

World War II was a major event of our lifetime. Patriotism was unquestionable. No one would have thought about protesting. I remember collecting scrap iron for the war effort and buying Defense Savings Stamps and bonds. I remember Mom's Victory Garden and rationing.

The war opened up a lot of industrial jobs resulting in a great migration of country folks to larger cities, particularly North and West. If you recall, my family went to California to be with Sonny who was drafted, but we also went because of the many jobs available. Dad went to work at Kaiser Steel Mill making steel for the famous Liberty Ships.

The Manhattan Project (1941-1945), was the organization that developed the atomic bomb. It existed when we were seven to eleven years of age.

In 1945, the USA dropped the first atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, effectively ending World War II. It resulted in a

terrible loss of human lives, but necessary to save America from domination by another world power.

Work done by the Manhattan Project, launched our nuclear energy program. The first nuclear reactor was built in 1942, when we were eight years old. The country got its first electricity from atomic power in 1951.

Israel became a nation in 1946, just as the Bible predicted. On the day Israel was inaugurated, she was attacked by several surrounding Arab nations. Unorganized, ill-equipped, and without military experience, she won. I should say, God delivered them.

Israel was attacked again in 1967 (we were 33 years old). The same story: God delivered them. In October 1973, their Arab enemies tried again to wipe them off the map. Israel won again.

In 2006, Muslim forces again aligned themselves against Israel. Among them was Iran who is currently developing nuclear weapons to destroy them. Newscast in March 2009, confirmed that Iran now has the material, equipment and expertise to develop a nuclear bomb.

The Christian world is looking on with anticipation. We are asking, "Is this the hour when God Himself will intervene in a miraculous way to deliver His people once and for all?"

You guys couldn't live without a computer, but did you know that we were five years old before the first digital computer came on the market (1939). It was a humongous apparatus that was housed in a room by itself. The transistor, which allowed smaller versions, did not come on the market until 1947. The integrated circuit, which allowed even smaller, hand held computers, was not developed until we were 24 years old (1958). The first home computer did not come out until 1975 and IBM did not reveal the first PC until 1981.

Did you know that you couldn't even get on the Internet until 1973 and the World Wide Web until 1990?

I am told television has been around since the early 1900s, but TV programming came out much later. Sony bought a black and white set about 1950, but color did arrive until later. Fiber optics, which is now used for cable TV, was out on the market in 1955.

I can still remember one of my favorite shows, Cecil the Dinosaur. There were a lot of cartoons in those days. I also liked war stories and westerns.

The only time I remember Dad missing church was the Sunday Kathy Fiscus fell into an abandoned well near our home. It was covered by TV and Dad just had to see the outcome.

The Bradfords had electricity, but they didn't have a TV until they moved to California in 1953. They had a primitive, battery operated radio, but they rarely listened to it except on Saturday night. They never missed the Grand Ole Opry.

Radio has been around a long time, but FM stereo broadcasts did not begin until 1958. We were in Costa Rica at the time.

Music recordings were important in our teenage years. I don't know when the old 78 rpm records came into existence, but the 33 1/3 came in 1948 and 45 rpm in 1949. Stereo LP recordings did not come on the market until 1958.

After that, things began to change pretty fast. When we were 29 years old, Compact Cassette Recordings appeared. Eight track tape players made their debut in 1966 and the first VHS Video recordings were put out in 1976. Laserdisc video recording came in 1978. Compact disks were on the shelves in 1983, but DVD recordings did not arrive until 1996. Can you believe it? We didn't buy a DVD player until 2006, but even now we don't use them very often.

Harry S. Truman became president in 1945 and died in 1952, the year we graduated from high school. The Korean War (1950-1953) occurred on his watch. It was so unpopular that President Truman called it a "police action." More than 54,000 men lost their lives. And the media described us as the first Americans to have ever "lost" a

war. Now, it is pretty much agreed on that we accomplished a great deal by driving the North Koreans back to where they belonged.

I was in college during the Korean War and was not subject to the draft. I was however, as I wrote earlier, eligible for the draft after I graduated in 1955.

The Cold War (1946-1989) confrontations between America and Russia, continued from the time we were 12 years old until we were 55. The race to put a man in space was the most spectacular. But development of nuclear devices and missiles was the most dangerous.

In 1962, the Cold War almost became the war that destroyed the world. It was called the Cuban crisis. We were only 28 years old at the time. Your Dad was not yet born. We were glued to the TV as the Russian ship carrying nuclear armed missiles, sailed toward Cuba.

