

Geri Hudson Morgan

I PLAY THE NOTES,
But He
Makes the Music



All her life Geri Hudson Morgan has been an exceptionally interesting and energetic person who loves people. Her adventures in life have included being honored at The Great Hall of the People for her work in China, and praying with a witch doctor in the depths of Africa.

An active teenager growing up in Dallas, Geri was voted class favorite, played competition tennis, and appeared on several local TV shows. As a pianist, she won talent contests in the Dallas Metroplex and was a regular guest artist at the State Fair of Texas. At eighteen, she began a successful career as a professional organist, playing for Dallas restaurants. She served as a full-time organist at the International Christian Center for seventeen years, and was co-hostess of a daily TV show.

You will never meet another person like Geri, so diverse in her interests and yet so focused on the call of Jesus on her life. She is a master storyteller and this book is filled with amusing and inspiring accounts of how God has led her life. You will be fascinated as her stories unfold in the pages of **I Play the Notes, But He Makes the Music.**



Professional organist, entrepreneur, missionary to forty-six countries, and ordained minister of music, **Geri Hudson Morgan** has lived a fascinating life. She built a five million-watt TV station in Dallas, Texas, and helped establish an eye surgery center for the poor and blind in China. A survivor, she is an extremely active kidney transplant recipient.

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I Play the Notes, but He Makes the Music



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The Sweetest Duet

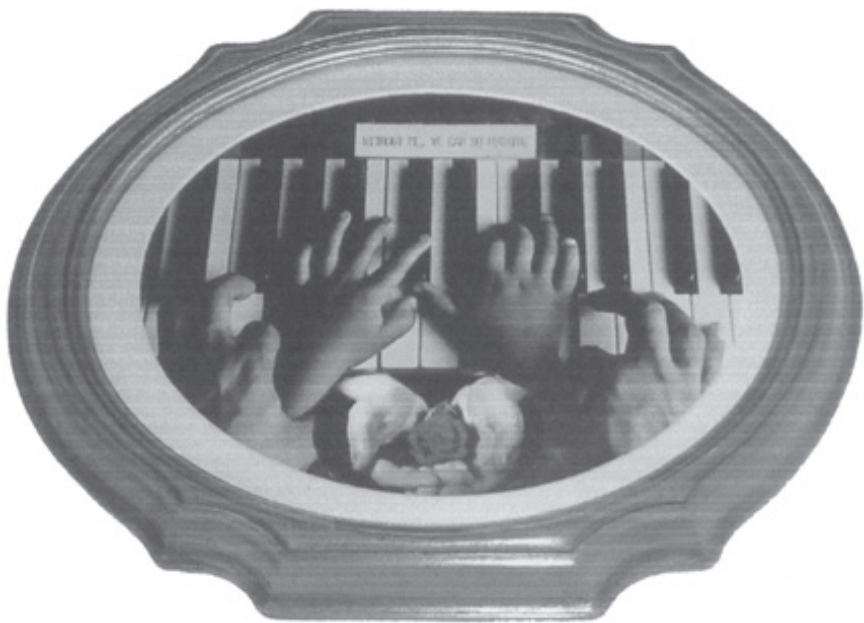
Wishing to encourage her young son's progress on the piano, a mother took the small boy to a Paderewski concert. After they were seated, the mother spotted a friend in the audience and walked down the aisle to greet her. Seizing the opportunity to explore the wonders of the concert hall, the little boy rose and eventually explored his way through a door marked "NO ADMITTANCE."

When the house lights dimmed and the concert was about to begin, the mother returned to her seat and discovered that her son was missing. Suddenly the curtains parted and spotlights focused on the impressive Steinway on stage. In horror, the mother saw her little boy sitting at the keyboard, innocently picking out "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star." At that moment, the great piano master made his entrance, quickly moved to the piano, and whispered in the boy's ear, "Don't quit. Keep playing." Then leaning over, Paderewski reached down with his left hand and began filling in the bass part. Soon his right arm reached around to the other side of the child and he added a running obbligato. Together, the old master and young novice transformed a frightening situation into a wonderfully creative experience. The audience was mesmerized.

That's the way it is with God. What we can accomplish on our own is hardly noteworthy. We do our best, but the results aren't exactly graceful, flowing music. But with the hand of God, our life's work truly can be beautiful. So, the next time you set out to accomplish great feats, listen carefully and you can hear the voice of the Master whispering in your ear,

“Don’t quit. Keep playing.” Feel God’s loving arms around you. Know that God’s strong hands are playing the concerto of your life, turning your feeble attempts into true masterpieces!

Author unknown (from the Internet)



Hands on piano



Prophecy Fulfilled

Prophecy through Rev. Marvin Crow, March 18, 1978

“I have given you hands of faith that will take you into kings’ palaces. You shall be in the presence of both small and great. I have anointed you and I have gifted you. I will make you a blessing unto many, saith God.” (See pictures on next page.)



Geri with Paul Crouch, Sr. (founder of Trinity Broadcasting Network – TBN) and Chinese government officials in the Great Hall of the People, Beijing, China



Geri with Paul Crouch, Sr., Paul Crouch, Jr., Dr. Elizabeth Vaughan, and Chinese government officials in the Great Hall of the People, Beijing, China



Geri's Jewels

*I*n typing Geri's book and hearing her tell stories, I was impressed with her discernment in salvaging treasures and things of great value from garage sales to thrift shops to finds on the pavement. Her eyes see the gleam of potential. Her fingers reach to retrieve the good. Her hands work to clean, polish, and display the beauty. And her heart takes joy in seeing the end result!

Somehow I know God delights in her achievements. I know because, like Him, her eyes and heart also reach to see hidden treasures in people of all walks of life, all races and backgrounds, all economic levels from top to bottom.

As I typed her stories about her childhood friend with polio, her Jordanian friend in college, the elderly couple she fished with at the lake, her serving Marvin Crow's ministry, her meeting Doreen at the wall in Xian, China, the maintenance man she gave the organ to, and the list goes on and on, I saw a correlation. Her hands and heart retrieved them, and her perception of their value enhanced their lives and brought forth not only a beautiful friendship, but an affirmation that displayed their best.

Like reaching for diamonds lost in the cracks of life, God uses Geri to find them, polish them, refine them, and display them so that others may see their value. This is truly God's handiwork shown through her. I should know, because my family is one of these her heart reached for.

"For her price is far above rubies" (Proverbs 31:10).

Gaye Savant Grun




Forewords

I have had the good pleasure of knowing Geri Morgan for thirty-four years. As I look back on this time, I remember mostly her love, acceptance, and encouragement. Geri challenges me in the things of the Lord. She continually looks to the best, to the future, and to God's purpose for those around her. What more can you want from a friend?

When her fingers fly over the Hammond organ it is so comforting, encouraging, and beautiful. It's as if the angels are playing. Through her music, the things of the Lord are stirred up in me. Her playing is so anointed; it goes hand in hand with her genuine ways. It was by divine appointment that God brought us together and I thank Him for His loving kindness.

I saw so clearly Geri's love as it was portrayed toward the Chinese orphans we came to know through years of ministry. I appreciate her truthfulness. Above everything, Geri's prayers are so precious and genuine that I cannot do without them. My friendship with Geri will last through eternity.

Dr. S. K. Sung
International businessman
International Director of Full Gospel Businessmen
Husband of the late Chinese evangelist, Nora Lam

 ur wonderful Lord has surely blessed us with a rare and precious psalmist in Geri Morgan. It's with joy that I say the church world would have been robbed of much had we not been blessed with the talent of this precious lady. I have personally heard her play creations of music that transcend natural abilities. I have seen this one, though time and time again hit by all affliction, climb back up the steps of healing and once again the songs ring out from her music as she plays.

Such a rare gift of music that God has entrusted her with so all of us in His blood-bought church may be able to lift adoration to our King of kings. To bounce back from so much adversity there must be a priceless gift in Geri.

Rev. Maryiann Sitton (1/03/21-8/11/10)
Evangelist, author, international television minister
Founder of Shiloh Christian Ministries, Inc. (four-year
Bible training center, church, and Christian retreat)

I can't remember a day in my life without Geri Morgan. This thought occurred to me the day I stood by her hospital bed in the Intensive Care Unit of Baylor Hospital after she had received her kidney transplant. My mind went back to the summer of 1949 when I was so very ill with polio. My house was quarantined for many weeks and visitors could only come to my window. But Geri was there almost every day. When the quarantine was lifted she brought schoolwork to me along with stories of our friends, and she would play the piano for me. We both took piano lessons from Mrs. A. A. Bianchi and we loved to play. We have shared so many adventures together ... playing piano and organ duets; making mud pies in the alley; riding our bikes; playing dolls; chasing celebrities; playing detectives; standing in the sunlight on the Great Wall of China; and holding each other as she buried her only daughter.

But standing at her bedside that day, I was pondering the changes in our health. This time she was the one who was so very ill and I was the one holding her hand, when so many years before the roles were reversed. It amazes me yet that I have been so blessed to have had this friend for well over sixty-five years. We don't always agree on philosophical and spiritual issues, but we listen to and respect each other. And, oh, how we've laughed! I've always taken great comfort in the knowledge that she loves me unconditionally. I know that in sharing her life in the pages of this book she will give her readers a glimpse of the dynamic and truly loving person that I have been privileged to call my friend.

Linda Stallones Classen, M.Ed., L.P.C.



In Appreciation

Gaye Savant Grun
(Transcriber)

*W*ithout you, this book would never have come to completion. Thank you for the countless hours of your life that you gave through the twelve long years it took to finish it, many of them in the wee hours of the morning as we worked together via telephone. How did you ever understand and translate all my scribbled notes?

Your patience, perfectionism, and insightful suggestions were invaluable to me. You will never know how much I appreciate you! You were GOD's choice and mine.



Dedication

My mother, Margaret Christine Spencer Hudson Blount (11/15/10 - 2/12/08)

“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6). You were the first one to teach me about Jesus. Without you, I wouldn’t be here. Thanks, Mom. I love you.

My stepfather, Capt. Marvin C. Blount (9/1/10 - 9/11/74)

The substitute dad that God sent to love me and my mom and to guide my life in so many wonderful ways. Your wisdom was a blessing to me and countless others. I’ll always be grateful for you.

My daughter, Angie Lynn Morgan Bragg (1/12/64 - 04/22/97)

My precious one who brought such joy, fun, giggles and Visa bills into my life and made me a “mom.” Thanks for all the fun times we shared.

Amy Vaughan Brock (My heroine)

Like Jesus, you laid down your life for me. I live today because you gave me one of your kidneys. There are no words to say thank you. “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13).

Linda Stallones Classen, M.Ed., L.P.C.

My dear “forever friend” from childhood who has been the sister I never had and the other half of our piano/organ duo. I will always remember your prophetic words to me, “Be still, and know that I am God.” Thanks for both the memories and the melodies.

Rev. Marvin Lynn Crow (1/17/35-4/6/93)

My spiritual father and my best friend. He was a man of wisdom, my pastor and teacher that God sent into my life at just the right time. His godly wisdom continues to influence many lives today. Mine is one of them.

Norma Norman David, Ph.D.

My dear childhood friend and my cheerleader, whose influence led me to college. You have been there throughout my life to encourage me to set my goals high and cheered me on to reach them. State Fair Musicals and Stoneleigh Hotel, here we come!

Marybeth Garrahan (My sweet friend from Hyannis Port, Massachusetts)

My precious friend (and Angie's) with Down syndrome, who many times has been "the wind beneath my wings." I love you, Mary Beth. From your Texas best friend, "Mrs. Morgan."

Rev. Ruth Ward Heflin (Minister) (1/21/40 - 9/15/00)

My friend who taught me how to catch the wind of the Spirit and be blown by it, which totally changed my life. She taught me to "Ask for the nations," as she wrote in her song. What a blessing when God brought us together in Jerusalem, November, 1980.

My father, Robert Gee Hudson (1/02/11 - 12/26/45)

Thank you for the spiritual legacy you left to me. All the years of my life, I have re-read the verse that you marked in your Bible for me to have: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" (2 Timothy 4:7).

Mary Elizabeth Bills Kaiser (Liz)

My sweet friend and cousin by marriage. We shared so many of life's important events together, from junior high school sock hops, the same boyfriends, and even the same hospital room for the birth of our daughters. One thing we didn't share was that 1955 red and white Pontiac or its driver!

Du Yi Ping (Doreen Ashbrook)

My beloved Chinese friend and sister in Christ Jesus, whom God brought into my life in 1994 on the wall in Xian, China. Thanks for all the fun

times we've shared from the Hong Qiao market, eating noodles in Lanzhou and lobster in Maine, to garage sales in America. Always remember the unforgettable train ride we took to Gangu.

Rev. Howard Richardson, Pastor, Gates of Glory Church

My pastor and my good friend. Thank you for allowing the Holy Spirit to speak many prophetic words into my life, always at the time I needed them most, some of which are written in this book.

The H. W. Savant Family

You played such an important part in encouraging me and helping me bring this book into being. A special thanks to Hope for her patience and expertise, and to Sister Elizabeth Savant for her inspiration, encouragement, and hours spent in proofreading. Thank you all for making this book possible. Brother Savant, Faith, and Jonathan ... without all of you this book never would have happened.

Bessie Spencer (5/17/1881 – 5/22-69) and J.T. Spencer (12/10/1875 – 4/29/62) (My maternal grandparents)

My beloved Southern Baptist grandparents who loved Jesus with all their hearts and taught me as a little child to love Him also.

Elizabeth R. Vaughan, M.D. (Ophthalmologist/Minister)

Thank you for the hours of your busy life you spent helping bring this book to completion and for sharing many of the events written in its pages. It's been a trip! You preached and lived the Word of God before my eyes and helped me remain alive by standing firm on God's promises. Thank you for speaking words of life over me, helping me to trust the Lord, and recognize "Christ in you, the Hope of glory."

"Mollie" Anne Morgan, my Lhasa Apso and constant companion

The sweetest little dog ever created who lives her life trying to care for me. (See her picture on the front cover.)

Thanks to all of you for touching my life. I send my love and gratitude to each one.



Introduction

Some of my stories are comical and some were life-changing for me. I hope they will help you recognize the reality of our loving Father's working in your life in this twenty-first century. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8).

"When a stone is dropped into a lake, it quickly disappears from sight but its impact leaves behind a series of ripples that broaden and reach across the water in the same way the impact of one life lived for Christ can leave behind an influence for good that will reach the lives of many others." Roy Lessin

Rev. Bill Johnson says, "Telling others about the miracles in your life makes God more real and causes faith to explode in those who hear what God has done for you. They will begin to see miracles in their own lives because of what God did for you."

That is my prayer. May we be like Mary, when she arrived at the tomb of her beloved Jesus and found Him gone. Her heart was broken when she found the tomb empty. As she stood beside the grave crying, she looked up to find a gardener standing nearby; at least she perceived Him to be a gardener. The Scriptures tell us that suddenly her eyes were opened and she saw Him to be her Beloved! He had taken on a different form. Read about it in John 20:15-16.

Oh, that our eyes, too, might be opened to see and recognize our Beloved Master who still comes to us in many different ways. He is the only one who can open eyes to see Him as He is, just as He did for Mary.

I have always loved to have fun and life has brought much joy and laughter to me. I hope you will smile a few smiles, laugh a few laughs, and maybe even shed a few tears as you read some of the experiences I have had because of the presence of the sweet Holy Spirit in my life. He came into my ordinary life and He has made the difference. I pray that the Holy Spirit will speak through the words that I have written.

I firmly believe in Jesus' words, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone" (John 8:7). We need to love one another and let God be our judge. I believe that our lives should be measured by the lives we've touched, not by earthly acquisitions. As Sister Gwen Shaw says, "It is not what we accumulate, but what we give away that goes into the building of our future building." When my life is over and I have finished my course, I hope people will remember me as someone who tried to make others happy and tried to treat all people equally.

I love the following written by James R. Miles: "You can easily judge the character of a man by how he treats those who can do nothing for him." Likewise, I might add, you can just as easily judge a man's character by how he treats those who can do something for him! God help us to treat all men equally, as we are all God's children. He is no respecter of persons; neither should we be! He doesn't care what we call ourselves, so why should we (i.e., Baptist, Methodist, Catholic)? As the little saying goes, "Just because we may not see eye to eye doesn't mean we can't still walk hand in hand."

For many years I had been told, "Geri, you need to write a book!" To be honest, I never seemed to have enough hours in my day to do it. Perhaps I just did not discipline myself enough to save some time to write one. However, the days and hours of my life changed drastically in August, 2001. I found myself on a dialysis machine for end-stage renal disease (ESRD, i.e., kidney failure) and praying to live to finish my course on earth, which I did not believe was finished. During the next year I used the many long hours I spent in the dialysis center each Monday, Wednesday, and Friday and the next eleven years to write about my life and God's wonderful and merciful workings in it.

Sometimes life can be like a rollercoaster, but that's all right as long as Jesus is sitting next to you. With ESRD, my life took a sharp, unexpected curve on the track. I am alive today only because of Him! He told me concerning my health challenges, "You do your best and I'll do the rest." He takes the most ordinary and makes it extraordinary. My life has been thrilling, fun, and full of excitement, all because of Him.

"There is a fellowship that I know (with the Holy Spirit) that is greater than any human fellowship. There is a closeness, there is a communion with Him that is the most priceless thing that I have in this life. He is more real to me than any earthly person I've ever known. I am led of Him and I become so sensitive to Him. The Holy Spirit is not a person or a power that you and I can use. The Holy Spirit must always use the vessel, the surrendered vessel."
Kathryn Kuhlman.

I like what Edward Boehm (Boehm Porcelain) said, "One should give life more than he takes from it." I believe we should use the life that God has given us to produce life (positives), not death (negatives). If only people could say after parting company with us, "I was blessed by being in her or his presence."

Recently a lady wrote to me, "I am keeping your letter with my Bibles as a comforting affirmation of the Lord's presence in our lives." I pray that my testimonies will help you see and recognize His presence in our everyday lives. Jesus took the loaves and fishes, natural things, to perform a miracle. Just as He used these simple, natural things, He does them quite often for us, but we usually fail to see them.

The Holy Spirit can give you a desire for cheese. So you go to the refrigerator and you find that you are out of it. You then decide to drive to the grocery store to purchase some, along with a few other things you are out of. Arriving at the store, you run into the old friend that you've been trying to find for a long time. Coincidence? I don't believe so. I believe God used a simple, natural thing to bring about this meeting because of His great love for you.

My spiritual journey started at a very young age. I felt the call of God on my life at age four. However, it began to take great strides when I reached thirty years of age. I am now seventy-four years old and I have to agree with the words of the old song, "The longer I serve Him, the sweeter He grows." My life has certainly not been a perfect rose garden. I've had a lot of thorns along the way. I caused a lot of them for myself. But, holding Jesus' hand, trusting Him, and attempting to follow Him, has been a wonderful adventure. He is able to make our crooked ways straight if only we will trust Him. "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain" (Isaiah 40:4).

As a child I learned the saying, "Only one life, 'twill soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last." I took this very seriously as a young person and now, in my senior years, I know it to be true.

Until He calls me home, I shall continue to hold His hand and trust Him. He's never failed me. The arm of flesh (people) has failed me many times, but my beloved Savior has never failed me. "Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD" (Jeremiah 17:5). He has promised His children that He will never leave or forsake them. "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5).

None of what you read would have happened without Him. **I have played the notes but, truly, it is He who has made the music in my life!**



**Geri at the altar of the Methodist Church in Concordia,
Missouri, where Kathryn Kuhlman was saved.**



Chapter 1

My Family

WORLD, HERE I COME!

My life began at St. Paul Hospital in Dallas, Texas, on September 25, 1939. I was born at 6:48 a.m., weighed 8 pounds, 3 ounces, and was 20½ inches long. My parents, Robert Gee Hudson and Margaret Christine Spencer Hudson, were both devoted Christians who enrolled me in our church's Cradle Roll Department as soon as I appeared on the scene.

I think I remain more "Hudson" genetically than "Spencer." I am most like my paternal grandmother, Patti Hudson. My father, a very serious, spiritual Christian, was head elder at Dallas' Mt. Auburn Christian Church (now The Disciples of Christ) at the young age of thirty. The following was written by my father to my maternal grandparents on September 26, 1939, when I was only one day old.

Dear Mom,

I have just come in from the hospital ... we are taking care of the dearest trust in the world ... they told me I was a "papa," but they hadn't given me any proof. You know, I'm stubborn that way. I have to be shown. Finally I located Geri Sue on the front row of some 18 babies in the nursery window. She's just as fair skinned, not a blemish I can see. She makes enough racket!

We're thinking about you all and there'll be a word for you when we talk with our Savior tonight. The Master will keep us and guide us for a long, long time to come if we'll only trust Him.
Love, Robert Gee

Not long before my mom passed away, I asked why she and my dad had chosen to name me Geri Sue, a bit unusual for a little girl in the '40s. She told me that she and my father had read and followed a story in the newspaper about a little girl who had been aboard a large cruise ship that had sunk. The little girl, Geri Sue, was one of the few survivors of the accident. My parents wanted me to be a survivor in life as she had been; hence, they gave me that name when I was born. I think God has honored my parents' desire for me, for truly I have survived many valleys in my lifetime and by His great mercy and grace, I am a survivor!

I remember attending many church functions with my parents when I was three or four years old. Sadly, today in most households, Sunday means a day to go to the lake or the flea market, or sleep late, rather than go to God's house. I find both humor and truth in the following little story that I once read on the Internet.

After the dedication of her baby brother in church, little Suzie sobbed all the way home in the back seat of the car. Her father asked her three times what was wrong. Finally, the little girl replied, "The preacher said he wanted us brought up in a Christian home, and I want to be able to stay with you and Mommy at our house."

As a very young child I was extremely enthralled with the music I heard at church gatherings. Some were very special melodies to me that I still remember to this day, seventy years later. I simply adored music! Hearing music was the thrill of my life. Plato said, "Music and rhythm find their way into the secret places of the soul." This was my first introduction to music other than my father playing the guitar with his left hand. Like him, I am also ambidextrous.

We had a blessed little family. My parents were so happy to finally have a little addition to their household after ten years of marriage. However, this

happiness was not to last. My father became quite ill and was diagnosed with kidney failure and passed away on December 26, 1945. In the 1940's there was no modern medicine or treatment such as dialysis to sustain life. Since I had just turned six years old, I have only a few memories of him. At about the same time, I remember the radio announcing President Franklin D. Roosevelt's death, but I had no idea what a President was.

People tell me that my dad had a good sense of humor and liked to joke a lot. I have been told by several people that he was more like Jesus than any man they had ever known. What a sweet compliment. I believe that God used him to help bring about my call to music ministry, a call that was on my life from my mom's womb.

Music has had a profound influence on my entire life. I began playing little songs by ear at about three years of age. It was my dad's deepest desire that I study piano and I have vivid memories of being in the car with my parents the morning they went to buy a used upright piano for me. I had never been so excited in my young life. Few events through my seventy-four years have ever provided such excitement to me. I was just ecstatic to have my own piano!

So at age five, shortly before my father's death, I began piano lessons twice each week. I soon played well enough to play "Silent Night" for a Christmas program at Dallas' Greenville Avenue Christian Church. My father was sitting proudly in the congregation that night to see and hear his little daughter play. This was his dream for me.

After his death, my mom saw that I still had a good life filled with visits with family and friends. My mother's family, the Spencers, are from the Hill Country of Texas. She was from a large family with four other siblings.

My father's family, the Hudsons, were in retail sales and were some of the original settlers of Plano, Texas. I visited with them in that small town many days of my childhood. Of course, today Plano is a huge, affluent, and sophisticated suburb of Dallas. I have heard the story many times of people who owed my grandfather money at his store, offering him their

land to pay off their debts. However, he would not take their land, and instead, waited on their cash. What a mistake that was. Plano's land is now worth a gold mine! I feel so strongly attached to Plano that it's as if I was born or created in that small town.

I came from families with a lot of left-handed, creative people. Emmett Kelly, the world's most famous clown, was a cousin on my maternal side. There are quite a few "artsy" people in my paternal background. Rush (Hudson) Limbaugh, the radio talk host who is considered America's most influential conservative voice, is my cousin. Several old Dallas businessmen were also related to my father. Jimmy Albright, my dad's first cousin, was president of the Dallas Antique Automobile Club for many years. Maybe that's where I got my love of classic cars!



Mom, Dad and Baby Geri



— HOSPITAL BIRTH CERTIFICATE —

This is to Certify that Jerry Lee Hudson
 was born in ST. PAUL'S HOSPITAL • DALLAS, TEXAS
 at 6:45 P.M. on the 25th day of September A. D. 1928;
 Weight 7 lbs. 5 ozs. Length 20 1/2 inches.

In Witness Whereof, the said Hospital has caused this Certificate to be signed by its duly authorized officer and its Corporate Seal to be hereunto affixed.


 Attending Physician
Edith McPaul, R.N.
 Superintendent

Hospital
 Number 8125-85

World, here I come



Baby Geri



My first Sunday school class



Geri, three years old



Geri with Dad just before he died Dec. 26, 1945



Geri's father, Robert Gee Hudson



A famous cousin, Rush Hudson Limbaugh

I GOT A NEW DADDY

My mother took excellent care of me during those years when there were just the two of us. I was a very blessed little girl and had a good life, but I missed having a daddy like the rest of my friends. At age eight, life changed again for me. My mother married a wonderful man, Marvin Blount, and I was so very proud and happy to have a father. I am absolutely positive that I had the best stepfather in all the world, at least the best one for me! I adored him and it was mutual. We never used the word “step” in our family as it just seemed so natural to have him as my dad from the onset of their marriage. I accepted him as my “dad,” not a stepdad, and I was his little daughter.

I almost ended their wedding plans when I announced to him that if he married my mom she would make him wear dirty clothes. I was such a clean freak back then, at age eight, that I wanted to change clothes at least twice per day. And back in those days everything had to be starched and ironed. My mom simply said one change of clothes per day was plenty, which did not please me. Hence, my comment about wearing dirty clothes. He laughingly told this story until the day he died.

Marvin was an extremely gregarious police officer who never met a stranger. Consequently, many new and exciting people came into our lives. Henry Wade (Dallas’ District Attorney) and Bill Decker (Dallas’ Sheriff) were close friends of my parents, as was Ted Hinton, one of the officers in the ambush of Bonnie and Clyde. My parents introduced Henry Wade to his future wife, Yvonne. One very interesting friend was a young West Texas oilman by the name of George H. W. Bush. I heard my father say many times that he was a wonderful human being. My father did not live to see his friend become our forty-first President.

My new stepdad picked up where my natural father left off. He truly helped mold my little personality into what it is today. I was the apple of his eye. Today people still say that I am a real mixture of both my fathers. My mom, who had exceptional organizational skills, gets very little credit. Somehow out of all those mixed family genes, I came out a slow, organized, and gregarious musician. Slow and musical from my natural dad, organized from my mom, and gregarious from my stepdad.



My mom and Marvin

MEMBER IN GOOD STANDING

SANGER'S WEBSTER WEBFOOT CLUB



to: *Jerry Sue Hudson*



from: *Webster Webfoot, Mr. Sanger
Bros. and Uncle Jimmy Heldon*

Growing up in Dallas, Webster Webfoot was my favorite TV show

MY SPIRITUAL HERITAGE

DEATH OF MRS. ELIZABETH HUDSON

(My great-grandmother)

Plano Star-Courier

November 11, 1909

Old-Time Resident of Plano Passes to Her Reward

Mrs. Elizabeth J. Hudson was born in November, 1850, in Tompkinsville, Ky., and died in Plano, Texas, November 5, 1909, being about 59 years of age.

She moved to Texas in 1873 and settled in Plano, where she has continuously resided until her death. Thus she was a citizen of our town 36 years.

She was married to J. C. Hudson in March 1875. From this union four children were born, two sons and two daughters. One of the last named died in early childhood; the three other children are now grown and residents of our little city. The husband and father survives.

Sister Hudson professed faith in Christ in her childhood and became a member of a Baptist church in her native state. Upon coming to Texas she united with the Baptist church here and was for many years active in the discharge of her Christian duty. She has been an invalid for the past 15 years and for the past six months confined to her room and bed. In her last days she was a great sufferer, but bore her afflictions with Christian fortitude.

Her faith in Christ was unwavering and her hope of a blessed immortality was unshaken. Few Christians have such implicit faith in the promises of God as this good woman. She was a diligent and believing student of the Word of God. Her end was peaceful as the babe falls into sweet slumbers. That which was

mortal of Sister Hudson lies resting in the Odd Fellows' Cemetery, waiting the call of God in the resurrection.

To the bereaved ones, the Star-Courier tenders its sincerest condolence in their hour of deepest sorrow.

MY UNCLE, THE BAPTIST PREACHER

My dad had only one brother, twelve years younger than himself, Jack Wilson Hudson. Both boys were born in Plano, Texas. My uncle was valedictorian and my father was salutatorian at Plano High School. The Hudsons were very intellectual people but also people who never seemed to get in a hurry about anything. (My mom always said I'm definitely a Hudson—slow—but I missed valedictorian by a long shot!)

My uncle served in the Navy during World War II and returned to further his education at Southern Methodist University and Baylor University. His major course was religion and he became a Baptist preacher. However, he later joined the staff at Baylor as the university budget officer, purchasing agent, chief business officer and internal auditor before retiring after forty years. Chancellor Abner McCall would have liked for him to become vice president of the university but Jack preferred working with numbers rather than people. He and his wife, Gladys, a Baylor professor, organized and published a concordance on *Paradise Lost* and on the collected works of Elizabeth Barrett Browning. (Oddly enough, one of my dear Christian friends in Massachusetts, the late Shirley Horton, was a direct descendant of Elizabeth Barrett Browning and a renowned poet herself. This is an example of a gift given to a family by God.)

My uncle had three daughters, my first cousins. His oldest daughter, Jaquine, retired from the vice president's office at the University of Oklahoma. She is a multi-talented woman and a gifted pianist. Her son, Boyd Gee, is a gifted professional musician. He is named after my father (Robert Gee) and looks very much like me, so much so that he could easily pass for my son.

My uncle's middle daughter, Cynthia, also a valedictorian, has a master's degree from the University of California, Santa Barbara, and has spent her life raising her family and working with "special education" children. She has made a tremendous contribution in this field. (My daughter was also a gifted Special Ed teacher and resembled her cousin Cynthia.) She is an avid collector just like me. She is also the genealogist for our family. We are descendants of David Hudson who in 1771 acquired four hundred acres in Culpepper, Virginia, where he built "Maple Lawn," a plantation which later became headquarters for the Union forces in the Battle of Cedar Mountain. It still stands today. We are members of the Daughters of the American Revolution as a result of her diligent genealogy research.

My uncle's youngest daughter, Patti, named after our grandmother, lives with her husband near Palm Springs, California. She received her master's degree in creative writing and is a published author. She also graduated magna cum laude with a degree in political science. She composes music and is a talented pianist. As you can see, piano students run in our family. Along with these many accomplishments, Patti is a volunteer forest ranger.

Patti survived the tragic Glendale, California, Metrolink train wreck on January 26, 2005. A disturbed man drove his SUV onto the track to commit suicide and changed his mind at the last minute—hence the collision. Eleven people were killed and Patti was the most severely injured passenger to survive. She spent months in the hospital and in rehabilitation. She had been a runner for years and once again is able to run in the 5K race. She's a trouper, for sure. She was interviewed on the Primetime Live TV show about her ordeal. God saved her life!

PROMPTING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

On April 14, 2003, the Holy Spirit spoke very plainly and told me to stop what I was doing and call my Uncle Jack. It was about 4:30 p.m., right at "supper time." I remember thinking that it was not a very good time of day to be making such a call. I had not talked with him via telephone in six years although we had exchanged lots of e-mails and letters. Although hating to bother them at their supper hour, I picked up the phone and

dialed their number. My Aunt Gladys answered the phone and since I knew my call would be a surprise, I assured her everything was okay, no emergencies. She and my uncle and I talked for an hour or more. We shared about the Lord's goodness and my uncle spoke a bit of Greek for me, as his minor in college was Greek. He spoke, wrote, and read Greek. I kidded him, saying, "It's all Greek to me."

We ended our fun conversation and made plans for me to visit them in Austin, Texas, where they had retired. My Uncle Jack, who had never had a moment's trouble with his heart, suffered a massive heart attack later that night and passed away. The goodness of God! He allowed me to speak with him one last time. I will never forget the sweet time we had on the phone that night. Thank God I heard the Holy Spirit and was obedient. "My sheep hear My voice" (John 10:27).

Promised Blessings through **Obedience**

1. **God's favor will rest upon your life.**

"The LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth" (Deuteronomy 28:1).

2. **God's blessing will rest upon you wherever you go.**

"Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field" (Deuteronomy 28:3).

3. **You will be protected from danger.**

"Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out" (Deuteronomy 28:6).

4. **Your children will be blessed.**

"Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body" (Deuteronomy 28:4).

5. **Your possessions will be blessed.**

"Blessed shall be ... the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine [cattle], and the flocks of thy sheep" (Deuteronomy 28:4).



My sheep know My voice

SUMMERS AT GRANDMA'S HOUSE

As a child, I spent a couple of weeks in the summer with my mom's parents near the Lyndon B. Johnson ranch in the Hill Country of Central Texas. My first cousin, Cherry, who was two and a half years older than I, lived in Corpus Christi, Texas, by the Gulf of Mexico. Many summers we would meet at our Grandma and Grandpa Spencer's home for a two-week time with them. I think we two young girls must have been quite a handful for our grandparents, who were elderly and retired. They were very gentle, devout Southern Baptists whose ancestors founded several Baptist churches in that area of Texas.

Every night of the world my grandparents had Bible study and prayer before bedtime. This was the family tradition that my mom grew up in. However, neither Cherry nor I were accustomed to doing this in our homes. As little children, we certainly did not want to interrupt our childhood playing to attend these little prayer sessions.

When evening approached, we would run and hide, trying our best to miss out on their nightly ritual. We were so naughty! We would find a new hiding place each night to hide from Grandpa, who was always the one sent out to find us. Poor Grandpa must have walked blocks looking for his two little mischievous granddaughters. In spite of all our efforts to hide, they would not start without our being there. Finally we just gave up and quit trying to hide. We realized that he would always win the battle, come looking for us, find us, and cart us off to Bible study and family prayer. Now these memories are very dear ones to Cherry and me.

Grandma especially loved the Lord and His Word. She took it upon herself to be sure that Cherry and I were brought up to know Jesus and the Scriptures. So, it was Grandma's idea that we be enrolled in vacation Bible school at their church when we came for a visit with them. But, it didn't stop there. We were enrolled in every other Christian church's vacation Bible school in their little community that offered it while we were there visiting. We went to the Baptist church one week, the Methodist church the next, etc. Perhaps having us away from their home for three hours

each day gave our grandparents a little peace and quiet and accomplished Grandma's goal at the same time. We weren't real happy about it, but off to vacation Bible school we went each morning, come rain or shine. Most of the time Grandma held our hands and walked with us to church to be sure that we arrived safely.

I thank God for this special time with my grandparents, now long deceased, and for the Holy Spirit that I was exposed to by visiting their wonderful church. As a child, I loved to go to the altar in that country church and talk to God. I could feel His presence as I knelt in that sweet little church. It felt so good that I didn't want to get up off my knees. My church in Dallas did not give altar calls, so this was a very special time to me. I still remember those wonderful feelings to this day, sixty-four years later. The sweet Holy Spirit was touching my young heart as I knelt in His presence but I just didn't know what to call what I was feeling.

I remember the vacation Bible school teacher at their Baptist church saying that whoever could memorize the entire 23rd Psalm could stand before the church on Sunday night and quote it in its entirety for the congregation to hear. If we were able to do it verbatim with no mistakes, we would win a prize. I adored memorization, which came easy for me, and I was always motivated by dangling carrots (rewards) in front of my nose. So I diligently began to memorize the 23rd Psalm, the entire chapter, word for word. No little ten-year-old girl was more thrilled than I when I stood up before the people on Sunday night and quoted it with no mistakes. My prize was a beautiful plastic bookmark with a picture of Jesus holding a lamb, and the 23rd Psalm was imprinted on it. For me that little bookmark was more precious than silver and gold. Come to think about it, the words printed on it still are! I have that same little bookmark in my Bible today and hold it very dear to my heart.

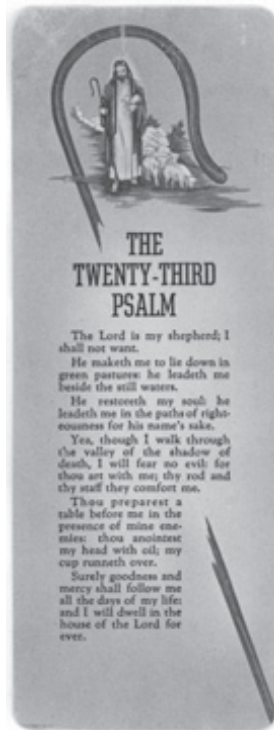
God was putting His Word into Cherry and me at such a tender age. I just devoured it. I've always especially loved memorizing the Word of God. Cherry got gloriously saved at age sixty-eight and I flew to Corpus Christi to see her baptized. Until she died in 2012, she studied and loved God's Word and served Him with her life. Grandma would be so happy. We were both answers to her prayers. Our Heavenly Father is so faithful!

I will always remember my sweet little old grandma as she lay in bed after suffering debilitating strokes. Each time she would awaken, she would ask someone to read the Bible to her. She loved God's Word and I thank God for my spiritual heritage on both sides of my family.

Some of you reading this probably had similar childhood experiences with godly grandparents who influenced your spiritual life. Like me, you can also thank God for summers at Grandma's house.



Geri at grandparents' church that was founded by their family



My prized bookmark that I won as a child



Chapter 2

College Years

A BUSY YOUNG WOMAN

I was an extremely active teenager, into numerous activities. While I was in high school, along with my schoolwork I was on the tennis team, played the timpani (kettledrums) in the orchestra, and carried the Texas flag onto the football field at each football game. By the time I was sixteen, my piano lessons and hours of hard practice had begun to pay off. I began playing and teaching organ and piano professionally.

I was working for a Dallas piano company and making a little money at a Dallas music studio. Evangelist Vicki Jamison Peterson's mother taught in the studio next door to me. How I admired Vicki! I also did some local TV as a young pianist and entertained at the State Fair of Texas. Besides all of these activities, I was "going steady" with a cute football player and that took up a lot of my time. We did not miss any of the school "proms" or other social activities. We always attended church together on Sunday nights. So my school days were fun and busy ones, but above all, I was still serious about my walk with Jesus Christ.

As I mentioned earlier, my maternal grandfather was a cousin to Emmett Kelly, the circus clown. I think I must have some of that same blood in me, as I was always seeking adventure. Perhaps it was genetic, but I decided that circus life would be fun, so at sixteen I decided to become a professional juggler in hopes of joining a three-ring circus. I really did! People have always

told me that my life has been like a three-ring circus. My parents must have been horrified. I spent hours tossing balls and practiced long and hard until I could juggle well enough to travel with Charlie Freeman's Variety Show. We traveled on a big Greyhound bus, doing shows around Texas. I would dress in costume, put on a lot of makeup, and do my juggling act. I also played the piano with my hands and feet at the same time. Was I ever a clown!

God is so sweet to give us the desires of our heart and let us play our little fun games. But, thank God, He helps us mature and outgrow some of the wild ideas of our youth. Still today I enjoy juggling, but life in the circus ring was not exactly what God or my parents had in mind for me.

After that lark, I became interested in "ham radio." I had to study hard, but I got my license, WA5CWG. I loved tapping out Morse code to various parts of the world. After making contact, you exchanged QSL cards, postcards with your personal ham radio information on it. It was a fun hobby. Ladies were called XYL's (which means ex-young ladies) and not too many women were involved in "ham radio" in those days.

My father had a real interest in radio, so I suppose I got my interest from him. My husband was very active in "ham radio" also, so our home included a "ham shack," a room set aside for doing "ham radio." This was before the Internet and instantaneous worldwide communication. Back in those days it was very exciting for someone in a faraway country to answer your "CQs" through a "skip" in the atmosphere. Most of you will not know what I am talking about, but it was fun. You could either try to speak with them, most of the time with great difficulty, or send your message in Morse code. Usually the tapping of the code went through easier than voice modulation. This is "Jesus is Lord" in Morse code:

-- - -/./ . . ./ . -/ . . ./ . ./ . . - . -/ - - -/ - - .

PACKING FOR COLLEGE

I graduated from high school in June of 1958, and immediately began studying organ for the first time with Charlie Evans, well-known staff

organist for WFAA-TV in Dallas. What a fantastic musician he was. I learned so much from him while I also developed such a schoolgirl crush on him! I think I fell in love with his music. Silly girl I was! While taking lessons with him, the door opened for me to play at an old-time Dallas restaurant, "Little Bit of Sweden" in Inwood Village. This was an answer to prayer for me, and my dream of becoming a professional organist was coming true at age eighteen.

Because of this, I missed out on my first semester of college, but I loved my new job. I had almost decided to forego college altogether until my dear friend, Norma Norman, shared stories about campus life with me. Her stories were so exciting, especially those about all the cute guys and fraternity parties. That really caught my ear so I made a very wise decision. I temporarily packed up the music career, loaded my suitcase, and headed to Fort Worth, Texas, thirty miles west of my home in Dallas. I enrolled as a freshman at Texas Christian University (TCU) where Norma and I became roommates in Waits Hall dorm on campus.

I took to college life immediately, especially the social life. I made a lot of new friends as a freshman. Very soon I began dating a nice young man, Bob West, who was from a ranching (oil and gas) family and lived in far west Texas. Hollywood had just recently finished filming the movie *GIANT* (starring Elizabeth Taylor, James Dean and Rock Hudson) on his parents' ranch. Bob had his own airplane, a Piper Tri-Pacer, and I loved that, of course. He flew it between school and his home, which was many miles from Fort Worth. My life was quickly becoming even more exciting! Bob was a real, authentic cowboy, so I began wearing western clothes. What we gals won't do to catch a guy! Sadly, Bob and his sister were killed when their private plane crashed while flying out of Houston, Texas, in bad weather in the late sixties.

One night a group of us Waits Hall girls decided to visit Colonial Country Club even though none of us were members. That was the fun of it! Among our little group was Mary Hanna from Amman, Jordan. She was a Palestinian girl who certainly did not understand American slang. However, she quickly picked up on it when we were into something! In an

effort to ease her distress on the evening we visited the club, we told her to just pretend her father “owned the place.” After a time of looking around the lush clubhouse, an employee approached us, probably realizing that we were strangers and certainly did not belong there. Before we could say anything, Mary, in her heavy Arab accent, spoke up and said, “It’s okay, my father, he own this place!” Oh, were we embarrassed! We literally ran out of there as fast as we could, jumped back into my little ’52 Chevrolet, and headed toward the TCU campus. We never did that again.

I thoroughly enjoyed my years at TCU and later transferred to Southern Methodist University (SMU) in Dallas. During this time I began dating an engineer who stole my heart. He had recently graduated from SMU and after a year-long courtship, we married. Three years later we were blessed with a little baby girl, Angie Lynn (see section “Until We Meet Again”). I worked as an organist in various Dallas restaurants and became known as “Geri Morgan at the organ”—a little rhyme. However, my life really revolved around being a good wife and mother, and taking care of our home. We had many years together.



Freshman at Texas Christian University

GOD PUTS HIS LOVE IN MY HEART FOR FOREIGNERS

In the previous section I mentioned Mary Hanna, a young Palestinian Arab girl originally from Jerusalem. She grew up in Amman, Jordan, and came to the United States and enrolled at TCU, where I met her. The Dean of Women placed her in my dorm across the hall from my room. Coming from the Middle East, Mary knew nothing about life in America. But she was an excellent student, having been valedictorian of her graduating class in Amman and was on scholarship at TCU. She learned Gregg shorthand after she came to America and she liked to write Arabic and shorthand side by side. Arabic had a backward slant and shorthand had a forward slant, but they both looked the same to me!

Actually, Mary was deeply in love with a young man of Islamic faith but she was a Christian and it was impossible for them to marry. She used her scholarship and came to America trying to forget him. Their special song was “Unforgettable” and I don’t think she ever did ... forget him.

Mary needed a little help learning our Western ways, so we freshman girls began to “show her the ropes.” We introduced her to life in America, and what an introduction she got from all of us Texas gals. We shared a lot of laughs as she stumbled along in her new environment! However, unbeknownst to me, God was introducing me to His beloved Arab people. I became enthralled as Mary shared stories about Jerusalem and Bethlehem. She had lived in all the places that were pictures in my Bible and I was completely fascinated by all of this. Mary was of the Greek Orthodox faith and she taught me many things about her people and their culture. During this time a precious, lifelong friendship between Mary and me began.

I was so very intrigued with my introduction to this new culture that I wanted to meet and socialize with other Arab students on campus. I had such a love in my heart for them that I soon began dating an Arab boy who also was from Amman, Jordan. (So long, Bob!) He was the javelin champion for the Middle East and on a track scholarship at TCU. To this day, my friends laugh and teasingly say that I very easily could have married someone from the Middle East and spent my life living in the

desert in a Bedouin tent, riding camels. My dear father quickly put the brakes on that little romance. He must have been afraid that his daughter would end up on the other side of the world from him. He was very wise. Thank God for loving, caring fathers. I had one!

I became so interested in the Middle East that I would sit for hours listening to Mary's stories. I have always been interested in learning other languages so I learned to speak some Arabic which I still speak today. I was so thrilled with her stories and became so caught up in them that I sometimes began to feel as though I were Arabic myself! I wanted to speak that language and be a part of that culture. I had a call on my life to those dear people long before I even knew it. Through these two young people, God gave me a love for the Arab people at the age of nineteen. I cannot explain why this happened. All I know is that a very deep, consuming love for people of Middle Eastern descent just completely engulfed me and has lasted for over five decades.