John F. Kennedy was president at the time. He boldly confronted the Russians in no uncertain terms. Turn the ship around and dismantle the Cuban missile sites or suffer the consequences. The confrontation went on for several days. Eventually, the Russian ship turned around and went home. The immediate crisis was over--a nuclear war was averted.

President Reagan took a hard position with the Russians. He called them an "evil empire." He continued to arm America so we would be prepared in case of war.

On June 12, 1987, Islamic terrorists (most of them from Saudi Arabia) hijacked four commercial airliners. They flew two of them into the Twin Towers in New York City, killing more than a thousand people. Another crashed into the Pentagon. The fourth one was headed toward the White House when brave passengers attacked the terrorists on board causing the plane to crash in an open field, killing everyone.

President Bush immediately declared war on terrorism and with any country that helped them. Afghanistan was the headquarters of Islamic terrorists and the Al Qaeda. They were given sanctuary and a

place to train. President Bush, without any hesitation, ordered our military forces into Afghanistan and subsequently into Iraq

We are now fighting in Iraq for the third time. Saddam Hussein has been deposed and a democratic government set up. It is very shaky. No one knows if the democracy will survive or not.

In November 2008, the American people elected a Black president for the first time. He was the most liberal president ever to sit in the White House. It is frightening. He seemed to be against everything the Church values dearly.

God only knows the last event of our time. He is Sovereign of the Universe, so with utmost confidence, we leave these matters in His hands.

What We Have Learned

One cannot sail life's sea for 83 years and not learn some important lessons—lessons worthy of consideration by next generations. So, I want to pass on some of the things we have learned.

It is difficult to know where to start, but in writing this chapter I have been reminded of a lesson learned many times over—trust God. That's not just a cliché. It is most important.

You guys were here when I punched Alt, Control, and Delete, on the computer key board and destroyed years of work on this book. I was almost in tears when I told you and Grandma about it. I couldn't

understand why such a thing would happen. Years of work down the drain didn't make sense. Half-jokingly, I told Grandma, "perhaps there was something I had written that God didn't like."

Disappointed, but determined, I began to reconstruct the lost material (I had partial back-up to work from). But the question remained, "Why?" I awoke this morning about 4:00 a.m. with the answer. This chapter was incomplete. The things I had included were not the most important lessons learned. And was about to conclude it without further consideration. Apparently, that was not in "the plan." The real lessons we have learned became clear and my trust in God was renewed.

Trust God. He sees the whole picture—from the beginning to the end. When we stand before our Maker, He will see and judge the complete person, not one act. When He says, "Well done" it will be worth the work of a life time.

I have learned that one should not spend a lifetime searching for a "special call." God has given each of special talents. Our "special call" is to define that talent (s), develop it to its fullest and use it as an act of worship. God gave it to us for a purpose.

You will not always see how or where God is leading you. But you can rest assured He is doing so. David wrote, "Your path led through the sea, your way through the mighty waters, though your footprints were not seen. You led your people like a flock." Ps. 77:19,20. Even though you will go through some terrible times, the good Shepherd, will lead you. So, keep using the talent He gave you whatever the situation or circumstance.

I have learned that every one of my actions are making memories for someone. Every time Bernice interceded for me, every time Glen loaned me his Model A or pickup, every time Sonny took me fishing or out for entertainment, every time Burb sent me a dollar, or took me fishing, every time Dad taught me a Bible verse or Mom patted my hand, they were making precious memories for me.

The Bradford family sang, “Working the Road. . . make it easy for those behind.” That is what each of us should do—make life’s road easier for those we come in contact with, especially our loved ones.

We have learned that God forgives. He expects us to do what is right—repeated sin is not acceptable to Him. Some sins may in fact, have long-lasting effects. And we may have to live with their consequences the rest of our lives. Yet, God forgives.

We have learned the value of integrity. When I was a young boy, the family laughed at my exaggerated stories. One of my favorites was telling how I knocked a big man off the bridge and escaped his grasp. Shamefully, exaggeration (lies) lasted into my youth. They were no longer cute stories.

Later in life, when I was accused of stealing a boy’s shop project, I saw the value of integrity. Sonny defended me with the words, “Jackie doesn’t do things like that! I don’t want to ever hear of him being accused again.” People will stand up for a boy or girl of integrity. Truth can stand alone.

We have learned the importance of marriage—one man one woman—united as one family. The sanctity of marriage is under unprecedented attack and family life is being destroyed. The gay lifestyle, homosexual marriages, and abortion, are now protected by law in some states.