After her years at TCU, Mary returned to Jordan. Her sweet family has adopted me into their family and I have visited them in Amman and she has been back to visit with me in Texas. Even during the various periods of war, beginning in 1967, we have communicated regularly either by mail or telephone. Sometimes the mail would take months, yet we never lost contact. Now she and I write regularly through email. We can easily talk every day. Each communication that we send begins the same: "To my very best friend." That is what we consider each other to be to this day.

Thus began my love life with the people of the Middle East. Later in life I met a very dear Muslim family in Dallas, originally from the town of Ramallah in the Holy Land. It was a large family, with each family member making a contribution to their community. The family owned and operated a business in a suburb of Dallas. During this time an Arab friend from Jerusalem came to visit me in Dallas. A wealthy shopkeeper and a likable man, he had deep roots all over the Middle East. During his stay in Dallas I took him out to meet my Arab friends. They, of course, conversed in Arabic and seemed to be instant friends, enjoying a nice conversation.

Whatever my visitor told them about me must have been wonderful, for after that I received the VIP treatment each time I visited them. Several Arab men would gather in a circle with their pastries and thick Turkish coffee, and invite me to join their circle. This is quite an honor! Imagine, if you can, this Anglo woman sitting in their closed circle, drinking Turkish coffee with them. I had never drunk coffee in my entire life, but I realized this was a very special gesture and quite an honor, so I accepted. Sitting in their circle and loving every minute of it, I just let the love of God flow out of me to my sweet Muslim friends. I believe these little meetings were ordained of God. To this day I remember the unforgettable smile and kindness on the old father's face. He and his family truly loved me in spite of the differences in our beliefs—they even invited me to their home for lamb, in my honor.

My heart breaks with today's problems. Whenever I have the opportunity to meet a person of Arab descent, my heart leaps within me! When I speak a little Arabic to them, especially with my East Texas accent, they love it.

Man has put up many barriers in the world today to separate mankind. Truly there is always communication breakdown, but we must love our brothers. I have traveled all over the world and been with many nationalities, and through this I have found that the language of love and compassion is universally understood. It goes beyond barriers and traditions as nothing else can.

I once read, "People who adapt well cross-culturally are usually secure within themselves, having a strong sense of humor and fun and are calmly confident of their beliefs and values in life." We must yield our bodies (the temple of the Holy Spirit) to Him and allow Him to love through us, whether it be those we see at the grocery store or His children on the far side of the world. Every single person on this earth needs to be loved and appreciated. This is a belief and value that we learn from the Word of God. "Charity [love] never faileth ..." (1 Corinthians 13:8).



Mary Hanna, my Jordanian friend

COINCIDENCE OR ORDAINED APPOINTMENT

In 2001 I was in Washington, D.C., for the inauguration of President Bill Clinton. It was such an exciting event and I was there with a lovely group of people. The morning of the Inaugural Prayer Breakfast we excitedly arrived at the hotel in our “Sunday best” clothes. Of course, it was a beautiful affair. The patriotic flags and colors decorated the magnificent ballroom and it was an event one would never forget. I was so thankful that God had allowed me to be a part of it that morning. Understandably, many people tried to get in but had to be turned away due to lack of seating, in spite of their having received invitations.

Upon our arrival, much to our amazement a gentleman ushered Dr. Vaughan and me to a front table. We were very grateful to even get a seat, much less a front row seat. Grace was said over the food, breakfast started, and everyone began eating. Strangely, one seat beside me remained empty in spite of the overcrowding. After a little while a woman with dark hair and olive skin came and sat down in the chair beside me. We began a little chitchat. Guess what God had done! “The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord” (Psalm 37:23). The woman was a delightful Arab lady from Amman, Jordan, who looked so much like my dear college friend, Mary Hanna, that I did a double take! She was most surprised that I could speak a bit of Arabic with her.

This sweet lady that God had seated beside me was a deeply devout Christian from a very prominent Jordanian family. She was responsible for helping to open the doors for many Christian ministers and facilitating the spread of the Gospel in the country of Jordan. What was the purpose of our meeting in this way? She wanted to introduce us to King Hussein. I always believed that God would use my life with those dear people. He knows exactly when and how. God opens doors that no man can close and closes doors that no man can open! “I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it” (Revelation 3:8).

In the meantime I will continue to allow Him to use me as a vessel of love for the Arab people that I come in contact with. They are dear to the

Father's heart, and in spite of the recent wars and terrorism, I still carry a God-given love for them. I can only pray for God's intervention in the horror being done in our world today, which must break His heart. But truly, our God loves all races of people—not their actions, but their souls.

HIGH ROLLER

As a young woman at SMU I really wasn't into physical education. I had too many other activities that took up my time. However, as PE was required, I tried to find an "easy out," so I enrolled in bowling, an option to a regular PE class. At that time, in the early '60s, SMU had a bowling alley in the basement of the Student Center and it was a thriving part of the Center's activities. I have never been an accomplished bowler. In fact, I was really pathetic at the game. Doing my best, my scores were generally below 50.

One morning I arrived at school and went to the bowling alley for my class. As usual, I was bored with it and anxious to be finished. Besides learning about the game, our grade was determined by the scores we made throughout the semester. I knew I would pass but with an average grade due to my usual low scores.

That morning, I changed into bowling shoes and readied myself for the two games we played each class. What happened next was turned into another "that's impossible" moment in time for me. As usual I picked up the too-heavy-for-me ball and did my best to send it rolling toward the pins. Much to my surprise, it hit the exact center and all the pins fell down. How exciting, because I seldom ever knocked over two or three, much less all of them. Now, I still had a second ball to roll. I gave it my best again and would you believe, once again I made a "strike," knocking down all the pins. I was elated, but really shocked!

The game went on and my partners each took their turns. Once again it was my time to roll the ball. It seems I could not bowl anything but near strikes that day. All the people in the bowling alley stopped what they were doing to come over and watch me attain a near perfect score. I was most

impressed, as Don Meredith, the illustrious football player, was among my admirers that morning. Too many years have gone by, but I think I had two spares and the rest were strikes. I don't know what my actual score was, as I have forgotten, but it was an amazing feat.

These same people stood by to watch me, the great bowler, begin my second game of the morning. Expecting me to continue my amazing feat, were they surprised when I rolled my usual low 50's score. In those days high scores were posted in bowling alleys for all to see. My name, along with my high score, was placed on the board as the official Ladies' High Scorer for the near perfect game I had the one time.

Five years later I happened to remember this hilarious event and told my husband, an SMU graduate. Knowing my bowling ability, he just said, "No way could that be." I said, "Let's go out to the Student Center and see if I'm still the champion." Arriving at the campus bowling alley we found that, in spite of the passing years, I was still the woman with the highest score and neither he nor I could believe it.

To add another bit of amusement to this story, in the early 2000's I decided to call SMU and see if per chance I was still listed as the ladies' high scorer. After speaking with several different people, who seemed quite confused when I asked for the bowling alley, I was told that SMU had no bowling alley. It had been done away with many years before and they had no idea what I was even talking about. Oh well, that was my one moment of fame at SMU, even though the bowling alley and my score were erased forever from history.



Chapter 3

A Bend in the Road

MY CHANGES/WORLD CHANGES

Many people were concerned as we entered the new millennium. When I was asked if I was afraid or alarmed, I could only reply, “No, but I do feel horrible days will start a year or so after January, 2000.” No one could have imagined what lay in store for our nation, to say nothing of what has transpired since.

The year 2001 brought unthinkable events to our world. September 11, 2001, will certainly be remembered as one of the darkest days, if not the darkest day, in America’s history. On this day terrorists attacked the World Trade Center’s Twin Towers in New York City, killing almost three thousand people.

Just a couple of weeks earlier in my own life, another day is marked on my calendar, never to be forgotten, August 21, 2001. On that day I began a new adventure in my life. At age sixty-one I started kidney dialysis, as my kidneys had failed. Let me say in the beginning, dialysis and the entire kidney episode in my life has by no means been a curse on me. Instead, it became a great healing and a blessing to me. God, my Father, did not put the illness on me any more than any of us would put illness on our beloved children, but He used it. I alone know how it has affected my life for good. What the enemy means for evil, God can always use for good. “But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it

unto good” (Genesis 50:20). Through my ordeal I came to know Him in many new ways.

I was under the care of kidney specialists (nephrologists) my entire life, as my natural father died of kidney disease on December 26, 1945, when I was six years old. The doctors closely monitored my health throughout my childhood, adolescence, and into adulthood. As time went on, I was diagnosed with Alport syndrome, a genetic kidney condition associated with decreased hearing. At age thirty I began to lose my hearing and I have to use hearing aids. Thank God I was able to live a completely normal life, even during my pregnancy, in spite of the disease.

During the beginning of my kidney failure I learned that one in five dialysis patients dies the first year. I saw many of my friends die. Also I found that the average number of times a dialysis patient is hospitalized is thirty times per year. The average patient survival time after five years is 29 percent. A kidney transplant patient with a living donor (as I had) has a five-year survival rate of 89.1 percent. I have just celebrated eleven years with my transplanted kidney.

Usually kidney patients become so accustomed to the symptoms that they do not realize how bad they actually feel. That is exactly what happened to me. By the time I needed to begin dialysis, I could hardly walk from the car to the front door of the hospital.

During 2000 my kidney function began to rapidly decline. Finally, in the late summer of 2001, I faced surgery to put an access in my left arm for dialysis. I was placed on the dialysis machine in the Acute Hemodialysis Unit at Dallas’ Baylor Hospital where I saw horribly sick people and things I had never seen before nor knew existed. I think I was the only one not semi-comatose.

Many of the pages of this book were written as I lay in the dialysis chair each Monday, Wednesday, and Friday for the five-hour treatment. Unbeknownst to me then, I was to spend 127 days lying in the chair, watching the machine purify my blood of the poisons that otherwise would

have taken my life. I spent 635 hours or nearly a month of my life in the dialysis chair, and endured over 500 needle sticks. What a way to finally have time to write a book! I now had the many, many hours to draft one. Half of this book was written using one hand while my other hand was strapped down to the dialysis machine. That was quite a feat in itself!

I know our God still gives creative miracles. We thank Him for whatever mercies He shows us. Many people were praying that I would receive a creative miracle and be instantly healed from ESRD. That would have been the easiest way, by far. However, when I prayed earnestly about what lay ahead of me, the Holy Spirit whispered so sweetly, "Jesus was perfected by the things He suffered."

At that point, I yielded my will to His and asked Him to perfect those things in me that needed to be changed. I knew that I would be undergoing surgery for a new kidney. I believed it would not be an instantaneous healing, but still a miraculous healing from His hands. I hate needle sticks and, of course, with each dialysis treatment came four big ones. How I dreaded and disliked them; I still do. With each stick, as I reminded myself of His wounds on the cross for me, mine would become very insignificant.

Jesus does not inflict pain upon His children but He is able to use our pain and trials for good. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28). Some people believe it is God's will that we suffer and be sick but I do not believe that! If it were true, why do these same people bother to go to the doctor or the hospital to get well, taking themselves out of the perfect will of God? Think about it.

In my annual Christmas letter of 2001, I wrote the following: "I am resting in the arms of the Lord and know that He has everything under control. Because of Him, I am not fearful in all of this. He's my Great Physician and He will sustain my life according to His perfect will and plan. I had a dream nine months before I started on dialysis in which I was sitting in a chair in a dialysis center, talking with several other ladies. (I was familiar with dialysis centers, as my daughter was on dialysis before she died.) I

glanced down beside my chair and saw the tubing used to connect the patient to the machine. I reached down and picked it up and much to my surprise, I was not attached to the tubing. So, I simply got out of the chair and left the dialysis center.” End of dream. You see, I fully expected to be raised up and off of that machine. God gave me great hope through that one dream.

I didn't know then that only fifty percent of dialysis patients are ever considered for a transplant. A real desire of my heart is that some of you reading this will decide to become organ donors. You can give life to someone fighting desperately to live when you no longer need your organs. It takes only one kidney to sustain life, so if two are donated at your death, not just one but two people can live and benefit from your generosity. Even a transplanted kidney can be used, so I am donating my donated kidney. Hopefully my own transplant can still provide life for someone else. Please help me to increase public awareness of the tremendous need for organ donation if it is in your heart to do so. Let's spread the word. As of August 3, 2012, there were 104,063 patients waiting for their miracle of a donor kidney.

God's great mercy and amazing grace reached down from heaven and touched me. June 4, 2002, after nearly one year of dialysis, my dream became a reality. I received a kidney transplant. Thank the Master! He has been so very merciful to me. I have learned to appreciate life and health so much more. Sadly, I took it for granted far too many years but now I know and believe that health is a gift from our Father.

GETHSEMANE

As Jesus was leaving His disciples to ascend to heaven, He explained to them that He was leaving so He could send the Holy Spirit to them. “Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you” (John 16:7). We know from Scripture that the miracles and wonders performed in Jesus' life on earth were done by Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus trusted the Holy Spirit with

His life. Therefore, “greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father” (John 14:12). The Holy Spirit working through the body of Christ today (the Church) can do many more (greater) things than if He were working through only one vessel. He gave His best gift to the Church (i.e., the Holy Spirit).

Our responsibility and, hopefully, the cry of our hearts should be that we learn to cooperate with that same Holy Spirit, die to our own flesh, and allow Him to fulfill His will through our vessels of clay. Paul writes, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me” (Galatians 2:20). “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (I Corinthians 3:16). “We have this treasure in earthen vessels” (2 Corinthians 4:7). “For to me to live is Christ” (Philippians 1:21). Oh, that the Father would remove the scales from our eyes that we might recognize who we are in Christ Jesus and what authority has been given to us as believers.

To be mightily used by God, one must experience (go through) Gethsemane. We must truly walk and live through our own multiple crushings which bring about victorious living and ministry. The cross represents death. Like Jesus we, too, must experience our own Gethsemane through death on our own cross (i.e., crucify our own will) to be able to be useful in the kingdom. The Scriptures tell us that to be His disciple we must follow Him unto death.

I’m often reminded of an old song in the hymnal that I grew up singing in church: “Are ye able, said the Master, to be crucified with Me?” Perhaps you, too, remember singing that as a youngster. In my opinion, it is sad that most churches today do not sing the old hymns out of songbooks. The anointing on the old songs touches my heart like none others. So in this hymn, we can hear the Holy Spirit ask us if we are able to follow our Master to death. How many times through life I continued to sing my answer, “Lord, we are able, our spirits are Thine, remold and make us, like Thee divine.” I have learned one thing: Be very careful what you say to the Lord for He will take you at your word and do many things in your life. Your very own words give Him permission.

Some of you may understand what I mean by Gethsemane and some may not. But if you desire to know Jesus and His ministry, going through Gethsemane is the only route you can take. It is not always an easy way but victories await you on the other side. Things will happen that you never dreamed possible nor could they have taken place without your willingness to be crucified with Christ. As I have said, it's a continuous death to our flesh; each day we must take up our own cross and follow Him. I once heard that if the weight of your cross is great, the blessing hidden in it is also great. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23).

We should never be flippant with our words to the Father. Sometimes life's challenges can become great and we pray and ask that they be lifted from us. Sometimes the sweet Holy Spirit will have to remind us that we prayed for something and in order to receive it, there must be death to our flesh. And death and dying are never fun. It's much easier to die a natural death than to die to our fleshly desires while we are still alive. But in order to be of real use to our Father and His kingdom, our spiritual death is required.

If we prevail, we can see His hand and His wisdom accomplishing our prayer. I love this line from a song of the '80s, "He's more wonderful than my mind can conceive." Truly, He is!

I remember well what Kathryn Kuhlman used to say, "Unless we give up our lives, we will never amount to anything for God." If we only knew what He is able to do through one who lives and surrenders to God! "Nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42). The will of God will not take you where the grace of God cannot keep you.

Have you ever wondered how some people are able to go as missionaries into the remote parts of the earth and yet be the happiest people on earth? When you answer God's call, whatever it may be, He will accomplish that work through you and fill you with joy that the world will never understand.

“If you are willing to go where God leads, God will see you through the journey.”

(Rev. Jesse Duplantis)

Beloved, He is able. Are we willing to pay the price?

Through the years I have watched and found that God works through people who work. He will take our name and our likeness, use our vessel or body to win souls, and we can stand back and watch Him work. He does not need our “IQs,” but our “I wills.” He is all knowledge and wisdom. The very second you answer a call from God, everything you will ever need in order to accomplish and fulfill that call will come. God does not call the equipped, He equips the called. He’s not looking for golden vessels, just yielded vessels who are obedient to His still small voice. He’s looking for empty vessels to fill and use for His purposes. Man cannot use the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit must have full rein to use the man. He must use the vessel. Many times He takes old marred vessels (people whose lives others think are wasted and ruined) and uses them in great ways for His Kingdom. What a blessing to watch the Lord take those who have been addicted to drugs or alcohol, change their lives, and put them in a miraculous ministry empowered by the Holy Spirit, after they’ve totally surrendered their lives to Him. This brings great glory to God.

I also have found that He gives the best to those who leave the choice to Him. No wonder Jesus prayed in the garden to the Father, “*Nevertheless not my will, but Thine, be done.*” He taught us to pray, “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10). Jesus was and is the perfect will of God, our example. God created the world out of nothing and when we become nothing and “die daily” (1 Corinthians 15:31), He can make something useful for the kingdom out of us.

“He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it” (Matthew 10:39).

UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN

The biggest heartbreak of my life came on April 22, 1997, when my only daughter, Angie Lynn Morgan Bragg, went to heaven. She was thirty-three years old, just like Jesus. Without the strength that the Lord gave me, I think I too would have died.

Angie was born with an inherited kidney problem, the same genetic disease that took the life of my natural father in 1945 when he was only thirty-four. However, the disease did not show up in Angie until she was in her late teens. Angie had a fabulous life in those few years and lived it to the fullest. Until the very end, she made wonderful contributions in the field of Special Ed. Angie's short life was filled with God's great blessings. Her health had remained good until the last few years of her life.

When she was seventeen, Angie began to have signs of the genetic kidney disease that had never shown up in countless physicals and lab work she had through the years. Why? I don't know. The doctor's prognosis for her, however, was not a good one. I was in shock and tried my best to forget his words. After all, other than the fact that her numbers were changing for the worse, she was quite healthy. She was a "chip off my block," very active and full of life.

Angie received her college degree, toured Europe, and even skied from the top of the Aspen slopes with ease during the ski trips we took each winter. We spent our summers at our summer home in Hyannis Port, Massachusetts (Cape Cod). She became friends with the younger Kennedy generation, as they were all the same age. She swam in the indoor pool at Rose Kennedy's house on the compound and was there when Rose celebrated her 100th birthday. She really had a lot of fun and adventures while there.

Ted Kennedy, Jr., who had lost his leg to cancer as a very young boy, was one of her friends. We went out with Senator Kennedy on his boat while we were there. We were at two of the big Kennedy weddings, that of Caroline and Ed Schlossberg, and Maria Shriver to Arnold Schwarzenegger, which

were held on Cape Cod in the late '80s. Of course, we were not inside the church, but were in the excitement outside. We saw many celebrities, including Oprah Winfrey and the acclaimed artist, Andy Warhol. I shall never forget hearing the wedding guests, which included many people from JFK's cabinet, at Caroline's wedding as they sang, "America, the Beautiful." That was a special moment in history as the song echoed through the woods.

I suppose both Angie and I tried our best to forget the possibility that our health would ever diminish the good life we were both enjoying. We certainly were not in denial. We just refused to allow the health issues to interfere as long as it was possible to do so.

Angie married and became a truly gifted teacher to Special Ed students. How she loved special needs people. One year she won the "Teacher of the Year" award from the National Down Syndrome Foundation. These students were the bright spots in her life.

Angie's health began to decline when she was about thirty until she finally went into ESRD. She had many complications which I will not go into; for the next few years it was "touch and go" with her life. Many weeks she lay unconscious in ICU on life support systems and then she would rally and recover enough to leave the hospital. I don't remember how many months of her life she had to be hospitalized but it truly was a nightmare for all who loved her. She was on dialysis but tried her best to continue life as it had once been. She missed her students and tried so very hard to return to the classroom, but it was just not possible in her weakened condition. She gave it her best but her frail little body was just too sick to be a candidate for a kidney transplant. In 1997, Angie went to her eternal home. God was merciful to take her out of all that suffering.

As a Christian, I am strengthened by my faith in Jesus Christ that we will be reunited again for all eternity. God's grace is sufficient for all. He said what He meant, and He meant what He said. Without Him I am the weakest of the weak! Because He shed His blood, I will see my sweet, precious, beloved Angie again. I believe she will be standing at heaven's gates to welcome me in.

Angie was a very spiritual young woman. As a child she saw a picture of Jesus at the Last Supper and exclaimed, "Look, Mommy! Jesus is having a tea party." I have great peace knowing that she is in the place that Jesus Himself prepared for her. "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:2). Angie is living in a much better neighborhood now. In spite of the few years we had together here on earth, we shall spend eternity together, never to be separated. God loaned her to us to love and enjoy for thirty-three years.

Only one who has gone through such an ordeal knows the anguish of watching your critically ill child spend months on life support systems and die. When Jesus said, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9), He meant just that. When you have need of that grace, it is there. He will carry you through times when your own strength is gone, when you have absolutely none of your own.

Many people said to me, "Geri, how in the world are you holding up?" My answer was and always will be the same, "I felt as though He was carrying me." (And He still is.) Repeatedly I said that, as that is exactly what I felt. I felt I was completely out of control, and He was in control. I have a little saying that I used then and I still use today that really fit my situation. "He put starch in me" which held me up. I had experienced this strength one other time, and that was when my dear stepfather died. God is able. God was carrying me, holding me up through the entire ordeal. Truly His grace is sufficient for *all*.

One night after Angie's homegoing, I had a wonderful dream of her. She was sitting in a chair across the room from me, dressed in yellow and looking so very beautiful, in her prime. I was amazed that she was there with me and I said the silliest words to her. "Angie, I hate to tell you this, but you died. Darling, you died. How can it be possible that you are here?" She never answered me with words but a beautiful smile came on her face and she appeared to be looking at someone standing behind me. When I turned to see what she was seeing, I saw the Lord Jesus Christ standing there. Then suddenly they both were gone from me.

Because He lives, we shall live also!



Angie, four years old



Angie, college senior



Winner, Miss Tan contest, Hyannis, Massachusetts

ANGIE'S SPENDING HABITS

Angie was a character in her own right. She was a bit like Lucy (Lucille Ball) of "I Love Lucy." She never tried to be funny, she just *was* funny. I could tell many stories about her, some of which put some of the gray into my hair. One took place when she was in Salzburg, Austria, a very long way from home. She was in school there and, of course, spent her weekends sightseeing. Since she had no job, her father and I gave her an allowance which, I might add, was very generous and well able to cover her expenses. Like the Energizer Bunny that keeps on "going and going," Angie's expenses and spending habits had a way of "going and going." She had a way with money, that's for sure. And that way was to spend every penny she got in her hands. I must come to her defense, however. After she began teaching, she usually took her paycheck and spent most of it buying clothes and gifts for many of her underprivileged students. She had a wonderful, giving heart. However, when her money ran out, mine came into play—and we "won't go there."

One day I got an urgent telegram from Salzburg, Austria. It seems Angie was down to her last couple of dollars and needed money immediately. Knowing her habit of actually spending down to "nothing," I could envision my child on the other side of the world going without food, bus money, etc.

In those days, the '80s, before modern technology, one had to go to Western Union in order to wire money overseas. There were no ATM machines back then. So, off to Western Union I drove almost in a panic. Upon arriving, I filled out the necessary forms and breathed a bit easier knowing that "help was on its way." As I was walking out the door, the Western Union employee shook her head and said, "Whoever Angie Morgan is, she sure is a lucky little gal." When she said that, I spun around, needing to hear more of her comments. I inquired why she said that and the employee replied, "Some man was just here, and wired her the same amount." If you haven't already figured it out, she had told both her dad and me the same sad tale. She never dreamed that we would compare notes and, true to form, she hit the jackpot on money that month. That was Angie! Hence my reference to "Visa bills" in my dedication to her at the front of the book.

ANGIE'S CHRISTMAS LETTER, December 1996

Dear Friends,

I know my mom keeps up with all of you during the Christmas season, so I want to take this opportunity to say a few words to each of you. This past year has been quite an ordeal in terms of my health. As most of you know, I am in end-stage renal disease which basically means that I need a kidney transplant. I have had quite a few complications along the way with my kidney disease. Recently I have had major surgery to remove my gallbladder, spleen, and half of my pancreas. This was all done to prevent any further complications with my pancreas in the future. The surgery was extremely difficult for me, but I am finally beginning to feel better. Each day brings a little improvement and I am on my way to being capable of having the transplant.

I want to thank each of you for your continued prayers and support of my mother and me. God truly has answered prayers. It is only because of Him that I am here! I wish that I could express to each of you personally how much you have meant to my family and me. Since I cannot, I hope that this small message will convey my feelings and gratitude to you. Thank you for being there and for all you have done! Hopefully next Christmas my mom can relay the good news that my transplant is complete and that I am "back to normal." I wish each of you a blessed holiday season and may God bring you joy and peace. Tonight as I go to bed, I will thank the Lord for all of His many angels and for the blessing you have brought to me!

Merry Christmas!

Sincerely,

Angie Morgan Bragg

MY LETTER REGARDING ANGIE'S DEATH

June 1997

Dearest Loved Ones,

I'm sure you will be surprised to receive a letter from me at this time of the year, as my annual letter is usually mailed at Christmastime. However, I didn't want to wait until the end of 1997 to tell you about Angie.

Much to our surprise, Jesus called Angie home on April 22, 1997. As many of you know, she had been in extremely frail condition since October 1995, when she nearly died of severe pancreatitis along with kidney failure. The next 18 months of her life were extremely difficult in many ways and involved endless suffering. She seemed to have continual complications of one kind or another. I lost count of the numerous weeks she was hospitalized during those months. Many days and nights during the last year were spent in the emergency room as she continually fought for her life. On top of this, she spent every other day on dialysis for four hours to cleanse her blood. As I wrote at Christmas, we were anxiously awaiting her kidney transplant, believing all would be well at a future date. She was not strong enough to proceed with the transplant, but was doing her best to gain strength in anticipation of getting the new kidney. How she longed to dance and travel once again.

On April 21, I spoke with her several times on the phone. She had a slight temperature and felt she probably had infection in her dialysis catheter. She decided to go to the emergency room and have it replaced. She'd been through this "outpatient," fairly routine procedure many times. However, unbeknown to the medical team, Angie had pseudomonas bacterial infection in the catheter. Upon removal of the catheter the bacteria spread into her bloodstream and she died immediately. She didn't die

from kidney failure, but rather from toxic shock. As you can imagine, we all went into shock. She had come through so many deep valleys of illness that we expected her to receive the new kidney and go on with life, as she wrote in the 1996 Christmas letter. She had so many dreams of helping others when she got well. Of course, she was able to fulfill part of those dreams as she spent her adult life caring for and teaching students with special needs.

However, as we know, God works in mysterious ways. I do not for one second question His wisdom in calling her home. I know His timing is perfect and He never makes mistakes. God in His great mercy reached down and took her out of all the suffering she was living with. Since her death my greatest comfort comes from two things: (1) She has a new, completely whole body (no more cuts, bruises, scars, etc.) never to suffer again. (2) She's living in the heavenly mansion that Jesus promised to prepare for her. Knowing these two things has helped dry my tears. I know this separation is only temporary and I'll see her smiling face again. We'll spend all eternity together.

As I look back I have wonderful memories of long conversations during the last months she lived. She and I spent hours on the phone, discussing the Bible and what Jesus had done for her. Many times she referred to Him as MY Jesus, not just the Lord in general terms. She told me that before her illness she knew the stories about Jesus, but because of the illness she now KNEW Jesus as her Lord and Savior. She longed to be a vessel for the Holy Spirit to use. She and her family joined a neighborhood Baptist church about six weeks before she died, having been members of Park Cities Baptist Church. They felt God led them to the new church and so they immediately got involved. She had gotten into various classes and was most excited about their foreign missions program. She would call me and discuss teachings, etc. with such excitement and enthusiasm. She had planned to be re-baptized (she had been baptized as a young child) on Sunday night before

she died on Tuesday. However, she wasn't feeling well enough and postponed it.

The funeral was a real tribute to her and her love for people. People of all races and countries came to pay their respects. I personally received calls from China, Jordan, Mexico, and Israel from those who loved her. My dear friend, Rev. Ruth Heflin, flew in from Jerusalem for the funeral. I was deeply touched to see many of Angie's Special Education students and several Moslem girls with their heads covered in their native dress. Their families brought several food items. Angie loved all of God's children and they returned this love to her. One mother of a child with Down syndrome told me, "My child has the good life she has now because of Angie." I will forever remember those tributes. The funeral director estimated over 2,000 people paid respects at the wake and funeral. One told me that in his 51 years as a funeral director he had never seen so many flowers. It was a most beautiful tribute to a wonderful girl.

My special thanks to all of you for the food, calls, flowers, visits, cards, and the contributions you've made in her memory. The outpouring of love toward me has been overwhelming and I do thank you so much! I'm doing quite well. As we know, God never allows more than we can stand, and His grace is sufficient for all.

I will continue to work in China and will be staying overseas a lot of the time. The new eye hospital in Beijing is coming along nicely with Chinese doctors and nurses being trained in Western medicine to staff it. The need is so great that they are asking that we bring these eye centers all over their country as well as to the countries of Indonesia and India, so the task is immense. We are blessed to have many fine professionals working with us. We have one goal and that is to help the people. With 1.4 billion people in China alone, each having two eyes, that's a lot of eye care!

I Play the Notes, but He Makes the Music

I can now truly join in sympathy with many of you who've lost beloved family and friends. Jesus said, "I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:26). May we all be ready when He calls our name.

Always your friend,

Geri Hudson Morgan



Chapter 4

Music, My Passion in Life

MY PASSION IN LIFE

It was my dad's deepest desire that I study piano. I have had only one driving desire in my life—and I would consider it to be a consuming one—and that was to play the keyboard and especially the organ. I can remember as a three- or four-year-old child longing to visit the Thompsons, our dear neighbors. They had a very nice upright piano and were so sweet to allow this little girl to play it. I really never “banged” on the piano as most little ones do. Like most adults, I couldn't stand that! I could actually pick out little tunes and play by ear. I think I could have played their piano forever but, thank goodness, my mother taught me not to abuse their generosity. I would play for a few minutes, fold down the heavy lid over the keys, go home, and dream of the next time that I would again be allowed to play. I lived for times to go visit the Thompsons and play that old piano. The greatest thrill in my young life was playing their piano, although they never knew that, and I can still remember that thrill to this day.

World War II ended in 1945 and my parents decided to give me piano lessons. All these years later I still remember the excitement inside my little five-year-old body when they told me of their decision. Of course, a piano student must have an instrument to practice on, so the dream of my young life was coming into being.

My father began shopping for a piano for me. I recall the Saturday morning my mom and dad and my future piano teacher, Mrs. A. A. Bianchi, and I went by several places looking for a good used piano to fit both my needs and that of our home. The purchase was made and I had only to wait for its delivery. I could hardly wait! I now had a piano of my own that I could play anytime I wanted. I couldn't believe it! Indeed, I did play that old upright piano, hour upon hour. Sometimes my parents would encourage me to go outdoors and play, giving them a little quiet time around the house. I was so drawn to the instrument that everything else in my life dulled in comparison.

I immediately excelled in piano and I memorized every sheet of music set before me. I was doing my best to fulfill that great consuming desire of becoming a pianist and being able to make music. Twice each week after school I walked to my piano lessons at Mrs. Bianchi's home. How I looked forward to music lessons. Piano was my passion in life by age six.

At about twelve years of age I decided I needed to begin preparing to become an organist. However, I had no organ or any prospects of having one. Organs were (and still are) quite costly. Only wealthy people owned them in those days. However, I was so determined to learn to play the organ that I "rigged" one up! I got boxes at the grocery store, drew a full keyboard of pedals, and stuck it underneath my piano. I used it as bass notes so I could practice putting my feet on the correct pedals as my little hands played melodies on the piano. What an imagination! I think God put this into my heart and it was working fine for me with one little blip.

One afternoon the mother of my best friend, Linda Stallones, came by our house, walked in, and saw my homemade organ. She could not figure out what it was and with a puzzled look, inquired about it. I was so embarrassed trying to explain my invention to her. But years later she heard and saw the results of my imagination. Linda, her daughter, and I have played piano and organ duets professionally for many years, including auditioning for the once very popular Lawrence Welk TV show.

My second piano was a nice spinet which my parents bought during my teenage years. They also purchased a small organ for me about the same time. I was pleased to have an organ but it was too “toy-like” for me to be able to make the sounds I knew could come from the larger, more expensive ones. A five thousand dollar Hammond organ with Leslie speaker was not in my parents’ pocketbook, especially since they were planning for my college years just ahead. But, oh, that was the dream of my life!

At Sunday school in 1950 when I was ten years old, I was given a Bible which I still have. Throughout my childhood and adolescent years, I would write a date inside of it and beside that date I would write my little confession: “I will become an organist someday” and “Someday I will have an organ.” Today that little childhood Bible holds a chronicle of dates through the years until I finally could write, “1958—I am an organist.”

The enemy tried his best to keep me away from the organ. When I begged to study organ as a teenager, one instructor told my mother it could cause me to have a nervous breakdown, as it required that you use both hands and feet at the same time. How ridiculous!

At age eighteen, I took my first job as organist at the Little Bit of Sweden, a very popular dining establishment in North Dallas. I played piano and organ simultaneously, with both feet and both hands! I really enjoyed this life. I loved meeting the public, I loved the easy money, and I felt completely at home in the entertainment business at that young age. I was fulfilling my dream!



Geri and Lawrence Welk



Linda, Geri and Alice Lon (vocalist for Lawrence Welk Show)



Geri and organ teacher, Charlie Evans, WFAA-TV staff organist



Music request slips at restaurant



Gerri at pipe organ



Mrs. Geri Morgan, Executive Vice-President of I AM Broadcasting, at the piano which she plays with the anointing of God.

Gerri at concert grand piano previously owned by Coca-Cola estate

JUILLIARD OR BUST

After I had studied with Mrs. Bianchi for several years, she began to see my love and true dedication to the piano. One day she took my mom and new stepfather aside and told them that if I would study piano with her through my twelfth school year and work diligently, she would personally prepare me and send me to the Juilliard School of Music, at her expense. Mrs. Bianchi had been my father's good friend. She had no children of her own and money was not an issue with her. I think she must have felt a lot of compassion for me as a six-year-old after my dad's death and perhaps wanted to do this for him because of their friendship. She believed I had the ability and felt I would be Juilliard material.

Many times after my piano lesson, especially if it had been an unusually good one, Mrs. Bianchi would give me a silver dollar and remind me of the carrot that she was holding in front of my nose ... to study at the finest music school that the U.S. had to offer, Juilliard. (Oh, to have all those silver dollars today, as well as that degree!) As a young child, I did not really understand much about the opportunity she was making available to me, but I felt it must be a good thing, as my mom was overjoyed with the idea.

I did study and practice hard each day, learning Chopin, Bach, Beethoven, scales, and everything she put before me. I loved classical music. It came easy to me and I loved making music. My folks never had to remind me to practice, as is the case many times with children. I dearly loved to practice and learn music! I never tired of playing then nor do I now. I simply love to play! It's truly like breathing ... just a part of me.

I had started my piano lessons at age five, before I started first grade. At age fourteen, nine years later, I discovered there were little boys in the world, especially one who wore a letter jacket and played football at my junior high school. Did I fall hard! I decided that piano lessons would infringe upon my developing social life (sock hops, coke dates, to name a few activities). What guy wants a girlfriend who has to hurry home to practice the piano? I thought these new things in life were much more important

than my piano, so I decided to stop my piano lessons and start my social life. Juilliard never entered my mind.

Mrs. Bianchi was heartbroken, as were my folks, but they allowed me to make that big decision. I quit the lessons but I still played for school functions or anything else when a pianist was needed. I loved it and never stopped playing during this time. I just quit the piano lessons and embarked on an active social life, which I also enjoyed.

Two years later I was a high school sophomore and by that time I realized that I had made a very big mistake by stopping my piano lessons. Now sixteen, I was a bit wiser, and realized the wrong decision I had made. I knew that I definitely wanted to resume my piano lessons, which I did. I don't know how many of you will remember or understand, but when I was a teenager it was considered "square" and embarrassing to have to practice piano before you could go out on a Friday or Saturday night date. However, I soon learned how to fit them both in.

Much to my great disappointment, the opportunity to study at Juilliard was no longer an option for me. I had not kept my part of the bargain, to study twelve straight years, through high school, with Mrs. Bianchi. In spite of my personal grieving, I never let anyone know how disappointed I was, nor did I ever feel bad toward my teacher. I was the one who made that choice. Early in my life my dad taught me the old saying, "We make our bed and then we have to lie in it." I had done exactly that. My goal had been "Juilliard or Bust." I busted!

However, given a choice, I would surely choose God's anointing over a music degree from Juilliard. But, to have them both would be wonderful. I was called by God in 1948 and was ordained as a minister of music by man in 1982.

MY CALL TO THE ORGAN

My young life was filled with many adventures and activities. My parents continued to take me to church each Sunday. I remember taking as many

coins as my little hand could hold to Sunday school and dropping them into a little bank made to look like a miniature old-fashioned church, complete with steeple. Did you ever see one of those?

My mother was always a giver, so she instilled this in me as a youngster. She taught me early in life that Jesus was truly alive and that our Father was watching over us when we accepted His Son, Jesus, as our Savior. I am very thankful that my mom, who was raised Southern Baptist, taught me as a young child about the reality of the spiritual battle raging between God and Satan. I knew and realized by the age of four that I belonged to Him and I became very serious about the things of God. I just had no idea what He had in store for my life. Jesus was always very real to me and I thought of Him as my best friend, even as a little child. I truly felt the call of God upon me at this young age.

Of course, piano lessons took first place in my young life. I absolutely loved practicing and at times my parents would sweetly ask me to please go outside and play with my little friends. Later, in my late teens, this request was repeated, very emphatically, when I began playing timpani and snare drums.

One of my life's most unforgettable events took place in 1948 when I was eight years old. My parents were invited to be attendants in a wedding for some of their friends. I remember well that night at Tyler Street Methodist Church in Dallas. When the time came for the wedding rehearsal to begin, to everyone's surprise, the organist was unable to be there. I must have been the only one in attendance who could play the keyboard, so guess who got to sit on the bench of that mammoth pipe organ?

Someone suggested that they let me play the Wedding March ("Here Comes the Bride"). God blessed me with the ability to "play by ear," so along with my three years of piano lessons, I began my rendition of that old traditional music. It was at least recognizable enough for the wedding party to rehearse walking down the aisle. Oh, I cannot convey the thrill in my soul to be able to touch those keys and make music on that magnificent, regal pipe organ! With my small child's understanding, I was extremely

disappointed that I was not invited back to play for the actual wedding on the following night. My little feelings were quite hurt, so much that I can still remember that pain to this day. I believe that I was created to play the organ and it became my passion that night. I even remember crying when I had to leave the organ.

Music is a universal language. A melody can reach the heart of all mankind, regardless of their mother tongue. I truly believe that God placed an anointing on me and called me to the organ that night at the tender age of eight. Just as preachers are called by God, I believe that I am called to play the keyboard. "But now bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the LORD came upon him" (2 Kings 3:15). I believe this to be a holy calling, a holy trust from God. As a young child I dreamed of the day that I could play God's best pipe organ in heaven for Him. I still have that dream!

It is interesting to me that I began as a piano major when I entered college at TCU. I did not enjoy the numerous classical recitals which were required so I quickly changed my major to sociology. I was told that I would never become a good concert pianist, as I played with "too much emotion." Was that the Holy Spirit in the music back in my college days? I believe so.

My dear friend, Rev. Sigi Oblander, received beautiful insight into the influence of music. She says, "The reason music has such an impact on us is that it creates a flow. There are no interruptions or opinions that get in the way. We just create harmony together." The Word says, "They were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven" (Acts 2:1-2). God honors unity among believers.

It is my prayer that He will put His sweet anointing on the notes I play, that you may feel it, and it will be a blessing to your soul. Only He can do that, by the Holy Spirit. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts" (Zechariah 4:6). I once read on a poster, "Life is like a piano. It just needs the Master's touch." How true!



Geri, 7-year-old pianist

^{age 15}
 Jan. 6, 1955 - My ^{wish} greatest
 to have an Organ! Maybe even
 the good Lord sees fit I may, if
 day. I'll be great some day, some
 wait and see if it's God's will. ^{first}

March 26, 1955
 June 26, 1955
 Dec. 6, 1955
 Jan. 17, 1956
 May 29, 1956
 Sept. 10, 1957 - I got an organ

Jan. 1, 1959 - 2:00 AM - I'll be great
 some day - you wait! Help me God!

May 13, 1960
 Sept. 11, 1961

(written by me in the
 back of my Bible I
 used as a child)

My greatest wish ever
 to have an organ
 Maybe if the good Lord
 sees fit I may, some
 day, I'll be great
 (good organist) someday,
 just wait and see,
 if it's God's will.

Inside was a consuming desire
 to become a great organist.

"My greatest wish" as recorded in the back of my
 childhood Bible was to be a great organist



**Tyler Street Methodist Church, Dallas, Texas, where God
called me to the organ as an 8-year-old child**

GOD KEEPS HIS PROMISE ... A DREAM

After answering God's call to music ministry in 1971, I never again played the organ as an entertainer as I had done for so many years. I felt peace about this decision as I dedicated the music to Him. Not a soul on earth knew about my decision ... no one! Many years later, in May of 1976, I was surprised one Sunday morning at Beverly Hills Baptist Church when a dear lady approached me. I did not know her personally but I had heard she had a tremendous prophetic gift. Taking me aside, she said, "I have a word from God for you." This certainly caught my attention, and under the anointing she began to prophesy. The Holy Spirit through her told me several things that morning. He said God would give me a dream in the next six weeks that would explain the call upon my life. I quickly wrote down these things as she spoke and I made specific note of the time to expect a dream. As He promised, God gave me the dream within six weeks' time, just as she had said.

I had the following dream on July 18, 1976. I was the visiting organist at Tyler Street Methodist Church, which is an older church in the Oak Cliff section of Dallas. Dressed in a choir robe, I took my seat at the console pipe organ. I always checked the bulletin for the morning's service to be sure I knew what and when I was to play. I began the prelude that was listed in the bulletin, something by Bach. As I began playing, the Holy Spirit spoke to me and said, "Play *Sweet, Sweet Spirit*." My mind immediately began to argue and I said, "No one knows that song. It's certainly not in their Methodist hymnal, so the congregation won't know the song at all." The Holy Spirit spoke the same words to me again, and again I argued. After three times of telling Him no, I was finally obedient. I changed from Bach to His selection, "There's a Sweet, Sweet Spirit in This Place." After I had played just a few measures, the congregation began to hum the melody very softly. I was so surprised that anyone knew the song.

What happened next was beyond my imagination. The auditorium was packed and all the people began to raise their hands in praise to the Lord while humming the tune. Now, keep in mind that this dream came in 1976, before the move of the Holy Spirit in many denominational

churches. At that time there was very little high praise and worship like we are experiencing in churches today. I continued to play and watch as the Spirit healed people. They got up out of their wheelchairs. Many were vomiting up evil spirits that had plagued them. Deliverance was taking place in people all over the congregation and most of them were slain in the Spirit and lying all over the floor in the large auditorium. I was just in awe at what my eyes were seeing. In the last scene in my dream, I saw a very dignified, beautifully dressed lady lying prostrate in front of the organ. I asked someone who she was and they replied, "Oh, she is the president of the ladies' auxiliary." I was amazed. In spite of her dignity, she too was under the power of God. I was really, really amazed. At this point, I woke up. This was the dream that the sweet sister had told me was coming.

To my amazement, the setting of the dream was in the same church, Tyler Street Methodist, where I had first played on the pipe organ for the wedding rehearsal in 1948, twenty-eight years before.

As a child, I never wanted to take my little hands off of that massive keyboard. As I said before, I believe with all my heart that God placed an anointing on me and called me to the organ that night at the tender age of eight as I sat at the massive pipe organ. Now, He opened my spiritual eyes to understand what He was about to do through the music. I was beginning to understand my passion for the organ, and why my only desire in life had been to become an organist.

Just as I played, "Here Comes the Bride" that night as a little girl, I believe in these last days before the return of Jesus that His anointing on music will touch the hearts of men and call forth His beloved church, the Bride of Christ. I believe that men and women will be drawn to the altar to be united with the Lord as the music is played, just as that bride and groom met at the altar that night so long ago to be united in marriage.

Music is a universal language. Since dedicating my music to Him, I have ministered in many countries around the world, including Israel, Russia, and China. Only He has made this possible. Otherwise, I would have spent my life entertaining in restaurants, sitting at the organ, never knowing

how God can use the music of a psalmist. I chose the best! For me it has been well worth it.

THE BLUE MARBLE

I want to share a story about a little blue marble because the Lord has used it in my own life. When God touches something, regardless of its size or insignificance, it becomes a thing of beauty and grandeur, simply because His hand has touched it. What does all this have to do with a blue marble? Let me share my true experience with you.

I began playing the organ in restaurants when I was only 18 and I really enjoyed this life. But God had placed the call of a psalmist upon me and soon I found that real joy and pleasure come only from doing the will of the Father.

My strict Church of Christ doctrine (no musical instruments in their churches) taught me that I was not to use my musical ability in the house of the Lord. So, instead, I gave it to the world. I played good jobs and recognized that these doors of opportunity came from Him. I was indeed thankful for them. For years I played in restaurants on Saturday night, but on Sunday morning I wouldn't have dared play the instrument in the Lord's house lest I miss heaven and lead others astray. Many years passed as I continued to enjoy the music business. However, at age thirty I received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and my spiritual eyes were opened.

After a time of instruction by the Holy Spirit, I felt God was truly calling me out of entertaining with the organ to ministry with the organ. Not all Christian musicians are asked to come out of entertaining, but I was. I now needed to make a "once and for all" kind of commitment, not having any idea about what God was asking of me. "Give, and it shall be given unto you" (Luke 6:38). Once I had given up this particular area of my life, I received "Joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Peter 1:8).

Once when my husband was in New York City on a business trip, I was home alone and conversing by phone with a Spirit-filled couple. Before I

called them, however, the Holy Spirit had said, "I am going to speak to you about your music."

These friends and I were sharing about the goodness of the Lord, when all of a sudden the man said, "Geri, God says you are holding a little blue marble." He explained the blue marble story to me as follows:

Johnny and Jane, two five-year-old children, were playing together. Johnny had his pockets full of "little boy treasures," including his blue marble, which he loved above all else. To a five-year-old boy, marbles can really be precious. Johnny had his marbles and Jane had her hands full of chocolate candy. Aside from his marbles, Johnny's second weakness happened to be chocolate. As he observed Jane eating the candy, he began to think of a way to make a trade for some of it. The only thing he had to trade was his pocket full of marbles. He placed his hand down deep into his pocket and felt for his little blue marble, his most prized possession. Being able to recognize it by touch, he pushed it deep down into the bottom of his pocket and pulled out all the other marbles. Then he said, "I'll trade you all of my marbles for all of your candy." Jane, thinking she'd get all his marbles, quickly agreed. Thus, he was able to make a trade and also keep his prize, the blue marble.

My Christian brother spoke on, "Is this not the way we do with the Lord about certain areas of our lives? We come to the altar and say, 'Here, Lord, here are all my treasures,' but tucked away, down deep in our pockets, we hold on to our most prized possessions. As long as we hold on to our blue marbles we'll never know the blessing God has to offer us in exchange. Give Him your all and He will give you His all." I had never shared anything about my music with this brother so I just listened as he spoke as a mouthpiece for God.

After hearing the story, I thanked my friends and hung up. I fell on my knees for I knew what treasure I had buried away. I was now positive that I needed to consecrate my music to Him. Later in the week my husband returned from his New York business trip. Unpacking his suitcase and knowing nothing of the events of the week, he handed me an item that he had found on the ground as he walked along a New York street.

“Something told me to bring this home to you,” he said.

You guessed it! He brought me a blue marble all the way from New York City. I now knew without a doubt from this confirmation that God wanted me to consecrate my music to Him alone. Crazy story you may say, but true. This ended my dream of being a professional musician—at age thirty.

God wants us to have His very best. He has a perfect plan for each of our lives. All it takes is surrender of our wills—giving up the blue marbles in our pockets. If we determine to stay in the place of total surrender to Him, holding back nothing of our own will, God can do a work through our lives. Holding on to those things in life that He has asked us to release will cause us to miss a lot of the excitement and blessings He has for us and His gifts are perfect! “Every good and every perfect gift ... cometh down from the Father” (James 1:17). Can you understand why little blue marbles are special to me?

MY BLUE MARBLE CONFIRMATION WITH *FUNNY GIRL*

One winter afternoon while my daughter, Angie, was out of school for Christmas holidays, she and I invited one of her little friends to go to the mall for lunch and the movie, *Funny Girl*, starring Barbra Streisand. We decided to have lunch at the cafeteria just across the mall from the theater. The holiday decorations were so pretty and festive! After we went through the line with our food, I chose to sit near the lovely white French provincial grand piano where the pianist was playing beautiful Christmas music. I introduced myself to him as a fellow pianist and we engaged in a little chitchat about mutual friends in the music world. Learning that I had been a pianist in Dallas restaurants, he asked if it would be possible for me to fill in for him when he went out of town for a few days. My heart leaped as I looked at the beautiful piano. I surely could use the money for Christmas gifts. You see, my flesh really wanted to get back into the spotlight of entertaining, all the while knowing that God had called me out of entertainment into ministry with the keyboard. I sheepishly told the man that I would let him know later if I could help him out, already knowing that I would not be able to do it. Still, I struggled.

The girls and I left the cafeteria and proceeded to the movie. I bought our tickets and when we walked into the darkened room, the movie had already started and there was dialogue going on between Omar Sharif and Barbra Streisand. He had just arrived home from a trip to Europe and had a little gift for her in his hand.

She asked him, "What is this?"

"It's a blue marble egg," he replied.

Along with the gift, he gave her a bouquet of roses. You know God has always used blue marbles and roses with me along the way. He used the blue marble to confirm His call to me as a psalmist. Astonished, all I heard of the dialogue was, "a blue marble," and his gift of roses to her. I knew that God was speaking to me about my temptation to play that white grand piano during the man's vacation. In less than five minutes God had again used the blue marble in my life concerning my music. I believed then, as I do now, that He intended for me to totally consecrate my music to Him. I could hardly enjoy the movie and, of course, I told the pianist that I would not be able to "sub" for him. Even though I would not have dared to take the job, I did enjoy a few minutes of the idea. It's now forty years later and I've never been tempted since that time.

With today's technology I have been able to play and replay that scene from *Funny Girl* on videotape many times. Can or does God speak to us through such trivial things? You bet! He can and He does, if we will be sensitive to listen. He once spoke through a donkey: "And the LORD opened the mouth of the ass, and she said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee, that thou has smitten me these three times?" (Numbers 2:28). He knows us. He knows our frames. He will use whatever He knows will touch our hearts. How you and I perceive God will be as different as you and I are. But He's the same Father to us both.

An example of that could be a natural father, a man with several children. He will speak much differently to his 17-year-old football star son than he does to his little pre-school, blonde-haired daughter. He will speak

much more man-to-man to his son and will speak more gently to his little beloved princess. But they both hear and receive the message that their father's voice has spoken to them. The father may reward the son with a new truck while the small girl might receive a tiny baby doll she had been wanting. Both receive a gift from their father who, in his wisdom, has given the gifts he believes they will enjoy and are capable of handling. How he speaks to his children is the father's decision. Likewise, God will speak to each of us in a way we can receive Him. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Matthew 11:15).

MY DREAM FINALLY COMES TRUE

The organ of my dreams was a Hammond B3 with a Leslie speaker. In my opinion, this is the very best—a superb instrument. I never had one growing up, but my folks had an elderly friend, a Dallas businessman named "Skipper" Glitch, who owned a Hammond organ and a collie dog. My parents would take me to his home with them occasionally and I would get to put my little hands on the keys of that Hammond organ. Oh, how I looked forward to visiting him and his beloved dog, "Patrol."

I had to wait many years to see my own dream fulfilled. I had married and settled in as a wife. I was also working as an organist at night in a Dallas restaurant. Each day I would look through the classified section of our Dallas newspaper, looking for a used Hammond organ, still dreaming of having one of my own. Searching through the newspaper just became a part of my daily routine for over five years. Finally one night I found an ad that I could hardly believe: "For sale, a Hammond organ and speaker, \$1,000." My heart did a flip-flop, as the usual price was five to six thousand dollars; surely this had to be a misprint. Either that or the organ had big problems. I quickly called and inquired about it. It sounded like I had found my dream instrument and it was affordable. Back in the '60s, even a thousand dollars was a huge investment for a young married couple. An interesting fact that I want to enter here is that my father had passed away over twenty years earlier and I had just received some unexpected inheritance from his estate. I had put aside exactly one thousand dollars toward the purchase of an organ, so I had the needed cash if I ever found one.

Another ten years passed before I was able to get the Leslie speaker to put with the organ. I was so elated to finally have the instrument and speaker of my life's dream after waiting thirty years! This truly was and still is my most prized material possession.

Needless to say, I spent countless hours playing and enjoying my new organ. There was one small drawback and to most people it would have been just that, a small and probably unnoticed thing. The speaker which came with the organ was the traditional Hammond speaker, certainly a good speaker. However, to get the great sounds out of a Hammond organ, it needs a Leslie speaker. Now, Leslie speakers are quite expensive in themselves. So, here I go again with another dream. Time passed and ten years later I was able to have a Leslie speaker to attach to the Hammond organ. What a sound it added! I was so thrilled. Now, after waiting over thirty years, my dream was complete and fulfilled. How I enjoyed playing it—but it wasn't to last. Here comes the best and most interesting part of this story.

Two weeks after I got the Leslie speaker, the Holy Spirit spoke to me and said, "How much do you love Me?" I replied, "Lord, I love You with all of my heart." He said, "Enough to give your organ and speaker to the church?" Oh, my! But I was so thrilled to be able to bless Him and bless His house that I quickly donated my wonderful instrument to the church. We know God's Word says, "Give, and it shall be given unto you" (Luke 6:38).

I had no idea that giving that organ to the church would open the windows of heaven as it did. Within two years I was the owner of five pianos and six organs. My prize piano is a Steinway grand that belonged to Dino Kartsonakis, the Branson, Missouri, piano artist and the world's greatest gospel pianist. This piano is the one that he loved and used through his studies at the Juilliard School of Music. Perhaps Dino and I would have been studying at Juilliard at the same time had I not "busted." I also received a white and gold, gorgeous French provincial concert grand piano. It was a Baldwin with a white velvet seat that rolled up and down, just like Van Cliburn used! This piano came from the estate of the owner of Coca-Cola. It was later donated to Trinity Broadcasting Network and

today is seen on their set at the studio in Dallas. I also received two other baby grand pianos and one spinet, for a total of five pianos, after giving my organ to the church.

But now, let's talk about organs. The largest came to me through a bankruptcy situation. It was a huge, 40-rank, theatre pipe organ. It was a concave (round), white French provincial with five keyboards, the type of organ that theatres and music halls are built around. It truly was a fantastic instrument, like none I had ever seen. Years ago the Palace Theatre in Dallas had a similar one. I also received an antique organ, a portable Hammond organ and Leslie speaker valued at about ten thousand dollars, as well as another very large Hammond organ, the best Hammond made at that time. However, my favorite of them all is my Hammond B2 organ with its Leslie speaker and Sideman.

The last miracle instrument that I received I purchased at an estate sale late one Saturday afternoon. I had gone there with my Aunt Mary and her daughter, Marsha, and we arrived about ten or fifteen minutes before their closing time. Anyone who knows anything about estate sales knows that everything of value is sold long before the sale is finished. Aunt Mary walked in and found the organ and grabbed me. "Geri, you must see this organ!" Since Aunt Mary is not a musician, I thought it would be some kind of small spinet model for home use. However, much to my surprise, it was a Hammond organ, Leslie speaker, and a Sideman, which makes many kinds of percussion sounds and rhythms. With a Sideman, you don't need a drummer to accompany you.

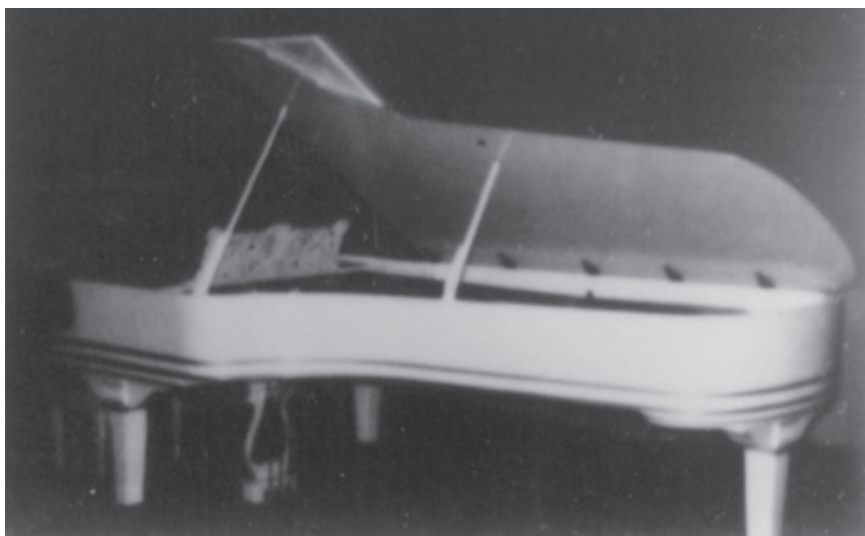
Sitting atop the organ was a stack of sheet music about two feet high, marked two dollars per copy. I casually asked the price of the organ and the answer nearly overwhelmed me. "The organ, the speaker, the Sideman, and all of the music go for three hundred dollars." Did I hear him correctly? That's right—three hundred dollars! Wow, my heart jumped. God was putting another Hammond organ and Leslie speaker into my hands, the instrument of my dreams. I called my longtime friend and organ technician who has worked with many of Dallas' professional organists for years. He came to my home and took one look at my newly acquired

instrument. His reaction was, “Geri, you’ve got yourself a steal! What a purchase! It’s a collector’s model organ, so don’t ever sell it. It is worth ten thousand dollars today.” Since then I have received another Hammond organ and a Leslie speaker, making a total of five Hammond organs and Leslie speakers that God brought to me.

Today that collector’s model organ, along with Dino’s favorite Steinway piano (both my favorite instruments), sit in my living room. Praise God for His goodness! “If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land” (Isaiah 1:19).

I had no idea what lay in store when I gave that organ and speaker to the church. We can never out-give our heavenly Father. Never in my life could I have dreamed of having such costly, magnificent instruments as these of my own to play and enjoy. God is so good!

After my kidney transplant, one dear minister friend reminded me, “Geri, you gave an organ to your heavenly Father and now He has given one back to you.” She was speaking of my new kidney, an organ for my body. What a Savior we serve!



Baldwin concert grand



Forty-rank pipe organ



Geri and Dino

GOD IS IN CONTROL

Later in life I enrolled in Bible college and took all the required Bible courses. I felt in my heart that I was to study sign language for the deaf, so I attended that class. What a thrill to be able to communicate with hearing-impaired people. This was before my own hearing became impaired.

When I started Bible school I determined that I would tell no one I was an organist. I wanted to be used only if it was God-ordained. The second week of school I found a note in my school mailbox from the Dean of Music requesting that I come to his office. What in the world would he want with me? I went to his office as requested, only to find out that he wanted me to play for morning chapel. How did he even know that I was an organist? As always, God works through people. Several years before, my stepfather had been a cancer patient in a local Dallas hospital. In my visits to him at the hospital, I met a lovely Spirit-filled nurse caring for him. She was always sitting at my dad's bedside and we visited on my trips to see him. At that time she was an RN, but decided to use her musical ability for God, so she quit nursing and became one of the voice professors at the Bible school I was attending. She saw me on campus one day and, remembering from our conversations that I was a musician, she suggested to the Dean that I play for their services. Word of mouth, yes, but led by the Holy Spirit, Who had placed the musical call upon my life. He's the One Who opens doors that no one can close. "Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it" (Revelation 3:8).

The Dean of Music had called me to play for chapel that morning, so I timidly took my place at the Hammond organ before service. After the meeting began and the service was moving along, a middle-aged lady stood up in the center of the auditorium and asked if she could say something. Her words pierced my heart that morning as she said, "When the organist began to play, healing went through my body and I was healed." God was confirming what He had told me in the dream and was ministering through the music. This was all so new to me.

That same morning something else very interesting occurred. At the end of the chapel service as I came off the platform, a young man approached me

and began using sign language to communicate. I was so glad that I had studied sign language, as I was able to understand what he was telling me with his hands. As he told me that he had been touched by the Holy Spirit through the organ music, I quickly gave glory to the One responsible, Jesus, and started on down the long hallway. As I walked along it dawned on me that the young man had never heard a sound with his natural ears because he was deaf. The Holy Spirit is able to work supernaturally. He certainly does not need our help. God blessed that young man with a touch from heaven.

I thank God for leading me to study sign language. I later taught it at a church. One of my very young students got so intrigued with it that when she went to college, she became a teacher for the deaf. I thank God for her life and her calling.

FIERY FURNACE

One hot summer night many years ago, my husband and I had guests over for dinner. Instead of eating inside the house, we chose to do a picnic in the backyard. The children could play while the adults grilled hamburgers on the grill, a '60s kind of thing to do. It was a fun evening in spite of the heat. After our guests left, we did the usual pick-up of dirty dishes and aftermath of the picnic and carried everything back into the kitchen. Why am I telling you these details? Keep reading and you'll understand.

The next day I happened to walk outside into the backyard. Much to my surprise I found the metal box that contained the matches we had used the night before to start the fire in the grill. We had accidentally left the box outside and I reached down and picked up the box to carry it back inside the house. At that time I really had no understanding about the Holy Spirit but as I walked toward the house with the metal box in my hand I heard these words, "Throw it down." Instinctively I threw the box as far away from me as I possibly could and then watched in horror as it exploded like a bomb, sending metal fragments in all directions. Sitting in the intense heat of the Texas sunlight all day long had caused spontaneous combustion to set up in the metal box of matches. Thank God for His loving care. He had protected my hands, as I would need them to play for Him. Perhaps He even saved my

life that day. I remember saying, “Something spoke to me,” and I was later to learn that it was the sweet Holy Spirit Who had spoken to me, not just “something.” I believe that far too many times in our ignorance, He is only spoken of as “something.” The Savior saved me once again from harm’s way!

MAINTENANCE MAN’S DREAM

I was scheduled to travel to California with a group of ministers. I had already paid for my nonrefundable airline ticket and made all my travel arrangements. Two nights before I was to leave, the Holy Spirit told me to cancel my plans and stay at home. I really scratched my head, as this had never happened to me. I would never cancel an important meeting, but I’m glad I was obedient. I was able to see God do a miracle in front of my eyes that I would have missed by going to California.

The day I was to leave for California I had some plumbing problems in my kitchen, so I called the building’s maintenance department. A new man, Charles, was working maintenance, so he was sent to help with the problem. He came up to investigate the problem and he had to walk past my Hammond organ in the living room to go into my kitchen. When he saw the organ, he audibly gasped. I said to him, “Oh, you like the organ?”

“Oh, yes, ma’am!”

I asked, “Do you play?”

He replied, “Yes, I do.”

So, I said to him, “When you finish working you must sit down and play for me.” He went on into the kitchen and checked out the plumbing problem. When he had finished, he came back through the living room.

“Well, Charles, sit down and play something.”

It was a large and wonderful instrument and I could tell immediately that he knew what he was doing. He began to play right out of heaven. It was

just wonderful! I said to him, “Do you play for a church? Please tell me that you play for the Lord.”

He said, “Yes, ma’am. I play for three different churches.”

He turned off the organ and as he left he said, “That’s the organ that I’ve wanted all of my life, but I’ll never be able to afford one. I don’t make that kind of money.” Just as he left, the Lord reminded me that I had another Hammond organ and speaker, not just exactly like this one but nearly the same.

About thirty minutes later Charles returned with some parts and fixed the problem in the kitchen. After he finished, he walked back through the living room where I was. I said, “Charles, I want to tell you something. While you were gone after the parts, the Lord spoke to me and told me to give you a Hammond organ and speaker like this one.”

This dear man absolutely came apart. He lay down prostrate on the floor in front of the organ and began to weep, saying, “Oh, no, I can’t believe this. I’ve wanted one like this all of my life.” The Lord gave him the desire of his heart, a Hammond organ and Leslie speaker.

I said, “You will have to bring a vehicle large enough to pick it up. If you can do that, it’s yours.”

Of course, he was able to find help and I was able to see the Lord bless that man. It just so happened that it was a portable Hammond, a very expensive, nice organ that you could take apart, fold up just like a suitcase, and carry anywhere. It had a Leslie speaker on rollers to go with it. So, he was able to use it at the three churches where he was music minister. I guess he has used it many places since then. Charles did not work at my condo but two or three months and I feel like the Lord brought him there to bless him with the organ. I have been in touch with him since and he is a music director and using that instrument for God’s glory. See what I would have missed by making the trip to California!



Chapter 5

My Spiritual Journey

MY ZEAL TO PLEASE JESUS

Jesus has always been very real and very important to me. As my little legs grew, so did my desire to know Jesus in a serious way. I always sought friends who went to church and Sunday school, hoping to learn from them and their experiences. I could not seem to quench the thirst that started for me at about age eleven. Being in church became so exciting to me and I was doing all I could to learn about Him and live my life for Him.

One summer I wove potholders to help raise money for the building of our new church sanctuary. I spent my entire summer walking all over our neighborhood, knocking on doors and taking special orders so that I could match the color of people's kitchens for them. In that day it was safe to do this. I was excited and so proud of my little business. I sold the potholders for twenty-five cents each, and along with my Kool-Aid stand, I managed to fulfill my pledge of fifty dollars to the building fund. That was like a million dollars to me and it certainly was a lot of weaving! My parents probably liked it, as it kept my little hands busy during that three-month summer vacation. I bet my heavenly Father liked it, too. I loved Jesus and I was trying so hard to please Him.

Later at age fourteen, when I was in junior high school, I became best friends with a very devout Christian girl from the Church of Christ. She attended both services on Sunday and prayer meeting on Wednesday night,

and in my mind this was what a sincere and genuine Christian should do. I went to two Sunday services, but our church did not have Wednesday night service.

As a fifteen-year-old ninth grader, I was able to enroll in a Bible course on the Old Testament offered by the Dallas Independent School District (DISD) for one year, and as a tenth grader, I took a course on the New Testament. What a taboo in the school system today! These classes were taught only at selected Dallas churches with certified DISD teachers. Credit was given by the school system for these hours of study if you met all of the requirements. It just so happened that the course was offered at the Church of Christ where my friend attended and my parents agreed to let me join the class. Mrs. Essie Wyatt, our teacher, was a fantastic woman of God as well as an excellent, qualified DISD teacher. I learned so much from her as she filled our young minds with the exciting Word of God. She truly was a real Bible scholar and I thought she simply knew everything about the Bible.

The more that I studied and learned, the more I craved to know the Word and Jesus. The Old Testament Bible course ran the same consecutive nine months as our regular school semester. I was an above average student in all of my school studies, but my zeal for the Bible caused me to really excel in its study. At the end of the semester we had to take a very difficult exam given by the DISD that covered the entire nine-month study. I made a perfect grade of 100. I owe my successful grade to Mrs. Wyatt's outstanding instruction. I was thrilled when I was awarded a leather-bound Old Testament.

The next year when I was sixteen and in tenth grade, I began the nine-month study of the New Testament. I studied hard all year and at the end of the second year we had to take another difficult exam covering the New Testament. It was given city-wide and required by all of the students who had taken that DISD Bible course. Like most exams, we all became a bit nervous when the exam day arrived. We were required to memorize many complete long chapters of the Bible and write them verbatim. Just placing a comma in the wrong place would reduce your score.

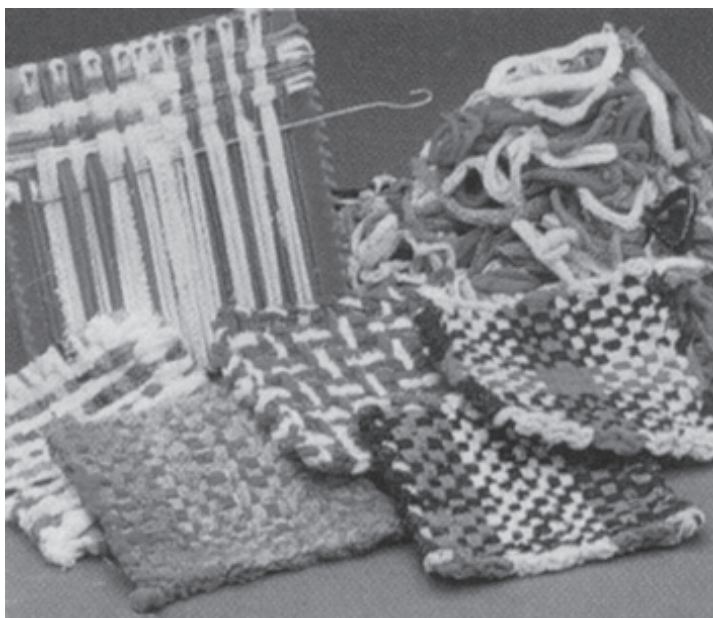
I studied so hard and was determined that I would make a perfect score as I had done the year before. I did! Was I thrilled! I came home with another perfect score of 100, a leather-bound New Testament, and a partial scholarship to Abilene Christian College. I thank God for putting His Word into my heart those two years as a teenager.

My wonderful Bible teacher for the New Testament course was Gertrude Wiggins. I saw in her such godly traits that I wanted to be just like her; in fact, she became a role model for many of us young girls. She seemed to be the perfect Christian mother, wife, and teacher and so along with learning the Bible, I was also learning from the Christian example she was living in front of my eyes. You see, you never know when someone is watching your life. She died several years ago, never knowing the impact she had on my life. In November, 1955, as a sixteen-year-old girl, I made a real commitment of my life to the Lord and was baptized at Skillman Avenue Church of Christ in Dallas, Texas.

Knowing absolutely nothing about the grace of God or the Holy Spirit, I worked so hard striving to be a Christian. I tried to do all of the things that I believed God was requiring of me and all the things that I thought were pleasing to Him. As a result I became quite legalistic in my walk with Him. I believed that I had to take communion each Sunday so I carried a bottle of grape juice and crackers with me in case I happened to be traveling and had to miss church and communion on Sunday.

As I said, I knew nothing about His grace, and I just felt like it was up to me to “make it” into heaven. I worked as diligently as I could in my flesh. If only I had known that it was not what I would *do* that would get me there, but what *He did* that assured me of a place in heaven. Hallelujah! Praise His name! He shed His blood that I might be saved!

All of my hard efforts were good works, but they did not assure me of eternity with the Lord. Only His blood has bought that assurance for us. Sitting in a church doesn’t make you a Christian any more than standing in a garage makes you a car.



Potholders I made to raise money for my church

KNOWING HIM

After all my zeal through the years learning about Him, I found that it is not knowing *about* Him, it is *knowing* Him, Jesus, the person, that is life-changing. That's what is important. A relationship with Him is what the Christian walk is all about. Christianity is not a religion, it's a relationship between Jesus Christ and the believer. "That I may *know* him" (Philippians 3:10). He desires to have a relationship with us just as He wanted with Adam and Eve in the beginning. Think about it. Would you want your children to know only historical facts about you, i.e., where you were born, where you lived? Can you imagine such a crazy thing? Don't you want a loving, close relationship with your children? We are made in His image. Surely the desires that we have for our children are the same as He has for us. His heart's desire is a close relationship with us, His children.

Until I meet you and gradually get to know you, there is not much I can really say about you. I may know where you work, where you live, your phone number, and other facts. However, the more time I spend with you, the more I learn your attributes. Then I can say to another that you are a caring person, a generous person, etc. I have come to know your character because we've spent time together. It's the same way with the Lord Jesus.

Mental assent of Jesus is not the same as surrender of the heart where He becomes Lord of one's life. Without surrender, He cannot lead, but with surrender He is able to lead. We follow His leadings. We must follow the Shepherd, not the flock! We do not lead and ask Him to follow. You don't see sheep leading their shepherd. He leads and they follow. It is the same with our heavenly Shepherd. Read the 23rd Psalm again that we all quote so very often. "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want ... he leadeth me" (Psalm 23:1-2). Does He really? He wants to!

OUT THE CHURCH DOOR I RAN

Throughout my life I tried to stay away from things that I considered sin in God's eyes. For instance, I tried to watch the words that came out of my mouth. But the harder I tried, the more I found myself falling short

of my expectations of what I believed would be pleasing to Him. The harder I worked at being a Christian, the more I realized I was really a “mess.”

Praise God, I soon learned that God’s only Son, Jesus, had made a way for God to accept me in spite of my many shortcomings. His blood washed away my sins and God loved me, a sinner.

In 1961, when I was twenty-one, I was exposed to a Pentecostal church for the first time. I had seen an article in the Dallas newspaper about a very young boy only seven years old called “Little David.” He was preaching the gospel nightly at an Assembly of God church in Dallas. I just couldn’t imagine such a thing and curiosity got the best of me. I wanted to see for myself so one night my husband and I did, indeed, visit the church where that young child was preaching. I really was amazed at his preaching but I was even more amazed at what I considered to be a “circus” in God’s house.

You see, I was accustomed to a church setting where no one said a word except the preacher. Certainly no one moved from their stiff, statue-like positions. And now here I was in the middle of a lot of shouted amens! Everyone prayed aloud and some even spoke in tongues, which really scared me. As I sat in the pew, I began to think that I had visited the “funny farm” and all these people were crazy—and I certainly did not belong in the midst of them. So, before one of them had the opportunity to lay their hands on me and pray, I quickly grabbed my purse and out the back door of the church we ran. How relieved I felt when we reached our car and drove away.

After receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit, there is no place I’d rather be than rejoicing in the midst of those worshiping the King of kings and Lord of lords, Jesus! Sometimes my old flesh will rise up and try to remind me that too much emotion is “too much.” Then I’m reminded how precious pure worship is to our heavenly Father and what a delight it is to Him to see and hear His children rejoicing in dance before Him. I surely had to ask forgiveness for being so judgmental.

ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST

Christmas of 1969 I received a Christmas card from an older lady whom my parents and I had known at church for many years. Inside the card she wrote, "Geri, give me a call sometime." I seldom, if ever, saw her, much less spoke to her by phone. We had absolutely nothing in common except having belonged to the same church and she loved to hear me play the piano. For some reason, unbeknownst to me then, I kept that one particular card and as most folks do, discarded all of the rest of the cards after the holidays.

About six weeks passed, but I continually thought of the message she had written inside the card. Finally one afternoon I called her and we had a normal little catch-up with the usual chitchat. Suddenly our conversation moved into spiritual things. She began to witness to me about the baptism of the Holy Spirit, a completely new subject to me. As she spoke of this experience, I listened in great amazement. All I knew about the Holy Spirit was, "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit."

As a teenager I had seen this middle-aged lady's life transformed before my eyes when she accepted the Lord as her Savior. You see, she had been a "hopeless drunk," as she described herself. She had been a bad alcoholic for years, with a strong rebellious personality and other attributes to go along with her addiction. By the time we talked, she had enjoyed many years of sobriety. She gave Him all the glory, as nothing else she had ever tried had worked for her.

She had become a much sought-after speaker at many churches and conventions, as her new life was such a tremendous testimony of His delivering and saving power. People adored her. I had seen His power in her life and, knowing all of this, I listened as she began to tell me, "Geri, there's more, there's more."

She spoke about another subject completely foreign and really "off the wall" to me. She said that after she received the gift of the Holy Spirit, she spoke in tongues. When she said that, I immediately whispered to

the Lord, "If You will help me get off the telephone with this crazy lady, I promise that I will never speak with her again." I just did not know what to think. My mind really could not comprehend this devoted, sane Christian woman speaking of such things. As I was about to get off the phone she said, "I have done a lot of things in my life, but I guess the strangest one I ever did was flying airplanes years ago."

Oh, my! Here was a lady pilot who could talk about flying, the thing that I loved with a passion. She then began talking about her hours in the cockpit and of her experiences as a pilot. I quickly realized that she indeed knew far more about the subject than I did. I was amazed that an intelligent lady, capable of flying a plane, would also admit to speaking in tongues. My mind was having a very difficult time with all of this, as you can imagine. Maybe yours is having a difficult time right now, too, as I write about this.

We concluded that fateful conversation and she promised to continue at a later date. I very graciously thanked her for sharing her experience, but hung up the phone, shaking my head and glad to be finished with that conversation, especially on the subject of tongues.

As she promised, she not only called again, but again, and again, and again. By this time I had become like a sponge, soaking up the things the Holy Spirit was speaking to me through her. You see, I thought all of this was coming from my friend's intellect. I did not understand that the Holy Spirit got my attention with aviation talk and then was speaking and teaching me spiritual truths through her. I only knew that I wanted this same experience in my life if God meant for me to have it. I saw a beautiful life coming forth from her with much more joy, peace, and love than before.

I was still utterly amazed that God would choose a person who could talk about my favorite subject, private aviation, and then switch to things of God. He knows exactly how to reach each of us. Indeed, He took on the likeness of a pilot, through my friend, to get my attention. And He did!

"Seek, and ye shall find" (Matthew 7:7). That is exactly what I did and I received the gift of the Holy Spirit in November, 1970, just after

my thirtieth birthday. I was soon to find out that my husband's dear grandmother, whom we affectionately called "Grandma Nancy," had been praying for me for years to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. God heard and answered her prayers.

As the Scriptures say, "Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17). Truly my eyes were opened and I began to see, hear, and experience things that I had never even heard about. I had finally reached out and touched the hem of His garment and life was all new to me. Until then I did not know Jesus was actually alive as the Scriptures teach and the songs say.

I was saved at age twelve by His grace. But at thirty the veil was removed from my eyes. The Scriptures suddenly became alive and I began to understand them better. I met the One who wrote them, the Holy Spirit!

Suddenly now all things were new to me. I knew the Savior of my soul was truly with me, in me, and allowing me to know Him as I had longed to do for so many years. Before then, I knew absolutely nothing about the Person of the Holy Spirit leading us or His work among us today. I did not have a clue about hearing His voice. However, two events were quickly to change that.

GRANDMA NANCY

"Grandma Nancy" was a member of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) when she received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and she was severely persecuted. This is her personal testimony:

On April 16, 1946, I was baptized in the blessed Holy Ghost. Up to a short time before I received this wonderful gift (and it is a gift from Jesus Himself), I thought it was for the apostles only. But by careful study of the book of Acts, I found it was for me, too.

I want every gift that God has for me, so I began at once to seek the baptism of the Holy Ghost. We do have to want what God

has for us before He can give it to us and I wanted this more than anything I had ever wanted before. I prayed as I had never prayed before, that God would cleanse me from all sin.

He answered that prayer and on the day I was praising Him and thanking Him for His goodness to me, He filled me with His Spirit. I can never thank Him enough for this one gift if I live to be a thousand years old.

This gift is for anyone who wants it, if they can pay the price. It was no price to me, just a great pleasure and privilege to give up the world for Jesus. There are no words that can describe this beautiful gift of God. It fills you with joy unspeakable. It gives you peace, wonderful peace. It satisfies every want. It makes you love everybody. It makes you want to pray. It teaches you how to reach God. It teaches you what to pray for. It makes you want everybody to have it. It makes you want to do something for Jesus every day. It makes Jesus real to us. It makes us see Him on the cross dying for us. We see the blood flowing from His sweet hands and feet for us. It makes us see sin at its worst. It makes us want to live for Him.

Oh, I love Him and thank Him from the bottom of my heart for being so good to me. I want to live my life every day close to Him. I want the world to see Him in me. I want my children and grandchildren to know Him as I do but I can't tell them these wonderful things that He has done for me and wants to do for them if they would let Him.

We do have to yield ourselves to Him before He can do anything for us. He stands at the door (of our hearts) and knocks. He wants to come in and dwell with us, for He says so in His precious Word. He can't force His way in. We have to let Him in.

Oh, if I could only make my family to know that this Holy Ghost is real, how happy it would make me, but I can't. I can only live

close to my precious Jesus and pray for my children. God has promised me my family and I am claiming that promise and will hold on to it until I am dead, for I know His promises are true.

Oh, I love Him so. I am going to prove that this sweet Holy Ghost is real and is for anyone that wants it. You will find it in His Word.

Twenty-four years later, “Grandma Nancy” sent a copy of her testimony to me along with this personal note:

1970

Geri Sue,

This is yours to keep and do with as you please. I don’t know of anyone I would rather give it to than you. Please use the Scriptures I sent you as it is what God gave to go with this, to prove to the world that the Holy Ghost is real.

Speaking in other tongues is the evidence of the Holy Ghost in us. We wouldn’t know we were baptized in Him if He didn’t speak through us.

May God bless this to your soul and others, too, is my prayer

Grandma Nancy

THE MOST GLORIOUS EXPERIENCE OF MY LIFE

In December, 1972, I experienced the most glorious spiritual experience of my lifetime. I was living through such a difficult, traumatic time that I was just ready to die and be with the Lord. Lying on the couch in my den, I must have slipped off to sleep. Like Paul, I don’t know whether I was in my body or out of my body (2 Corinthians 12:2). All of a sudden I was in a place where everywhere I looked I saw dark blue. Out in space I saw a gleam of light much like a star shining brilliantly. As I gazed at this light,

I recognized Jesus and He was coming toward me. Like a camera zooms in, it was as if He just zoomed in and stood over me. I thought either I was going to heaven with Him or this had to be the rapture of the church, when the saints of God are caught up into heaven (1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). But I realized that it couldn't be the rapture, as I was the only person there with Him. The rapture will have many people caught up into heaven at one time. I held my arms out toward Him, as I wanted to go with Him. (This is what you do when you see Him.) He spoke to me and said, *"Not yet, but soon."*

He showed me His hands and the entire palms of His hands were gone. I could look through them and see the glory on the other side. I did not see His face or eyes as others have, but I saw the glory that surrounded Him. It was more beautiful and more magnificent than human words can ever describe or express. The glory was like the hues of a rainbow all mixed in with a powerful, white smoke and it encircled His body. It was a supernatural aura given only to Jesus by the Father. It looked to be as electricity and I knew that if I touched one small speck of the glory I would just be completely engulfed by it and I would die.

As I stood before Him, He spoke these words to me, "Acts twenty-six sixteen." Acts 26:16? After He spoke those words to me, He disappeared. He was gone! I looked up this Bible reference and here is what I found: *"But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me"* (Acts 26:16-18).

I believe that this was my calling both to the ministry and also to China. Twenty-seven years later, after working with the Chinese to build Glory Eye Center in Beijing, China, I realized a part of Acts 26:16 was already being fulfilled. We were doing our best to open their eyes, both physically and spiritually.

In December, 1976, I was a student in Bible school. Rev. Chuck Flynn was preaching in the morning service and called me out to give me a prophetic word. The Holy Spirit spoke through him and said to me, "Let My peace, the Balm of Gilead, touch you for you are set free. This that would try to hurt you, this that would try to cause a condemnation, I cover with My forgiveness. You are forgiven. You will come forth with great praise and victory. Four years ago that anointing of the Lord came to set you free, and My hands have been upon you to keep you unto Myself that you may come forth with great strength and praise."

It is very interesting that it says, "four years ago." This prophecy was given to me in December, 1976, exactly four years after Jesus had come to me in December, 1972. In this prophecy He says, "Four years ago that anointing of the Lord came to set you free." I was just amazed.

There are two Scriptures that became very real to me after my visitation. One is, "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth" (Philippians 2:10). The other one is, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11). One glimpse of our resurrected Savior in all His splendor will cause every knee to bow. They will believe and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord of lords!

HEARING AN AUDIBLE VOICE

One night while sleeping, I was awakened by an audible voice. As I listened I heard, "You will be working with the word of knowledge." It was received in my spirit like I would be working with another person named The Word of Knowledge. I awoke and quickly recorded this experience in my spiritual notebook. That same day I had a knowing, and I suppose the gift manifested at that time. I knew and told friends to expect a large explosion. I did not know where it would happen, but I saw this in a vision. I knew that an explosion was going to take place. I had never had feelings like this and it was all brand new to me. About 7:00 p.m. that night, Dallas experienced a horrible explosion. A train carrying explosives blew up and

caused a large portion of Dallas to be closed and blocked off for many weeks due to the danger. Again, God confirmed His Word. He had given me a word of knowledge. He has been true to His word to me.

HE NEEDS A VESSEL

I was driving to a Bible study when I first heard the Holy Spirit speak. A dear friend from high school named Ann had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Ann was a graduate of SMU and had been a longtime first grade teacher, which I believe is a special calling. She developed multiple sclerosis and gradually her health declined to the point that she could not continue with her career. Before long she was confined to a recliner chair in her home. Ann had a beautiful voice; however, she was not able to attend the Presbyterian Church where she had been a regular paid soloist. Because of her confinement, several of us ladies decided to take our prayer group to her home so that she could be a part of it.

One morning after taking Angie to school, I started over to Ann's house to have prayer meeting. I passed a man standing on the corner of the highway selling roses and something inside said, "Buy a dozen roses and take them to Ann today." The Holy Spirit works through the heart, not the intellect. It was a soft command, a knowing, not an audible voice. As I said, I did not know anything about the Holy Spirit leading us. But I heard or felt in my heart, "Take a dozen roses over to Ann today." I was in such a big hurry that morning that I just ignored the inner voice, although it never stopped as I drove along. Several blocks down the road I saw another man selling carnations dyed different colors. Again that soft, small voice said to me, "Buy one carnation and take it to Ann. One is sufficient." Well, by now my mind really began to argue the case, thinking that taking only one would look cheap, silly, etc. Time had run out and I did not have time left to purchase either one, so I drove on, trying to arrive on time. I also wanted to forget that still, small voice I had heard.

After I arrived at Ann's house we began our little prayer meeting with songs and testimonies when suddenly there was a knock at the front door. I responded and found one of Ann's fellow teachers at the door. As I was

to learn later, she was a Spirit-filled Episcopalian. I invited her to come in, which she did and quickly went to Ann's side. She held in her hand a beautiful bouquet of a dozen red roses. She spoke these words to Ann, "God spoke to me and said to bring a dozen roses to you. I know one would have been sufficient, but here's a whole dozen." She had to drive about twenty miles out of her way to obey while I had been just a few miles down the road.

You can imagine my astonishment! Before my eyes God's perfect will had been performed by an obedient vessel. This lady had used the same words, "One is sufficient." God had given me the opportunity but I missed it because my intellect got in the way. I am sure He just wanted to send a little special love to Ann that morning. However, I learned a tremendous lesson from God that I'll never forget. God did not love me any less, but He did need an obedient vessel. "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land" (Isaiah 1:19). This was one of the two great experiences I had in learning to follow the Holy Spirit in my early Spirit-filled walk. As I said earlier, the sweet Holy Spirit works through our heart, not our brain or intellect. We must follow and trust Him from our heart.

God began sending red roses into my life after that. Many times I would feel Him direct me in some way and I would follow the best I could. Very often someone would walk up and hand me a rose. For me they have been like God's autograph, a confirmation from heaven. Signs follow believers; we don't follow signs. Do I need roses? No, but they are nice.

EXACTLY TO THE PENNY

One night while my husband and I were driving back to Dallas from our lake house, the Holy Spirit spoke to me and told me to give a little sum of money to some Christians. This was completely new to me as I was not accustomed to the Lord speaking to me in such a way, but I knew what I was hearing. I responded to the Lord's voice and the next day after taking Angie to school, I went to the home of the people. I was a bit embarrassed but when they came to the door, I explained that the Lord had instructed me to bring them this money. It was only maybe thirty or forty dollars,

but it was a lot to me and I gave it to them. They thanked me and praised the Lord, and I left.

Three weeks to the day that He had spoken to me the first time, as I drove up the same highway to Dallas, He spoke to me again. And again He asked me to take money over to these same people. This was really perturbing because it was a small amount and it had odd cents on the end of it—something like three dollars and seventeen cents. I don't remember the exact amount, only that it had odd cents. I said, "Oh, Lord, I know this isn't You speaking to me because if it were, You would round it off. You wouldn't send me over there with odd cents. I'm going to feel so silly walking up on their doorstep with this amount of money." Oh, I was so embarrassed, but I knew what I had heard and I knew I must be obedient.

The next morning I took Angie to school and then drove back to their house. I slowly crept up on their doorstep because I was even more embarrassed than the first time. When they answered the door, I stuck the money out to them. I wanted to get away from there quickly but when they looked at it, they began to cry. As I tried to hurriedly leave, they said, "No, wait just a minute." They continued, "At the beginning of the month we had a major appliance break down and had no money to have it repaired. We were going to have to take our tithe money and put it toward getting our appliance fixed." They said the Holy Spirit spoke to them and said, "No, you give and it shall be given unto you." And so, they went ahead and gave their tithe, which was the exact amount that I had brought to them. They were quite legalistic and that's where the odd cents came in, down to the penny. Jesus truly increased the faith of each of us.

I didn't know the Lord would speak that clearly about such things, but I told the Lord then, "If You will speak this clearly to me and I can hear You, I will do anything that You tell me to do." That was in 1970 and through the years I have tried my best to follow His voice and then watch Him work.

"Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it" (1 Thessalonians 5:24). He just needs a willing body to work through.

PHENOMENON

In 1972 a strange and beautiful phenomenon appeared in our home. It was indeed different and a lot of lives were touched by it. My husband and I had been working with a group of “Jesus kids,” as they were called, who had participated in a large evangelistic conference called “Explo ’72.” The Holy Spirit had led us to have bumper stickers that read **SELECT JESUS CHRIST AS SAVIOR** made up to give to the young people.

Many of these young people were on fire for the Lord and groups of them would come to our house to pray and share Jesus. It was such a beautiful time to watch the Holy Spirit touching their young lives. Several of today’s large churches were built and are pastored by young men who were a part of the Jesus Movement. I have had the pleasure to watch many of those teenagers grow into God’s spiritual leaders of today.

During this time one evening a very strange thing happened in our home. I walked into our darkened master bedroom and turned on the small lamp which sat on the dresser. What happened next was unbelievable. A large picture of Jesus appeared above the bed. The only explanation is that shadows from the lamp’s small wattage bulb created the beautiful, supernatural, colored pictures of Jesus. I say pictures because there were at least six to ten different poses. One was a profile; another was looking straight into His face. One had a shepherd’s crook (cane) next to His body. It was truly unbelievable but very believable to the many who saw it.

I was so astonished that I quickly called for my husband. After taking one look he replied, “We should take off our shoes; this is holy ground.” And we did.

Being afraid that the pictures would disappear and we’d never see them again, he said, “Let me go get the Polaroid camera and try to get a picture.” He was disappointed to find that the camera was out of film and he very quickly drove to the local drugstore where he bought film. Upon arriving back home he quickly took a picture of the wall where the pictures still appeared.