We have learned that life begins at conception. We had not given much thought to that idea until abortion was legalized in the 1960’s. We were not alone. Pastors and laymen everywhere took for granted life began when a baby was born, when they took their first breath—the breath of life. Not so! Scriptures that were once passed over as irrelevant, have become clear. Life is sacred from conception.

We have learned to be suspicious of those who declare human beings evolved from the lowest of creatures. Man is the highest order of creation; made in the image of God Himself. Contrary to recent developments in DNA, man did not evolve. “Everything was

created through him; nothing—not one thing came into being without him. (John 1:3 MSG). To say otherwise is a slap in God’s face.

We have learned the importance of family. Moms and dads deserve respect. God commanded that we honor them (EX. 20:12). Children learn respect. It is not inherent in their nature. Respect to parents is the first step in that process. Most children, who do not learn respect, become delinquent, a disgrace to the family, and the community.

We have learned the importance of attending Church and bonding with those of like values. Your friends and family, people of your own faith and values are indispensable.

The secular world looks down on the Church They say it is an antiquated institution standing in the way of progress. The truth is they want to do their own thing. If our nation continues down the present road, Christianity will become irrelevant to American life.

We have learned that devotions are the most important activity of the day. When you get up in the morning, do your devotions first. You will be growing in troublesome times. You will need God’s help every moment of every day. Without Him, you will be defeated, with Him you can “do all things through Christ who strengthens you.”

We have learned that ten percent of our income belongs to the Lord. It’s not discretionary. If we keep it, we are robbing God. He gives us ninety percent of what we earn. That’s a bargain. He wants ten percent for the work of the Church.

Grandma and I have faithfully returned the Lord’s tithes and we have given offerings over and above that for the work of the ministry. It has paid great dividends, God has given us great health and prosperity. Without really planning for it, we have a retirement plan that takes care of all our needs. For that I give Him praise.

We have learned that life is short, like a puff of smoke it’s gone. My Mom kept a motto on our wall for many years: Only One Life, It Will Soon Be Past, Only What is Done for God Will Last.”

In our youth, we think very little about growing old. Grandma and I felt we would live until the Lord's return—we may do that—but we have learned that life is short. The greater part of life's work is over. Only What Was Done for God will survive for eternity.

Measuring A Tree

I read one time where a "tree is best measured when it is down." When it is young, it's easily measured, but the longer it lives, when its roots grow deep and it survives the test of time, it gets taller. During that time, you can only estimate its height. When it is lying down, you measure its true height.

So, it is with life. The longer a person lives, the more life experiences, and the deeper his roots go down, the taller (more significant) his life will be.

Grandma and I are like growing trees—83 years old. Our roots have grown deep, we have survived the test of time, and we are standing tall. God only knows how much longer "our times" will last.

The Bible says that our lives are a plume of smoke, a blade of grass, or like a shadow that passes. We understand that now, time has passed very quickly.

Hopefully, our "plume of smoke" will last long enough to see you guys grow to be tall trees in God's beautiful land. "So, be strong, show yourself man and observe what the Lord requires: Walk in his ways, and keep his decrees and his commands, his laws and requirements, so that you may prosper in all you do and wherever you go." 1 Kgs 2:2

We are going to be very careful in estimating the height of our trees. We are not down yet. We don't know what their actual heights will be. Instead, we will reminisce—look back on things past—and bring to mind our "growth years." We will remind ourselves, and you, of God's thoughts and plans for these many years. With the deepest

respect for my Lord, I question that my “call to the ministry” was from Him. It could have been of my own making, or, perhaps my Mom and Dad. They felt deeply that God had a special place for me in His kingdom. And I felt I had a duty to pursue it. So, down the road I went, searching for that illusive call.

I referred earlier to David Jeremiahs’ poem, A Bend in the Road and throughout this book that analogy has been used. Now, I want you to read the complete poem:

Sometimes we come to life’s crossroads
And we view what we think is the end.
But God has a much wider vision
And He knows that it’s only a bend—
The road will go on and get smoother
And after we’ve stopped for a rest,
The path that lies hidden beyond us
Is often the path that is best.
So, rest and relax and grow stronger,
Let go and let God share your load
And have faith in a brighter tomorrow.
You’ve just come to a bend in the road.

Grandma and I came to many crossroads and we didn’t know which way to go. The road that lay ahead was hidden from us. We had to make decisions not knowing if we were obeying the “the call” or not. We prayed the decisions would keep us on the road, but we had to walk by faith.

Now, we know the path He chose for us was the best. He designed the bends in the road so that we might grow stronger and have a bright tomorrow.

Leaving home to attend a Christian college stimulated my mental and spiritual growth. I learned a lot about the Bible. And at the International Preparatory Institute I experienced the diversity of cultures and the good in all of them. I gained a knowledge of Spanish that built my self-confidence to the highest ever. And the years of study and service on the mission field built a priceless spiritual foundation that will never be destroyed. For that I will be eternally grateful.

There is another very wonderful, very important, outcome in my search for ministry: God built a marriage relationship second to none.

Think about this: Grandma and I dated for only a few months. Most of our courtship took place via telephone calls and letter. We hardly knew each other. (I don't recommend such a short engagement).

We had only been married six and half months when we left for the mission field. In foreign lands cultures are different. You are out of your element, like a fish out of water. It's then you need someone who understands where you are coming from.

Grandma and I needed each other in those days—we had to get close. We depended on each other. We worked together and became very close friends and confidants. Bonding took place in those days that endures to this day.

Perhaps God planned the mission field experience more for Grandma and I than anyone else. You see, even today, I would rather be with Grandma more than any other person. I really enjoy being alone with her.

I have come to believe that God's plans for individuals are not cut and dried. Each part of one's life is a progressive series of jobs, geographical locations, and situations, all of which, when connected together form a complete whole. The completed puzzle, the tree lying down, is the true picture of God's handiwork. Then, and only then, should a man's height be judged—not by men, but by the Judge Himself.

Our duty is to be persistent, to sail on and on and never give up.
Joaquin Miller's poem, "Columbus" has a message for all of us.

Columbus

Behind lay the gray Azores,

Behind the gates of Hercules:

Before him only shoreless seas.

The good mate said: "Now must we pray,

For lo! The very stars are gone.

Brave Admir'l, speak; what shall I say?"

Why, say: "Sail on! Sail on! And on!"

"My men grow mutinous day by day;

My men grow ghastly, wan and weak."

The stout mate thought of home; a spray

Of salt wave washed his swarthy cheek.

"What shall I say, brave Admr'l, say,

If we sight naught but seas at dawn?"

"Why, you shall say at brake of day:

"Sail on! Sail on! And on!"

They sailed and sailed, as winds would might blow.

Until at last the blanched mate said:

"Why, not even God would know

Should I and all my men fall dead.

These very winds forget their way,

For God from these dread seas is gone.
Now speak, brave Admr'l; speak and say"
He said: "Sail on! Sail on! And on!"
They sailed. They sailed. Then spake the mate:
"This mad sea shows his teeth tonight.
He curls his lip, he lies in wait,
With lifted teeth, as if to bite!
Brave Admr'l, say but one good word:
What shall we do when hope is gone?"
The words leapt like a leaping sword:
"Sail on! Sail on! and on!"
Then, pale and worn, he paced the deck,
And peered through darkness. Ah, that night
Of all dark nights! And then a speck-
A light! A light! At last a light!
It grew, a starlit flag unfurled!
It grew to be Time's burst of dawn.
He gained a world; he gave the world
Its greatest lesson: On! sail on!"

Sail On! Sail On! Sail On! Sail On!

Sail On! Sail On! Sail On! and on! There will be times while you are on the sea of life that the "very stars" will be obscure. Men and women around you will grow "wan and weak", fearful of the stormy seas around them. You'll be tempted to think that "not even God would know should you fall dead and you will wonder, "what shall I do

when hope is gone?" There will be times when you peer through darkness, "Ah, that night of all dark nights," when your precious little ship with its treasured cargo, is being driven toward disaster, there will appear "A light! A light! At last a light!" A light will burst on the dawn of a new day. You will gain a world not even in your wildest imagination.

Sail on, guys! No matter what happens, sail on. Never, never, give up! Keep your eyes on the One who created you; the One who "planned how many days you would live" and "wrote down the number of them" in His book.

Honor and enjoy your Creator while you're young,
Before your vision dims and world blurs
And the winter years keep you close to the fire.
In old age, your body no longer serves you so well.
Muscles slacken, grip weakens, joints stiffen.
The shades are pulled down on the world.
You can't come and go at will. Things grind to a halt.
The hum of the household fades away.
You are wakened by a bird song.
Hikes to the mountains are a thing of the past.
Even a stroll down the road has its terrors.
Your hair turns apple-blossom white,
Adorning a fragile and impotent matchstick body.
Yes, you're well on your way to eternal rest.
While your friends make plans for your funeral.
Life, lovely while it lasts, is soon over.
Life as we know it, precious and beautiful, ends.

The body is put back in the same ground it came from.

The spirit returns to God, who first breathed it.

Ecclesiastes 12: 1-7 Message

With our deepest love,

Papa Jackie and Grandma Eva