What happened next was almost more amazing than what we were seeing on our bedroom wall. We waited for the Polaroid picture to develop (such was modern technology in the early '70s). Once it had developed, the bedroom wall, bed and nightstand were in the picture—what you'd expect to see. Much to our disappointment, the pictures of Jesus were not visible in this picture. However, in their place was a picture of Jesus in a long, white robe with *shekinah* glory surrounding His body. This was a completely different picture from the original one still on the wall. In this day with computer enhancements of all kinds, we have all seen pictures with other pictures superimposed and “doctored up.” However, in our picture one can see Jesus in a long robe with *shekinah* glory around Him. I still have these amazing original pictures and they continue to amaze those who see them.

For several months afterwards many of the “Jesus kids” came to our home and had prayer meetings sitting in the middle of our bedroom floor while viewing the supernatural pictures of Jesus on the wall. Many of them brought their parents to the meetings and they also were touched by the pictures, which remained on the wall as long as we lived in the house.

MY MIRACULOUS INSTANT HEALING

During my teenage years I played a lot of tennis. I was a strong, healthy young woman but my doctor, John Minett, M.D., found that my thyroid was completely inactive. Because I was playing competitive tennis, I needed all the energy I could muster and a lazy thyroid makes you just that, lazy. My energy level hit rock bottom, so Dr. Minett prescribed thyroid medicine for me to take, and soon I was up to par.

I took the same amount of medicine for more than ten years. At age thirty when I was baptized in the Holy Spirit, my eyes were opened to divine healing. I realized that Jesus is “the same yesterday, and today, and forever” (Hebrews 13:8). I began to have an understanding that the gift of healing flows through His ministers. The person has no ability in himself to heal, but God uses human vessels for the Holy Spirit to bring about healing today.

An evangelist, Kenneth Hagin, Sr., was holding a meeting in Fort Worth, Texas, at Calvary Cathedral with Pastors Bob and Joy Nichols. Some of my friends were driving over for his meeting and invited me to go along. I was excited to hear this man of God, so I put on the most expensive dress I had ever owned and joined them for the evening. I had never attended this type of service and to tell you the truth, I was really a bit unsure of what to expect. But I knew my friends were devout Christians and loved Jesus, so off I went with them.

After Brother Hagin finished the message that evening, he said, "Anyone needing healing, raise your hand." I felt pretty safe just raising my hand, so I did. Then he went a little further, "Stand up." Oh, me, I didn't really want to stand but being in the far back of the auditorium, I quietly stood to my feet, thinking maybe no one could see me. However, that night there were not too many people standing, so I felt that everyone saw me stand up.

His next statement was, "All of you who are standing, come down to the altar and I will lay hands on you and pray." Now, it was one thing to ask for prayer and even stand up in the audience, but laying on hands at the altar was a new experience for me and I wasn't at all sure that I wanted to do that. However, feeling all eyes on me, I quickly found myself heading for the altar. I was wedged in the middle of the prayer line so I could not exit without everyone seeing me. As I stood watching, my heart really began to pound. You see, as Brother Hagin prayed for each person, they suddenly fell to the floor. "As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground" (John 18:6).

I had neither seen nor heard about this type of thing but now I was in line with this happening right before my eyes. I knew I did not want this to happen to me but where could I run at this late hour? I was terrified in spite of believing to be healed of my thyroid condition. Oh, me, the line and I got closer and closer to Brother Hagin.

Just when I stood about three people away from him, the power of God hit me and I was "slain in the Spirit." Down I went, expensive dress and all. It was glorious, as I had never had this experience. I remember thinking later

that there I lay on the floor in the most expensive dress I had ever owned. God doesn't care how we come to Him, only that we come!

When I managed to get myself up off the floor, I knew absolutely that God had healed my thyroid. I returned home and told my sweet family what God had done for me. They wanted to believe but felt that I should continue taking my regular thyroid medication. As hard as I tried, I could not make them believe that I truly was healed. (They just loved me and wanted me healthy!) So, to appease them, I continued with the medication. However, it didn't take long, about one week, before I began experiencing some changes in my body. I could not sleep and I was "jittery" in a bad way. Because of this, I visited Dr. Minett to see "what was wrong." After doing blood (lab) work on me, they discovered what I already knew! Taking the medication with a normal thyroid causes the reactions I was experiencing and I was taken off the medication that day.

After years of daily medication for a deficient thyroid gland, my numbers were perfect without medication. That healing occurred in 1970 and from that day until now, 2013, I have never needed nor had another thyroid pill in my body! Due to all my health issues, I am continually checked by many specialists and my thyroid remains perfect. Hallelujah!



Geri on The Phil Donahue Show, Chicago

END-TIME ARMY

As a very young Christian, the Holy Spirit began to teach me about the army of God. I did not know that Christians actually have a position in His Body. "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues" (1 Corinthians 12:28). When we find our place, we need to be satisfied with our calling. As the little saying goes, "Bloom where you are planted."

For several weeks I had been studying the Word as He began teaching me about His end-time army. One afternoon during this time, as I was driving along a little country road about fifteen miles out of Dallas, something caught my attention on the side of the road so I stopped my car and backed up to see what it was. Much to my surprise, it was a sack of about fifty tiny plastic toy soldiers that perhaps a child had thrown out the window of a car. I thought they would make some little boy happy so I decided to pick them up. As I reached down to pick them up, out rolled one blue marble. I feverishly dug through the sack to see if there were other marbles of any other color. But that was the only one.

God had placed that one little blue marble, along with the soldiers, there on the side of the road for me. I believe it. As I picked up the marble, still amazed at there being only one blue marble, the Holy Spirit spoke to me, "The blue marble represents the world (globe)." He then said, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you" (2 Corinthians 6:17). I knew that if I wanted to be a member of His great end-time army, I had to choose to follow Him. I made that choice long ago. "I showed up for duty." He continues to draft people into His army for end-time warfare.

One night Angie came running in to me exclaiming, "Mom, there's a program on TV called 'The Big Blue Marble' with a big blue marble on the screen." I asked her what the marble represented and she answered, "The world," just as the Holy Spirit had said to me out on that little country road.

A SPECIAL MOMENT IN TIME

Something happened in the late summer of 1977 that would change my life completely. God had another wonderful surprise in store for me. I was about to meet my God-ordained spiritual father.

Wanting to hear God's perfect will for my life at that time, I decided to go on a three-day fast. After those three days at home in prayer, I left my house to run errands. Driving across the bridge that spans White Rock Lake in Dallas I turned on the car radio and immediately heard a man preaching his heart out. I will never forget his words, as they pierced through me like an arrow. He excitedly spoke these words, "Two years ago God gave me a vision." At that point the Spirit of the Lord engulfed me as I had never felt Him before. I began to weep as the voice of the Holy Spirit spoke these words to me: "I want you to help this man."

I had no idea *who* the man was, *where* he was, or anything at all about his ministry. My mind immediately told me that perhaps I should mail a small contribution to help with his vision. However, with such an overwhelming presence of the Holy Spirit, I soon felt that there must be a lot more that God had in store. So at the end of the program I quickly wrote down his name and address, Pastor Marvin Crow of Garland, Texas, a suburb of Dallas, right at my back door! Feeling that God had more for me to do than just send him a small offering, I decided since it was so close that I would drive out to the church and check it out. However, the Holy Spirit told me not to go on that day, but to wait until the next day.

By the next day, August 11, 1977, I was ready to make my little voyage out to Garland to meet the pastor I was supposed to help. Upon arrival I was very surprised to find that the church was located in an old post office building which was being renovated. My first reaction upon seeing this old building with the sign reading "International Christian Center" was, "God, why in the world would You send me to such a place as this?" I suppose I was expecting to be sent to a large, beautiful church with a tall steeple on it. But being so sure that I had heard the voice of God, I entered through the front door and walked down a long hallway toward

the pastor's office. Unbeknownst to me, I was about to meet Marvin Crow, one of my life's most spiritually influential people and a God-ordained friend, a true gift from heaven.

I was to learn that Brother Crow had been the pastor of John Osteen's Lakewood Church (father of Pastor Joel Osteen) in Houston for several years and also had founded many churches in India. He was a great man of God. His brother, Bob Crow, and his wife, Lynn, now have a tremendous work in Mexico and various countries of the world.

Brother Crow was a tall, slender man with coal black hair and dark, expressive eyes. He was part native Indian from the Crow tribe and he looked every bit the part. When we first met he held out his hand and introduced himself. At this point I did not know if he would question my sanity if I told him of my experience in the car the day before. I should have known that God would not send me someplace unless He had prepared the way ahead of time, but I was still just learning the ways of God. "Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared" (Exodus 23:20). "Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it" (1 Thessalonians 5:24).

I began telling Brother Crow how the Holy Spirit had led me to his ministry when I heard his radio program and that I was to help him. I really did not know how this would be received, but I noticed that he was taking notes during our conversation. When we finished he said, "Geri, last night I lay before the Lord asking Him some very important questions which I needed answered. The things you are saying to me are my answers. God truly has sent you here today." Marvin Crow, I was to learn, was an extremely private person, but he showed me the paper on which he had written down his questions the night before. Then I understood why the Lord would not let me go visit with him the day before. He had me wait until the next day so that I could go in and be a confirmation to Brother Crow's prayer the previous night.

That was the beginning of a wonderful spiritual journey on which I was embarking. I devoted my time and energy to International Christian

Center for the next sixteen years, until Brother Crow passed away on April 6, 1993. Besides being his organist all those years, I was his secretary. I think I did nearly every job at the church. I worked in the front office; I learned to lay out and print the Sunday bulletins, before the days of computers; I painted school desks; I painted walls; I was president of the Christian ladies' club; and I was the coordinator for the mobile prayer chapel. I just did everything I could to help, as the Holy Spirit had instructed me.

I learned so much about God from Brother Marvin Crow. He was a man who not only preached and taught the Word, but his Spirit-led life set the example for his congregation to follow. Sister Crow (Jean) was a true, spiritual helpmate, as she co-pastored alongside Brother Crow. No one could lead praise and worship better than Sister Crow.

I pray I fulfilled my call to that ministry, helping Brother Crow. The week before he unexpectedly died, he called me and left a recorded message, which I have kept. Among his words were these, "Geri, you're my very best friend." Money could never buy what that means to me. Brother and Sister Crow and their boys became family to me and she still remains a dear friend.

God had called me to the ministry of the psalmist. Like David, who played the harp, I was called to the organ. The Holy Spirit told me in 1961 not to accept money for playing. It was His will that I do as the song says, "Freely, freely ye have received, freely, freely give."

Several years before meeting Brother Crow, I had shared my call with a dear saint of God, J.T. Adams, who had been Music Director for the Southern Baptist Convention. He was now the Music Director for Beverly Hills Baptist Church, a very large church that had moved into the deeper things of God. Brother Howard Conatser was the pastor and Brother Larry Lea was the youth pastor. J.T. patiently and politely listened as I shared my testimony and we both went our separate ways. Now several years later, J.T. had become Music Director for Brother Crow's church. I never told Brother Crow that I was a musician.

After I had been there just a couple of weeks, the church organist had to resign after serving many years. I volunteered to help out until another one could be found. They had two or three other assistants, and I thought one of them would be hired. However, J.T. quickly decided that I was the one he wanted as his organist. As he said, "Back several years ago when you shared your testimony with me over at Beverly Hills Baptist Church, the Holy Spirit spoke to me and said that someday you would be my organist, so you're my choice."

Subsequently I played many years with very little time off for vacations. I learned to follow the Holy Spirit in the services and I learned the difference between entertaining and ministering with an instrument. I had sixteen wonderful years of God-ordained training with Brother Crow as I sat on the organ bench. I was ordained as a Minister of Music on August 23, 1982.

I did my best to help Brother Crow in any way I could to make his ministry easier for him. I thank God for those years He gave me with Marvin Crow, some of the best, most exciting spiritual years of my life.

Brother Crow taught me a couple of very simple but weighty things that I want to share with you. He told me two very simple phrases that have helped me keep my life on a normal track. The first was, "Geri, never look back. Always look ahead. By looking back we can't see where we are going and we will stumble every time."

The other thing he said that was meaningful to me was, "Geri, if life gives you lemons, you make lemonade out of them." I have had a few lemons in my life and this bit of wisdom has helped make life's events much easier for me. I will always appreciate these words and never forget them. Maybe they will help you as much as they have helped me!



Geri and Marvin Crow, pastor and close friend



Chapter 6

She Changed My Life

GOD-ORDAINED STEPS IN JERUSALEM

*T*ruly one of the greatest spiritual events in my life was meeting Rev. Ruth Ward Heflin in Jerusalem in November, 1980. The Holy Spirit led Dr. Vaughan and me to Israel. We love Israel, as Jerusalem is God's "hometown." In God's eyes, Jerusalem is the center of the earth, the place where Jesus lived and died, and where He will return. God has chosen to show forth His glory there. It's God's heart and it will never be forsaken by God Almighty no matter how many armies march against her. You can read about it in the Bible.

One afternoon after we arrived in Jerusalem, we were in the Old City. Here the shopkeepers sell olive wood, mother-of-pearl, and many other articles that are made in the Holy Land, most of them by the Arab people. We left this area to return to our car and hotel. However, the Old City of Jerusalem is behind rock walls with hundreds of little streets and alleyways. It is built like a maze and is very difficult to navigate if you are not familiar with it—and we certainly were not! We continued to walk and walk, trying to find an exit and the longer and farther we walked, the "lost" we got. It was beginning to get dark and I decided that we'd better get real serious about finding our way out.

Just then I looked up to see a slightly portly, elderly man walking toward us. My still vivid recollection is that he was wearing sandals and carrying

a newspaper under his arm. As he drew closer, I walked toward him, thinking perhaps he could help us.

“Do you speak English?” This was my first question and I was so relieved when he answered, “Yes.” As I began to explain our dilemma, he told us that we were in the Armenian section. He explained that the Old City is divided into four sections: the Jewish, the Arab, the Armenian, and the Christian. I knew absolutely nothing about Armenia, but I happened to remember Brother Demos Shakarian in America, an Armenian raised up by God to establish the Full Gospel Businessmen’s Fellowship. This organization was made up of thousands of Christian men around the world. Demos’ name was the alpha and omega of my Armenian knowledge! I asked the nice man if he knew Demos Shakarian and his answer really astounded me. “Yes, I know him; he is a regular visitor to our city.” When he responded with such excitement, I felt he had to be a Spirit-filled Christian. Later I learned that he was just that. Did God use him as an angel? I think so. “Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares” (Hebrews 13:2).

Our new friend quickly invited us to a prayer meeting, which was held each Friday night in the St. Peter-en-Gallicantu Church. This is the church that is built in the place where Peter denied Christ. He explained that the meeting was led by an American woman from the State of Virginia in the U.S. and we were most welcome to attend. We accepted his gracious invitation and looked forward to Friday night with great anticipation.

This dear saint of God helped us find our way out of the maze of the Old City and then invited us to his house for dessert. He and his wife lived in a little apartment actually made out of a stable in the Old City. They gave us a special Armenian dessert and I played music on their treasured piano, their most prized possession. The top was down over the keys and then he had carefully covered it all with a cloth cover. When they found out that I played, he quickly lifted the cover off the keys and took a cloth and cleaned them. What a wonderful blessing it was for me to be playing worship songs to Jesus in a little stable (home) in Jerusalem, one I shall never forget.

Friday night soon rolled around and we made our way to St. Peter-en-Gallicantu Church for the meeting. Upon arrival we were introduced to a praise service such as we had never before experienced. Remember, this was 1980 and this type of joyous praise was not the norm in churches at that time, as it is today. The entire congregation was at the altar dancing, singing, and worshipping. The music was resounding off the walls of that beautiful, historical church. One of those present happened to see Dr. Vaughan and me walk in and they invited us to join them at the altar. We had never done such a thing, but it was a wonderful opportunity to praise our Lord Jesus, so we found ourselves in their midst doing Israeli dances and enjoying the special songs right along with them. It was glorious! This praise in song and dance continued for at least an hour.

After worship, a large, very tall woman walked to the front of the room and it was evident that she was in charge of the meeting. As we turned to walk back to our seats, she approached us and asked, "Don't I know you?" We knew immediately that she did not, as we had never seen her in our lives. As we were to learn later, once you met Sister Ruth, you never forgot her. Usually your life was never the same, either. She was beautiful. As we started back to our pews she said, "I do know you. Let the Holy Spirit bring it back to my mind. Oh, yes, I saw you on *The Phil Donahue Show*," she said.

Indeed, we had been on a telecast of *The Phil Donahue Show*. Brother R. W. Schambach had been invited to be a guest on the program to discuss miraculous healing and Dr. Vaughan had been invited to appear as a Christian physician. I was very determined that I would only sit in the audience and watch the taping of the show, as I had no desire to be on national television. That's not my cup of tea! However, as we left the hotel for the television studio, the Holy Spirit whispered to me, "Wear your mink jacket." How strange—but I was obedient.

When we arrived at the studio, I chose a back seat in the middle of the row so that I couldn't possibly be near Phil Donahue or his microphone. Well, so much for that! When the program began rolling, much to my horror, he

started in my direction. Sure enough, he passed over all the others sitting on both sides of me, held out the microphone, and began interviewing me. I firmly believe that it was the mink coat that attracted his attention to me, but the Holy Spirit foreknew and I was to give my testimony of my thyroid healing which took place at the Kenneth Hagin meeting in 1970, where I was healed after thirteen years of documented medical files showing that I had minimal thyroid function. I have never needed or taken another thyroid pill in the last forty years.

Sister Ruth had seen us on the program, and she very quickly invited us to their Sunday service at the Mt. Zion Fellowship in Jerusalem. She asked Dr. Vaughan to speak, and I was to play the piano. We had no idea what lay in store for us.

God gave Dr. Vaughan a message that morning about walking on the water as Peter did. "And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus" (Mathew 14:29). We are taught how we should step out of our circumstances, keep our eyes on Him, and trust Him. Unbeknownst to Dr. Vaughan or anyone else, Ruth had asked the Lord to speak to her that morning concerning an impending trip into China with her ministry group.

Sister Ruth had been on the mission field for many, many years and had gone to China as a missionary at the young age of seventeen. By the time we met her, we were all forty years old and she had ministered in nearly every country of the world. In fact, she did preach in every country of the world that would permit her entry before her homegoing. She prayed a very special prayer over us, asking God to use us to bless the nations of the world. Dr. Vaughan and I had traveled overseas only one time, but after her prayer our lives changed very quickly.

The next week we departed Israel for Dallas, while Sister Ruth and her associates left for China. God spoke to us on the plane en route to Dallas and instructed us to leave for China as soon as we got home. After arriving back in Dallas we began preparing for that trip; in fact, we went to China twice in a very short period of time.

The second trip we flew to China with Evangelist Nora Lam and her dear husband, Dr. S.K. Sung. This was the beginning of our long friendship. Nora passed away February 12, 2004, and S.K. remains my dear friend. He was 103 years old on July 19, 2013, an amazing man spiritually, mentally, and physically. He is loved and admired by people around the world. We had some very good and interesting times on those first two trips into China. In fact, we were some of the first foreigners to go into China after the Cultural Revolution. Even though the Cultural Revolution had been declared to be over, most of the Maoist reforms associated with the Cultural Revolution were not abandoned before 1978. Our trip took place in 1981 and the doors had just opened.

On the last night of our first trip to China, I was looking out the window toward some dear Chinese farmers in their rice paddies. They were wearing their little round, pointed hats (coolie hats) and working their hearts out. As I stood and observed, the Holy Spirit engulfed me with His love for them. I felt as if He had empowered me with all the love He had for the Chinese. His love for China just enveloped me and at that instant I could have stayed with them for the rest of my life.

The Word of God says that the steps of a righteous man are ordered by the Lord. "The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD" (Psalm 37:23). Truly He caused our paths to cross with Sister Ruth and through her God anointed us to touch the nations with His Word and for His purposes. Our lives were changed by the Holy Spirit's prayer through her. We have traveled to forty-six nations since that divine appointment with Sister Ruth in Jerusalem.

**Geri, Ruth Heflin,
Dr. Elizabeth Vaughan,
1980**



Geri, Ruth Heflin

OUR FATHER KNOWS OUR FRAME

One winter Sister Ruth came to Dallas for a visit. What wonderful and fun times we spent together through the years. We never knew exactly where we would meet; several times we met in Jerusalem and China. Our most recent time together was in Switzerland and France and unbeknownst to any of us, this would be our last overseas meeting with her. Dr. Vaughan, Sister Ruth and I celebrated nearly twenty years of friendship while we were in Geneva, Switzerland, in November, 1999, and it was a joyful occasion for us. Sweet, sweet memories. She went home to the Lord on September 15, 2000.

Back to Sister Ruth's winter visit to Dallas, when I was to get a very gentle, sweet reprimand from the Father. He always does it so gently that it is easy to praise Him afterwards and sometimes even smile. Sister Ruth awoke one morning and decided that she would like to go to Neiman Marcus for lunch. Neiman Marcus and Dallas are synonymous for fine clothing. Many of our First Ladies in Washington, D.C., have chosen to buy their wardrobes at the downtown location where Sister Ruth wanted to visit that day. She wanted to eat in the Zodiac Room, their wonderful dining room. Then perhaps we could do just a "little looking," not buying, just "looking," as she always said. She just enjoyed looking at their exquisite merchandise. Knowing that I might see some of my fancy, moneyed North Dallas friends, I put on my "Sunday best" along with my mink jacket, and off we went to Neiman Marcus in my God-given Rolls-Royce, typical North Dallas style.

Once downtown, we had to park and walk several blocks to the store. One simply had to know Sister Ruth to understand this. You see, she was always in the Spirit and sharing stories about Jesus and His mighty works. The Spirit flowed through her continually and as we walked along the sidewalk in downtown Dallas from the parking lot to Neiman Marcus, she began telling one of her little stories. I was listening carefully as we made our way toward the store. Now, I had paid no attention to what Sister Ruth was wearing that morning, but once we got out of the car, I immediately saw that she was dressed all in white. Her dress, hose, shoes, and even her jacket were white, and to top it off she put white roses in the top of her hair.

“Proper” Dallasites are taught early in life that you do not wear white after summer and before Easter. Now it was winter and I was going into a fashion center of the world with a lady dressed in wrong clothes! As we walked along the sidewalk, each windowpane that we passed—and we passed plenty of them—reflected her all-white attire and I thought to myself, “I hope none of my fancy friends see me at Neiman Marcus with someone so inappropriately dressed.”

Sister Ruth knew nothing of my distress and she was telling her little story to me as we casually walked toward Neiman Marcus. Actually, the Holy Spirit was telling the story to me! I did listen intently, in spite of watching the windowpanes as we passed by. Her story was about a dress she was wearing at her home in Jerusalem. She lived in Jerusalem with the Mt. Zion Fellowship along with many other members who came from all parts of the world to live, work, and pray there.

Lots of ladies took great care of Sister Ruth, helping her with her clothes and other needs. The Holy Spirit had instructed her to wear a certain dress, and as she was obedient, she would see miracles around her. He also instructed her to tell no one about this. In obedience to the Holy Spirit, she continued to wear only the one dress. The ladies who were with her kept insisting that she change her dress, as she had many nice dresses. Would she please change her clothes? She said no and just kept wearing that particular dress. It was fine to wash it, but she wanted to put it right back on. The ladies were becoming quite distressed that she would not change her dress, but Sister Ruth wanted to see God’s miracles, so she persisted. The ladies began to insist that she change into other dresses because she continually met with world leaders and they just wanted her to look her best. They never knew about the word God had given her. She loved watching God do miracles around her as she wore the dress in obedience to Him.

So we were walking along the downtown sidewalk as she was telling her story and all I could think about was her improper white attire. White in Neiman’s at this time of year! She finally came to the end of her story and said, “You see, Geri, God wasn’t dealing with my pride; it was their pride

that He was dealing with.” Those words pierced through me. Hallelujah! You see, God was dealing with Geri Morgan’s pride. I quickly repented of my thoughts concerning the out-of-style, out-of-season attire that she had on. Our loving Father will remove such as this from us in such a gentle way. Sister Ruth never knew what transpired in me that day. At least, I don’t think she did. The Holy Spirit was very sweetly reminding me of that ugly attribute and I have tried very hard since then to crucify it when I feel it trying to find a place in my life.

I learned such a valuable lesson that day from the Holy Spirit. Probably the whole trip to Neiman’s was just to teach me that lesson. Being the woman of God that Sister Ruth was, everyone from the maitre d’ on down was in awe of her as we left the Zodiac Room. I will thank Him forever for that day as long as I live. “Pride, and arrogancy ... do I hate” (Proverbs 8:13). “The pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 John 2:16).

Through the years I have watched how God puts us in embarrassing situations to kill our flesh and put a death to our pride. Sometimes it’s not fun or pleasant. “Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt” (Matthew 26:39).

GOD LOVES HIS LITTLE GIRLS

I love what a sweet minister and dear friend of mine often says when she reminds me, “God takes care of His little girls.” One such example of that happened many years ago. Sister Ruth was my houseguest for a few days and one morning she woke up wanting donuts. I would have been happy to go out and buy some for her; however, there were no donut shops anywhere near my home. Sister Ruth continued to talk about donuts. My employees all came to work at 9:00 a.m. and one of them walked in with a large box of a dozen donuts and handed them to Sister Ruth. I was just astounded. This employee had never done this before and he never did it again in the many years he worked for me. Sister Ruth served God with her life. He was her Father. He was taking care of one of His daughters. God knew that little desire of her heart and He just used my employee to deliver the goods. God truly does “take care of His little girls.” He loves to give us the desires of our heart.

I had a similar experience this past week. I have recently moved to an “active adults” golf resort, as it is advertised, although I must say, there aren’t many who live here who are “inactive.” Each Friday morning some of the local farmers in the area bring their fresh produce to our community. Being the “new kid on the block,” I get most of my information from my friends who have lived here several years. I was told the produce was fresh and good so immediately I was hungry for some farm fresh tomatoes. However, we were also told that you must be at the market site by 8 a.m. as the produce is sold very quickly and what remains is usually very “picked over” and less desirable.

It was not possible for me to get to the market early. I never told anyone how badly I wanted some fresh tomatoes, but the Lord knew the desire of my heart.

Early Friday morning a lovely couple, friends of mine, came by my home and rang my doorbell. They were en route to the market and thought maybe we would like some fresh vegetables and they would pick them up. We told them yes, we would like some squash and green beans if they would kindly pick them up for us.

With that, they left on their market trip. An hour or so later they returned and quickly explained that they could not find squash or green beans, but they had gotten some beautiful fresh tomatoes instead.

I certainly felt God’s hand in my tomato blessing. And also, were they good! You may pass this off as a simple little coincidence. But if you had known how badly I wanted tomatoes, you would agree that again God took care of one of His little girls.

A SMALL ERRAND SEEN AROUND THE WORLD

(At the death of John F. Kennedy, Jr.)

God used Sister Ruth so many times in my life. When John F. Kennedy, Jr., his wife, Carolyn Bessette Kennedy, and her sister Lauren had died in an airplane on July 16, 1999, Dr. Vaughan and I happened to be in

New York City at the time of his funeral. We talked to Sister Ruth on the telephone and she told us to make a spiritual poster and take it down to John's Tribeca condo, where thousands of people had gathered with memorials to him and his wife.

We bought art material and made two big posters with very spiritual messages on them. Upon arriving at his apartment, we were immediately picked out of the crowd of thousands to be interviewed by CNN. It was viewed worldwide. I was also chosen and interviewed by *The National Enquirer* at the funeral. God chose our mouths and poster signs to give Him glory that day. Thank God, Ruth heard the Holy Spirit and sent us on that little errand. What a shock to my friends, Bill and Norma David in Texas, when they flipped on their TV to CNN News and there we were, up in New York City! They couldn't believe it! They were able to get a video made of it which I keep with my Kennedy memoirs.



CNN interviews us at John's Tribeca apartment



Our posters seen around the world

DR. VAUGHAN REMEMBERS MEETING RUTH HEFLIN

(Excerpt from book, *An Instrument in God's Hand*, by Dr. Elizabeth Vaughan)

Meeting Ruth Ward Heflin was a divine appointment, clearly arranged by God in a most unique way.

In November of 1980, I was visiting Jerusalem with a friend named Geri. We had both been there before, so we decided to venture into a part of the Old City where neither of us had ever been. We had strolled through the streets for quite a while when suddenly we realized that we were in a very different part of the city. There were private walls everywhere we turned. It was like a maze of walls with periodic locked gates. There were no people around, no shops anywhere. We were lost. We tried to find our way back to the busy section of the city, but everywhere we turned, more silent walls presented themselves.

By this time the sun was going down, and we were beginning to get a bit concerned that we might have to spend the night in the street, leaning against a wall. We started asking the Lord to help us find our way out of the maze of narrow streets.

As we prayed we kept walking in the growing dusk, until we finally saw an elderly man approaching. He had something rolled up in a newspaper under his arm. We had no idea if he spoke English or not, but we were compelled to try to communicate with him. We asked him what part of the city we were in.

Thank God the gentleman understood the question and told us that we were in the Armenian section. Geri, being a very gregarious person, asked him if he knew Demos Shakarian, the founder of Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship, the only Armenian she knew. To our amazement, he said he did know Mr. Shakarian. This opened the door for him to tell us that he was a Christian, and proceeded to invite us to come to his home and meet his wife.

We followed this man to a small, humble home, where his wife demonstrated the local hospitality by proceeding to serve us rolled oats with cinnamon and a little sugar.

The most prized possession in the little house was an old upright piano, which neither of them played. It was carefully covered with a nice cloth. When they learned that Geri was a pianist, they asked her to play for them. Glory rolled out of that old piano as she played, and tears came to their eyes at the joy of having music in their home for the first time in many years. God blessed them and blessed us through that meeting within the maze of walls in the Old Armenian Quarter of Jerusalem.

Before we left his house that night this gentleman told us of a meeting being held in the church known as St. Peter-en-Gallicantu by an American lady from Virginia. He invited us to go there the following Friday night, and we said we would. We had no idea we were about to begin a whole new chapter in our lives.

When we arrived at the church that Friday night, promptly at 7:00 p.m., many people were already there, and they were dancing in front of the altar and singing joyfully. Not one person was sitting back in the pews. We had never been in a church service like this, and we really did not know what to do. We just stood quietly in one of the pews, watching what was happening.

Before long, one of the believers came over to us and invited us to join the group, so we went to the front and started dancing with the others. They were doing line dancing and circle dancing, and they were singing what we later learned to be the “new song.” Someone in the group would receive a song spontaneously from the Lord and begin to sing it. These “new songs” were always simple enough that we could all catch on to them quickly and sing together.

Then another person would get a second verse to the same song or perhaps they would get another “new song” from the Lord,

and again everyone would join in. This spontaneous singing and dancing went on for a full hour, with no apparent leader except the Holy Spirit.

As everyone began to sit down, a tall lady came over to me and said, "Haven't we met before?"

I had never seen her before in my life, so I told her no, we hadn't. She looked at me intently and said, "I'm sure we have met before." Again, I told her we had never met.

Persistent in her belief that we had met, she looked at my face carefully and then said, "I remember! I saw you on The Phil Donahue Show when I was in America." Sure enough, I had been on The Phil Donahue Show with Rev. R. W. Schambach, verifying a miracle God had done on a man who had lost his eye. That she had remembered a stranger's face from a single television show was a great miracle, but I was to learn that this woman was surrounded by the miraculous.

She introduced herself as Ruth Heflin, head of the Mt. Zion Fellowship, based in Jerusalem. She asked me if I would speak at the church on Mt. Zion the next day, which was the Sabbath. Still in a stunned state because of this series of strange events, I accepted the invitation. It was the beginning of a lifelong friendship with Ruth.

The next morning the Lord told me to speak about "walking on the water" (i.e., walking by faith) which I had had abundant practice in doing over the preceding years. Immediately after the service, Ruth graciously thanked me for coming and then scurried off to take care of some important business. Months later I learned just what that important business was.

The fellowship had a team of people ready to go into China. They had been waiting in Hong Kong and Los Angeles for several

months, unable to get visas. They were running out of funds, and Ruth needed to make an immediate decision about whether or not to bring them home. She had prayed fervently, asking God to give her a definite word through me that Sabbath morning about what to do concerning China. The strong word that had come forth was “walk on the water,” so she acted immediately on this word and bought herself a ticket to fly to Hong Kong via Los Angeles on the next flight leaving Israel. In faith, she believed that God would open the door for the team to enter China.

The Lord had told Ruth, “On Thanksgiving Day, you will have something to be thankful for.” Thanksgiving had only been a few days away when I spoke at the Mt. Zion Fellowship. Ruth arrived in Hong Kong on Thanksgiving Day. Her team met her with the news that, after waiting all those months, they had just gotten their Chinese visas. God’s timing is perfect, and His ways are awesome to behold! The team members had a wonderful Thanksgiving together in Hong Kong, before entering China.

Shortly after this, Ruth came to Dallas for a visit. My friend Geri and I took her out to eat and talked about the nations of the world. Ruth always smilingly says that God put an international anointing on us in that Steak & Ale restaurant that night in Dallas. Since that time we have been together many times in many places—New Orleans, San Francisco, Birmingham, Washington, D.C., Switzerland, France and our mutually beloved China. Over the years we have made the observation that things always happen in the Spirit when you are with Ruth. You cannot ever point to an exact time or an exact event, they just happen. You always leave her presence in a higher level of glory than when you entered it. Having an encounter with Ruth is like being impacted by a forceful meteor that changes the direction of your path forever.

Ruth has a certain graciousness about her in that she is willing to be inconvenienced herself in order to meet the needs or desires of others. She is a gracious hostess, whether it be for one visitor in her

home or hundreds of people at an inaugural prayer breakfast for the President of the United States in Washington, D.C.

And I have never met a person with greater faith than Ruth. I have seen her fly off to some foreign country with no money in her purse, no credit card to fall back on; she simply trusts God to take care of everything when He says to go. And for many decades she has operated this way among the nations, knowing that God always supplies the need that anointed faith creates. I have often thought of Ruth in relation to the words of Jesus in John 3:8 (NAS).

“The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is every one who is born of the Spirit.”

She blows with the wind of the Spirit just like a feather blows in the wind. He takes her where He wants when He wants, with no resistance from her, with no hindrance in her spirit. Finances do not slow her down at all. Actually she seems oblivious to them, because God always has provided and He always will. Health matters do not stop her. She broke her ankle stepping off a train onto the icy ground while crossing Russia, but she kept going. I know of no one like her, who had traveled all the nations of the world time and time again, ministering to masses or to individuals, to kings or peasants, continuously on the go for over 40 years.

I have heard prophetic, life-changing utterances come out of her mouth in the middle of ordinary conversations. I have heard heaven in her voice and the authority to call forth nations from darkness into light as she prays. She is like God's mouthpiece.

What does Ruth Ward Heflin mean to me? How can you put into words the feelings you have for someone who has changed the whole course of your life, a person who would always drop whatever they were doing any place in the world, and come to

your side if the need arose? I can only fall on my knees and thank God from the bottom of my heart for putting us together that fateful day in Jerusalem and allowing me to walk through life in that friendship He created. There was a beginning to it, but there will never be an end.

Elizabeth R. Vaughan, M.D.

7-18-00

MY TRIBUTE TO RUTH'S LIFE

Dearest Loved Ones,

We have just arrived back in Dallas after attending the funeral of one of our best friends, Rev. Ruth Ward Heflin. She fought a good fight, she kept the faith. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" (2 Timothy 4:7). She went to heaven on 09/15/2000, in Ashland, Virginia.

Some of you have met Ruth through our long association with her; others maybe only have heard us speak of her. She was one of the greatest persons in God that we have ever known and I am quite sure she had more spiritual impact upon our lives than any other human being. The HOLY SPIRIT through her changed my life as it did countless people around the world. She was indeed "one of a kind!"

I will add a small paragraph from her obituary so that you can read the tremendous impact she had on our world. The American flag was flown at half-staff over our nation's Capitol in Washington, D.C., on Friday, 9/15/2000, out of respect to this great woman of God who so greatly impacted our nation as well as the world, a truly deserved tribute. She was God's ambassador!

"Rev. Ruth Ward Heflin traveled the globe for more than four decades, spreading the gospel. She preached to world

leaders and was a guest chaplain for the U.S. Congress and the Pennsylvania Senate, hosting two presidential inaugural prayer breakfasts in Washington, D.C. Her books have been translated into a dozen languages and are read worldwide. She was widely revered as a prophet to the nations. By the age of seventeen, she was already a missionary to the Chinese people in that nation. Her journey of faith took her into every nation on the face of the earth, where she ministered to kings, queens and emperors. Perhaps the greatest legacy of Ruth's ministry are the many men and women who now go forth throughout the earth carrying the ministry and the glory she imparted to them."



Celebrating 20 years of friendship in Switzerland with Ruth



Chapter 7

Special Friendships

A SPECIAL FRIENDSHIP MADE IN HEAVEN

One of the most treasured blessings God ever brought into my life was meeting and knowing Marybeth Garrahan, a resident of Cape Cod, Massachusetts. Marybeth was born with Down syndrome and today she is forty-two years old. The youngest of eight children, she was born into a wonderful New England family, which now consists of twenty-three grandchildren and five great-grandchildren, all of whom she adores. Her late father was a lawyer in the Boston area and the family summered on the Cape.

I met this outstanding girl one night many years ago on the Hyannis Port Yacht Club (HPYC) dock, sometimes referred to as the “Kennedy boat dock.” This dock was used by the late President John F. Kennedy, other members of his family, and residents of the quaint village of Hyannis Port, Massachusetts. It was at the end of our street so we spent a lot of fun times down there, especially in the evenings.

Marybeth was very young, perhaps fourteen years old, at the time we met her. She was with an older teenage girl who had been hired by Marybeth’s parents as a companion for her during the summer. My daughter, Angie, several of her friends, and I were down at the dock enjoying the boats and the beautiful water. Little did I know I was about to meet someone on the dock who would absolutely steal my heart away and be used by God in my life in such a sweet way.

The kids began chatting as we sat and looked out at Great Island and Nantucket Sound in the distance. As we laughed and talked, I became aware of the tremendous charisma that just exuded from this precious one with Down syndrome, who had come down to the pier with her companion on their evening walk around the Port. She and her friend soon joined our conversation. She was so happy, so full of life, and so enthusiastic that it just spilled over on all of us and others around her. Marybeth Garrahan walked into our hearts and our lives that evening.

We learned that Marybeth was attending special classes at a school near her home in Boston. Angie had graduated from the university with a degree in Special Ed and had taught many special needs students, including many with Down syndrome. She had been awarded “Teacher of the Year” from the National Down Syndrome Foundation during the year prior to that summer. (My uncle, a professor at Texas A&M, and my first cousin both spent their lives caring for special needs students, so Special Ed has definitely held an important place in our family. I also would have chosen this field had I not been a musician.)

Marybeth’s family’s summer home was very near our home in Hyannis Port. After meeting her, she soon became one of the gang of young people at our house that summer (and many thereafter). Soon after our initial introduction to Marybeth, she became like one of Angie’s own. She and Marybeth became real “running buddies” and a special bond developed between them. Angie just adored Marybeth, as did all of Angie’s friends visiting us that summer. They included Marybeth in most of their daily plans. Angie took her along with her other friends to their numerous summer activities—with her parents’ permission, of course. I don’t think they spent one day the rest of that summer that wasn’t fun-filled. What a joy she was to all of us!

Very quickly one giant problem did arise. Angie liked to sleep until noon or later, as this was her summer vacation away from her job and her responsibilities. And could she sleep! Nothing awakened her! Marybeth, however, was at our home each morning at 9 a.m. ready to start their fun day. With Angie’s sleep schedule that just didn’t happen. So with a bit

of frustration, Marybeth would come into the house with me, visit, and wait for Angie to wake up. We had some wonderful conversations. I don't think I have ever met anyone with more zeal for life. Her love of life was and is contagious. I began to look forward to the rays of sunshine she was bringing into my own life each morning as well as that of our household. I began to really treasure the times I had with her while she waited for Angie to wake up.

I think Marybeth could have made an excellent philosopher, as she has so many whimsical ideas/views about life. I've never forgotten a one-liner twenty years ago about patience. "Mrs. Morgan, interruptions are just part of life," she said, as she patted my shoulder one day while we drove along in the car. It truly changed my life for the best. Oh, that we could all be such a positive influence on someone's life! I would far rather spend fifteen minutes with Marybeth than fifteen hours with a roomful of Ph.D.s. Marybeth can speak more pure wisdom in a few minutes than most people can speak in a week!

Marybeth has a job and has been a faithful employee all of her adult life. She earns her own spending money and carefully saves it to buy items of her choosing such as CDs and DVDs, etc. She is very good with the computer and often sends emails to me. She is also quite a cook and has prepared several meals for us in her home. Her mom tells me that these days she is becoming an even better cook. She surprised me one Christmas with a lap throw she hand-knitted for me. I treasure it!

Several years after losing Angie in 1997 I, too, went into kidney failure. Sometimes I would be experiencing a real health challenge when out of the blue, my phone would ring. Marybeth's precious voice would be on the other end, singing to me: "That's what friends are for," or "I just called to say I love you," or "Did I ever tell you you're my hero?" a line from a Bette Midler hit song several years ago, "The Wind Beneath My Wings." Suddenly my mood would be changed. I would much rather hear her sing that song to me than to hear Bette Midler, as talented as she is. No one but God knows how He has used her in my life as she has ministered to me just by being herself and sharing that self with me.

Through the years I've kept all the letters she's written to me. Now, Marybeth can be just a bit melodramatic at times, as you will see in these notes she's sent to me. In one of them she wrote, "You are my hero, my best friend, and the best thing that ever happened in my life. I'm your number one friend. Love, Marybeth."

In a recent note she said, "You are the best person I ever met in my life. Thank you for being my special friend for 21 years. I love you, Mrs. Morgan, as a hero and a great friend to me." Another letter says, "I wish that I could come down to visit you. Cape Cod is not the same without you here. That was the best time of my life to be a part of your life. If you want to know, I am still the same Marybeth you love as a best friend! Your number one friend, Marybeth."

Marybeth wrote the following in my most recent letter from her, after reading this chapter about herself. "I want to say you are always right about me. I'm the greatest angel. I think about the first time I met you. That year was 1985. I was about 14 years old. That was the best summer I ever had meeting you and your loving daughter. You will always be in my heart and my soul. Just remember we will always be the greatest friends forever." I might even agree with her that the summer of 1985 was the best summer of my life also. She knows exactly how to touch my heartstrings! I'm quite sure I was far behind Angie and Marybeth's many other friends in being her #1 friend. However, her sweet notes and words sure changed some days for me. Still today if I ever face a health challenge, my family will say, "Call and talk to Marybeth." They've seen the results of what a five-minute conversation with her does for me. I also keep a sweet picture of her on my bedroom dresser, right beside my precious Angie's picture, both my special angels.

Marybeth's family has allowed her to fly nonstop from Boston to Dallas where she has been my houseguest on two occasions. What fun and exciting times we had, including the day she decided to call SMU (Southern Methodist University) in Dallas, and order their college curriculum catalogues. Speaking with the counselor, she inquired about which Special Ed classes would be available to her. She loved Dallas and, of course, the

Cowboys ... both the football team as well as those that wear boots and hats! I think she would have immediately moved into the campus dorm had it been possible. However, her parents in Massachusetts quickly put the brakes on that idea. College courses were okay but taking them in Texas was a bit far from home.

Do I believe in angels? Certainly I do. I believe God *uses* people as angels many times in our lives. Sadly, we usually fail to recognize them. "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares" (Hebrews 13:2). One cannot meet Marybeth and come away without knowing that she truly is a gift from heaven. One afternoon when Angie was so dreadfully ill in kidney failure and on life-support systems, my phone rang and it was Marybeth. This precious one was calling from Massachusetts, offering to donate one of her kidneys to her dear friend, Angie.

God truly blessed us all when He sent Marybeth across our paths that summer night on the HPYC boat dock. For many, I suppose the dock is a symbol of an era when John Fitzgerald Kennedy was President of the United States, in some way a small memorial to him. That's nice. But for me it has a far greater meaning. It's the place where God brought a "best" into my life. "God gives the best to those who leave the choice to Him." Indeed, Marybeth's friendship will always remain one of my life's most unexpected and treasured gifts.

It is my prayer that somehow each one of you reading this will be blessed to have a "Marybeth" in your life. Do I believe in angels? Oh, yes, I do! "Angels exist but sometimes since they don't have wings, we call them friends" (unknown). Think about it.

Truly ours is *a special friendship* ordained in heaven by our heavenly Father Who does all things well. "And were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak" (Mark 7:37).

A sweet note from Marybeth's sister:

"I want to thank you for being Marybeth's special angel all these years. Please don't forget that it went both ways ... you and Angie gave her so much love, contributed to her self-confidence, and touched her heart in ways that will never stop."

One-Liner

Marybeth uttered a one-liner that had a tremendous effect on my life. I wish I had heard it earlier and applied it to my everyday life.

One summer day I had my car filled with Angie and her friends, which included Marybeth. We were going out for a fun afternoon on the other side of the Cape from Hyannis Port.

Route 28 is usually a road you definitely want to avoid if at all possible, especially during the summer months. It is the road that everyone seems to use to get anywhere they are going on Cape Cod and it's a nightmare from early June through Labor Day. Well, you get the picture.

As we snailed along the highway, Marybeth must have perceived my impatience even though I had not said a word. I was agitated at being "stuck in traffic" and as we sat at a red light, Marybeth leaned over my driver's seat, patted me on the shoulder and said, "Don't be upset, Mrs. Morgan. It's just a part of life." Her words really pierced my soul ... so simple but so profound.

I immediately loosened my grip on the steering wheel, took a few deep breaths, and began to enjoy the time I had with my carload of young people. I think my blood pressure must have gone down drastically.

Since that day many years ago, whenever I feel my patience very low and life hands me agitating issues, I remember the words Marybeth spoke to me that hot summer afternoon.

"Don't worry, Mrs. Morgan. It's just a part of life!"



Geri and Marybeth

YOU AND ME TOGETHER — ANOTHER SPECIAL FRIEND OF MINE

In the spring of 2010, I had the pleasure of meeting Esther Rohrs. Esther also was born with Down syndrome and what a special person she was. God has given me such a love for those with Down syndrome. He has brought six such people into my life. What a blessing their friendship has meant to me. The beautiful thing about Esther was the the relationship she had with her stepmother. Esther also had a special needs brother so when Flora, her stepmon, married Esther's father, she immediately became the mother of two special needs children who required constant care.

After meeting Esther and Flora, I was so touched by the immense love Flora had for her daughter. I never would have guessed that Esther was not her own daughter. I think you will be able to feel the genuine love and affection she had for Esther when you read the letter she wrote after Esther's death.

I tried to mail little gifts to Esther whenever I could find Disneyland stamps or small items that I knew she liked. How she loved jewelry so I was certainly able to send lots of fun jewelry to her to enjoy. She loved to dress up in jewelry and go to church in all her glitter.

What a shock I received this past year when I was told that Esther had gone to heaven quite unexpectedly. Of course, my heart was saddened along with her many friends and family. But what a joy to know she no longer had to live with the limitations she had on earth. She is a brand-new creation because of Jesus!

I thank God for allowing me the privilege of knowing Esther, a real angel to many. I want to share the letter her mom (stepmom) wrote about the daughter she adored. You will be blessed by it as I was.

May 5, 2012

(Written by Esther's mother)

As most of you know by now, Miss Esther has gone to be with Jesus. Yesterday she spent her twenty-third birthday in her heavenly home.

Esther no longer has a problem saying what is on her mind. She is no longer “Down syndrome.” She is understanding all the words to the songs she sang so joyously.

I am truly a blessed woman, for I had the privilege of being her “mom in the home” for the past 14-plus years. Every day was an adventure. Rarely did she get her shoes on the right feet the first try. No matter where we went or what we did, Esther always remembered to put on her jewelry, even though she forgot her glasses at times. I bathed her, brushed and fixed her hair, and helped her with her skin care. At times she wanted to help me with my hair and makeup so I let her fix me up when we weren’t going outside.

Esther loved dressing up for church, going to tea rooms, visiting others. She was truly a “girly girl,” as somebody said of her.

The theme of all we did was, “You and me together!” One time I might say it, the next time she would. This saying began the first time we had time alone when I was dating her father. Just about everything we did, we did it together. We were seldom apart. I always said, “We are attached at the hip, right, Esther?”

Her response was always, “Yep, yep, yep!”

Esther loved doing puzzles, eating out, swimming, riding horses, doing exercises with mom, camping, hiking, going to the zoo, playing basketball, visiting Disney World and Grandma Beck, ladies’ teas, mulling over magazines and books, greeting and visiting people, and watching her favorite movies, over and over. Outside of movie time she was a very active girl.

When the men’s work season began, Esther’s and my schedule would adjust also. We would write our schedule for the day and check it off as we finished each task. She liked doing that a lot. A sample of our day may look like this:

Breakfast, PU SU (pick up, straighten up), do dishes, vacuum (while mom swept), Esther's Bible and tea time (usually 10:30 or 11:00), puzzle or movie while mom made business calls or did more chores, lunch time, finish folding laundry together or clean her room, fix supper, eat and clean up, bath, games or cards or movie or puzzle. I am sure I forgot to put in a lot of things.

Esther didn't have any enemies because she didn't know how to be one.

This gives you an idea of the wonderful and active and full life this beautiful "special needs" person had because she was given the opportunity to be born and to live!

Flora B. Rohrs

LEARNING TO BE A FRIEND

I learned a lot about friendship as a very young child. My dear friend, Linda Stallones, contracted polio in the summer of 1949, the year the disease struck in epidemic proportions in the United States. I think Texas was especially hard hit. Linda and I began our friendship as little four-year-old girls attending Gingham Girls Dance Studio. As we grew older, both of us were "tomboys" so we were also into climbing trees, roller-skating, and all kinds of rigorous activities.

Our homes were on the same street, so we regularly played together each afternoon. That is, until polio struck! Linda suddenly became quite ill and I remember going to her house one morning and finding "Quarantine" signs posted. As a nine-year-old child, I had no earthly idea what that word meant. (No one could enter or exit their home.) I was soon to learn that my best friend lay paralyzed and it would be over a year before we could think of resuming our fun days of childhood play. It was several months before I could even see or visit with her. During that time it was really "touch and go" with her life because polio was a deadly disease in those days. There was no vaccine for it.

Finally I was able to go inside the house and see my friend again. It was wonderful to see her, but I also was a witness to the extreme pain she was enduring. Modern medicine had not yet arrived on the scene and she suffered agony from the daily hot pack treatments that had to be placed on her legs. How it hurt my little heart to see her endure such pain. When she cried, it made me cry also. As a helpless little child, I determined that as her friend I would always do whatever I could to make her life easier and better for her.

Sixty-five years later I can say Linda has stood by me through many storms in my own life, and I pray that she can say that about me. Today Linda is a very healthy lady with several college degrees. She is a specialist in attention deficit disorder (ADD). She has a wonderful family with three grown sons and four grandsons. God spared her life and has used her to bring hope to many parents of ADD children. Her husband, Nick, is Pipe Major for the Austin Bagpipe Corps. He had the honor of piping for Lady Bird Johnson's funeral. He also played for my own mother's service. God blessed me with a wonderful friend in Linda. I learned as a very young child how special and important friendships are to our lives. "Give, and it shall be given unto you" (Luke 6:38). God's law. Give friendship, receive friendship. The following is Linda's input on our long friendship.

A STORY OF FRIENDSHIP ... AND POLIO

By Linda Stallones Classen, M.Ed., LPC

Among my earliest memories of my childhood in Dallas, Texas, in the '40s are tap dancing lessons at Gingham Girls Dance Studio on Henderson Avenue. My parents had moved from South Dallas to what was then *North* Dallas in order to provide a stable, middle-class neighborhood for my sister and me to grow up in. I was a very active little girl and loved music. Those were the days of the MGM musicals, and tap dancing was definitely in. Also taking dancing lessons was the girl who would become my closest, lifelong friend. Geri Sue Hudson was exactly one year older than I, and when I was six years old we moved to a house just across and down the street from hers. We were in the same grade at school, were

both tomboys, and we both were absolutely mesmerized by the piano. We not only studied with the same piano teacher, we also played “by ear” and created our own duets. Along with this were neighborhood croquet games, throwing crab apples at passing cars, bike riding, and endless hours of playing dolls.

Things changed dramatically for us both on July 6, 1949. That was the life-shattering day I was stricken with a nearly fatal bout of polio. I spent the entire hot, non-air-conditioned summer paralyzed. At first, in a coma, I fought just to survive. I was completely paralyzed, but I could breathe and was not in an “iron lung.” A serious polio epidemic that summer caused the local hospitals to be overcrowded. For that reason I was kept at home and our house was under quarantine. My ten-year-old sister was sent away to stay with relatives. My dad had to have a special permit from the health department to go to work each day, and my mother couldn’t leave the house at all.

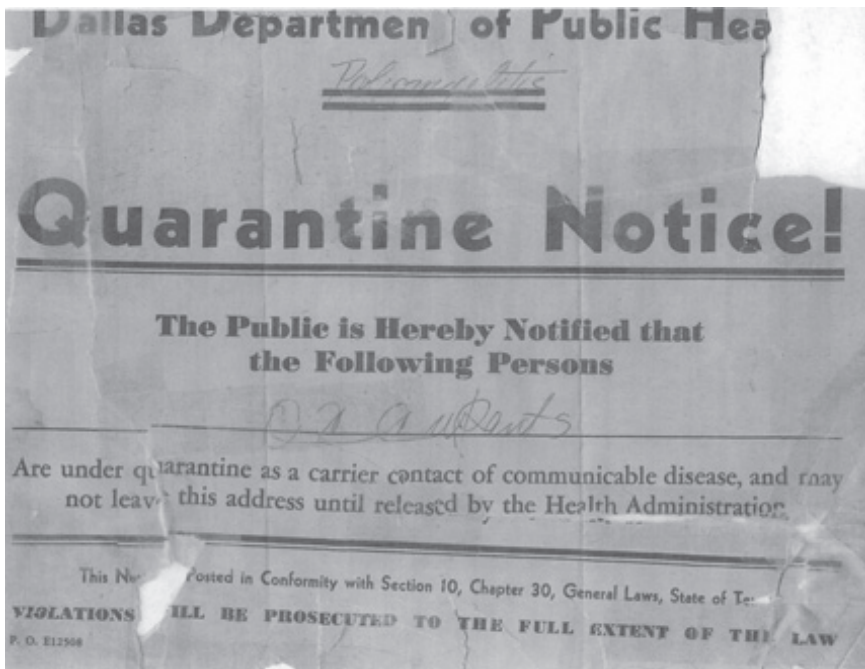
For the next seventeen weeks I was in agony and endured four hours a day of the Sister Kenny hot pack treatments. I also had twice-daily physical therapy. I had no idea what had happened to me (I was never told I had polio—I figured it out on my own much later) and I was bewildered, hot and in pain. My room became a fairyland of get well cards and presents, but I was trapped inside. There was no television in those days. I hated the RN who was at the house providing the hot pack treatments. I had a better relationship with Miss Nutt, the physical therapist who came to the house. She once brought me two baby turtles that I let “race” up and down my stomach. Still, the therapy she delivered was excruciating and I screamed my way through it. The only food I remember eating was tomato soup and milk.

During those horrible years of polio epidemics, people were terrified, not only of the disease, but of the actual polio patients and their families. Even when the quarantine sign came down and I was able to be out in the yard in my reclining wheelchair, no one

would come near me or my sister. My sister was shunned at school as though she had an active case of AIDS. My friend, Geri, was the only one who was willing to come close to me. She not only came *to* my house, she actually came inside! I've always believed that the only reason she was "allowed" to come inside to see me was because her mother was at work and didn't know she was there!



Geri beside Linda in a wheelchair (Geri is second from right)



Quarantine for polio on Linda's front door



Norma Norman (David), Linda Stallones (Classen), Dr. Elizabeth Vaughan, Geri



Mary Elizabeth Bills (Kaiser), Linda Stallones (Classen)

Newspaper article from *The Dallas Morning News* by Local News Columnist Steve Blow on Saturday, June 23, 2007.

Women's lasting friendship got them through thick, thin

This isn't the first time for Linda Classen and Geri Morgan to show up in the pages of *The Dallas Morning News*. And therein lies a tale of long-lasting friendship and role reversals.

Their other appearance was nearly 55 years ago, back in September of 1952, when Linda and Geri jointly celebrated birthdays on White Rock Lake's beloved Bonnie Barge party boat.

What made their party newsworthy was that gifts weren't accepted—only donations to the March of Dimes—and that Linda happened to be recovering from polio herself.

"We got all the attention, but I think it was really our mothers' idea," 66-year-old Linda said the other day with a laugh.

"We probably would have preferred presents," 67-year-old Geri chimed in.

In those days they were Linda Stallones and Geri Sue Hudson. And they can't remember not knowing each other. They grew up a few houses apart on Homer Street in East Dallas.

And neither can they remember a time when they weren't best friends—two lively birds of a feather.

"A police officer came to talk to us at Bonham Elementary about bicycle safety," Geri recalled. "He gave us a list of dangerous things to avoid. So that very afternoon, Linda and I tried to do everything on the list," she laughed.

"We spent the whole afternoon jumping curbs," Linda cackled.

The two friends still cut up like schoolgirls, but they grow solemn when Linda talks about the horrific onset of polio.

“July 6, 1949. That’s the day my life ended—the life I would have lived,” she said.

She was swimming at Tietze Park. “I dove into the water and, honestly, I thought they had drained the pool. That’s how badly it hurt when my head hit the water.”

With a blinding headache, Linda went home. When she woke the next morning, she was paralyzed. “I couldn’t move anything. Not my arms. Not my legs. Couldn’t turn my head right or left,” she said.

“But I could breathe,” she added gratefully. “I didn’t have to be in an iron lung.”

Her home was quarantined for months. Geri still remembers first seeing the quarantine signs plastered on her best friend’s front door. “It just broke my heart. I cried and cried,” she said.

As soon as the quarantine was lifted, Geri was at her friend’s bedside. “No one wanted to come near me,” Linda said. “Except Geri.”

In fact, Geri became Linda’s surrogate teacher. Linda missed all of fourth grade, but Geri faithfully brought her schoolwork every afternoon and talked about the day’s lessons.

Slowly, and with great effort, Linda regained the use of her limbs. Only a limp remains.

Meanwhile, their friendship grew stronger and stronger. Some things never change. Those dance lessons at Gingham Girls Dance Studio fell by the wayside.

But both continued to take piano lessons from Mrs. Irby Bianchi. And they excelled. Both became professional musicians—playing in churches and for parties.

They entered talent shows around town and regularly won with their piano duets. “We beat Trini Lopez and his band at North Dallas High School,” Linda bragged. That was in ’58.

Linda moved to Austin to attend college and never left. Marriages and children, careers and divorces came along. But none of it dimmed their friendship.

And as I say, this is a story not just of friendship but also of role reversals. A family history of kidney disease caught up with Geri in 2001. It had already taken the life of her father and daughter.

As Geri’s health declined, Linda drew even closer. When Geri had a kidney transplant in 2002, Linda was her primary caregiver. “When she woke up in intensive care, there I was,” Linda said. “It was such a switch because when I was so sick, she was right there for me.”

Geri’s health is precarious these days. She’s in a wheelchair most of the time. But Linda is a regular visitor, a daily caller and flies to Geri’s side whenever needed.

“Linda is the sister I never had,” Geri said. “I can’t imagine life without her.”

“We’re as close as sisters could be,” Linda agreed.

So here’s to friendship—and the opportunity it provides to pay and repay kindnesses, over and over.



Chapter 8

Meeting the President

GOD'S PERFECT TIMING

The year 1999 held two wonderful surprises for me. In June of that year we were back in Beijing, China, working with the eye center. One afternoon I decided to venture down to the Silk Market, an open-air market in an alley near the American Embassy. As you have probably guessed, beautiful silk and many other things are sold there very reasonably.

In China, with a population of 1.3 billion, every place you go or look is full of people, so when I arrived at the market, the little narrow alleyway was already packed with shoppers. I made my way slowly down through the crowds, shopping as I went along. I saw two impressively dressed men whom I immediately thought to be men from one of the embassies, which were very near the Silk Market. They had special security earphones and connecting wire boxes and I presumed they were security for a visiting diplomat. My first thought was that perhaps Prince Charles was there.

As I continued looking at the merchandise in the little stands, I noticed a lady standing beside me, also shopping. Catching a glimpse of her white hair, the thought crossed my mind, "I am not the only foreigner here in the market today." You see, very few of the 1.3 billion Chinese have white hair; it's all black. At the same time, we both turned and looked at one

another. Oh, my! It could not be. I thought I was seeing things. These words slowly came out of my mouth, "Barbara Bush!" (The security men I had seen were her Secret Service detail.) The response from her was, "Yes." God had brought me together with this gracious, elegant lady who just oozed greatness, genuineness and humility. Here we were, talking, jammed right in the middle of a little back alley, in the middle of China, on the other side of the world. God had allowed our paths to cross at that moment. I never dreamed of having a close encounter with a First Lady! We exchanged greetings and spoke a few minutes. Much to my delight, I was able to tell her of our work in Beijing with the establishment of Glory Eye Center to help the poor people.

My stepfather, Marvin Blount, had been a good friend to her husband, our former President George H. W. Bush, back in the late '40s and '50s. We had a nice little conversation about that. After she returned to Houston, she wrote a letter to me saying that President Bush indeed remembered my dad with very fond thoughts. My dad died in 1974, never to see his friend, George H. W. Bush, in the White House. Barbara Bush and I have corresponded many times since then. God was so good to let me meet a First Lady, especially my favorite of them all. I consider Barbara Bush to be a great blessing to humanity. That she could take the time to correspond with me numerous times speaks volumes to me. Of course, today she has been both the wife and mother of a U.S. President.

Three months later, in September, 1999, I was traveling inside the United States. I had been with a group of Christian doctors in Florida for the week, where Dr. Elizabeth Vaughan had been a convention speaker at the Christian Ophthalmology Society. Sister Ruth Heflin invited Dr. Vaughan and me to meet her after that in Birmingham, Alabama, so we flew there from Florida on a hot afternoon. The hotel had a shuttle bus that was supposed to pick us up upon our arrival. We stepped out of the airport into the terrible heat to wait for the shuttle bus, which had not arrived. We continued to stand in the hot sun, really ready to sit down on an air-conditioned bus. The bus never arrived! After three calls to the hotel and an hour and a half later, the hotel personnel advised us to just take a cab at their expense. It sounded like a good idea.

We finally arrived at our destination tired and hot, much later than our itinerary had planned for us to arrive. After checking in, we turned with the bellman, who had all our luggage, and walked toward the elevator. A gentleman was standing alone inside the elevator and as we approached to get on, he said, "I'm sorry, ladies, but you can't get on this elevator. It's reserved for a VIP." I looked at him in disbelief. I had never known of an elevator being reserved. Surprised at the whole scene, I asked the identity of the VIP and the man holding the elevator replied that he could not tell me, but that I would recognize the person. When he said that, I immediately knew that the person was going to be former President George H. W. Bush. I believe this to be a word of knowledge since no one had mentioned him; I just knew it.

Just at that time a van pulled up in front of the hotel, and guess who jumped out, along with several Secret Service men? You guessed correctly—former President George H. W. Bush. He apologized for the inconvenience he had caused on the elevator. He was such a kind, considerate, and gentle man to us. Later, he allowed us to make photographs with him. I was able to take Sister Ruth Heflin's picture with him, which was printed in her last book before her death, *Harvest Glory*, one of the many books she wrote. If we had arrived by the shuttle earlier, we would have completely missed meeting the President. Did God plan that day for us that our footsteps would cross with President George H. W. Bush's? I think so.

In just two months' time I had met and conversed with both former President Bush and his wife, former First Lady Barbara Bush. One of them I met in the silk alley in China, on the other side of the world; the other I met in a hotel lobby by arriving an hour and a half late. God's timing is perfect and He does order our steps. "The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way" (Psalm 37:23). Why did God allow it? I do not know, but I know it was one of the biggest thrills of my life. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17).

Later when their son, George W., was making his bid for the White House, Mrs. Bush exchanged some letters with me about him. These letters written

I Play the Notes, but He Makes the Music

by the mother of the future President and the wife of the former President are truly treasured items. They were written from both Houston, Texas, and Kennebunkport, Maine, where the Bushes have their family summer compound. I also have a handwritten letter to me from then-Governor George W. Bush. They mean a lot to me.



President George H. W. Bush and Geri

MY DREAM ABOUT GEORGE BUSH'S ELECTION AND LETTER TO HIS MOTHER

I am not into politics, never have been, and have very little interest in them other than wanting godly people making decisions for our nation that line up with the Bible. As most of the world eagerly watched the 2000 presidential election, I too got caught up in the whirlwind of it. The last Friday night, when it appeared that they would begin counting votes again, I believe I had a prophetic dream. "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions" (Joel 2:28). I believed then and I still believe now that the dream I received was prophetic. (See following letter recounting the dream.)

God does not take sides, but we need to be sure that we vote for the man/ party whose platform lines up with God's Word, for sure. When we are on His side, He is automatically on our side. Regardless of your political persuasions, George W. Bush held fast to his testimony for the Lord Jesus. I believe he finished his course.

This is the dream as I described it to his mother, Barbara Bush.

November 5, 2003

Dear Barbara Bush,

I want to share a special dream that I believe to be God-given. He has given many dreams to me in my sixty-four years which I have seen become reality. The most important one for me was one in which I saw myself get out of a dialysis chair, completely healed. You see, I became a dialysis patient after meeting you in Beijing. It took nearly two years before I saw that dream become reality, but it did come to pass. I received a kidney transplant on June 4, 2002, and I came out of the dialysis chair. Praise God!

The same heavenly Father gave me a dream about your son, George W. Bush. I received this dream during the Florida vote count fiasco. In my dream a large group of men were walking around asking, "Where is he, where is George W.?" One answered, "He's out in the field with the sheep." I then saw George W. as a little boy in the fields, tending sheep. (Can you imagine?) These professional men, all dressed in suits, went to the countryside, found him, brought him inside and re-dressed him. They put an American flag tie around his neck. In the next scene they were pushing him into a boxing ring, with ropes around it. Al Gore stood in the opposite corner, completely silent. The men quickly held up George W.'s hands and declared him "the winner!" The crowd went wild. The Holy Spirit spoke and said, "*George W. is my David for this hour.*" I awoke, filled with great assurance that he would be our next President. I told this dream to many people who encouraged me to send this to you.

I'm sure that you are very familiar with the story of David in the Bible. You remember, even his family was amazed that God would choose him, just a young shepherd boy, and pass over his older brothers who seemed to be so much more capable in their eyes. But, God saw David's heart and anointed him to be king and lead the people.

I believe that your son will be the President of the United States and the most powerful man on earth because the same God has seen your son's heart and has chosen him for this hour, just as He chose David for that hour. He's not where he is because of man, but because of God! Not another person but George W. has the anointing from God to be in this position. God looked down and found His choice to lead the world today, 2003.

I so believe in the dream that I have a small statue of David, the shepherd boy, standing beside a picture of George W. Bush.

I Play the Notes, but He Makes the Music

If you can ever relate this dream to him, please do. Maybe it can be of some encouragement to him.

Thank you for your time. You are a blessing to our world!

Fondly,

Geri Hudson Morgan



President George W. Bush

I received the following letters from President Bush and his mother, Barbara, in response to my letter.

Easter

Dear Geri,

Thank you for your very dear letter you wrote to my ... our ... son. We have just been with him and two of our other children and many "grands" [grandchildren]. It was a very happy 3 days. We had two church services with the Marines. It was very touching. GEORGE'S FAITH IS STRONG. Thank you.

Warmest,

Barbara Bush

Geri Hudson Morgan
3525 Turtle Creek Blvd.
Dallas, Texas 75219

April 8, 2006

President George W. Bush
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Mr. President,

A quick introduction of myself. I am the daughter of Capt. Marvin Blount, now deceased, a good friend to your father in the '50s. My dad worked for the Department of Public Safety in Dallas. They had a mutual friend, a college professor at then North Texas State College in Denton, "Prof" McCalister, whom they often visited when your dad came to Dallas.

I am a 66-year-old, Spirit-filled Christian. I'm a life-long Dallasite, living on Royal Lane, very near your home off Preston Road for many years. I built and owned Channel 23 TV in Dallas. I have also worked in China since 1981, helping build an eye clinic in Beijing that does free eye surgery on the poor. I was blessed to meet your mom, buying Beanie Babies in the Silk Market there several years ago. We have corresponded since then. I think you were told this Beanie Baby story at a party while you were still in Austin.

I'm giving you the above introduction so that you may know I am a stable person of sound mind. I want to share what I consider to be a prophetic dream from GOD concerning you. I received this dream during the Florida ordeal over votes.

DREAM: A group of men were desperately searching for you. Some were crying out, "Where is he? Where is George Bush? We must find him." One man replied, "**He's out in the field with the sheep.**" This same group of men traveled to the countryside and found you in the fields tending sheep. (What a strange dream I was having with George W. Bush being a shepherd.) They very quickly told you to change clothes and you dressed in a man's usual attire. They put a tie around your neck which was made out of U.S. flag material, carried you, and put you inside a boxing ring. In the opposite corner stood Al Gore. He was absolutely silent, staring into space, and motionless. The men around you helped raise your hands up over your head for you as you were totally exhausted. They began shouting, "The winner is George Bush." At this moment I awakened, confident that you would be our next President. However, I was puzzled by the "sheep" in my dream. The Holy Spirit spoke to me and said, "**He is my David for this hour.**"

You know the Bible story of David, the little shepherd boy who was Jesse's youngest son, chosen above all of his elder brothers to become king. I believe that you, like David, were chosen by the same living ALMIGHTY GOD to be the leader of the United States of America, which has in turn made you the most powerful

person in the world today. I believe you are divinely called and anointed to lead just as David was. And, with this anointing comes the ability to do the job. GOD Himself has entrusted this divine call to the White House upon you. Never doubt it! "Faithful is He that calleth you, for He will also do it" (1 Thessalonians 5:24). He is working through you, His chosen vessel for this time in history. **Man has not put you there, the great Almighty has**, as you refer to Him.

I pray this letter will reach your desk and be an encouragement to you. It comes with great admiration and gratitude for your superb leadership and your outstanding witness for our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. I think you are the greatest President of my lifetime which history will agree with in due season. You are greatly loved by countless people around the world. I'm just one of them. Thank you, Mr. President.

Respectfully,

Geri Hudson Morgan

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

June 16, 2006

Ms. Geri Hudson Morgan
3525 Turtle Creek Boulevard
Dallas, TX 75219-5539

Dear Geri:

Thank you for your correspondence and your kind words. I appreciate your taking the time to write.

It is an incredible honor to be the President of such a great Nation, where freedom is the right of every citizen. During this important moment in America's history, we will lead liberty's advance, shape our economic future, and strive to be a more compassionate society. We are building the foundation for a stronger Nation and more peaceful world.

Laura and I send our best wishes. May God bless you, and may God continue to bless America.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

August 3, 2008

President George Herbert Walker Bush
10000 Memorial Drive, Suite 900
Houston, Texas 77024

Dear President Bush,

I know you are extremely busy, but I do so hope your staff will allow this letter to reach you.

As young men, you and my father shared a friendship here in Texas. His name was Marvin Blount with the Texas DPS. (His picture is enclosed.) I think you two also shared a friendship with "Prof" McCalister (if the name is correct) at North Texas State College whom you would visit together in Denton, Texas. I only remember this from my dad's conversations 50+ years ago.

The reason I am writing this letter is that I want you to know the words my father often said to many people in my presence,

“George Bush is the finest man you could ever know.” He thought there was none other like you. These words have resounded in my mind for many years. He passed away in 1974, never knowing that you became our President. How proud and pleased he would have been. He was the officer chosen to stand beside Governor John Connally’s bedside at Parkland Hospital on November 22, 1963, at the time of the JFK assassination.

I met your wife and former First Lady, Barbara, in Beijing’s Silk Market ... shopping for Beanie Babies in 1999. We have exchanged letters through the years. She once told me she had mentioned my dad’s name to you and you said that you did remember him. Later that same year, I had the honor of having my picture taken with you in Birmingham. (Picture enclosed.)

Mr. President, I thank God for you and your sons and your places in history. I salute you and George W. as indeed my father would have.

Your fellow American,

Geri (Blount) Morgan

P.S. Would it be possible to get an autographed picture for my office? Thank you very much.

I did receive a beautiful autographed photo of our 41st President of the U.S.



President George H. W. Bush and First Lady Barbara Bush

GEORGE BUSH AND THE TWINS

Another interesting little Bush note. One afternoon I took my elderly mother out in the car for a drive. We were enjoying our drive and the beautiful spring flowers as we drove along in a north Dallas neighborhood. We happened to see a man playing old-fashioned roughhouse tag in the front yard with two young girls who looked to be about eleven or twelve years old. My mom recognized the man as George W. Bush, who had just been elected as our Texas Governor. He was playing with his twin daughters, Barbara and Jenna. When he saw us, he immediately waved and flashed that famous smile as we drove by. I've never met any other Presidents or First Ladies in my life. It truly is amazing that the only ones I have met and seen were all within the Bush family. My stepfather, who had a good friendship with former President Bush, always spoke of him so highly, saying he was an unusually fine man. I believe my dad was a good judge of character, being a police officer nearly forty years. I guess you can tell I am a real pro-Bush person!

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Chapter 9

RV to RR (Rolls-Royce)

GOD'S HOLY GHOST CAR DEALER

The Holy Spirit began leading me to give away automobiles. Many were given to ministers, evangelists, and brothers and sisters in the Lord. I used to laugh and say I felt like I was “God’s Holy Ghost car dealer.” It seems I could not keep a car very long before He would lead me to give it away. I loved it. It was such an exciting walk with Him.

After giving away several automobiles, beginning with my older station wagon, many cars went through my hands. I had never done anything like this but I knew the Holy Spirit was leading me, so I just followed.

The Lord gave me a brand-new Oldsmobile with a fancy Landau roof with all the “bells and whistles” on it. I don’t think it had 5,000 miles on it when He told me to give it to a beloved minister and his family. After this, I acquired a beautiful Lincoln Mark V Designer Series that I thought was the grandest car on the road! I was so happy to at last have a car that I could call my own. However, that was not to last very long either.

One weekend the Holy Spirit began to speak to me about the Mark V that I loved so very much. He told me that it was to be given to another minister. Oh, my heart sank! Really it did, because I wanted to keep my beautiful car. Being a bit immature and wanting to be sure I was doing His will, I prayed, “Lord, I will do this but I want a definite sign from You.” I

said, "I want the person to speak to me at church on Sunday morning in a way that I will have no doubt that my Lincoln automobile is to be given to her." Now, have you ever done that? Oh, me. However, as we know, our Father is so very faithful and patient with us.

Sunday morning came and I took my place at the organ, looking for my sign from God. Believe me, I was watching for my sign, as I really wanted to keep my beautiful car. The services ended and the minister who was to receive my car walked down the aisle toward the back of the church to leave. I breathed a sigh of relief watching her leave, thinking I was going to get to keep my car. My eyes were glued upon this minister and as I watched, she stopped with a jerk, literally. I saw this happen in front of my eyes! She turned around and walked directly back down the aisle, back up to the platform where I was. Leaning over the organ, the minister said these exact words, "Don't you need to talk with me about something?" I nearly fell off the organ bench. God was patient with me and that minister did receive the gift from the Father, the Lincoln Mark V.

Another automobile entrusted to me was a beautiful, brand-new white Cadillac Biarritz, an exquisite automobile. Three weeks after purchase, the Holy Spirit spoke to me and said to give it to a certain pastor. Oh, my, my, my! I was really immature again and I asked for another definite sign that I had to give this vehicle away. I spoke of this to no one.

Within thirty minutes my phone rang and it was a dear brother in the Lord, calling to share the Lord's goodness with me. Not one word was spoken to him or anyone else in this world about the "fleece" that I had just put out about the new car. Suddenly this brother said these exact words, "Geri, you do know that the Cadillac is for our dear brother so-and-so." Again I nearly fell over, as here was my sign I had just asked for about giving away the Cadillac, just thirty minutes before. Do you see why I felt like God's Holy Ghost car dealer? God wanted to bless this minister and we got to watch Him do it.

Many years and many more cars have come and gone. At least twenty-two automobiles, vans, and a Class A, large motorhome came through my

hands and went to God's servants. Not all of the cars were pre-owned. Several times ministers chose their brand-new cars from dealerships.

One of the last cars I drove was a beautiful Rolls-Royce. However, as you may guess, He once again called on me to give that one away. Being accustomed to sowing and reaping with the automobiles, I very quickly gave it away and God provided another Rolls-Royce and a stretch Lincoln limo for me. Do you see the progression in God from my old station wagon to the Rolls-Royce? God is faithful. "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land" (Isaiah 1:19).

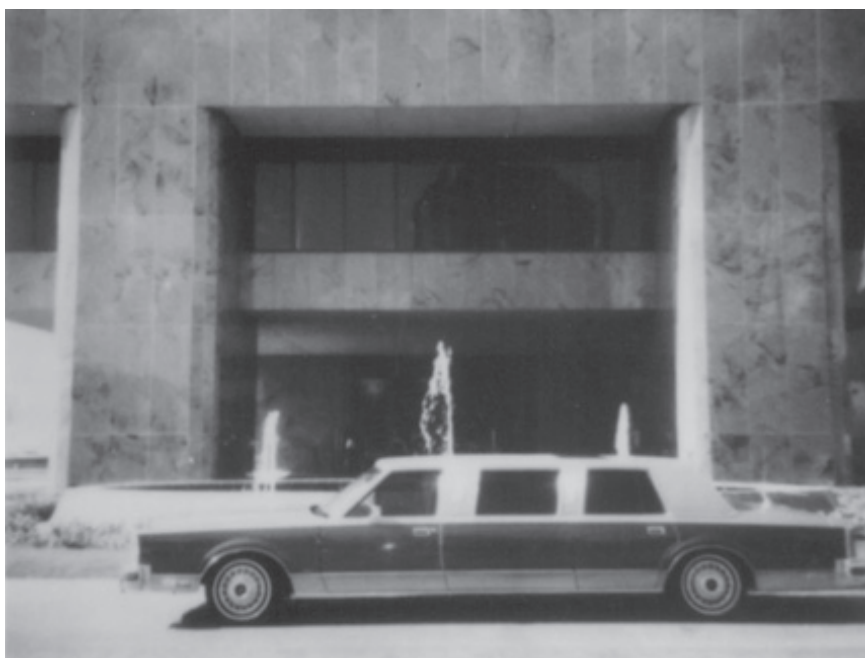
He will put material blessings into our hands if we will allow them to flow through us. We can possess them as long as they don't possess us! There's a big difference. He will give it *to* you as long as He can get it *through* you.

Cars did not fall out of the sky and little fairies drive them to my door step, but they did, as the old saying goes, "fall into my hands!" After giving away a car, I would soon get another car or have an encounter with someone trying to sell a car at a ridiculous price and I could buy it for a song. Some cars were brand new and full price was paid for them, and they were given anyway. I believe we must be good stewards with what is put into our hands.

Now, don't go out looking for someone you can give your car to so that you can get a better car unless God puts it into your heart to do such a thing, or else you will probably end up using the bus for transportation. You must be led by the Spirit. Furthermore, He does not always do things like we think He will do them. But one thing I can assure you is that you can never out-give our precious Father in heaven. "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom" (Luke 6:38). Personally, I love His spiritual gifts and healing far more than material ones.



One of my last cars, Rolls-Royce



Stretch Lincoln

HARVEY, THE RV

I have been a motor home (RV, recreational vehicle) enthusiast for many years. The first one I owned was purchased in Las Vegas, Nevada. Several of my employees from the television station and I had gone to Las Vegas for a TV convention. We decided to just “go look” at the RVs that were on display at an RV show also being held in Vegas. My mom and her friend were also there, so we all had fun “just looking.” The longer we looked, the more appealing the RVs became and very soon we became serious buyers rather than just lookers. As you have already guessed, we signed the papers and bought a nice, big Class C motor home. We put all the ladies and luggage into it and began the long road trip back to Dallas in the new RV.

Truly it was quite an adventure, one that none of us had ever experienced—nor would we ever forget it. First, we knew very, very little about using the “john” (commode). Enough said. Not knowing better, we spent several nights parked on dark, closed service station property, grocery store parking lots, etc. God kept us safe and we finally arrived back in Dallas. That was the beginning of my love affair with RVs. I enjoyed that motor home so much. We nicknamed it “Harvey, the RV” and Harvey provided many great times for us.

I kept that motor home for many years. In 1995 I purchased a Class A Rockwood. Those of you into RVs know the difference between a Class A and Class C. Those of you who haven’t the faintest idea, a Class A is much bigger. I wanted a larger one and I really did like everything about the Rockwood, especially the wood paneling throughout.

A very interesting thing happened when I purchased “Harvey II.” This RV was pre-owned but was in almost mint condition when I purchased it. I bought it from a Dallas RV dealership but it still had the original owner’s manuals in the cabinet. I found the former owner’s name listed in some of the papers and much to my surprise the owner’s last name was Hudson, my maiden name. I wanted to inquire of the former owner if there were any problems or things I needed to be aware of that only he would know about. After a lot of effort, I was able to track down the man. He lived

two hours from Dallas. I was later to learn that he had taught the same Sunday school class in the local First Baptist church for over twenty-five years, a really fine gentleman. He had also been the electrical contractor for Cowboys Stadium in Irving, Texas. I placed a call to him and found him to be a delightful man.

Both of us got the shock of our lives with my phone call that afternoon. You see, I wanted to know if maybe we could be related, as his name (Hudson) was my father's name. When I called I identified myself as the new owner of his recently sold RV. I said to him, "This is Geri Hudson Morgan." I heard a deep gasp on the other end of the phone. A few moments of silence passed and he asked me to repeat myself, which I did. "I'm Geri Hudson Morgan calling."

When he finally regained his composure, he said, "Mrs. Morgan, I can hardly believe my ears. My wife just passed away. Her name was Geri Morgan and when she married me she became Geri Morgan Hudson." He had just buried his beloved wife whose name was exactly the same as mine, but our last names were reversed. Was this a coincidence or was that a bit of confirmation that the RV had my name on it? Somehow, I felt as though that Rockwood had my name on it before it came into my hand. But, it sure is a strange coincidence, you must admit.

We enjoyed our chat via telephone and I met him later when we traveled through his town in his RV, which I now owned. I don't think we ever decided whether we were kinfolks or not. But we did share the same heavenly Father.

GOD'S GIFT OF AN RV

In the spring of 2005, I was reading a magazine showing pictures of the new RVs. Oh, some were just gorgeous (and expensive!). I was camping at a state park, enjoying the trees and the water. It was very close to a huge RV dealership so I decided to venture over and just "look" at newer RVs. That's all I had in mind.

As most of you know, when we go shopping with something in mind we usually end up purchasing it, especially if it has the right price tag on it.

Right? Well, you've guessed it already! After several days of contemplating the major decision, I decided I did want to purchase a new one. So, I began seriously looking for just the right one. That, of course, wasn't to be, because none of the ones available were really what I had in mind. After three days of looking, I left empty-handed. Both my salesman and I were very disappointed. But this is not the end of the story by any means!

The next day the very nice RV salesman called me on my cell phone while I was still camped out in my motor home. He was extremely excited to tell me that a couple had just traded their motor home that morning for another one. The one they were trading in was only two months old and was top-of-the-line. And, in addition, the owner had added every extra "bell and whistle" available. (The reason for their trade-in was to get a larger one.)

Miracle #1: This motor home was both wonderful and unbelievably luxurious. But, because it had been driven "off the lot," it had depreciated and was being offered at a lower price. I was beginning to see God's hand in all of it.

I still had my original Rockwood motor home. During the previous days when I had been looking at various RVs with the salesman, I casually mentioned to him about our work with the blind in China. Like so many people, he was quite fascinated by it. I also just made mention that if the dealership was not going to give me very much for my Rockwood as a trade-in on the new one, maybe they might donate the RV to a ministry who could put it to great use. Also it would provide a nice tax write-off for them. That was the extent of that subject as we continued our RV shoptalk.

Miracle #2: In the meantime, the loan company allowed me \$19,000 trade-in on my old RV as a down payment on the new RV, so I was not out any cash in the purchase.

After a few days I began to have second thoughts over the transaction, so I called my salesman and told him that after thinking it over, I had decided I would not take the RV after all. Both of us were quite disappointed, as

I closed the door on the sale. A few hours went by and he called me back, excited to tell me, "The owner said he would not only allow \$19,000 toward the purchase price if you will take it, but he will also let you keep the old RV to be used as you see fit." My goodness, first the bank used Harvey II as collateral and I didn't have to pay one cent down. Now, the same RV was back in my hands to be used any way I wanted to use it. The reason the owners gave the RV back to me was because my salesman had mentioned to him my very casual conversation about our work in China. God had touched his heart and he wanted to give of himself. Hence, the RV was still in my hands. Now I had two very large motor homes and I needed only one.

I began to ask God what I should do with my first one. I asked others to pray with me that I could clearly hear and follow His will. I felt it would go to ministers who could not only use it for travel but also as an office if parked on the street during street ministry. However, I didn't have a clue as to where or who it should go to.

After several weeks of serious prayer, I was awakened from my sleep at 4 o'clock in the morning and the Holy Spirit told me who to give the rig to. It was a street ministry with headquarters in Hollywood, California. These precious servants travel all over the U.S. and minister to the needy, especially those who live on the street. They had been in ministry about thirty years. Unbeknownst to me, after giving them the RV I found out they had received a prophetic word eighteen years prior to this, that they would receive a motor home free of charge for their ministry. Like Abraham who waited for the promises of God to come to pass, they, too, had waited and God brought that word to pass for them.

Since then the "Revival Vehicle" (RV), as they named it, has been used in the U.S., Mexico, and in New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Presently it is being used as a home for a minister, his wife, and two teenagers who lost everything they owned in Hurricane Katrina. God knows the future. How exciting it is to watch Him work!

After the "new" purchase was done, I was looking through my files on my Rockwood, Harvey II. I found that I had purchased the new one very

close to the same day, ten years later—the Harvey II on March 9, 1995 and Harvey III on March 25, 2005.

RV, THE “REVIVAL VEHICLE”

The following is a newsletter written by the minister to whom I gave the motor home several years ago.

April 25, 2005

Hello, Everyone ...

We just had a great miracle I want to share with you, to encourage you, and invite you to be a part of.

We got a call a few weeks ago from a friend in Texas.

The friend told her astonishing story.

Although we know this friend in Dallas, we have not seen or spoken to her in several years.

You can imagine how shocked, surprised and elated we were to hear of this.

I returned the call to our friend in Dallas and she began to tell me how the Holy Spirit told her to give us the motor home. In great thankfulness, I said to her, “Thank you so much for thinking of us to donate your motor home.”

Very bluntly and matter-of-factly, she replied, “I wasn’t thinking of you ... the Holy Spirit woke me up and told me to give the motor home to you.”

It was not like she had been thinking of us ... it was not like she went to bed thinking, “Who can I give my beautiful motor home to?”

The Spirit of the Lord spoke directly to her on our behalf. Thank God for people who obey the leading of the Lord, even though it may be a hard thing to do.

She had bought the motor home after her daughter went through a terminal illness several years ago and had great memories of using it to “get away from it all.”

Now, she wants to see the motor home used even more for the glory of God and His work. We will use it to minister in Mexico and in so many ways that God will show us.

What she didn't know before (until I told her) was that over 18 years ago, a great man of God named Dale Gentry who is gifted in the prophetic, prayed over us in Dallas, TX, and said the Lord showed him we would be doing ministry from a motor home.

He said he saw us using a motor home for the glory of God. We said, “Thank You, Jesus,” and put that word from the Lord on the shelf.

Now, over 18 years later, God woke an obedient servant of the Lord at 4 a.m. and told her to fulfill His promise He had made to us.

I am getting Holy Ghost chill bumps writing this to you.

I am telling you this to say, “*Wait for your promises from the Lord ... stand in faith and refuse to let God's words to you drop ... Though His promise may tarry ... wait for it, for it will surely come!*”

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Hello, Everyone ...

Well, our God is an awesome God.

We flew from L.A. to Dallas on Saturday and were met on Sunday by our dear friends and co-laborers for Jesus, Geri Morgan and Dr. Elizabeth Vaughan.

When we pulled into the Albertsons grocery store parking lot where we had pre-arranged to meet Geri and Dr. Vaughan, there it was ... a beautiful sight. We praised God as Streetwise was presented with an awesome 1988 32' Rockwood motor home. WOW!

We will use this motor home for the glory of God as we continue "Going for Jesus!"

People refer to these road vehicles as either motor homes or RVs; however, we are going to call this one an RV ... "Revival Vehicle."



Donated RV

Hey, Everyone ... The RV (Rescue Vehicle) has arrived “on target” in Covington, Louisiana, (just outside New Orleans) after Hurricane Katrina and is on-site to be a blessing there. It will be used to distribute food, clothing and medical supplies, but will be a “home on wheels” for Pastor Troy and Melanie Bohn and their teenagers, Jered and Kayla.

For awhile, they had been sleeping in their car, then on the floor of a Sunday school room. Now they will have real beds to sleep on, since they have lost their home and pretty much everything else.

Dear Geri,

You will be so thrilled to know that a team from Northern California is coming here to pick up the motor home and drive it to Louisiana/Mississippi to not only help with relief but to let Troy and Melanie Bohn (and their 2 teenagers) live in it while they do outreach. They have lost literally EVERYTHING but continue to reach out to others.

So the motor home is the gift that keeps on giving! When you bought it so many years ago, did you ever imagine how the Lord would use that beautiful home on wheels? It was a blessing just ministering to people between Texas and here, a blessing in Mexico, and now it will be to the Gulf Coast!



Chapter 10

My Stories

MY IMAGINATION BECOMES A REALITY

I was an adventuresome girl and by the time I was sixteen, I dreamed of “seeing the world,” especially as I had such an interest in aviation. Seems my natural father and I had this in common. I have always heard the story that on my way home from St. Paul Hospital as a newborn, my dad took me by Dallas Love Field Airport to introduce me to airplanes. I remember sitting in the car with him when I was about three or four years old and watching the airplanes land at Love Field.

I spent many hours of my life as a teenager at Love Field, both admiring and observing private aircraft, as well as the new commercial 707 jets which began flying into Dallas in 1957. As a teenager girl, I knew far more about aviation than the boys I was dating. They were always fascinated with my knowledge of planes. Actually, it was really quite limited, but they liked to hear my stories.

One afternoon a girlfriend of mine, Ada Sue Eubanks, and I decided to go to Love Field Airport and act out our dreams of flying on one of those superb new 707 jetliners, which at that time only flew round-trip from New York to Dallas. Of course, in 1957 the exciting thing for many Dallasites was to be at the airport when either the American or Braniff 707 jets landed—about five minutes apart. Cars would line up three deep to watch those magnificent flying machines land. Can you imagine that? That

was life in the late '50s. People dressed in their nicest attire when flying. I have pictures of women wearing gloves, hats and high-heeled shoes as they boarded planes.

Ada Sue and I dressed in our best clothes to be sure we looked the part of New York travelers as much as possible. Keep in mind that we were only sixteen years of age. We took our empty suitcases and filled them with newspapers and magazines to add weight, and proceeded to the airport to play our game. Can you imagine what security police would do to us now? All was going fine until I looked up and saw my parents' good friends, Ben Gold and his wife, walking toward us. They were the owners of Nardis of Dallas, a fine ladies' clothing manufacturing company. Oh my, what would they think of their friends' sixteen-year-old daughter traveling alone? Remember, this was the '50s and that just wasn't done back then. As they say these days, I quickly saw that Ada Sue and I were "in a pickle."

The Golds immediately asked where we were going. Trying not to appear foolish with our nice "traveling" clothes on and suitcases in hand, I quickly blurted out, "Oh, we've just come home on the jet from New York." In amazement Mrs. Gold said, "Oh, we have just arrived from New York also. Which plane were you on?"

Since I knew that both Braniff Five and American Six came in about five minutes apart, I answered her with a question. "Which plane were you on?" Whichever she replied, I told her we had come on the other one. With a sigh of relief, I thought that explanation would bring closure to this embarrassing meeting and conversation. I was really "sweating it" and felt so convicted of lying to her. I thought I had handled the scenario quite well, in spite of the "little white lie" which I did not want to tell. But how could I have ever explained to those very dignified people the game we teenagers were playing?

Several weeks passed and one afternoon my sweet father asked if I would please drive to his office and sit down with him for a short conversation. This usually meant he had something of a serious nature on his mind to speak with me about. I always obeyed, so off I went to his office,

wondering what in the world he wanted to talk to me about. He began the conversation by saying, "I understand you traveled to New York recently." I wanted to crawl under the chair! Seems my folks and their friends had a great laugh at the Variety Club about our New York trip and our teenage imagination as the Golds told my parents of our encounter at the airport. I was so embarrassed, but truly I learned a lesson that it's best to always tell the truth. However, the adults did enjoy a few laughs at our expense.

I believe God put the love of flying and the desire to travel in my heart during those days many years ago. My best dream was to visit Jerusalem before my life was over. I never could have dreamed what lay ahead for me after I received the baptism of the Holy Spirit in 1970. Since the day in 1981 when Sister Ruth Heflin prayed for me at the Steak & Ale restaurant in Dallas for God to use my life among the nations, I have traveled by air to nearly every state in the United States, the Vatican, and forty-six countries of the world.

I have made over twenty trips to China, a twenty-four hour flight from Dallas, some in blizzards. I've spent much time in Jerusalem, God's hometown. I slept in a tree house in Zimbabwe where a large boa constrictor had been killed the night before, and in the official State House in Beijing, China (Arafat was staying just down the hall at the time). I met with Major Saad Haddad in an army tent at the Lebanese border, missing a bomb and shelling there by ten minutes; been honored twice by high-ranking Chinese officials at the Great Hall of the People; traveled with Astronaut Jim Irwin (who walked on the moon) and his wife, both devout Christians, into China; and was strip-searched (yes, they took off all my clothes) by military authorities at the Romanian border. After spending time in Communist Russia, I was so thankful to arrive back in the U.S. that I literally got off the airplane and kissed the tarmac (ground) like they do in the movies. That was the only time I felt that way.

I have climbed the Great Wall in China and the steps of the Parthenon in Greece. I visited Auschwitz, a German extermination camp of the Jews in Poland. I prayed for a Zulu witch doctor in his hut in South Africa, visited the filming site of *The Sound of Music* (my favorite movie) in Salzburg,

Austria, and met Maria von Trapp. I have ridden camels at the Egyptian pyramids, bought wooden shoes in Holland, ridden the gondolas (canal boats) in Venice, Italy, and become lost while driving a rental car in the dangerous Golan Heights. I have been baptized in the Jordan River and visited the Vatican. I ate grass served to me as part of a meal in rural China and I visited the world-famous De Beers diamond mines in South Africa.

I have flown in the cockpit of a jumbo jet over Alaska and met hundreds of celebrities, including Liberace, Shirley MacLaine, and Sammy Davis, Jr. I visited and photographed the Alfred P. Murray Federal Building in Oklahoma City soon after its bombing, which took the lives of one hundred sixty-eight people. I have walked in Turkey on the remnant of the streets of ancient Ephesus. I removed my shoes, as is customary, to walk through the blue mosque in Istanbul, as well as the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem. I have watched a grizzly bear eat berries atop a Canadian mountain. I have seen Queen Elizabeth once and Prince Philip twice. On two occasions we spent Thanksgiving in foreign countries and our hosts prepared a traditional Thanksgiving dinner for us (as well as they could).

Many have been my adventures since that crazy day as a teenager playing games at the airport, dreaming of seeing the world. I give God all the glory for all of this. He took my ordinary life and filled it with the extraordinary. The best decision I've ever made was giving my life to Him!

However, instead of newspapers, my suitcase has been packed with Bibles for distribution to destinations where they were badly needed. The cry of my heart is still, "Here am I, Lord, send me!" I had no idea how many hours of my life would be spent on airplanes, much less the adventures God had in store! The following is a list of countries God has sent me to since my friend Sister Ruth's prayer:

I Play the Notes, but He Makes the Music

Africa	Greece	Mexico
Austria	Guatemala	Nassau
Belgium	Hawaii (Kaua'i, O'ahu)	Pakistan
British Columbia	Holland	Poland
Canada	Hong Kong	Romania
Cape Verde Islands	Hungary	Russia
China	Indonesia	Singapore
Costa Rica	Inner Mongolia	South Africa
Czechoslovakia	Isle of Mykonos	Sweden
Denmark	Isle of Rhodes	Switzerland
East Berlin	Israel	Taiwan
Egypt	Italy	Thailand
England	Jamaica	Turkey
France	Japan	Yugoslavia
Germany	Jordan	Zimbabwe
		The Vatican



Geri in Africa



Geri in Africa



Geri in Venice, Italy



Geri in Indonesia



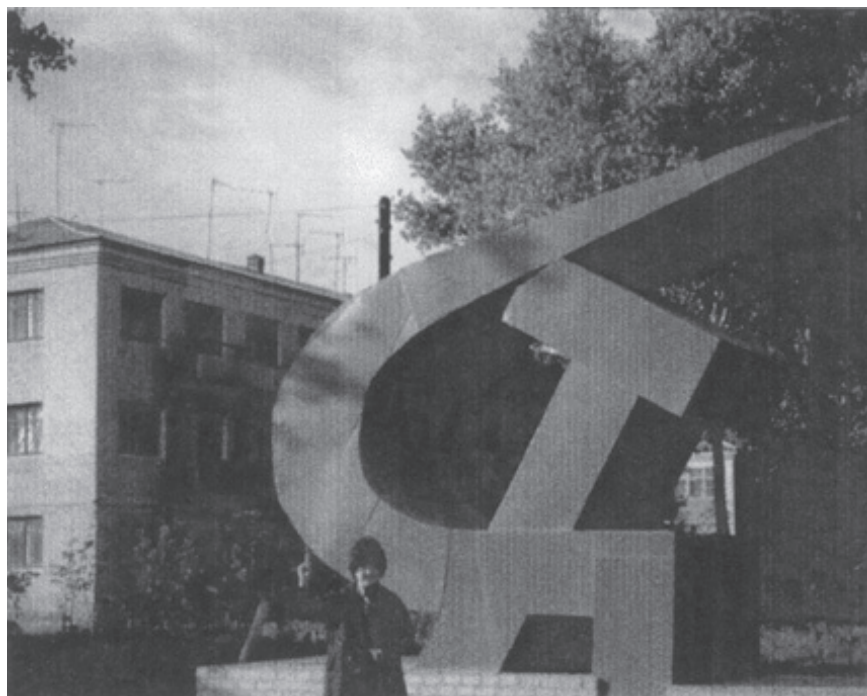
Geri and Dr. Vaughan in Indonesia, Muslim schoolgirls in background



Geri at the Vatican



Geri in Thailand



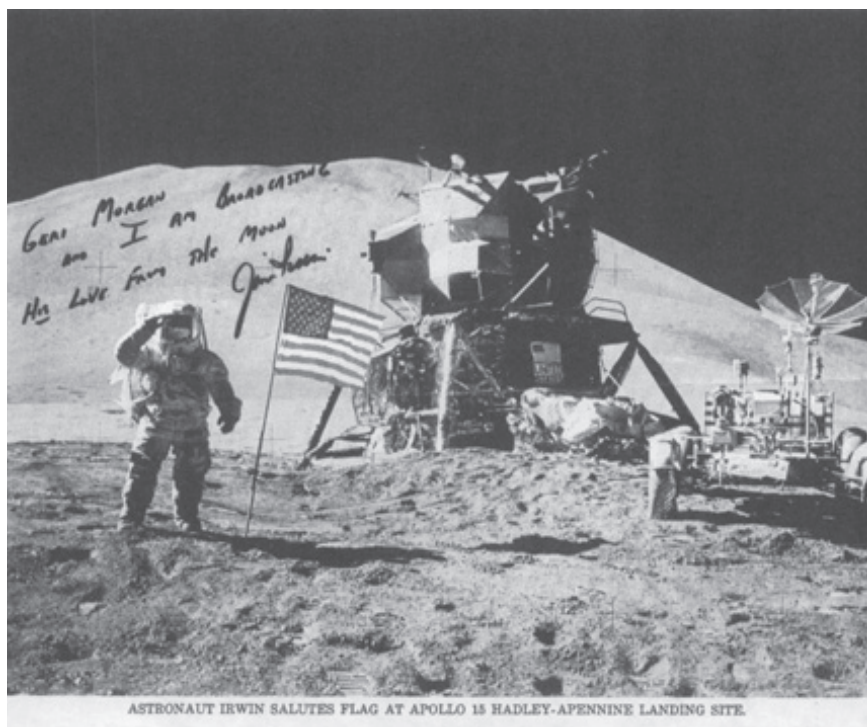
Geri in Russia



Geri in Russia



Geri in Jerusalem at Jesus' tomb



Jim Irwin on the moon

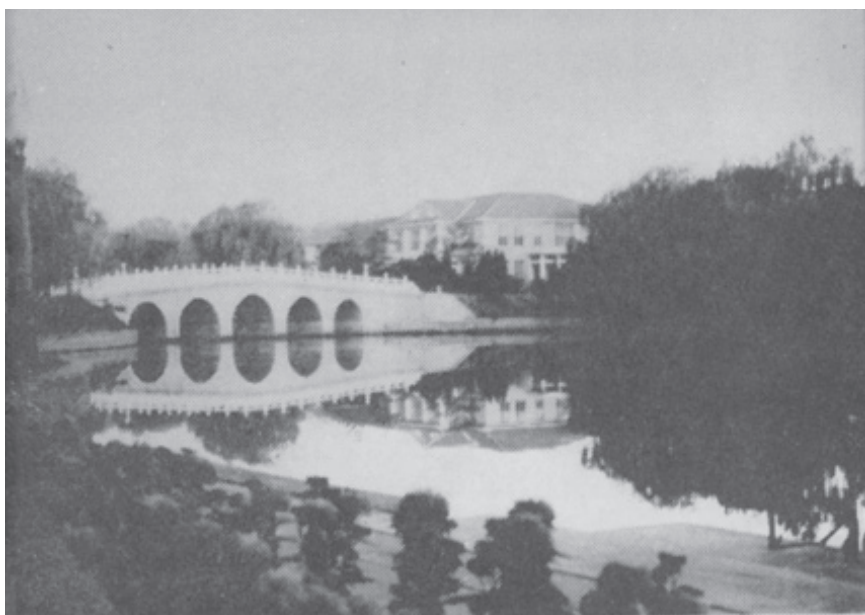


Jim Irwin, Dr. Vaughan and Geri on the Great Wall of China



Astronaut Jim Irwin and his wife Mary share Jesus with us as we ride a train from Canton, China to Hong Kong.

Jim Irwin, his wife, Dr. Vaughan and Geri on train in China



State Guest House where we stayed in Peking.

State Guest House where we stayed in Beijing



Geri and camel, Mt. Zion, Jerusalem



Major Saad Haddad at Lebanese border



Geri at well where Baby Jessica was trapped and rescued in Midland, Texas



Geri and Olivia Newton-John



Geri and Maria von Trapp (The Sound of Music)



Geri and Liberace, June, 1984



Geri and Cyd Charisse, 1993



Geri at The Plaza Hotel, New York City



Geri with Chinese friends, Central Park, New York City



Geri with Rev. Maryiann Sitton



Geri with Rev. Gwen Shaw, Founder of End-Time Handmaidens

FLYING BOXCAR INVITATION

One Saturday afternoon Ada Sue and I were at Love Field, looking at private planes parked at Southwest Airmotive. In those days there were no security gates or security officers, so we were able to drive right up to the planes in the hangars. Oh, how I loved Aero Commanders. I thought they were wonderful. They were high-winged with a nice body style, a bit different from the usual Cessnas and Pipers of the day.

As Ada Sue and I drove around through the hangars, we noticed that a large “flying boxcar” plane had landed and was slowly taxiing toward the hangar where we were. We watched in fascination as the huge plane rolled to a stop and six or eight young men disembarked. I guess because we were young girls, the young men noticed us watching them and decided they would come and talk to us. It was harmless, as we sat locked inside my little blue ’52 Chevrolet Bel Air. They had flown into Dallas to repair some problem in their plane and we immediately began talking, maybe flirting with them just a bit.

After answering dozens of our questions pertaining to the aircraft, they asked if we would like to fly on it. Oh, my! An opportunity to fly! We were not about to pass up that offer. They offered to fly us around Dallas while they checked the repair work after it was completed. We were so excited at the thought of flying that we never gave one minute’s thought to it being dangerous.

Now, flying on a plane having its problems checked out is not too smart, much less flying on a plane with complete strangers—two teenage girls on a plane with unknown young adult males. This was in the innocence of the ’50s, but perhaps the two of us were a bit more daring than most? Also amazing was the fact that times were so innocent that they could invite teenage women to board their plane. And, to make matters even worse, it was a foreign airliner from South America. They spoke only broken English with a Spanish accent and I spoke broken Spanish, just enough to communicate with them. So, our plane ride was all arranged to take place later in the afternoon.

We immediately left for our homes to redo our makeup and “fix up” for the flight. My parents were not home, but Ada Sue’s were. When they found out about our proposed adventures with the young pilots, they quickly put the brakes on our wonderful plans. Of course, her parents were horrified and we never saw those foreign pilots or their plane again. It was completely innocent on our part, but we could have been kidnapped and spent our lives on another continent! That was the end of that “flying boxcar” for us! My sweet friend, Ada Sue, passed away in 2002. We shared many fun times together.

EXCHANGE OF DESIRES

“Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart” (Psalm 37:4).

I believe that when we try our best to seek God and His will, He will give us the desires of our heart. First and foremost, I believe that His will changes our own hearts’ desires as He puts His in their place. Some of our own interests may fall to the side while His quickly take their place. There is certainly no feeling of loss but, instead, an excitement over the new that has arrived. For instance, I have mentioned my love for aviation, especially private aviation and small planes. I knew all about the make, the type of engines, the passenger load, and the flight information systems on many of them. Long before DFW was built, I spent days of my life at Dallas Love Field. I knew many of the private planes and their owners, and dreamed of the day that I, too, could own one. What a dreamer I was. That passion for flying continued until I was thirty-one years old.

My husband and I had good friends who owned a nice, single engine Mooney Mark V. We enjoyed flying with them so, of course, this only increased my love of flying. People used to kid me by saying that I had gone by Love Field to check out the planes before bringing our infant, Angie, home from the hospital.

Now what does all this have to do with God’s desires becoming our own? I can share this as it truly happened to me, just overnight. When I was

thirty I began to seek God in a serious way with all my heart. As I related in Chapter 5, God sent an older Christian lady into my life who began to lead me into deeper things of God. How I hungered for more and more as she shared her own experiences with Him. I wanted the same close relationship with Him that she had. I had known her for over fifteen years and had seen the complete transformation that had taken place in her life as a result of giving her life to the Lord Jesus. She had been gloriously saved! He had completely changed her from a hopeless alcoholic to a shining, Spirit-filled Christian who became a most sought-after speaker for churches around the nation.

After years of living with the alcohol addiction, trying her best to overcome it, she finally turned to the lover of her soul, Jesus. Of course, He delivered her from all the hell she was living in. Because of this, she loved Him with a passion and in a way that I had never witnessed before nor many times since. “Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much” (Luke 7:47).

I wanted to *know* Him as she did. I wanted to *love* Him as she did. As she shared the things of God with me one afternoon, I got a big surprise. I realized that she knew far more about aviation than I did. So, not only could she teach me the deeper things of God, but she could talk with me about my favorite subject, aviation. I remember asking her a very serious question—at least it was in my mind. I asked her if I would ever be as excited and interested in the Lord as I was in airplanes. What a question! She laughed and said, “Oh, yes.” And just as she had said, in weeks to come, without any effort or thought on my part, suddenly I realized that I had forgotten all about airplanes. My time was now being spent on learning of God. There was nothing wrong with my interest in aviation, but He was changing my interests. He had given me the desires of my heart. He had replaced that worldly pleasure with His desires, things much greater and far more wonderful for me. “Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17). Aviation had dulled to me as the things of God took its place, accomplished by the sweet Holy Spirit.



Off we go into the wild blue yonder

SWEET, SMALL DESIRE OF MY HEART

Just recently I experienced an example of His giving me my own desires. It may seem small, but it meant a great deal to me. I had a pair of earrings that I liked so much. I wore them every day for many, many years, and my friends and family kidded me constantly because they never saw me wear any others. I am a person who doesn't like change and so my gold earrings became a part of me. I have many earrings but these particular ones were the only ones I ever wanted to wear, and needless to say, they began to show wear and tear. I went back to the shop where I had bought them and was able to buy two more identical pairs. I was so happy to find them, but through the years I wore them out, too. Now I had three pairs of my favorite earrings that I could patch up and mix and keep at least one pair wearable. By doing that, I had a pair for several more years.

Finally the day came when all of them just died. They could no longer be patched up or put back together. I wasn't too alarmed because I just thought, "I will go back to the shop and purchase more," as I had done in the past. Much to my disappointment, they no longer had them and that design had been discontinued. I was a very disappointed camper as I left. I spent several years looking for them, literally all over the United States. When I was visiting in other states and other cities, I would try to find them in their local shops, without success.

In the spring of 2007, my caregiver and I went to an outdoor flea market early one morning. At the time I was in a wheelchair and trying to roll around over the muddy ground was very difficult. She would roll me to each dealer's space and leave me to look at the junk that was displayed. One booth had everything priced at only fifty cents. I heard her say, "Here are some pretty gold earrings that you might like." I looked her way and nearly fell out of my wheelchair. Much to my amazement she had found a pair of my earrings. She knew nothing about them until I told her my story. I just was elated over finding them, as I believe God had them on that fifty-cent table just so that we could find them on that particular day.

To add even more to this story, we shopped a garage sale the next week and she found another pair exactly like them. So, I have two pair of my favorite earrings. The Lord gave me the desire of my heart. By the way, I'm still wearing them and I still get kidded about them!

THE LAMP

I guess you wonder what on earth could possibly be said about a lamp. I just experienced a special and most unusual blessing that I want to share with you.

One summer I took Angie and a small group of her friends over to Martha's Vineyard for the day. The journey was just a short ferryboat ride from our home in Hyannis Port. The kiddos loved the boat ride and visiting the islands in the summers, both Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard. That morning, we all loaded into the boat in anticipation of a very fun-filled day. And we were not disappointed, I might add. Once we arrived, the young people scattered in different directions while we adults quickly discovered sights and shops to visit. One can sit for hours just enjoying the quaint villages and harbor scenes with their boats and lighthouses.

Somehow I managed to stop at a yard sale before our boat sailed back to Hyannis Port that evening. I found two nautical lamps which I thought were beautiful. They had schooners on them (sailing ships) and would just be perfect for my living room in Hyannis Port. I had done the house with nautical accents, so these fit my decorating scheme perfectly. We finished our exciting day and all carried our day's treasures and finds. Our tummies were full from eating seafood in Menemsha at Jackie Kennedy Onassis' favorite restaurant, the Home Port on the Vineyard, where she and her companion, Maurice Tempelman, often dined. I managed to carry the two lamps back on board the boat, very, very happy and pleased about my yard sale finds. We agreed that it had been a great day for us.

As I said, I wanted these charming lamps for the living room. I continued to enjoy them as long as I lived in Cape Cod. However, years later my life's circumstances made it necessary for me to return to Texas where I

would be able to take care of my elderly parents, as well as tend to other pressing issues. With great reluctance, I left most of my Cape Cod home's furnishings behind as I simply had no place for them in Dallas. However, one of the few things I did transport home were the two lamps I had gotten on the Vineyard. I found another place in my Texas living room to use them so I could still enjoy them. I had moved into a high-rise condo and decided that I would try to give the decor a bit of a nautical flavor. I had the two lamps but thought I really needed another one to sit on a certain table. (You know us ladies!) I decided that I would shop nautical shops on my next trip to Boston and purchase another one to match the two I had.

I thought this could be easily accomplished as it seemed I had seen these lamps "everywhere" on the East Coast, that is, until I began looking for them! I remember spending my entire fall vacation looking for "my lamp" up in New England. If you've ever visited there, you are aware of the numerous nautical and antique shops. I think I shopped them all in pursuit of my schooner lamp. At the end of my time there, much to my disappointment, I couldn't find the lamp anywhere. And I saw very little of the beautiful fall foliage that year because I spent most of my time looking for that lamp.

The last night of the trip we checked into a small, economical motel in Boothbay Harbor, Maine. It was the type of place you usually choose for the end of your vacation after "winning and dining" at the touristy places. It was just a plain and simple motel room, with a TV set, one bar of soap and very few towels. Get the picture? Well, much to my surprise, I opened the door to the motel room and there sat "my lamp" on their dresser. I couldn't believe my eyes. After days of searching, I believe my heavenly Father set it there just for me. Trying to get my excitement and utter disbelief to settle down, I quickly called the front desk to ask about purchasing it from them. The desk clerk said they couldn't sell it, as they only had enough to supply their rooms. My heart sank again. However, soon the phone rang and the owner of the motel said their maintenance man had found one broken lamp and I could have it for ten dollars if I wanted it. I quickly paid her and just sat transfixed looking at the lamp I had wanted so badly for so

long. End of lamp story? No, there's more. Just twenty-five cents for a part to repair it made it perfect.

I brought the third lamp to Dallas, sat it on a table, and enjoyed it. Later I decided that I needed just one more to complete decorating my living room. So, knowing exactly where to go to find the lamps, I made reservations for the next fall to return to my beloved Maine and the "affordable motel" to get my last lamp. I could hardly wait to get the key into the lock so I could enter and see "my lamp." Much to my surprise and horror, upon entering the room I saw that there was no lamp sitting where I had left it the year before. Oh, me, how my heart really sank! I called to inquire and found that the motel had been refurbished during the year and all those wonderful schooner lamps were gone ... gone for sure this time. The owner told me they had all been discarded and were no longer available anywhere. If you know me then you know I am not easily discouraged. So I soon began another search for another schooner lamp to match my other three. Here is the unbelievable finale to this story.

The next year I was visiting Boothbay Harbor again with a dear pastor and his wife from Oklahoma, precious people to travel with. We had so much fun eating lobster and finding loose lobster buoys along the coastline. Of course, they were well aware that I was looking for the "perfect lamp," but they also knew just how very dismal the prospect of finding one was. Unbeknownst to me, they were keeping an eye out for my project.

One morning I got a call from my preacher friend. He was so excited! He and his wife were driving past the Humane Society's thrift shop and he had spotted the lamp in their window. Being an "Okie" from Oklahoma, we all laughed as he described the lamp to me. "It has sailboats on it, Geri," he said. Yes, it could be "mine" with the exception that mine have schooners on them. I asked him if the shopkeeper would hold it for thirty minutes so I could come to the shop and check it out. I was so excited that I rushed to dress and arrived there in about five minutes. As we drove up, I was able to see the lamp that my friend had found. You guessed correctly. It was identical to my other three lamps, this time with a twenty-dollar price tag on it.

To some, this may be just a silly story, one of coincidence. But for me it is far more than that. I believe that my heavenly Father knew that was a desire of my heart. His Word says He will give us the desires of our heart: “Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart” (Psalm 37:4). We found out that the lamp had been donated only two days before we found it. It was waiting in the window for me as we made the over 2000-mile trip to find it. I see my Father’s love that we sometimes overlook. I love my lamps but how much more I enjoy looking at them, remembering the story behind them. It is my hope that this story will speak to your heart and you too will see His hand in making it possible. After sixteen years, I have my special nautical lamps that I consider to be sweet gifts from God.



The lamp

LESSONS IN HUMILITY

I have had the opportunity to know some of the most humble people on earth. Four beautiful Christian examples whom I vividly remember are Dr. W. A. Criswell, pastor of Dallas' First Baptist Church for over fifty years, beginning in 1944; Dallas Mayor Jack Evans (1981-1983); Ruth Hunt, widow of oilman, H. L. Hunt; and William Howard Beasley, owner of Whittles Music Company.

I like the old saying, "If you were arrested for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?" I think these people, who are all now in their eternal home, surely could have been convicted!

Upon the death of Dr. W. A. Criswell, I wrote the following article for the editorial page of *The Dallas Morning News*:

"Our loss, heaven's gain," as Rev. Billy Graham so eloquently spoke of Dr. W. A. Criswell. Truly our world has lost a great man. Volumes are sure to be written about him.

I was never a member of his congregation but I once had the opportunity to be seated for dinner next to both Dr. Criswell and Ruth Hunt, the epitome of graciousness. Being in their company was an experience I shall never forget. Upon leaving, I turned to Dr. Criswell and said, "I'm so thankful to have had this time with you, one of God's saints." He very quickly replied, "Oh, but my dear, it is I who had the blessing by being in your company."

A great theologian, orator, leader, and friend, he will be remembered as all of these and more. I felt I was touched by a bit of heaven the afternoon he spoke those words to me. I have never forgotten them. His life demonstrated many of the attributes of Jesus Christ. Thank you, Dr. Criswell.

Yes, "our loss, but heaven's gain."

DALLAS MAYOR JACK EVANS

As a very young teenager I used to ride my bicycle to a nearby shopping center and window-shop at many of the businesses. I never bought anything, I just looked. One of the stores that I visited was Evans Food Mart. Now what can be so important about visiting a neighborhood grocery?

During this time I was attending Skillman Avenue Church of Christ. One of the elders of the church was Jack Evans, the father of two young boys who were friends of mine. He was such a wonderful Christian man, husband and father. I knew nothing about the Evans family's involvement in the grocery business. I did notice that when I visited the store, Mr. Evans was usually mopping the floor and he always put aside his mop when I entered. He stopped and talked to me as if I were the most important person in the world and our little chats always left me feeling like a million dollars. He always encouraged me in my schoolwork and in my Christian walk. He was never too busy to put down the mop for a few minutes to encourage me.

This happened every time I went into his store and I really appreciated it. I considered him to be my friend and it was many years before I learned that my friend, Jack Evans, was the CEO of Tom Thumb Groceries, Inc. This nice man, mopping the floor of the grocery store and taking time to talk to me, was the Chief Executive Officer of the corporation. Many years later he became Mayor of my city, Dallas, Texas.

After his passing, my following editorial was published in *The Dallas Morning News*:

Forty-three years ago I had the pleasure of attending the same church as Jack Evans and his family. He was by then already an outstanding role model as a Christian husband, father and community leader. He was such an outstanding young man that we teenagers looked up to him with great respect.

My family lived near the Evans' Hillside Village grocery store. As a kid I regularly rode my bicycle to the shopping center to

window-shop. The highlight of my trip there was to stop in and say “hello” to Mr. Evans. I so much looked forward to those three-minute visits because Jack Evans would stop whatever he was doing (many times mopping the floors) and take the time to speak to a 14-year-old. He spoke to me as if I were the most important person in the world! He was always interested in my family, my welfare, and my numerous school activities. He always had a word of encouragement for me and I would walk away feeling 100 feet taller than when I walked in.

Jack Evans never knew what a blessing he was to me. He never knew that those few moments he spent with me would make the impression on my life that they have. So forty-three years later, I’m still grateful that his life touched mine. I’m sure I’m but one of countless lives influenced by Jack Evans during his lifetime.

Not only Dallas, but our world, has lost one of its best—a true role model! Thank you, Mr. Evans.

GERI HUDSON MORGAN

Dallas

You may never know the impression you are leaving on someone’s life. As a youngster I absolutely lived to play a Hammond organ but they were costly instruments back then (and now) and there were not too many of them in households.

Dallas had a large, wonderful music store, Whittles, on Elm Street in downtown Dallas. Many afternoons I would ride the bus downtown to the store in hopes that I might get the opportunity to sit down at an organ and play. Since I was just a young girl of about twelve, understandably the salespeople did not always encourage me to play their expensive instruments. However, there was one kind gentleman who always seemed so glad to see me. He would take me back into the organ showroom and let me play to my heart’s content. I soon learned to look for that particular man each time I visited the store.

Oh, how I looked forward to those times when I could sit down at a Hammond organ and do my best to play it. I have never forgotten the kindness which that one man showed me. Many years later I was shocked to find that he was William Howard Beasley, owner of Whittles Music Company. He never once “let on” that he was anyone other than a salesperson, doing his job.

Of course, I was surprised to find out thirty years later who my friend really was. Our daily Dallas paper carried a lengthy obituary and picture which told of his business and civic contributions to Dallas. God had given me favor with Whittles’ owner and allowed me to have the desire of my heart, to play the organ. It was in his store that I began to practice toward the goal of my life to be an organist.

SUMMERS IN HYANNIS PORT

Some of the fondest memories of my life revolve around summers we spent in Hyannis Port, Massachusetts, famous for the Kennedy compound. Jackie Kennedy Onassis and her children lived one block from my house, as did Teddy, Ethel, Eunice Shriver and their big clan. The Port was always full of Secret Service if Jackie, JFK, Jr., or Caroline were there. We were there (in the crowd of observers) at Caroline’s wedding to Ed Schlossberg, and also at Maria Shriver and Arnold Schwarzenegger’s wedding. The village swarmed with celebrities such as Oprah Winfrey, Carly Simon, Andy Warhol, and many others.

My house stayed full of houseguests. It was an old sea captain’s house with eight bedrooms and, believe me, the beds were filled for the summer. Everyone loved to visit Cape Cod. What lazy summers we spent on the water.

One year I got a lobster fishing license and bought lobster traps. It was fun to bait the traps and go back later for the catch. I bought a boat in Texas and we transported it behind my van two thousand miles from Texas to the Cape. Now that became really an ordeal. On one of the trips from Dallas to Cape Cod we went by Washington, D.C., to sightsee. This was

long before all the tight security they have now. We drove my van right into the heart of D.C., even by the White House, dragging a big boat behind us. But we were quickly stopped by the police. Even back then one did not pull such a thing behind one's car in Washington, D.C., for security reasons. Embarrassed, we very quickly "got out of Dodge" and continued on up the highway, boat and all.

A group of Angie's friends and I, along with our dog, "Snowball," went out that summer on Ted Kennedy's boat. Angie won the "Best Tan" contest that year held at the Sheraton Hotel. Senator Kennedy was a real dog lover so he and "Snowball" got along real well.

I thank God for the wonderful summers we spent there. Angie always said it was her favorite place on earth, and it's mine also. I still visit sweet friends there as often as I can. If you ever have the opportunity to visit Cape Cod, by all means, do it.

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Joyhaven, my home in Hyannis Port



Geri, Angie and Pookie at Hyannis Port Yacht Club



Welcome to Cape Cod

POOKIE, THE PUPPY FROM MY FATHER

Let me tell you the story of Pookie, my most beloved dog of all. One Friday afternoon I was dressed up and on my way to a party. In Dallas, April can be an extremely wet month and it was raining miserably that day. Driving to the party, I turned the corner and caught a glimpse of a small black and white doggie in the middle of the street in the blinding rain. You can already imagine what happened next. Party clothes and all, I stopped my car and rescued the poor little thing. (I later learned that the dog's original owners were the son and daughter-in-law of an acquaintance of mine.) The poor little dog was soaking wet and was shaking badly, not only from the cold but also from her fear of bad weather, which I discovered later. After rescuing and putting her into my car, I don't know who was the wettest! After you hear the rest of the story, I think you will agree that God sent this little puppy to me.

At the time I found the small dog, I had several large breed dogs and a miniature horse named Junior. I had plenty of room at my home for them to run free inside a brick fence on three acres of land. I really did not need another animal but this little doggie and I immediately bonded. After I picked her up, she did not want to leave my side nor did I want her to. She was a true companion-type dog.

I tried hard to find her owners. I placed an ad in the Dallas newspaper and also put up "Found Dog" signs all over the neighborhood. At that time a group of people were beginning to work through computers to match up lost and found animals around the city, so I posted the dog I had found.

At the end of that week I had heard nothing, so I went to my houseboat, where I spent most of my weekends. Before leaving I called and made sure that the computer people had a good description of the little dog I had found. I think it is always best for an animal to be reunited with its owner, if possible, although I admit that I was hoping against hope that no one would come to her rescue.

I knew nothing about this particular breed of dog, Shih Tzu, but I found her to be the most loving little dog that I had ever been around. As the cute

little one and I sat all cuddled up together on the couch in my houseboat, the phone rang and it was the dog-matching lady. My heart sank as she began to ask certain markings and details about the dog. Sure enough, this was Princess. She had escaped from her backyard home because she had been so frightened by the storm. She was just deathly afraid of bad weather and storms. I was devastated that I would not be able to keep her but was happy for the dog and her owners. I arranged for the owner to pick her up on Monday at my home when I returned from my weekend at the lake.

It was a terribly sad day for me when the owner arrived to pick up the dog. I cried a few tears and told the sweet young lady to please remember me if she ever needed a home for her. She explained that the dog had been a gift from her recently deceased father and that she would never let her out of her sight. I handed the dog back to her with a broken heart and we parted with that conversation.

I tried so hard to forget about the dog, but for some reason she affected me as none other. One day my heart just longed and longed for this little doggie. I knew the name of the street where her owners lived, so I drove down that street, wondering where the little precious dog was. That day I decided that I must get over my love for her, get her out of my mind, and move on. I tried hard.

Many months later on a hot June day I was busy packing my van and trailer for my annual jaunt to Hyannis Port, Massachusetts. I think my departure day was the busiest day of my year. In the midst of this scene, the phone rang and I was almost too busy to answer it, but thank God I did. On the other end of the telephone the caller seemed to be in distress. When she identified herself as the owner of the little Shih Tzu, my heart jumped. She explained that her infant son was now learning to walk and it was not working with the little dog around. (We never want our children in harm's way, if possible.) She was extremely upset and asked if I could possibly take the dog.

My dream had come true! I told her of my immediate departure (in one hour) for Massachusetts and she asked me if she could bring the dog before

I left. I agreed and the little dog rode in my lap the entire two thousand miles we traveled from Dallas to Hyannis Port. After Angie saw her, she said, "She looks like a Pookie," so that became her name. It was not a fancy name, but an endearing one, for sure. Her original name, of course, had been Princess, but she gladly answered to her new name and became my shadow. For the next eight years she was my constant companion. The original owner's natural father had given the dog to her, but my heavenly Father later gave her to me.

Here is another interesting thing about my Pookie. Soon after I got her, I made a move from my home into a high-rise condo. The condo by-laws permit residents to have one dog under twenty pounds. Of course, Miss Pook, as we sometimes called her, was well under that weight, so she moved in with me. I later found out from her previous owner that Pookie was already familiar with my building. The owner's mother and father were former residents and used to dog-sit with Princess (renamed Pookie) when their daughter traveled. So Pookie had been in my high-rise condo before I had.

I truly believe with all of my heart that my little Pook was hand-picked by God just for me. She died of old age December 29, 1997, and later I had another tiny Shih Tzu. We named her Pook II but fondly called her Yi Pooh because of my love for the Chinese. However, there will never be another dog like my Pookie I. Today I have two rescued Lhasa Apsos, Molly Anne and Precious. Molly Anne believes herself to be my caretaker. She won't leave my side and takes every step that I take. People have told me that I should (and could) register her as a service dog. As of today, Pookie and my Mollie Anne are my favorites of all time.

A dear friend of mine, the late Lou Tower, widow of the late Senator John Tower, gave me a sweet little plaque that hangs in my laundry room today. Lou was a dog lover also and a great supporter of the SPCA in Dallas. That little plaque reads, "Please, God, make me the kind of person my dog thinks I am." They love us unconditionally.



Pookie (black and white)

HERE AM I, LORD, SEND ME

One summer I was asked to substitute for the organist at a Disciples of Christ church in the Dallas area. It was fairly common for me to fill in for full-time organists when they needed to be away. Since I had a small child at the time, I chose not to take a full-time position as church organist, so substituting worked quite well with my schedule. I had played for this church several times and thought highly of the minister and his labor of love for the congregation. One night while playing the organ for the service, the Holy Spirit whispered to me to speak with the minister after the service and share my experience of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Oh, my, he was a denominational pastor who might not understand whatsoever. However, I knew I had heard His voice very clearly, so I had to be obedient.

After the service I asked if I could speak with him for a few minutes. I know he was quite surprised because I was very timid, especially about the subject of the Holy Spirit. Only God knew how much courage I lacked. However, I obeyed and went to his office after the service and began sharing some things I believed God had put in my heart. As I began speaking, this very dignified preacher with probably forty years in the pulpit broke down and began crying. Needless to say, I did not know what to think. He composed himself a little and began to explain why he was so emotional. He too had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and he had just been praying that God would send a Spirit-filled Christian to him. In 1970 not many denominational pastors were experiencing the move of the Spirit that we are seeing today and he had no one with whom he felt he could speak about spiritual things.

“For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:20). God sent me on a little errand and the Holy Spirit blessed us both that night as this pastor poured out his heart to me. I believe I delivered the message that the Father had sent me there to say. In fact, later the Holy Spirit sent me to another pastor with similar words. I was learning to trust the still, small voice that I was hearing, and I was loving it. “The sheep follow him: for they know his voice” (John 10:4).

DON'T MOVE

One afternoon I was running errands alone in my car. As I pulled up to a red light at a major intersection in Dallas, I remember wishing the light would turn green so I could hurry and get on about my business that afternoon. Maybe I was too impatient that day. The light did change to green and obviously it was my time to go, but as I started to push the accelerator, the Holy Spirit said, "Don't move." Wow! I heard Him so loud and clear that I immediately put my foot back on the brake pedal. All of this happened in a split second. An elderly lady drove past me into the intersection and as I watched, she was hit broadside by a fast-moving car which ran the red light at high speed. I watched in horror as her car was thrown up into the air by the impact and wrapped around a telephone pole, injuring the lady quite seriously. I do not know why this happened, but I do know that if I had not heard His voice, I would have been seriously injured that afternoon.

A LITTLE CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM

Years ago I had a very humbling experience that I had not planned for, not at all! Our little Angie was about eight years old at the time and attended a private school near our home. It was not a Christian school, but most of the staff and teachers attended the same Baptist church and their church auditorium was frequently used for school functions such as plays and graduations. Most of these sweet teachers were also my friends. One of Angie's teachers knew that I loved Christian music and invited me to a special musical program being held at the church. This meeting had no connection with Angie's school and I was thrilled to be invited. If I had known what was going to happen that night, however, I'm quite sure I would not have attended.

The night of the concert I dressed Angie in her prettiest little Sunday dress and off we went. When we arrived my friend quickly ushered us to seats that were being held for us. They were great seats, right in the center about midway back in the huge auditorium, which probably held about four thousand people. The church was packed and I noticed many of

Angie's teachers, as well as the school principal, in the congregation. We exchanged smiles, as they knew I was a visitor in their church. They were glad that I had come to visit the church as well as experience the program. It was just a nice, sweet evening. The concert started and it was a wonderful presentation.

At the end of the concert, the musicians stayed on the platform and during an "altar call" appealed for anyone who needed prayer to come to the altar. It was a beautiful invitation given by the Holy Spirit. However, not one person in that packed auditorium made a move. A long period of silence went by and still no one moved out of the pews. What happened next? Oh, me! I will never forget what happened next. As I sat there with my eyes closed, the Holy Spirit spoke to me and said, "Go to the altar." I did not know of anything in particular that I needed to go for, and besides, I was only a "visitor" in this nice, sophisticated Baptist church. If I went to the altar, all of Angie's schoolteachers would surely see me and think her mother had some big problem or that I was a lost sinner. Would I allow the enemy to keep me in a man-fearing spirit or would I submit to a God-fearing one?

My pride was really being tested. I tried to explain to the Holy Spirit that I would be too embarrassed to get out of my seat in front of all those people. I reminded Him that I was a visitor there and all of Angie's teachers and even her principal were there. And, remember, the church was completely packed out that night with about four thousand people in attendance. I just could not possibly go to the front. However, the harder I tried to convince the Holy Spirit, the stronger the word came, "Go to the altar." Did I want to obey my Father's voice or be disobedient and look good in the eyes of my friends? I had a choice.

Finally, I stood up in the middle of the church and began that long walk down to the altar in the front of that church. It seemed like it was a mile down that aisle, with all eight thousand eyes on me (four thousand people times two eyes). All the time the enemy and my intellect were saying, "How stupid you look. How very embarrassing! Don't you know all of Angie's school is watching? And besides that, you really don't know why you are going to the altar." True, I didn't have any big needs that I was aware of, but

I knew God had spoken to my heart and I had to be obedient. As today's little *Nike* slogan says, "Just Do It." Well, down that long aisle I went. Keep in mind that I was the only one moving in that large auditorium, the only one "doing it."

Once at the altar I knelt down, bowed my head, closed my eyes very tightly, and tried to forget all those eyes looking my direction. As I knelt there, eyes closed, I began hearing soft noises, some sniffing, lots of moving around and shuffling. I opened my eyes, peeping a little, and much to my surprise, the altar was filling with people. They kept coming and coming. They had just needed some encouragement to step out. I think this was a real rarity in that dignified church.

God needed a little trusting child to lead them and I suppose I was the one who became the little child that night. "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them" (Isaiah 11:6). I am sure we all needed to be kneeling at the altar that night, but someone had to lead the way. I'm so very thankful that I went to church that evening and had the opportunity to obey my Master. And you know what? Angie's teachers seemed to have greater respect for me after that.

LIFE IN THE FAST LANE

My husband and I built a weekend retreat home on a pretty club lake in a beautiful forest in East Texas. What fun we had designing, building, and furnishing it and looking forward to enjoying some relaxing weekends there. It was a great place to be. We were very active in our home church in Dallas but we knew we would be spending most of our weekends at our lake home, so we quickly decided to look for a nearby church to attend on those Sundays. The small, sweet town was nestled in the piney woods and was filled with wonderful people. Our first Sunday morning there we went looking for a place to worship and landed at the Methodist Church. I actually think it was the only church having services that morning. However, I also believe it was by divine appointment that we went there.

We settled in, making their Sunday school and church service our home away from home. I helped in vacation Bible school and played the organ in the services when needed.

A very strange thing happened in my life at our lake home. My Sunday school teacher and her husband became close friends of ours and we often visited in each others' homes, both at the lake and in Dallas. This was the second marriage for him and she became a stepmom to his son. For months she spoke lovingly about her stepson and I felt as though I knew him even though we had never met.

One evening at their home my friend pulled out the family scrapbook to show us pictures of their family. As I slowly turned the pages, I did a double-take. There was a picture of a guy I had gone to school with and even dated as a teenager. I jumped back in disbelief and quickly inquired, "What in the world is my school friend James' picture doing in your family scrapbook?" Much to our astonishment, the boy I had known in school was the stepson that she continually spoke about. What a small world! Later he and his family drove down to the lake and we all had a big, fun reunion and a few laughs over the scenario. Life has been quite interesting for me!

My dad used to say that we were "living in the fast lane" at an early age. My life truly was exciting in my late twenties but an intense hunger for Jesus still existed and none of the "fast lane" life would satisfy it. My life was about to change.

YOU WANT MY HOUSE?

After I received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, my interests began to change. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17). It was as if the blinders had been taken off of my eyes. I truly lost some of my old desires, which were quickly replaced by excitement in Him.

One afternoon the Holy Spirit spoke to me concerning our wonderful little retreat home. Oh, how we both enjoyed it. Friends would drop by for

visits with a freshly baked cake and many times we had friends spend the weekend with us. We had a lot of fun at our second home. One afternoon the Holy Spirit whispered to me, "Would you give Me your house?" I knew He was speaking about the lake house. Oh, me! Did He mean that I would have to get rid of the little chalet log house that I loved so much? He said, "Give Me the house and watch My Spirit move."

The Spirit of the Lord also said, "I am going to give you an even bigger reason to want to go to the lake on the weekends. It is going to be so exciting!" I thought maybe I was going to suddenly acquire a great love of golf or swimming or something like that. You know, that's how our natural minds work. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts higher than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:9). But now He was asking me to give Him my little home, so I said in my heart, "Okay, Lord, it's Yours." I had decorated it so perfectly and now large groups of people would be using it without my even being there!

The following few days, weeks, and months I watched as He began to do a work. My phone began to ring off the wall with many young people from several denominational churches wanting to know about the Lord. They were so hungry for Jesus! It was beautiful. I had become well acquainted with families at the lake and the small town nearby. When we arrived each weekend so many people came to our home that we had very little time to relax.

People from different denominations received the baptism of the Holy Spirit during these days. I never told anyone what the Holy Spirit had spoken to me, I just sat back astonished and watched Him do a tremendous work. I was learning to hear my Shepherd's voice and to follow like a little sheep. All He had asked for was my house and so, not knowing a better way to do that, I gave the key to a local church. The ladies began to have their Bible study group in my home and the Spirit of the Lord began to move in a beautiful way. Years later we sold our home and moved, but the Holy Spirit continues to live and move there. Today a large church has been built on the lake for the believers.

God is so faithful. We can always stand still and watch the salvation of the Lord. "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD" (Exodus 14:13). He gave me a wonderful reason to want to be at the lake each weekend, as I watched a beautiful move of God start in my little weekend retreat home. It was very exciting to watch. I had expected something to happen in the natural realm but His ways are so much higher than ours.

HENNY PENNY, I'M CALLING

You may remember the old children's book, *Henny Penny, the Sky is Falling*, with characters Chicken Little and Goosey Loosey. To those of you not as old as I am, I will give you a quick synopsis. Everyone lost confidence in Chicken Little because he had yelled, "Henny Penny, the sky is falling," too many times without it happening. He felt an acorn falling from the trees and thought the sky was falling! Finally, one day it really was falling and no one believed him. Now, what does this have to do with my life? It's almost too embarrassing to tell but here goes!

Those who know me know that I listen to the police scanner nearly 24/7. My dad was a police officer and I grew up listening to a scanner. So, rather than spending time watching TV, I've listened to the Dallas police "calls" since I was a child. I was listening and heard the JFK assassination broadcast in November of 1963, a day in Dallas history never to be forgotten.

Back to *Henny Penny*. I was preparing to go to my job at the International Christian Center and my police scanner was broadcasting various calls, as usual. All of a sudden I heard horrible events being described via the transmitter such as, "Seventy-five people are trapped underneath a building at 4639 Maple Avenue." "All pilots at Love Field have been advised to abandon their aircraft." "One hundred fifty people remain unaccounted for at 6503 West Mockingbird Lane." Now, all of these addresses happened to be around Dallas' local airport, Love Field.

After just a few minutes I determined from their conversation that Dallas was experiencing a tornado, (Dallas does lie in a path which gets some pretty wicked weather) and ambulances were being dispatched in all

directions to care for the victims. I was really horrified. I ran into the kitchen where my housekeeper was going about her morning chores and told her these horrible events were taking place. As she was the mother of a young boy, she immediately grabbed the phone and called her babysitter to be sure they were okay. Her call was met with absolute amazement, as there was not a cloud in the sky where they were. Assured that her child was okay, she continued calling family members, who in turn called family and friends to warn them of impending danger. The calls just mushroomed. I, too, began doing my "Boy Scout honor" by calling friends and family with the same message, "Dallas is having a dangerous tornado which is on the ground near Love Field, moving northeast."

One of my friends whom I called placed a call to her husband who was doing computer work near Love Field. He, too, was shocked as he could not see anything unusual by looking out the window of the tall office building he was in. He put word out among the hundreds of employees working in the high rise building. One of the ladies I called in turn called her sister who worked in a large office in a downtown Dallas skyscraper and told her of the "tornado."

By this time, my housekeeper was outside on the driveway looking up at the sky. She was Catholic and was continually making the sign of the cross over her body. She stopped when she saw me approaching and said, "Mrs. Morgan, I don't see any clouds in the sky." I didn't either, as a matter of fact. All I knew was what I was hearing from the police scanner. My few calls probably affected hundreds of Dallasites in a few minutes. As sad as it is, in this day frantic situations such as these seem to loom on the horizon with terrorist attacks, etc., and might not come as too much of a surprise. But in 1977 society lived in a much "calmer and gentler" world than we have today. Very soon my urgent call to try and save others from harm's way became the joke for many ears to hear. By now you are wondering what actually happened, right?

Leaving my housekeeper confused and frightened in the alley behind my home, I went back into the house only to hear the police dispatcher repeat several times, "Mock alert over ... mock alert over ... mock alert over."

All of the reports I had heard were actually the text being transmitted. However, I failed to hear the beginning of the transmission announcing that it was only a practice drill for the police and emergency services of Dallas.

Everyone had a big laugh and heaved a sigh of relief when it was all over. My real concern is that should I ever call them with a real emergency message, will they believe me or will they think it's a Henny Penny call?

A NEW MINK COAT

God blessed me with a dear friend in childhood, Norma Norman. Today she is Dr. Norma Norman David. Our friendship began long ago, in 1951, as fifth-graders in elementary school. Later we finished junior high and high school together and then went on to become roommates at TCU during our college years. As I wrote in another chapter, it was Norma who influenced me to go to college. Eventually she was maid of honor in my wedding. I could write a book on the many fun adventures we have had through life. To this day she and I find ourselves giggling like school girls, especially when we get to spend a day going to garage sales. In spite of all the fun and games, she received her Ph.D. She and her dear husband, the late Dr. Bill David, have made large contributions in the field of Special Education and juvenile diabetes. Bill finished his book, *Converging Hope*, before his homegoing on October 26, 2008. What good friends, along with Norma's mother, Virginia, they have been to me for over sixty-two years.

Several years ago Norma and Bill were my houseguests in Dallas. They were celebrating their thirtieth wedding anniversary and we had an exciting evening planned. As they were spending the entire weekend, I invited them to go to church with me. "Sure," they replied. So off we went on Sunday morning to Gates of Glory, where I attended services.

We received an excellent message that morning through my Spirit-filled pastor, Brother Howard Richardson. The service was a bit different from the ones that Norma and Bill were accustomed to, as they were members of the Disciples of Christ, a fine church in their hometown. At the end

of the service, Brother Howard gave an altar call and invited anyone who needed prayer to come forward. I had no real urgent needs that I was aware of, but in my heart I wanted God to bless Norma, so I went to the altar in her behalf. The prayer I prayed was a very simple one. "Lord, please bless Norma in a special way so she will see Your miracle-working power and know that You are alive." I told no one of my request. After the service we all went our merry ways.

The next day, Monday, I found myself in a fur shop with friends. The owner happened to be a friend of mine, so we chatted for a while. Then he said, "You know, Geri, I have a full-length mink coat that you need to try on." Me in a full-length mink coat? I put it on and, of course, I felt like a movie star! As I stood looking in the mirror admiring this gorgeous coat, my mind quickly changed and I envisioned Norma in a fur coat. In my heart I wanted her to have one to enjoy. We had dreams like this when we were silly teenagers, but here we were, both approaching sixty years of age and she still had not gotten the coat of her dreams!

As I stood there looking in the mirror the second time, thinking these thoughts, I asked my friend, the furrier, if he ever had any great sales on mink coats that I could tell my friend about. I was thinking in my mind that if it was a really terrific sale, maybe I could "make some kind of deal" and purchase one as a gift for Norma. I just wanted her to have the joy of owning one.

Suddenly the furrier said to me, "Is she a good friend of yours?" I replied, "Yes." He said, "A good friend?" I replied, "Yes." Then he said, "Well, if you will bring her in, I will give her a fur coat." I stood amazed! Now remember the little, simple prayer that I had prayed the day before, "Lord, please bless Norma in a special way." Coincidence? Not in my book. God knew the desires of Norma's heart and chose that way to show His love for her. By the way, I am also the owner of a full-length coat purchased at one-half of the original price. Praise the Lord! God is so sweet to us. Since then I've had a lot of friends jokingly ask me to do the same thing for them, as they, too, would love to receive a mink coat. That's not the way it works. God is the Blessor! Norma got a good and perfect gift from her Father.



Geri and Norma, childhood friends since 1952



Virginia Norman (Norma's mother), Dr. Norma David in her new mink coat, and Geri

8 — Section 1 The Dallas Morning News Monday, September 8, 1958

ESPIONAGE SYSTEM

Nervy Teen-Agers Get Host of Autographs

What does it take to garner the scribbled signatures of 49 entertainment notables?

Two Dallas teen-agers say they employ a fountain pen that won't stall at critical signing moments, enough nerve to approach a star without stuttering and an espionage system comparable to the Central Intelligence Agency.

"My boy friend thinks I'm crazy, but he's given up trying to jump me," said Geri Sue Hudson, 18, of 6309 Blue Valley Lane.

She and Norma Norman, 17, of 4913 Mission, both June graduates of North Dallas High School, have posed upon a host of Dallas visitors in the last five years, including Marie Wilson, Tony Curtis, Pat Boone and George L. Hearn.

Sometimes they don't stop with an autograph.

"We got an empty champagne bottle after Jayne Mansfield and Mickey Hargitz had their wed-

ding reception in Dallas," Norma said.

And Norma "obtained" a costume tag from Tony Dexter's wardrobe when he was playing in "The King and I" at the Fair Park this summer.

This is the modish tapered, in the words of Geri:

"We watch the papers. Tony Zogel (News amusements columnist) gives us lots of tips. Too, State Fair Musicals stars usually stay at The Roneydough. If they're there, we'll get hold of them."

"Sometimes we just have to go somewhere and wait. We waited at Love Field from 11:30 to 6:00 to 'get' Ricky Nelson."

"When Pat Boone was here for the Church of Christ religious rally this summer, we were the first ones there except for the justice. We waited from 10:30 in the morning until the rally ended late in the afternoon for his autograph (Pat Boone's, not the justice's)."

The happiest of all hunting grounds is backstage at Fair Park Auditorium during a musical.

One backstage prize: A huge cartooned star from the dressing room door of Ann Rogers, "My Fair Lady" star last summer.

There's one trade secret the autograph hounds won't share. When "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes" played here this summer, they had front row seats every performance except three—and that's in two weeks.

"We can't tell everything, or we'll get it," Geri asked.



—Dallas News Staff Photo

Geri Sue Hudson

and Norma Norman display autographs.

Geri and Norma as teenagers

NOT A SPARROW FALLS

I had two very dear friends, an elderly couple, I used to fish with at White Rock Lake near my home in Dallas. Before Angie was born, I would pack a little picnic lunch and meet them and a group of retired people who regularly fished at the lake. After a day of fishing, I would return home and cook dinner for my husband before he came home from work. This was fun. My two friends were both in very frail health, living on their meager Social Security checks. They had no children to devote their attention to, so instead they turned their affection toward God's little feathered ones. They just adored birds.

A well-known Dallas realtor and his family were leaving Dallas and moving to Los Angeles. They had a beautiful parrot and an ornate cage but just could not transport the bird to California. Hearing that they were going to leave the bird behind, somebody told the family about Ruby and Copeland, my bird-loving friends. After a couple of phone calls, it was decided that they would adopt the family pet. Before leaving, the realtor gave them the bird along with its very expensive cage and supplies. They were elated! Now they not only had a beautiful bird, but one that could actually talk! Until now they had only little parakeets that could say a few cute little words. God blessed them with this sweet, priceless gift. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17). That's what this little bird was to them. They would never have been able to purchase such an expensive bird. They enjoyed this bird for many years but as we know, our pets don't live forever, even though parrots usually do have long lives.

After several years Penny, the parrot, died, leaving this couple just brokenhearted. Not too many days passed and as they sat grieving at their kitchen table, much to their amazement, in a small bush outside their window sat a beautiful parrot. They could hardly believe their eyes. As both of them were crippled, they quickly called one of the neighborhood boys in hopes he would be able to capture the bird. Sure enough, he was able to catch it. Since their first bird's name was Penny, they named the

new one “Copper” (copper penny). Copper moved into his beautiful new home already waiting for him.

Their first little bird brought more happiness to them than money ever could have. Their broken hearts were suddenly healed by the arrival of the second bird. Our Father knew exactly where to send that sweet little bird. The bird needed them and they needed the bird. He gave them the desire of their heart. Do you believe it? I sure do! Cute Copper outlived both of them. Had I not been traveling overseas so much, Copper would have come to live with me after they died.

One hilarious thing happened with Penny, the original bird. As I have mentioned, I’ve listened to the police scanner all of my life. In Dallas that can be quite exciting. One evening I came home and turned on the police scanner to hear them reporting Ruby and Copeland’s address. The dispatcher was repeating, “A woman screaming for help.” I recognized their address and was concerned because of Ruby’s frail condition. I immediately called them and when Ruby answered the phone, explained, “They have just said over the police radio that a lady is screaming for help at your apartment.” She said, “Everything is fine! Copeland and I have been gone all day and we left Penny at home alone. She got so upset with us that she has been hollering, ‘Help me! Help me! Help me,’ all day long. Somebody heard her and thought it was a woman’s voice, so they called the police. The police are here now. I can’t talk to you on the phone, Geri. I’ve got to get off and explain to them what is going on.” What a little character Penny was!

I believe our Father loves all of His creation, which includes the animal kingdom. If He doesn’t, then why do I have such a love and concern for them? As we know, we are made in His image. “So God created man in his own image ...” (Genesis 1:27). Through my seventy-four years, I think I have rescued over a hundred dogs. As a teenager I used to go to the Dallas dog pound (now it’s called the animal shelter!) where they allowed you to take four dogs at one time. In the ’50s, there were no laws about adoption, neutering, vaccines, and certainly no fees for adopting them. So I would load them into my little ’52 Chevy, take them home, bathe them, put a red ribbon around their necks, and then find homes for them. I supplied dogs

to nearly everybody I knew and I think my friends hated to see me coming! But we did rescue some that otherwise would have been euthanized and they provided some loving, warm times for their owners.

Because of my compassion for the doggies, Ms. Skyler, head of the animal rescue (pre-SPCA days) in Dallas, wanted me to take her place. She had seen my compassion for animals and decided that I would make an excellent replacement for her when she retired. How I would have loved to do this, but I was expecting our first baby in January of 1964 and, of course, motherhood took first place in my life.

THE WATCH FROM JESUS

I want to share this story because I think it is phenomenal. A Spirit-filled friend in Dallas and her husband were married many years before his death. They never had children, so the two of them shared an unusually close bond. Sadly, he passed away and one of the things she treasured most was an engraved watch he had given to her. She especially treasured the watch because it was a tangible keepsake that she had left of her memories of him.

After a shopping trip to downtown Dallas one afternoon, she returned home to discover her watch was gone. She had lost it somewhere downtown. Of course, she went back and tried to find it, but to no avail. She even advertised in the Dallas paper, but got no response. She was just devastated.

A couple of years went by and she was reading a heart-touching story in the newspaper about a widow with several children. It was Christmastime and the children were going to have a very bleak holiday. My friend said the Holy Spirit had spoken to her heart to share a small amount of money with this lady. She got the address out of the newspaper, put the money in an envelope, and sent it off to her. She never heard anything from the newspaper and didn't really expect to hear anything from the woman.

A year later at Christmas she received a call from a lady who identified herself as the woman in Midland, Texas, who had received the money. She was calling to thank my friend for what she had done. The money had

helped give her children a good Christmas. The lady said she was going to be in Dallas and although she still didn't have much money, she wanted to take my friend out for lunch in appreciation for what she had done for her children.

They met for lunch and enjoyed a pleasant conversation. The lady began to share a story about being in Dallas several years before that. She said, "You know, I was in downtown Dallas and I found a watch. You were so very kind to us and I want to thank you by giving this watch to you." My friend said she knew it was going to be her watch, the one she had lost. Sure enough, it was the watch from her endearing husband with the engraving still on it. An amazing story!

What a miracle God did for my sweet friend. She was faithful to follow the Holy Spirit in her giving. Some might call it a coincidence. I call it an unusually good miracle from the Lord Jesus Christ!

A PRETTY GOOD SWAP

Several years ago in Hyannis Port, my mother and I stopped one afternoon at a yard sale. As we went up the steps, I saw a scrapbook containing some plastic folders just full of foreign currency. I picked it up and my mom said, "Oh, honey, throw that down. That's just more stuff for you to have to carry back to Texas." Keep in mind that we were up in Massachusetts. So, I threw it back down on the ground and shopped some more. However, before we left, thank goodness, I picked it up again and told my mom, "I'm going to get this." I paid three dollars for it.

Later that summer I came back to Dallas and brought the three-dollar scrapbook with me. I tried to give it to Angie, but she didn't want it. I had to go to Dallas/Fort Worth Airport for something and decided to take some of this money to the foreign currency exchange at the airport. I took seven of the bills with me, hoping to exchange the money. The man looked at them, got his books out and started pitching U.S. hundred dollar bills out to me. It was a lot of money, \$402.14. He kept seventy or eighty dollars for the exchange. I think that was a pretty good return on the three

dollars that I had invested at the Massachusetts yard sale. What a surprise blessing from God.

A SMALL WORLD

In 1966, when little Angie was two years old, her dad and I decided we could now take her on a nice vacation. She was out of diapers, so it would finally be a nice time to travel. We made reservations in Estes Park, Colorado, at "The Craggs," a very elegant hotel of yesteryear.

When we arrived, we found that the hotel assigned the guests to different tables in the lovely old dining room. We were assigned to a table with a middle-aged lady, Juanita Blackburn, and her teenage son, Howard. Mr. Blackburn had stayed at home because of his job. We ate each meal with them for about ten days and they were such interesting people that we really enjoyed their company. They were from Dallas and when we compared notes, they thought they recognized me from some of the Dallas restaurants where I had played the organ. They were music lovers, so we just hit it off great. They were very cordial people, lots of fun, and we became such good friends during the short time we were together that our friendship has lasted over forty-seven years now.

Of course, when I got back to Dallas from Colorado I told my parents about the lovely people we had met. I wanted them to meet our new friends and I mentioned that they had invited us to dinner and a musical, *West Side Story*, at the First Methodist Church. My mom and dad called that big church the "First Church" and said, "Well, we're going down there to see the show that night, also. We're going to be with friends." I hoped we could meet up and they could meet the Blackburns.

The night of the musical we were already seated when I saw my mom, dad, and their friends arrive. I was so excited for everyone to meet and I brought my parents over for introductions. Juanita Blackburn's face expressed shock and her mouth fell open. My father's did, too. Why? Well, they explained that they had been sweethearts in college. They had dated when they were students at North Texas State University.


So, it is indeed a small world. A few laughs later, my parents renewed an old friendship with Mr. and Mrs. Blackburn. It was such fun! Sadly, all four of them are gone now. The city of Forney, Texas, named an elementary school after Juanita a few years ago. She was an outstanding teacher there for many years and Mr. Blackburn was Mayor of Forney at one time. But today Howard and I share a fun relationship. For years I've teased him, "You are almost my brother."



Chapter 11

My Stories II

GIVE AND IT SHALL BE GIVEN UNTO YOU

n our television program we interviewed a lady from California who shared such a sweet, unbelievable story of something special that God had done in her life. She told about having a special, small decorative dish that she was so proud of. It was her favorite material possession. The Holy Spirit told her to give it to some Christian friends and she really didn't want to give away her prized possession. But she thought, "Oh, okay. I'll just go get another one. No problem!"

So she gave away the dish at the direction of the Holy Spirit, thinking replacing it would be easy. Several weeks went by and she decided to pick up another one at the establishment where she had bought the first one. They didn't carry them any longer, so she began to search in gift shops all over Southern California. She searched for several years and couldn't find it anywhere so even though she was disappointed, she was glad she had been obedient to the Holy Spirit. She now had no hope of ever replacing it. It just didn't work out the way she had planned.

Several months later after she had completely given up trying to find the dish, she and her husband had houseguests arrive from the East Coast. After staying a week or so, they handed her a little wrapped gift as a thank you for being such a gracious hostess for the week. She thanked them and they left.

She unwrapped her little gift and discovered the exact beautiful dish she had given away. The Lord had brought it by the hands of her friends from the other side of the United States and put it back into her hands. I think that is a marvelous story. And certainly it was the fulfillment of the Word, "Give, and it shall be given unto you: good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom" (Luke 6:38).

THE SKI LESSON

On a ski trip to Colorado one winter, God used a very simple illustration to teach me some great wisdom. You know, Jesus taught by simple illustrations when He instructed the people.

In my younger years I took an annual ski trip to Aspen, Colorado. I always looked forward to seeing the beauty of the snow-covered mountains and experiencing the excitement found in the quaint little village.

In my zeal to ski, many times I found myself on the black slopes that required a lot more skill than I possessed! Anyone who skis knows that the ski trails are plainly marked so that a beginner or intermediate will not find himself on an expert slope where he is not qualified! I read the signs, so that was not my problem. Instead, my problem came when I decided to join friends who were able to ski the more difficult slopes and I wanted to ski with them. So, up I went on the ski lift to the top of the mountain!

The ride up took no effort; however, at the top I looked down and the village was so far away that it seemed it would fit into the palm of my hand. Oh, mercy! Straight down the mountain, several miles of icy moguls lay between me and my destination! And it was up to me to get my body back to civilization. I took one look and knew I was in big trouble. I could ski a little but this was "way over my head." Of course, I prayed and God gave me wisdom and instruction! As long as I kept my eyes directly on the snowy path in front of me, I could traverse in a zigzag pattern downward a little at a time. So, back and forth I went, looking only in front of me instead of at the huge task of reaching the village at the bottom of a very, very difficult ski slope.

Do you want to know the lesson I learned? First, I learned never to ignore warning signs posted along our way. They are placed there for a reason! I also learned an important lesson that greatly impacted my life and enabled me to do some things in life that I probably never would have tried or thought possible. I learned not to look at the insurmountable obstacle (skiing to the village at the bottom of the slope) but simply perform the tasks placed in my hand for that day, things right in front of me. By continuing to do things that way and not allowing my mind or eyes to see the impossibility or difficulty, pretty soon I had accomplished my goal (reached the village *alive*).

Because of these valuable lessons, as complete novices we built a five million-watt television station, listening to His voice and following Him one day at a time. Also our Glory Eye Center in Beijing, China, was accomplished that same way. Many, many obstacles lay in our path before Glory Eye Center was up and running, providing good eye care and surgery for dear people, and free care to those who have no means. "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it" (1 Thessalonians 5:24).

SONGS FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT

In 1978 the Holy Spirit spoke to me through a secular song. We were being led by the Spirit to the Middle East, which included a trip to Cairo, Egypt, and Jerusalem. This was my first trip to the Holy City, which I like to think of as "God's hometown." The morning of our departure from Dallas, we stopped at a local pancake house for an early breakfast before the long trip across the Atlantic. As we sat there I began listening to the song coming through the speaker at our booth. I believe the title of the song is, "You Belong to Me." The only words I heard that day, loud and clear, were, "See the pyramids along the Nile, Watch the sun rise on a tropic isle, Just remember, darling, all the while, *You belong to me.*" It was our confirmation that He was sending us on our first mission overseas and truly our lives were His. We were learning to be led by the Spirit. He was sending us along the Nile River! I don't remember ever hearing that song since that morning years ago. Coincidence? For me it wasn't.

Another time our ministry group was in Xian, China. The group was going to tour the famous underground terra cotta soldiers during the afternoon but I decided to go back to the hotel to rest. In the quietness, I looked out the window at the great mass of humanity living in Xian and began to pray for them. Suddenly the Lord spoke to me, confirming my call to the Chinese people. It was thrilling to hear the voice of the Lord solidify once more what we had long believed to be true.

When three of the team returned to the hotel, I was still standing by the window. Sister Ruth Heflin sat down on the arm of a chair nearby and began singing a little song:

Oh, come and go with me
To my little corner of the world.
Stay awhile with me
In my little corner of the world.
I always knew
I'd find someone like you.
So welcome to
My little corner of the world.

And if you care to stay
In my little corner of the world,
Then we could hide away
In my little corner of the world.
You'd soon forget
There's any other place.
So welcome to
My little corner of the world.

None of the group knew what the Lord had been telling me that day, but it was essentially the same message as the words to this song. Ruth, flowing in the Holy Ghost as usual, had just sung a confirmation from the heart of God to me. I was now in tears.

Ruth used to love the old song, "Far Away Places," a secular song from the '40s. The lyrics are, "Those far away places with the strange sounding names, far away over the sea. Those far away places with those strange sounding names, are calling, calling me." That song spoke to her heart, as she ministered in every country in the world except North Korea and Albania before her homegoing in September, 2000. God's voice speaks to our hearts however He chooses and then He gives us ears to hear what the Spirit is saying to us.

PRACTICE FOR A MATTRESS

Believing God for a mattress was my first experience using my faith. That's right, a mattress, the kind you sleep on. In the early '70s I was on the Board of Directors of a faith ministry and worked hands-on with them. It was a home for young women with various problems (drugs, alcohol, delinquents, runaways, etc.). We were in the process of preparing a large home to accommodate the many girls the courts were sending to us and things were coming together nicely.

One Friday we received word that a sweet, elderly lady would be arriving by bus that same afternoon from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, to become housekeeper for the facility. This was indeed an answer to our prayers except for one problem: We had no bed for her to sleep on, as all the beds were filled.

The administrator, a woman of great faith, told me that one of my jobs for that day was to believe God for a mattress for the new housekeeper! It was a faith ministry and there was absolutely no money in the bank. So, we believed God for everything, believed Him to supply all our needs.

I had never had to trust God in this way, but I did my best. I just prayed and prayed and prayed because it was my job that day to believe for the housekeeper's bed. I knew the kind soul had to have a place to lay her body after her long bus trip to Dallas. Surely she would be extremely tired from several days' travel.

Lunchtime came and went and we still had no mattress. I have to admit, I was beginning to get a little shaky over this, my first "faith" assignment.

About mid-afternoon there was a knock at the door and when I answered, I found a middle-aged man standing on the porch. Before I could say much, he explained, "I'm a mailman and I've heard all about this work. While I was on my route delivering mail this morning, the Holy Spirit spoke to me and said to buy a mattress for this home, so here is the money to purchase one." Keep in mind that this was my first experience with asking and believing for a miracle. I nearly fell off the porch. I was learning that I could ask in faith and believe God to provide our need. He used a simple little mattress to begin teaching me about the faith walk. "But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty" (1 Corinthians 1:27).

Many years later when we had the TV station, our faith had to bring in millions of dollars. He never failed us, not one time. Praise God we always had our needs met. I began learning how to believe God from that first stressful day I practiced on the mattress.

GERI'S NOTE TO TAMMY FAYE

Tammy Faye Bakker Messner was misunderstood by many people. She was a controversial figure, known for her heavy makeup and false eyelashes, among other things. However, she was an anointed woman of God and a strong contender for the gospel. She never gave up on God in spite of the lemons life held for her. The Holy Spirit used her greatly and He used her in my own life through the years. I like what she used to say about people, "We're all made of the same old dirt; no one is any better than any other."

(The following is part of a letter that I sent to Tammy Faye through her personal assistant on May 11, 2004. She had begun her long battle with cancer.)

"I am recovering nicely from dialysis and the kidney transplant. Thank God, the Lord has extended my life so I can accomplish His will with the added years. Your words (spoken in the Holy Spirit) have given strength to me through the years, enabling me

to accomplish a lot of the undertakings the Lord has called me to. I appreciate you so very much for just being you. I see His LOVE in you probably more so than any other human being I've ever been witness to."

Oh, that we could all be as loving as the Lord so that when people look at us, they would see Jesus and His love.

In answer to my note, she wrote, in part, "Your words uplifted me during a rough day in the doctor's office."

Tammy Faye Bakker Messner went to heaven on July 20, 2007.

SHIPWRECK IN TURKEY

While I was traveling via ship through the Greek Isles in the Mediterranean Sea, we had the opportunity to visit Ephesus. What a thrill! I also visited Cairo, Egypt, and saw King Tut's tomb. I anticipated meeting my old friend from my TCU college days, Mary Hanna, who lives in Amman, Jordan. I so hoped that she would be able to meet me in Istanbul, Turkey. I had not seen her in seventeen years, so "docking" was foremost in my mind that morning as we made our way to breakfast in the beautiful dining room of the ship. We enjoyed a delicious breakfast, expecting to dock in Istanbul later in the morning.

As we munched on the breakfast delicacies, a horrendous bump to the ship knocked things out of place on the table. As everyone gasped and tried to comprehend what had just happened, there was another huge bump to the ship, causing it to shake violently. At this point, the waiters all threw down their food-filled trays and people began falling. Bedlam set in very quickly and many men fell over their wives to protect them. My first thought was that we had arrived in Istanbul and had hit the dock too hard! I looked out the porthole just in time to see another ship traveling in our same direction, no further than ten feet away from us. We had been hit by a Russian freighter, causing structural damage to the front of our ship. Wow! It was scary, very scary!

The accident was caused by fog so thick that you could not see your hand in front of your face. The Russian ship did not see us and hit us perpendicularly, trying at the last minute to turn. In turning, it slammed side-to-side, causing the second bump we felt. Our ship was quickly checked and the decision was made for us to immediately head for Istanbul! We were thrilled to be on dry land once again. While the ship sat in dry dock a couple of extra days until repairs could be made, we got to leisurely visit the city. We saw the famous Blue Mosque and had a bit of time with the people of that famous city. By the way, my friend Mary was not there to meet us, but instead met us in Jordan.

So, God saved us once again. One year later, this same type of accident happened to another cruise ship in the same exact location. These people were not so fortunate, however. The huge ship went down, taking about six hundred lives with it!

THE GATEKEEPER'S KEY

A very special thing happened for me in 1977. I was planning a vacation trip to Los Angeles, California, always a fun place to visit. I was looking forward to the trip but not for the purpose of visiting Disneyland, Knott's Berry Farm, or even Hollywood. No, more than anything, I wanted to go to Forest Lawn Cemetery and visit the gravesite of Kathryn Kuhlman, the renowned evangelist who passed away on February 20, 1976. You may wonder why that was so important to me. Because the Holy Spirit touched my life through her in such a profound way that she was and will always be most special in my heart.

As the time came closer for my trip, people began asking me what I was planning to do in California. My reply was always, "I am going to visit Ms. Kuhlman's grave," and then I would add Disneyland and all the other things I was planning to see. I'm sure my first answer must have seemed quite strange to many, yet it was the deepest desire of my heart. Only my Father in heaven knew what it meant to me.

Finally we arrived in California, got a rental car, and headed for Forest Lawn Cemetery. The cemetery covers hundreds of acres and you must pass

through a guardhouse to even get onto the premises. When we inquired about the location of Kathryn Kuhlman's grave, we were informed very quickly that that information was strictly confidential.

My heart sank a little but I was determined to find her burial site. We continued on through the gate, as I was not going to be discouraged. We parked the car and began walking through literally thousands of gravesites, looking at each marker in hopes of finding hers. After several hours of wandering around, it became clear that it was a futile search.

Still determined, I asked other cemetery employees the location of her grave. One man pointed his finger, saying, "Her grave is in that direction but no one is allowed in there." Now at least I knew which direction to look in so we drove a little farther and parked the car. I was the only visitor walking around on the grounds that afternoon.

Out of the corner of my eye I saw a man approaching. Since I was the only person there, I knew he had to be coming to speak to me. Sure enough, he came over and introduced himself as the caretaker.

"May I help you?" he asked.

"Yes," I told him, "Can you help me find Kathryn Kuhlman's gravesite?"

"Oh, no one is allowed in that area," he answered. He went on to say that thousands of people had tried to get in at the time of her funeral but her family members were not even allowed inside to visit. Typically, in keeping with her life, she never wanted to be seen or acclaimed in the eyes of men. She wanted her life only to reflect Jesus Christ so she chose to have a very simple gravesite away from the glare of the world.

This man continued to talk to me and then he quickly said, "Come with me," as we walked toward a brick-walled garden. It had a large door on one side and as we approached it, he took out a big key ring and unlocked the door. I watched in astonishment as it appeared he was taking me to her grave. As I walked through this door with the

man, the Holy Spirit said, "I open doors that no man can open and I make a way where there seems to be none." My spirit was really leaping inside of me as he took me through the garden to the place where she was buried.

God had given me the desire of my heart, and also honored the confession I had been saying for a full year: "When I get to California I will visit Ms. Kuhlman's grave." Through Ms. Kuhlman I was able to see what the Holy Spirit can do with a yielded vessel, a person who is willing to die to the flesh, allowing Jesus to work through the body. "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us" (2 Corinthians 4:7). She was truly an inspiration to millions of people. The inscription on her grave marker read simply, "Kathryn Kuhlman. I believe in miracles because I believe in God." The caretaker reached down and picked a rose from the beautiful bouquet of red roses on her grave and handed it to me. Remember, roses are very special to me since the Holy Spirit began using them to teach me in the early '70s. Perhaps they are kind of like God's autograph to me.

As I wrote in the Introduction, I think I felt a bit like Mary when she visited her beloved Master's tomb and found it empty. She began to speak with a Man whom she thought to be the gardener, until her eyes were opened and she recognized Him to be her beloved Lord. I believe I had a similar experience. My beloved Lord opened the door for me that day, even though His appearance was that of a cemetery caretaker. I still have the rose he handed to me all those years ago.

THE STRANGEST OCCURRENCE IN MY LIFE

The strangest thing that ever happened in my life began in 1977 and ended in 1999, twenty-two years later. I was a passenger in a car with a friend driving up the East Coast. It was a dismal, rainy afternoon and a dense fog had settled in. This made driving difficult, especially since we didn't know where we were. We had gotten through the congested traffic of New York City all right and had reservations at a motel in Mystic, Connecticut, but just where was that?

Since I am no help reading maps, my friend suggested that when we stopped at the next red light, I should roll down my window and ask the person in the next lane if he could help direct us to our destination. I will never forget what happened next. An MG sports car driven by a very handsome naval officer in a white uniform with gold braid came alongside. He was so impressive that I was embarrassed to have to speak to him, but we desperately needed some direction from a local person. I had been attempting to read the map and knew that we were either in or near Groton, Connecticut.

Since I had never been to Groton, much less heard of it, I had no idea how to correctly pronounce it. My full Texas accent made it sound something like "Graw-tahn." I quickly rolled down the window intending to say to this officer, "Sir, are we in Groton?" However, I had gotten my tongue twisted and the first word of my sentence, "Sir," and the last syllable, "ton" came out together. Afraid that the light would change, I hurriedly hollered out, "Sirton." My ears heard in disbelief what my mouth had just said and I was so embarrassed! Without looking my way or blinking an eye, the man pressed his foot on the gas and sped off as soon as the light turned green.

"Sirton?" I had made such an idiot of myself, and my friend was laughing uncontrollably at the whole scenario. That funny little story has been all over the world, bringing giggles to a lot of people. Imagine hollering out that window, "Sirton?" to some handsome naval officer sitting next to me in a nice sports car about two feet from my window. I was too embarrassed for words.

Fast forward to 1999 for the amazing end to this story. A friend in Dallas called to say that she was having a garage sale and knowing how much I enjoyed them, she invited me to come by and take a look. I didn't really need anything, but it had been quite a while since I had seen her, so I drove over early on Saturday morning. My friend introduced me to two ladies and a man, residents of the apartment who were also involved with the sale. We stood around and chatted for a few minutes and then the man looked at me kind of strangely and asked if I had ever driven up the East Coast,

especially in Connecticut, along the Atlantic coastline. I kind of shrugged off his question and he repeated it. I told him that, indeed, I made the motor trip from Texas to Massachusetts several times each year, driving through Connecticut en route to my home in Hyannis Port.

“I knew it! Do you remember rolling down your car window and hollering at a naval officer in a little MG convertible?” Oh, no! This could not be “Sirton.” You guessed it. I had met the man that I had made such a fool of myself with at that stoplight in Groton, Connecticut, in 1977.

All the people at the garage sale just stood in amazement when they overheard our conversation. Twenty-two years later our paths had crossed again, this time in Dallas. He had moved to Dallas in the '80s and was living in that very apartment complex and helping my friend with the sale.

In amazement I asked, “How in the world did you remember me?” The years had completely changed both of our appearances. He answered, “The moment you began speaking, I recognized your voice.” He laughingly said that I had scared him so badly with those strange words that I had hollered at him that he had never forgotten the scene or my voice. Now, in all of my seventy-four years, I think that is the ultimate of strange occurrences. “Sirton” and I are now friends and our paths cross fairly often. If he calls on the phone he always says, “Hey, Geri, this is Sirton.”

Why would I put this in my book? Well, you must admit it's not a story you will ever find or read anywhere else ... just another true adventure in my book of life.

MANDATE TO LIQUIDATE

In early 1990 God began to speak to me in a most unusual way. At that point in life I had almost anything that money could buy, including two large houses, one in Dallas and one in Hyannis Port, Massachusetts, by the Kennedy Compound. I had a Rolls-Royce, a stretch limo, too many cars, a motorhome, a golf cart, six motor scooters and three boats—a fishing boat, a ski boat, and a houseboat. I really was appreciative of these material

blessings and I believe God blessed me with them. I do not boast of these things. However, very sweetly and very gently, He told me to liquidate. That was a wonderful word for me, as the relinquishing of all these things was a real blessing. The responsibility and upkeep was becoming just too time-consuming. So I began the hard task of getting rid of a lot of stuff! It took me over four years to get that accomplished and it was a huge job. I had to find homes for my miniature horse and three large dogs, which was my biggest heartache, because I loved my pets. But God said, "Liquidate."

Afterwards I moved into a high-rise condo. The only possession that I really wanted to keep was "Shalom" ("peace" in Hebrew), my houseboat. I had had this boat for many years and it was my getaway. I dearly loved going to it on the weekends, where I could cuddle up on the sofa, get away from the phone (before cell phones) and everything else and just sleep for hours as the boat rocked away on the lake. The rocking lulled me to sleep and I loved it. I also enjoyed fishing and the many parties I gave. Everyone seemed to enjoy "Shalom."

I had no trouble disposing of the ski boat and the fishing boat, which was named Knot Yacht. (It was far from being a yacht, hence the name "Knot Yacht"—not a yacht). But, oh, how I loved my houseboat! I asked for a sign from God that He really meant what He had told me. Have you ever done that? God is so patient with us. Surely I could keep my houseboat!

Again, truly seeking His perfect will in the matter, I opened the Bible and my eyes fell on, "And they straightway left their nets [and boat], and followed him" (Matthew 4:20). Wow! There was my answer in black and white, right before my eyes. Of course, the houseboat was history. That very day it went on the market. Little did I know at that time that much of my time in the future would be spent in China, on the other side of the world, far away from my houseboat. God always knows best. Hallelujah!



Houseboat (They immediately left their boats and followed Him)

A PERFECT HOME OFF THE LAND

I received confirmation from the Bible one other time. I was seeking God's perfect will about where I should live, as I was moving from both of my homes and I needed a place to sleep. After searching for a smaller home for many months with a Realtor, I began looking at high-rise condos. I had never lived in a building, much less a tall one. I was accustomed to having a yard, weeds, garage, trash cans, and all of the things that home ownership provides. I finally had to decide between a nice home near the Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport, many miles from Dallas, and a condo in a twenty-two story building near downtown Dallas. The bank, doing its job, was pushing hard for me to make my decision between the two and finally it came down to thirty minutes before I had to sign one contract or the other. The bank wanted an answer and I was trying hard to know the perfect will of God and pick the perfect one. I just did not know which one.

The Word says, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally" (James 1:5). Again I opened the Bible and my eyes fell on part of the Scripture that says, "And they will go up from the land" (Hosea 1:11, NAS). From my understanding, I believe that God led me to the condo "up off the land," many floors above the ground. Life in the condo was marvelous for me.

Many advantages came as a result of the move twenty-two years ago. God's wisdom made that perfect choice for me long before my kidney transplant. My mom moved into a retirement center nearby where she lived for many years. What good times we could share because she lived so near my home. I thank God for His faithfulness and wisdom.

MY FATHER'S HAT

One afternoon I ran into a friend I had not seen in over twenty years when we had attended the same church. We were both so surprised and, of course, tried our best to catch up on all the happenings during the past twenty years in a short fifteen minutes. As you know, that's just impossible to do.

We ran into each other at the Salvation Army store, which happens to be one of my favorite places to shop for bargains. You never know what you'll find. We found ourselves comfortable chairs in the furniture department and had a wonderful time of fellowship right in the midst of the store full of shoppers.

My friend is just about my age and has four grown children. She told me she had been a foster parent for years, as she really loves little ones, especially those in need. Then, in spite of her age, she had adopted three little children, whose ages were three, five, and seven. What a joy they were to her as she prayed for strength, patience, and energy to keep up with them! And, oh, how she loved them! She is not a wealthy lady by any means, so taking in three little ones put a real strain on her meager pocketbook. However, as she sat with tears in her eyes, she said, "I had to take them or they would have split up my babies." The three children were a brother and his two sisters, all born to the same parents, and my friend had cared for all of them since they were infants. Her God-given motherly love for them was overwhelmed by the thought that they would be split up from the only real family they would ever know. So, she went to court and was awarded all three little ones. Today they are the sparkle in her eye and the names upon her tongue.

As we sat swapping stories, my friend told me a beautiful one about one of her little girls. She and the child were shopping one afternoon, just the two of them. After a little while, the child wanted to look around as all kids do, and so, pulling away from her mom, she wandered around awhile on her own. However, very soon she returned to her mom's side, grabbed her hand, and began pulling her to "look at something I found." We parents know about these times, don't we? My friend tried to delay the child until she could finish her little bit of shopping. However, by now the little girl was pulling her arm vigorously and saying, "I found my father's hat! I found my father's hat!" Now she had not only the hand but the ear of her adoptive mom.

What in the world could she possibly mean by that? There had never been a father figure in the child's life. My friend followed her little girl through the store until she stopped and there atop the counter was a crown of thorns, made from twigs, just like the one we believe Jesus wore on the cross. My

friend quickly realized what was going on. The child had seen the picture of Jesus with the crown of thorns and my friend had taught the three little ones that Jesus was their Father. So, in her childlike way, the child simply put the two together. The crown became a “hat” to her. What a revelation God had given to this small child.

I thought this was such a sweet story. Truly, as the Scriptures say, “A little child shall lead them” (Isaiah 11:6). Unless you become as a little child, you can’t enter into the kingdom of heaven. “Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein” (Mark 10:15). “And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea” (Mark 9:42). The Word of God has so much to say about little ones.

I left the Salvation Army store with a lot more than I expected to leave with that day. God blessed my soul that afternoon.

It is a cute little story but it goes far deeper than that. You see, our heavenly Father had revealed the truth into this child’s five-year-old spirit. She had received a divine revelation of who Jesus Christ is. The Holy Spirit draws or woos us to the Lord and it is He who also gives the “revelation” of Jesus Christ to us. As we grow in Him, He gives deeper revelations of Christ in you, the hope of glory, and who we are in Christ Jesus.

I think Jesus got a good chuckle about “His hat” and, for sure, He knew I would be sharing the story with you.

Another friend of mine, an American evangelist, works in Africa among the orphans there. A home with all the modern conveniences was built for the children. Walking around the house one day, one of the little orphan girls said to the teacher, “This house looks just like heaven!” Precious! And spoken out of a child’s grateful heart.

I recently went to my favorite nail salon for a manicure. The shop is owned by a Vietnamese family whom I have come to know through my years

of patronizing them. My nail lady has a very sweet little seven-year-old daughter and I am always eager to hear her latest cute sayings.

The story I heard on that particular day was pretty astounding. Her daughter had been watching TV and the latest toy advertisement had caught her attention, as they are meant to do. The ad was about some new toy that the child knew she definitely wanted and, of course, she began to express this in a very loud way to her mom.

It was shortly after Christmas and her mom explained that she simply could not afford to go shopping for a new toy. They would have to put the toy on next year's Christmas list and save their money. The little girl was not too happy at the thought of having to wait a whole year to get her heart's desire and she made a lot of noise about her disappointment. But she had no choice but to let the subject die.

Several weeks later she came to her mom with the following piece of wisdom: "Our family doesn't need to buy a lot of things; we have enough, and we don't need money; we have enough. What we really need is just more of the Holy Spirit."

Out of the mouth of babes! "And Jesus said unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou has perfected praise?" (Matthew 21:16).

GLITZ AND GLITTER

I "accidentally" got into the jewelry business through a young neighbor in the high-rise where I lived. I began selling antique costume jewelry to dealers and boutiques around Dallas and God blessed it! My business mushroomed until I had thousands of pieces of jewelry. The dealers could hardly believe the pieces I would find. They would tell me that they had been in business over twenty years without such finds. Since I believe in tithing, after my first jewelry sale I had a big fifty-cent tithe to give to the Lord. I was so excited to have it, even though it was somewhat like the widow's mite. I had made five dollars from my new business venture and I

had half a dollar to give to God. From that day on I began to see the Lord's blessing rest on my new business venture.

One afternoon I was driving along busy Central Expressway in Dallas, eager to get home and rest after a very busy day. This was before my dialysis days and I was beginning to get really "bushed." However, as I drove toward home, I felt a gentle nudge from the Holy Spirit to go to a certain shop—what I called a "hole-in-the-wall" shop. Only homeless people shopped there, but I had been to it in the past. I was not too excited about making the trip there, especially in my exhausted state. I just wanted to go home and rest. My mind began to argue with what my heart was saying but I am so thankful I followed His direction that afternoon.

As I entered the little shop I knew there must be a good reason for my being there. My eyes fell on a small box under the glass counter but I really couldn't see what was in it because I wasn't wearing my glasses. I could see that there was sparkly jewelry (I call it glitter) in the box so I called the proprietor over and asked how much he wanted for it. "Four dollars," he said, so I paid him and took the box to my car. I put on my glasses and pulled out my jeweler's eye loupe, which I always carry with me. When I read the mark on the back of a large, beautiful rhinestone pin, I almost shouted! It was a piece of Eisenberg Ice, a very collectible piece of antique jewelry. Because they are so highly collectible, it is almost impossible to find them anywhere. This beautiful piece was worth nearly a thousand dollars.

Now this was just the first piece I picked out of the box. There were several other good pieces of old jewelry, including a pair of 14K cameo earrings from the '30s. What a return I made on that four-dollar investment! "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land" (Isaiah 1:19). Thank God I obeyed the little nudge from the Holy Spirit that afternoon.

Another time I felt the Holy Spirit nudge me to visit a shop and that time my find was a gorgeous, gold, Dresden angel figurine valued at over fifteen hundred dollars. I paid one dollar for it. I was learning to follow His leading in small ways. Truly, if we are obedient, we "eat the fat of the

land.” The antique dealers were very excited to see what I would bring to them next!

A lady got my name through a mutual friend who told her that I liked antiques and old jewelry. She called to say she was liquidating the apartment of her elderly aunt, who had to be placed in a nursing facility. The apartment was an hour’s drive from Dallas but she thought I might be interested in all the “stuff.” I think she was a little surprised that I was interested and would be willing to drive a distance to see what she had. We set a date and when the time came, I invited a friend to go with me.

The large pieces of the estate had already been disposed of, but the apartment still had plenty of “junk” to sort through. And I say “junk” because most people would have considered it just that. I spent a nice morning looking through her things and then filled my car to the brim, paid the lady a grand total of forty-two dollars, and drove home.

While looking through the the apartment, I had found a box that contained a lot of old, dirty, broken jewelry pieces. I decided to throw it in with the rest of the things I was buying because you never know what is in a box like that until you are able to carefully examine it. When I had an opportunity, I sorted through the jewelry and was amazed. I found a nice little gift box in good condition with the name Georg Jensen on it. He was a very famous silversmith and his work is very collectible. I got excited because I had never had a piece of his work. Now at least I had an empty box with his name on it!

I began to think how wonderful it would be if I could find a piece from the old master silversmith himself. His old pieces are very, very rare and highly sought after. You just cannot find them anymore. As I dug through the box of dirty jewelry, I found a large, sterling silver pin. It was very interesting and using my eye loupe, I was able to see the mark on the back of the piece. It was stamped Georg Jensen! Wow! I grabbed my catalog, which told of his works, along with pictures. Much to my surprise, not only did I have the little jewelry box with his name on it, but I had an antique piece with his mark on the back, valued at almost seven hundred dollars.

Once before, I had found an extremely valuable sterling piece in a garage sale. It was done by another outstanding silversmith, William Spratling. Spratling is known as the “father” of all the silversmiths and his art gallery was in Taxco, Mexico. His work is very collectible and sells for “big bucks.” I happened by a garage sale one afternoon, again without my glasses, and picked up a unique, heavy sterling bracelet. It was priced at only twelve dollars. I had no idea I held in my hand a very collectible piece that collectors from the West Coast to the East Coast would almost fight over. I finally sold it to the highest bidder in Beverly Hills, California.

Another wonderful piece of costume jewelry I found was in a dirty little bowl at a flea market in lower Manhattan, New York. It was raining and the little bowl was half filled with rainwater. Two pieces of jewelry in the bowl caught my eye—both very heavy pieces. One was a massive chain with a disk on it and the other piece had an Italian mark on it. The man wanted only ten dollars for the two pieces, so I picked up my purchases and left, trying to stay out of the pouring rain. What had I found this time? An original piece by Versace, worth a lot of money.

I have also been blessed with many leather goods. I have found hundreds of pieces of Gucci, Louis Vitton, Fendi, Coach, Burberry, Prada, and other designer leather pieces. My dealer friends tell me they have been in the business for years and never find the quality pieces that I find. It all started when I gave my fifty-cent tithe to God. Most of these items cost me no more than two dollars and some I’ve gotten for only fifty cents each.

One Saturday morning I left early for a full day of errands. I was driving very carefully because I was in a small convertible. I did my best to stay out of the way of the many large trucks on the road that morning. Just as I got to the other side of Dallas on a terribly busy expressway, the little car decided to quit. I managed to coast to the side of the road and safely stop the vehicle. Thank God for cell phones! Since it was Saturday, several people I called for help did not answer. I took a long leap and called a dear preacher friend whom I knew would come to my aid if I could just reach him or a member of his family. I was so relieved when Reverend Alton

Hayes answered my call. Hearing my anxiety and frustration, he assured me that they would be happy to come to my aid.

An American Automobile Association (AAA) wrecker finally arrived and took my car, and my preacher friend and his family came and rescued me from the side of the busy, dangerous highway. Of course, my plans were completely disrupted for the day, which must have affected my attitude, because Brother Hayes spoke prophetically to me and said, “Geri, God is going to give you a spectacular day!” My spiritual ears picked up his words and I quickly said, “Amen,” in agreement. Brother Hayes was the youngest minister in the Voice of Healing ministry of the ’50s.

God has so many blessings for us along the way. By the end of that day, I had seen God do a very spectacular thing for me. As Brother Hayes and his family drove me home, we stopped along the way at a little shopping strip, which consisted of dollar stores and thrift-type stores. Since I’m always looking for collectible jewelry, I stopped in a very old, small shop that said, “Secondhand Items for Sale.” I asked the owner if she had any old jewelry and she handed me a dirty shoebox full of glittery old pieces, which I liked. We made a deal and I purchased the box of jewelry and left.

When I finally arrived home that evening, I began to look through the jewelry to see what I actually had bought. There were many good pieces in the box, but the most spectacular was a 14K pin covered in large diamonds. I had it checked out by my jeweler. It was a beautiful handcrafted piece that was soon put on consignment at a boutique in one of Dallas’ finest hotels.

God had done something spectacular for me on that day, indeed. After Brother Hayes’ prophetic word, He took my twenty-five dollar investment and turned it into almost three thousand dollars on just one piece in that old, dirty shoebox. That’s right! Two thousand, nine hundred and ninety-five dollars! Including all the other antique jewelry pieces in the box, the total value was over five thousand dollars. I often teased Brother Hayes that he needed to prophesy over me more often. He spoke the word, “God is going to give you a spectacular day,” and God honored it. God is so good! My dear friend, Brother Alton Hayes, went to heaven in 2002.



Some of my garage sale finds

BUILDING A TELEVISION STATION

I learned many years ago to follow the Holy Spirit; it's the only way that I know to live. Once I began to see what He can and will do through people who yield themselves, I decided that I wanted my life to be used for His will, not mine. I have made so many mistakes along the way but I have tried my best through the years to listen to that still, small voice and follow.

I believe in the old saying, "The proof of the pudding is in the eating." I have found that God usually assigns tasks that are impossible for man to accomplish in his own ability, in order that He will get all the glory when the task is finalized. If Almighty God has truly spoken to individuals to do something, it will come to pass if they cooperate with Him. It is only by following the Holy Spirit that the eye hospital was built in China ... and, likewise, the television station.

When God moved on Dr. Vaughan and me in 1977 to build the TV station, all we had, literally, was a stack of papers in our hand and a word from God. We certainly did not have the millions of dollars that were needed. But I knew His voice and I began at "square one." I used the wisdom I learned while skiing on the difficult slopes in Aspen, Colorado, (see the Ski Lesson section) and began to do what was in my hands each day, day after day.

We experienced one miracle after another through the years of very hard work. Just getting the license/permit from the FCC took years and thousands of dollars (FCC attorneys, engineers, etc.). What an ordeal. Actually, I was in Washington, D.C., before the FCC on the day that the plane fell into the icy Potomac River; perhaps you remember that sad day, January 13, 1982. The weather was so bad, blizzard-type conditions, but that was our big day before the FCC. They drill you about every single detail in the engineering workup for the construction permit. That book was at least ten inches thick and we had to know everything in it about television. We were being challenged by a Los Angeles "professional" who already owned twelve other stations across America but wanted to get into Dallas, as it is a "top ten" market.

The FCC had to be assured that we had the expertise to build a television corporation. Being a lay person, I simply had to memorize reams of paper filled with information that was pure “Greek” to me. I was not a professional, but with pencil in hand I got to work.

Of course, we had to hire “professionals” (TV engineers, etc.) who did know everything about it and we had to believe God to bring in the finances for all the salaries and expenses. Our seventy-eight story TV tower alone cost nearly a million dollars. Once it was up, other users rented space on it and thus brought in much needed revenue. That was a great help. Our remote TV truck, tower and antenna were quite costly, to say nothing of the two buildings, studios, lighting, cameras, etc. With God’s grace, nearly nine months from our day at the FCC we were granted our license. From that point, the rest is history. It became a multi-million dollar corporation once it was up and running ... from that little stack of papers that I had in my hand. (I remember looking at that stack one day flying back to Dallas from Boston thinking what a crazy beginning but it would happen and I would give my life to help accomplish it!)

The story of the building of the station has been told throughout the world, giving glory to God. So, from the crazy little stack of papers, the task was completed, much to the amazement of those around, as well as ours. Is it harder for God to make mankind out of dirt or a TV station from a small stack of papers? “Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it” (1 Thessalonians 5:24).



Remote truck

A SAD DAY FOR DALLAS

A very important part of my childhood sadly came to a close when the Arcadia Theatre was lost to a recent devastating fire. Some of my earliest memories revolve around the Dallas landmark. I think I speak for many of us who grew up in Northeast Dallas during the '40s and '50s.

I remember as a little girl of about three years old, wearing glittery costumes for Mrs. Olivia Crutchfield's Gingham Girls Dance Studio recitals which were held on the stage of the Arcadia. (Both Mrs. Crutchfield and Gingham Girls were Dallas legends.) We danced our little routines looking out at the darkened theatre filled with proud and loving parents and grandparents. That was a very exciting event in the lives of little ones.

The following was taken from an editorial that I wrote to the *Dallas Morning News* after the Arcadia Theater burned to the ground:

Countless Saturdays we kids were dropped off by our parents in front of the theatre with a quarter for the "Saturday Kids' Show." It was very safe back then. We were always instructed to meet our parents at a certain place in front of the theatre at a certain time after the movie was over. Twenty-five cents covered all our needs! Admission to the movies was nine cents, popcorn was a big ten cents, candy was five cents, with a penny left over. Saturday afternoon at the movies was really an American way of life for young children back then. The Arcadia Theatre played a very important part in our growing up in Northeast Dallas. I miss those days and I shall miss driving past the place that left these indelible marks on my life. A trip down Greenville Avenue just won't be the same for me.

NOVEMBER 22, 1963, A FATEFUL DAY IN DALLAS

My stepfather, Capt. Marvin C. Blount, was a longtime law enforcement officer with the Dallas Department of Public Safety. He had served in various positions with the city police, fire department, and DPS as a young

man. Because of his gregarious personality, he often was called to escort dignitaries who were visiting Dallas, such as Lyndon B. Johnson and others. He was beloved and respected by many.

The day of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, November 22, 1963, my dad was called to Parkland Hospital immediately after the presidential party arrived there. His assigned duty was to stand at Governor John Connally's bedside, submachine gun in hand. Governor Connally had survived life-threatening gunshots himself.

Immediately following the assassination, things were extremely chaotic, as no one knew what to expect. So, my dad stood duty for three days and nights before being allowed to return home. He was in the room with the Governor when they showed him the famous Zapruder film of the actual assassination. This was a silent, color motion picture sequence shot by private citizen Abraham Zapruder with a home-movie camera. My dad later said that they had to turn off the film, as Governor Connally became too upset watching it. My dad was one of the first people to view that most important piece of historical information. Because of my father's involvement in this dark day in America's history, I was in the midst of the drama in a very big way.

I was seven and a half months pregnant at the time. I awoke that morning with errands to run, but I wanted to see the parade that would be going through downtown Dallas. I had never seen a President in person, so I was excited about being there to see JFK. Along with my mother and her younger sister, Dottie, we awaited Air Force One's arrival at Love Field Airport in Dallas. After watching it land safely, we quickly drove to a place along the parade route, and from that vantage point I was able to take great photos of President Kennedy and Jackie as the motorcade rolled by. Those pictures were donated to The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza, Dallas, where the assassination and legacy of President John F. Kennedy is chronicled.

It was truly a fateful day, as John Connally said to me many years later. I met him on an airplane while traveling from Houston to Dallas. He had kind remarks to make about my father's service to him while he was

hospitalized at Parkland Hospital. Among my JFK memoirs I have several letters of commendation sent to my dad from both Governor Connally and his wife, Nellie. My parents were friends of the Connallys before the tragedy. In fact, like many Dallas police officers, my dad knew Jack Ruby long before November, 1963.

According to my father, Jack Ruby was a Mafia-type, man-about-town who owned a strip club, and was well known to Dallas police officers.

I was listening to the police radio while the Dallas police searched for the assassin on Jefferson Boulevard. The suspect, Lee Harvey Oswald, was eventually captured in the Texas Theatre. My father had told me to go home and stay behind closed doors, as they did not know what to expect in Dallas. I did go home, but by way of Jefferson Boulevard on the other side of Dallas from my home.

My husband had done design work on the radios that the Dallas police were using at that time. In our car we had a printed circuit board (an exact copy) of the radios, which we regularly listened to. It transmitted both Channel 1 and Channel 2, which were transmissions of the Dallas Police Department, not Secret Service. However, I heard all the excitement as they searched for the assassin up and down Jefferson Boulevard that day. Instead of going straight home I, too, went looking for the assassin in the Oak Cliff area of Dallas. However, I was safe at home when Oswald was captured in the Texas Theatre on Jefferson Boulevard that afternoon!

So you can see, I have a lot of close ties to all of that.

Just recently I have been interviewed several times by the Curator of the Dallas Police Museum concerning this. There are also other ways in which I am very closely connected with the events of that day. I have donated many collectors' items to museums in Dallas. Included in these are the letters from the Governor and his wife, Nellie, thanking my father for his service to them during those days. Many of my historical items are being put on display with my name as the donor in honor of my dad. They made copies of all of my donations for me.

Now, with most of the people directly involved with the assassination gone, I am a second generation who remembers quite well the events surrounding that fateful day in 1963. Therefore, I have been interviewed for my input of those historical moments.

MY MOM AND DAD

(From my mom's obituary)

Margaret Blount, widow of well-known former police officer, Capt. Marvin C. Blount of the Department of Public Safety, passed away February 12, 2008, at the age of ninety-seven. Capt. Blount preceded her in death on September 12, 1974. Together, the couple contributed many years of service in law enforcement for Dallas as well as the State of Texas. Both passionately loved law enforcement and the political scene, never missing the Texas Gubernatorial Inaugurations in Austin, Texas.

Margaret was born into a ranching family in the Hill Country of Texas. She attended North Texas State College, now North Texas State University, as did Capt. Blount. She began her career in the 1940's working in the Records Building for then District Attorney, Will Wilson. It was there as a young 34-year-old widow that she met Marvin Blount, a gregarious and highly respected police officer. They were married January 10, 1948. Soon after their wedding, they introduced their good friend, a young, up-and-coming lawyer named Henry Wade, to his wife-to-be, Yvonne. Henry later became Dallas' District Attorney, playing an important role in the historic JFK assassination/Jack Ruby days in Dallas.

Spanning the next thirty years, Margaret worked in the old red courthouse for various judges, including Justices of the Peace Glen Byrd and George Patzig; County Clerk Tom Ellis; and District Attorney Henry Wade. Many times she was called upon to work cases with the medical examiner/coroner. Because of her vast knowledge of the various departments in the court system, she was instrumental

in helping open the sub-courthouse in Richardson, Texas, in the 1960's as well as Lew Sterrett County Courthouse in downtown Dallas. Much of the work establishing the departments in the new facilities was entrusted into her hands due to her years of experience. She retained much of this knowledge up until the time of her death.

She spent many years as a detective, doing security detail long before women had begun working in this capacity. Margaret felt strongly that everyone should vote, and as a result, volunteered much of her time helping during election years. She enjoyed sharing tales of her life's adventures and did so until the time of her death. People loved to gather around her to listen as she told stories about the historic events in Dallas that she had been a part of during her lifetime.

Capt. Blount served first in the Dallas Fire Department (DFD). His younger brother, Sherwood, also gave many years of service to Dallas as a respected firefighter and officer in the DFD. Marvin later went to work for the Dallas Police Department. During his time with the city police, he trained a young police "rookie," Jesse Curry, who later became Chief of the Dallas Police Department. Capt. Blount went through the ranks of the Department of Public Safety and in 1952 became Captain of the Motor Vehicle Inspection, a newly established DPS division. At that time, vehicle inspection was done for the cost of \$1. His office was in the old log cabin on the grounds of the State Fair of Texas, headquarters for the DPS for many years.

Marvin's gregarious personality drew people of all ranks and races to him. He and Margaret loved helping people and both were continually sought for their wise counsel. As a young city cop he walked a beat and patrolled in the downtown area of Dallas where he met a wide spectrum of the population. As a result of this, he and Margaret enjoyed many lifelong friendships among the Italian, African American, German, and Little Mexico communities. Tupinambi's Mexican Restaurant owners, Consuelo

and “Sonny” Dominquez (Eddie’s folks) were very good friends as was Carl Kuby, owner of Kuby’s Sausage House in Snider Plaza. Mr. Kuby credits Capt. Blount with helping care for many newly-arriving German people to the Dallas area. Among the Blounts’ best friends were Dallas Sheriff Bill Decker and his wife, Clyde. Margaret’s daughter, Geri Hudson Morgan, remembers as a little girl sitting on the floor of Bill Decker’s office, playing jacks with childhood friend, Dallas Realtor Virginia Cook. As Geri says, “Dallas was much different in those days.” Geri grew up with these people as her extended family.

Among the Blounts’ other good friends were former President George Herbert Walker Bush, then a young West Texas oilman; Dallas Mayor Earl Campbell, businessman and city leader; Julius Schepps; Ted Hinton, officer and author of *Ambush*, who helped in the 1934 ambush of notorious gangsters Bonnie and Clyde.

Capt. Blount was regularly chosen to escort Texas state dignitaries such as then Senator Lyndon B. Johnson and others. He was escort to Gov. Buford Jester when the plane carrying the Governor crashed in a heavy snowstorm in West Texas in the late ’40s. The Governor and Blount both survived the crash.

Marvin’s son, Charles “Chuck” Blount, has had acting parts in several JFK movies, including “The Trial of Lee Harvey Oswald” with Lorne Greene, and “Ruby and Oswald.”

Living in the White Rock area of Dallas, the two were charter members of Ridgewood Park Methodist Church. Capt. Blount was a very active lay leader in the Methodist church. The Blounts always had a heart to help retiring Methodist ministers, to provide for them in their latter years. As a result, they worked diligently helping raise financial support to build the C.C. Young Memorial Home and also the Scottish Rite Children’s Hospital of Dallas. Blount was a 32nd degree Mason and a member of Hella Shrine and the Scottish Rite. Together they were very active in the Eastern Star.

GUNSHOTS WITH CORNY DOGS

Several years ago Dr. Vaughan and I, along with Brother Crow and his wife, Jean, went to a musical at the Music Hall on the grounds of the State Fair of Texas in Dallas. Actually, the fair was in progress at the time we attended the performance at the Music Hall. The shows there are always superb musicals, comparable to those presented on Broadway in New York City.

We enjoyed the presentation and joined the crowds exiting the Music Hall. Dr. Vaughan suggested that since we were already inside the gate of the State Fair, we could walk on over to the midway and enjoy a Fletcher's corny dog. Now, I suppose you must be a Texan to appreciate such, but people attend the fair just to enjoy the wonderful corny dogs by Fletcher's, a real Texas tradition. I don't know the price of admission to get into the fair these days, but I'm sure it is quite costly, like everything else in life. But, some people actually pay the price of admission to enjoy a favorite Texas hors d'oeuvre!

After the performance Brother Crow and Jean had left the fairgrounds and gone home. Their decision was the best and wisest that night. Dr. Vaughan and I chose to walk over and buy one of those special treats before returning home.

We found our way to the little stand, bought our corny dogs, loaded them with mustard, and made our way through the massive crowd of fairgoers who stood "bumper-to-bumper." The people were packed in because two university football rivals had just finished playing their game at the Cotton Bowl there on the fairgrounds! At that time alcohol was allowed, so there was a lot of rowdiness amongst the young people.

As we pushed our way through the crowds, munching on our sought-after corny dogs, all of a sudden we heard gunshots. In the throng of thousands, it was impossible to see the gunman or know exactly where the shots were coming from. Pandemonium set in as the people panicked, jumping and diving behind anything that might shield them from bullets. It very

quickly became a terrible scene as thousands ran in all directions at the same time. It was true panic and we were caught right in the middle of it. I don't think that I have ever experienced such horror.

Of course, we began trying to get away from the gunshots. I had decided in my mind that I would fall over Dr. Vaughan and shield her because as a doctor she could help mankind far more than I could. We didn't know if it was safer to try and hide behind a game booth made of canvas material or run for our lives. We chose the latter and ran our hardest behind the old buildings that are along the perimeter of the grounds in hopes of exiting the large fairground area. We were in such a state that I felt like my heart would just stop from both the panic and the exertion.

It seemed to take hours before we were able to exit the grounds. Many policemen had come and were running with guns in their hands, trying to quell the volatile situation. Because of that eventful night, new security methods are now in place and hopefully these scenarios are a thing of the past.

Whenever I do attend the fair, I am reminded of that frightful night when God, once again, saved my life and delivered me from another fiery furnace! Many times He has been my Savior throughout my life!



Chapter 12

Prophetic Dreams

ENEMY EXPOSED

*I*n 1983 I had the worst nightmare I have ever experienced. I cannot be sure whether it was a dream or a vision so I will just call it a bad dream. In my dream I was asleep in bed when I was awakened by a hissing noise. I opened my eyes and immediately found the source of the noise. Coiled right at my head was a huge snake with its mouth wide open so that I could see its large fangs. It was so close that I knew if I did not knock it away, it would bite me all over my head and take my life. I immediately threw my hands up against it and it bit me on both hands but my right hand received the most severe bites. Blood was flowing from the puncture marks on my hand but I was able to fling off the snake. When it hit the floor it became like ashes—it just disappeared. I immediately woke up in a terrible state, shaking uncontrollably. I called my pastor and a few of my spiritual friends to tell them what had happened even though I knew that what I had experienced was of satan himself. I also realized that it was an attack against my hands.

Later in the week several of my staff from the TV station and I flew up to Boston for a television seminar. We had planned to mix business with a little pleasure while there and I was eager to drive up to Cape Cod. However, I became so ill the first night we arrived that I actually thought I might die in the hotel room. I could not describe to the doctor how or what I was feeling, except that I just felt extremely ill. I managed to

stay for the seminar for three or four days, but returned to Dallas and immediately sought the care of several physicians. What was happening to me was exactly what I had seen happen in the horrible attack of the snake in my dream.

After many different tests, the doctors diagnosed my condition as psoriatic arthritis. My hands became stiff and the right one was much worse than the left one. The attack left me with three permanently bent fingers on my right hand (the hand where the snake bit hardest) and I lost most of my fine motor skills in both hands. I was put on chemotherapy for this condition for many years until I eventually needed a wheelchair. I was forty-three years old at the time. All of my fingers were attacked, but the right hand continues to bear the worst marks of the enemy. I have been able to shake off the problem of the psoriatic arthritis and I can still use my hands to play the organ and piano. Praise the Lord! I have learned to take authority in Jesus' name over dreams. Jesus gave us the power to bind demonic attacks such as this. "Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you" (Luke 10:19).

WHITE CHALK AND DOLLAR BILLS

I had a very interesting dream many years ago which prevented a tragic episode for Dr. Vaughan. In reality, she had been approached by some well-meaning friends who wanted to make her a "rich woman" overnight. However, they needed one hundred thousand dollars in cash from her in order to accomplish their good business venture—and make her a rich woman! In other words, they wanted her to invest one hundred thousand dollars in their business. The idea looked and sounded like a workable plan and the people involved were really dear people. Thank God that He is our Protector.

I did not know any of this impending business, but I had a dream in which Dr. Vaughan was being buried under white limestone rocks. It was crumbling, as limestone does, and it trapped her in a crevice with the rocks falling on her. Seeing this happen, I ran to the deep crevice and

pulled her out from underneath the white rocks that were burying her. I felt this was a God-given dream, but I did not understand what it meant. However, it did have great meaning to her. You see, the product of the new business was made from limestone. God had shown us through my dream that by getting involved in this venture, she would have buried herself financially. It was not too long before the company failed. Thank God for His guidance through dreams.

CHINESE DRAGONS AND SCORPIONS

God can do many things for us through dreams. We can receive revelation, encouragement, warnings, or whatever He chooses to send our way. Perhaps we get too busy during the day to hear His still, small voice, and maybe He sometimes has to wait until we are quiet enough to speak with us. I once had a very strange dream but it held a great warning for me concerning my life at that time.

I was standing by a body of water and looking down I saw two extremely large Chinese, dragon-like serpents swimming toward me. They were side by side, swimming in sync, each movement being exactly the same for each of them. They reached the bank where I was standing, but instead of crawling up onto the bank, they immediately made a U-turn and swam back out to where they had come from, just as we see the Olympic swimmers do in their swimming lanes. What was the meaning of the dream?

Several days later I was approached by two Chinese people who came to me in the name of the Lord. They attempted to give me identical advice, which was very obviously against the will of God for me. Their words seemed good and logical but I had been warned in advance through my dream. I recognized the source of their words: the serpent, satan. How interesting that they turned and left together, and I have never seen them since.

I had another interesting spiritual dream several years ago in which I stepped out of an airplane into a vast open field and began walking through it. As I walked, as far as my eyes could see the ground was covered with scorpions—billions of them! As I continued to walk through the field, the

scorpions ran from my footsteps. I was not stung or bothered in any way. Wherever I put my foot down, they scattered. "Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you" (Luke 10:19).

MRS. THOMAS YOURS

God has given me many dreams in the past forty years. I don't recall having such dreams until I received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. "It shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions" (Joel 2:28).

Several years ago I had a dream that was both amazing and amusing. In it, I saw a large hand reaching out toward me. Something was in the hand and I perceived that it was being given to me. I was handed a check that was signed and completely filled out. Of course, I was really excited about receiving it, in spite of not knowing what was written on it. You know that excited feeling when you receive a check for any amount of money! I looked at the check, expecting it to be made out to me, "Mrs. Geri Morgan." However, much to my surprise, it was made payable to "Mrs. Thomas Yours." I saw this name in big letters. I was so shocked and disappointed that this name was where my name should have been that I woke up. I knew this was a God-given dream but I had no understanding of it. God knows me, however, and He knows my frame. Many times I have had to pray, "Help my unbelief."

"The father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief" (Mark 9:24). Sometimes I have been a bit like doubting Thomas, who said, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe" (John 20:25).

It is interesting that when Jesus came to me in 1972, He showed me the holes in His hands, just as He did for Thomas, to dispel every trace of doubt.

The Holy Spirit said concerning my dream that finances, as well as all of God's promises, were mine, given from His hand to mine. They were given to me! "Mrs. Thomas, do not doubt, they are yours, already in your possession." Our Father has such a sense of humor at times. He is wonderful! When I have a great need in my life, I am reminded of that dream. He has already put His promises into our own hands and it is up to us to draw on our heavenly account.

STARVING BIG BOY

I had another strange dream which I believe to be God-given. If you remember the old Big Boy restaurants, you will recall that their logo was a cute, chubby boy in red and white checkered overalls with suspenders. In his hand he held a platter filled with a huge, juicy hamburger. It is easy to picture that in my mind. However, in my dream the chubby boy looked like a very malnourished war orphan, such as one we see on TV from a third world country. His clothes were falling off of him. The platter he was holding was completely empty with no food whatsoever on it. He tried to smile. It was a strange sight to behold. Perhaps its meaning is either famine is coming to our land or there will be a lack of the Word of God in the end time or both.

BANK BOARDED UP

I had a dream in 2003 of my bank, long before the economic crisis we are seeing all around us. I had driven my car down to the bank and when I arrived, the doors were boarded up, just like we have seen in movies. There were boards nailed across the doors and it was completely closed up. I am sure this was a prophetic dream, I just don't know when it is going to happen. As a result, I am now cautious concerning my banking needs. I think this is prophetic for our financial system in general. However, I did move my account from the bank I saw in my dream.



Chapter 13

China



Geri on the Great Wall of China



Geri at Tiananmen Square



Geri at Chinese school with children, 1981



Geri taking Bibles abroad



Geri and precious Chinese baby and mother



Geri and Dr. Vaughan entering Inner Mongolia



Geri looks Chinese?



Geri and Angie at the Great Wall of China (Geri looks Chinese)



Dr. Vaughan at Glory Eye Center, Beijing, after doing cataract surgery



Linda, Geri, and Dr. Vaughan with new mobile unit for Glory Eye Center, Beijing



Dr. Vaughan, Rev. Benny Hinn, Geri at Tiananmen Square, Beijing



Geri in Chinese jacket

CHINA BY VISION

In 1994 I had a most unusual dream. I was working inside a hospital pushing a very archaic cart filled with medical supplies. I do not recall seeing the faces of the medical personnel or the patients, but I knew they were foreigners. The interior of this hospital was very dark and I saw the nurses' station and many hallways leading away from the nurses' desk. The most visual part of my dream was the beautiful wood paneling throughout the building. When I awoke, I made a drawing of the floor plan inside the hospital I had seen. I believed this was a dream from God and I wanted to make notes of what I had seen.

Nine months later my friend, Dr. Vaughan, was invited to go to Beijing, China, and teach Chinese eye surgeons there. She asked me if I would be willing to go and help with her expensive surgical instruments. She wanted to train someone to care for those delicate instruments, and I was the only person nearby who would be going on the mission. The other ministry team member who was accompanying us lived in another part of the United States. So, Dr. Vaughan asked if I could go to her office and learn to take care of her instruments and work with her. Remembering the dream that I had of helping with the instruments on the archaic cart, I agreed to help her. Nearly a year after my dream, we left for Beijing, China, to teach the Chinese doctors.

The first morning there we were picked up by one of the Chinese physicians and escorted to the hospital. As I entered into the old red brick hospital, my eyes caught the darkness of the hospital throughout. The Chinese use very low wattage lightbulbs and consequently their buildings are always barely lit and very dark. The next thing my eyes fell on was the very dark wood paneling throughout the place. And then I saw the nurses' station. This was the exact hospital that God had shown me by vision nine months before, and we had arrived at the very place!

Our God is an amazing God! He was able to show me the intricate detail of the interior of that Chinese hospital on the other side of the world while I slept in my bed in Dallas, Texas. He is awesome! My eyes began to fill

with tears at the greatness of our God. We knew that we were at the place He intended us to be.

Many of my missionary friends have traveled “by vision” for years, but this was my first experience. As I felt led by the Holy Spirit, I shared this little story with many Chinese, including high-ranking government officials. They always got very excited and even misty-eyed and said things such as, “Truly the God has sent you to us.” Remember, that is coming from the mouths of people who supposedly do not believe in God! God has given us great favor with the Chinese government officials who have twice honored us at the Great Hall of the People, a place reserved only for heads of state.

We thank God that He opened doors for us to walk through. “Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it” (Revelation 3:8). Our eye clinic opened there in 1997 after many years of hard work and many, many cups of tea. The Chinese are wonderful and have been a big blessing in my life. Evangelizing is illegal in China, but the language of love and compassion is universally understood. How we love them!

One of our Chinese surgical patients shared such a precious word with us through an interpreter. She said, “I can’t see you, I can’t speak your language, but I can feel your hearts.” Love never fails! The Holy Spirit speaks a universal language.



**God gave me a vision of the inside of this hospital,
Peking Union Medical College Hospital**

The following is an excerpt taken from Dr. Vaughan's book, *An Instrument in God's Hand*:

In January 1981, under a mandate from God, Geri Morgan and I went to China for the first time. Though the temperature was freezing and the accommodations lacking, we fell in love with the sweet, humble people. We returned again in the fall of 1980. All the adults were dressed alike in blue Mao jackets and trousers. Everyone either walked or rode bicycles. Motorized vehicles were scarce. Their lives were simple, and they had an appreciation for small pleasures like a canary in a small cage or a cup of tea or flying a kite. Our love for the people grew deeper.

In 1994, I was invited by the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences to come to Beijing and lecture on modern eye surgery. Would they want me to do surgery? If so, I would need my surgical instruments. But I didn't want to put my fine microsurgical instruments in the hands of someone unfamiliar with handling them. They are fragile and very expensive. Two friends were going with me on this trip. The logical one to learn about handling my instruments was Susan Woodman, a missionary living in Virginia. But I couldn't teach her, because of logistics. Geri Morgan was an unlikely candidate to learn about instruments because she had an aversion to medical things; however, since she lived in Dallas, she was my only option. I carefully approached her about it, thinking there was a decent likelihood that she would say, "No." Much to my surprise, she quickly agreed to learn about my instruments because of a dream God had given her a few months previously. In the dream, she was pushing an archaic cart with my surgical instruments on it. She knew it was in some foreign country, but she didn't know where. She vividly remembered the room where she was pushing the cart and even sketched a picture of it for me.

So I taught her a little about my instruments, and off we went to China. The day I was scheduled to lecture at the large, prestigious medical center in Beijing, the head of the Ophthalmology Department met

us and began walking us into the beautiful old building. Geri and Susan followed a few feet behind the other doctor and me. As we entered the building, I heard Geri say, "This is it! This is it!" I turned around and saw tears rolling down her face. This was exactly the same room God had shown her in the dream nine months previously. He works in mysterious ways His wonders to perform. We knew we were where God wanted us, sent there by Him on a mission of love.

On this trip I realized that there were poor people in rural China who were blind and sitting in dark hopelessness because they knew they would never be able to solve their visual problem. I also knew that in a few minutes of eye surgery, I could give someone's life back to them. How could I possibly withhold this gift? Right away I started working toward the dream of mobile surgery units that could reach far into the countryside, enabling us to help those who were most desperate. It met with too many obstacles to enumerate. But I am glad to say that God raised up a Chinese partner who caught the vision and had a heart to help poor people. Together we have built Glory Eye Center in Beijing, where many blind people are brought from the countryside to have eye surgery. We opened the surgery center in February 1998, and in June 1999, launched our first mobile examination unit. With it, a team goes out weekly to various rural areas doing free eye exams and treating eye diseases. Those requiring surgery are brought into Glory Eye Center. In May of 2000, we took our mobile unit to Inner Mongolia and expanded our outreach.

GOD'S CHOSEN FRIENDS

In the spring of 1994, Dr. Vaughan and I flew to Hong Kong en route to China. At that time Hong Kong was still British and separate from Mainland China. Flying into Hong Kong and seeing its sights from the air is such an experience! Like New York City, there is only one Hong Kong.

I have a very dear friend from Hong Kong, S.K. Sung, the international business mogul and widower of evangelist Nora Lam. S.K. and Nora

became very dear friends of mine many years ago. We traveled with them, along with astronaut Jim Irwin and his wife, Mary, into Mainland China on our second trip to China. We shared many great times together. I remember flying with S.K. and Nora in a small private plane right above the beautiful Golden Gate Bridge and Alcatraz in San Francisco en route to one of Nora's meetings in northern California. That was one experience I shall never forget, as we experienced some pretty rough weather in that small plane.

I have made many trips into Hong Kong, so it holds a special place in my heart. Several of my American friends have lived there and established churches through the years. On one trip our friend, Susan Sharp Woodman, was there to meet us at the Hong Kong airport after a long flight over from the United States. Susan had lived in Hong Kong and China for many years. God gave her great favor with the Chinese and she is fluent in both Mandarin and Cantonese. She has such a love for the Chinese people that she just became one of them. Still today she wears the old traditional silk Chinese dresses and jackets. Like me, she sometimes wears the blue and straight-cut Mao jacket with the mandarin collar. I think there are few people who have the knowledge of China and its culture that Susan has. Because of this, she was able to quickly teach us so much that otherwise would have taken us years to learn.

After spending some time in Hong Kong and other parts of China, Susan decided that we needed to visit Xian in western China. Ruth Heflin had joined us in Beijing and one day the four of us took a very bouncy, rough flight from Beijing to Xian. (The next month the same plane went down in Xian, killing all those aboard.) They wanted us to see the underground terra cotta soldiers, a very interesting discovery. While there, we decided to visit the old wall that surrounds the ancient city of Xian. We spent an afternoon walking around observing the sights, while unbeknownst to us God was bringing a Chinese person across our paths who would become a lifelong best friend to us.

At that time, I was buying and selling jewelry to boutiques in Dallas. I thought the Chinese ladies would enjoy having some western jewelry, so I

brought a box along in my suitcase. That particular morning I took some of the jewelry pieces with me and I was giving them to the young girls and ladies as we enjoyed the sights. Of course, because of this I attracted attention and a lot of outreached hands hoping for a treasure from the West. I was thrilled to give and they were thrilled to receive.

One young woman named Doreen began following me around speaking broken English, which caught my attention immediately because very few spoke or understood English in that region. We began to converse and she told me her father and brother were doctors and had a medical clinic in Xian. This immediately caught my attention, as we were hoping to establish an eye clinic in China. Could this somehow be a piece of the puzzle in doing that? Dr. Vaughan was on the opposite side of the wall but I knew that she would be interested in talking to Doreen so I took Doreen over to her.

From the minute we met Doreen we began to see God's hand upon her. She accepted the Lord Jesus and immediately began to memorize the Christian songs we taught her. She is blessed with a beautiful soprano voice and the first song we taught her was *Jesus Loves Me*. Since coming to the States, she has appeared on worldwide Christian television with Dr. Vaughan.

Many more miracles began to take place. Doreen is self-taught because she was forced to quit school in the fourth grade due to the Cultural Revolution. So, the rest of her education she acquired from tapes, television and radio. She learned English by watching American cartoons and today she has a tremendous command of the English language. She is a very bright woman. She became a nurse, and after meeting us she began to learn about ophthalmology by reading medical books.

We invited Doreen to come to America to learn about eye surgery but visas were not being given at that time. She made several thirty-six-hour train trips from Xian to Beijing, standing all the way, to go to the American Embassy in an attempt to get her visa and passport so that she could enter America. Each trip was met with failure until we arrived back in Beijing.

Realizing her treatment from the Americans officials was nothing less than mistreatment, we went to the embassy and spoke in her behalf. God gave us favor and she immediately was given a visa to come to the United States with us.

Because she had been studying English ophthalmology books, Doreen was able to work with Dr. Vaughan upon arrival in Dallas. She proved herself to be a very competent assistant to her for many years.

A funny note about this experience. When we met Doreen, she was one of 2.6 billion Chinese living in China, many of whom dreamed of going to America, almost an impossible dream. This was certainly not an option for her, as she had no money or formal education. She told us later that she would get a world map and lay it on the floor with her little son. They would point to places on the map that they would like to visit and dreamed of going on vacation to these places. Of course, they were not allowed to leave their city in those days but they were making it happen in their dreams.

One afternoon Dr. Vaughan called her from America through an antiquated phone system on Doreen's end. All the excitement of meeting an American doctor who actually contacted her was just unbelievable. Dr. Vaughan placed this call to invite her to come to the United States. When Doreen went to her parents' home after the phone call, she told them of the invitation, and knowing this to be impossible, they actually thought that she was hallucinating or having a nervous breakdown. Understandable, but funny!

Well, that was many years ago. Since that fateful day, Doreen has been in America many years, traveled much of the world with us, and seen the places that she had pointed out on the map to her little son years earlier. She is now an American citizen and is happily married to an American. Her son is on scholarship, working on his Ph.D. and teaching in a large university. He is married to a beautiful Chinese girl from China who has a degree in English and they have a new baby son. He is so fluent in English now that he is used as an interpreter in a Chinese Baptist church. When

we first met him in China, he did not know a single word in English. God indeed has blessed this family! I thank God for allowing our paths to cross on the other side of the world on top of the ancient walls in Xian in April of 1994. Doreen remains one of my most cherished friends.

TENNIS WITH THE VICE MAYOR

Of the many stories I could relate about our adventures in China, I think this is one of the most interesting. One evening we were invited to dine as honored guests with some of the high-ranking Chinese government officials. It was a delightful meal where great trusting friendships were being formed. After the meal, the former Vice Mayor of Beijing, a very kind gentleman, turned to Dr. Vaughan and me and invited us to play tennis at an exclusive tennis club in Beijing. He said that we would be allowed on the courts only with good and proper tennis shoes.

Independently Dr. Vaughan and I had packed our suitcases without any discussion about what clothes we should take. I had never, nor had she ever, taken a pair of tennis shoes to Beijing. You need sturdier walking shoes in China. Now we were invited to play tennis with the former Vice Mayor of Beijing. We quickly accepted his offer, for the Holy Spirit had helped pack our suitcases that trip and we both had our tennis shoes to wear on the court.

Dr. Vaughan later did eye surgery on him and he and his wife became dear friends.



Geri and Vice Mayor of Beijing



Geri and Vice Mayor of Beijing shake hands over the keyboard



Chapter 14

From Death to Life

MAKE LEMONADE OUT OF LIFE'S LEMONS

I want to share my personal experience as an end-stage renal disease (ESRD) patient, in the hope that it may encourage someone in a similar situation or perhaps someone who has received some other form of frightening news.

I've tried to be positive rather than negative throughout my 70-plus years of life. You have heard that when life hands us lemons, we just need to make lemonade, and what wisdom there is in that little saying!

I was born with a rare genetic kidney disease, Alport syndrome, especially rare in females. I inherited this disease from my father, who died in 1945 from kidney failure when I was just six years old. Of course, in those days there was no modern medicine or treatment available for kidney failure. In my case, in spite of the disease, I was able to live a normal life and suffered no ill effects from it for many years.

As I became a teenager, I heard my family talk about my condition and I began to understand the potential seriousness of this disease. So, at the age of 15, being really afraid that I could or would die, I put my life into the hands of God in a very serious way.

I put my faith and trust in the Scripture that I had read in the Bible as a young girl: "For *in Him we live*, and move, and have our being" (Acts

17:28). With childlike faith, I believed that my flawed body, with a deadly disease, could stay alive *in Him*. And because of Him, I believed I could live and not face an early death. I've held tightly to that Scripture for the last fifty-plus years.

I enjoyed an extremely active life growing up, playing competition tennis as a teenager and young adult. I also lived out my dream of becoming a professional organist/pianist. At age 16, I began playing professionally for Dallas restaurants and teaching piano and organ at a Dallas music studio. I attended college at both TCU and SMU and I remained fine. My very busy life was full of health and fun. However, I was always under the care of a nephrologist who carefully monitored my kidney function.

After college I married and settled in as an organist, a wife, and three years later, a "mommy." In 1964, our precious little daughter, Angie, was born. I had no complications whatsoever from the kidney disease during my pregnancy. However, at age 30, I began to lose my hearing, a strange side effect of Alport syndrome. I began using hearing aids, which was the only real health issue I had for many years.

Life was good with its normal ups and downs. I weathered most of its storms very well until I was told that our daughter, Angie, at age 17, had signs of the same genetic kidney disease. The doctor's prognosis was not a good one. However, other than the fact that her kidney function tests were showing deterioration, she was quite healthy. She eventually married and became a truly gifted teacher of special needs students who were the bright spots in her life. Angie's health began to decline at about age 30 and at age 33 she went to her eternal home.

As a Christian, I am strengthened by my faith in Jesus Christ that we will be reunited for all eternity in the place that He promised to prepare for all who believe in Him. Now, that is the hardest part of my story to tell. My own health challenges are a little easier for me to discuss in detail.

I spent many years of my life in the television business. I was Executive Vice-President of Channel 23-TV in Dallas. That monumental project

took the days of my life for ten long years. I worked in China many years, going there first in 1981. I helped establish an eye clinic in Beijing that gives free eye care and surgery to the poor. I stayed overseas a good portion of my time with this project and my kidneys continued to function all during this time. However, in early 2001, after returning home from Beijing, I found myself in the same ESRD that had already taken the lives of my father and my daughter when they were in their early thirties. It seemed that at age 61, it had finally become my turn to fight the disease. I began to show symptoms rather quickly once my kidneys began to fail. It kept me feeling pretty lousy and the doctors told me that dialysis was my only hope of staying alive.

Was I afraid? Yes, of course I was! It's human nature to be afraid of the unknown. When your life is involved, you bet it can be very scary. I still had faith in the Word of God that I had first believed as a teenager, but I sure didn't know what to expect or what I would face. Would I die also? Would I feel miserably sick? How would this affect my busy, exciting life? Would I ever be normal again? I would lie awake at night feeling my body jerk involuntarily from the electrolyte imbalance caused by my kidneys' failure to rid me of the poisons that were accumulating. For sure, this was not a pleasant time in my life! Instead, it was a very upsetting and frightening time for me. I sought out people who could offer counsel, both medical and spiritual. I spoke with other transplant patients because I wanted to know and understand what lay ahead of me.

Finally I had to enter the hospital to have the "access" put into my arm to enable me to receive dialysis. I was almost petrified with fear just thinking about it. The access needs to be in place at least one month to heal properly before it can be used for dialysis. Exactly one month and three days after receiving my access, I found myself in the Acute Hemodialysis Unit of Dallas' Baylor Hospital. However, the treatment was not nearly as bad as I had feared, and I had a wonderful support system of family and friends surrounding me. Friends continually came by to visit and cheer me on. How I needed their visits and encouraging words. Thank God for others who truly love and care for us in our time of need, our own special angels.

Soon I began my regular treatments three days each week at the dialysis center. Many people have asked me, knowing what an active person I am, how in the world I dealt with having to lie completely still for five hours each Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Well, first of all, what choice did I have? I wanted to live, and dialysis was my only option at that time. I just remembered the lemon story, got busy, and decided to make good lemonade out of my situation. *I determined that I would conquer it and not let it conquer me!*

I began to meet and become friends with the other patients who were on the same “shift” that I was on at the dialysis center. I love people and I found each one to be interesting in his or her own unique way. Each seemed to have a different health trial to deal with. Most of them were dear, sweet people desperately trying to stay alive. Many of my fellow patients were amputees, others were blind, but most of them were optimistic, struggling to live in spite of their conditions. They became my own inspiration but they never knew it. *You see, you can be an inspiration and a blessing and never know how your life is touching others, regardless of what you are living through yourself.*

I soon began to look forward to being with my new friends at dialysis. I would be excited to arrive at the center each time. The honest truth from my heart is that there was never one day I was unhappy about having to go to the dialysis center. Sure, there were other ways I would rather have spent those hours. I had to pass up a lot of garage sales (my passion in life) en route to dialysis on Fridays (which is one of the best days for “g-sales”). I just had to look the other way! However, I never, not one time, felt anger or frustration because I had to spend my day on the machine. I was just so very grateful that there was a treatment that could help keep me alive. Some of the patients bitterly complained, as you can imagine. I certainly understood and felt for them in their own situations. When one feels bad, things can seem much worse than they actually are. Some of the patients entered dialysis with the mindset that they had been issued a death sentence. Because of that, they could become quite irritable and fussy. This made it much more difficult for them as well as for the medical staff trying to care for them.

I decided that the long hours I was facing on the dialysis machine should be used in a productive way, aside from purifying my blood. For many years people had asked me when I was going to write a book and for a long time I'd felt in my heart that I should write one, if only for my relatives and friends to read. So, guess what? I used nearly every one of the 635 hours I spent on the machine to write my book. Writing was a very difficult task for me in itself. My left arm was attached to the dialysis machine, leaving only my right hand to hold the paper and write at the same time. You cannot move while you are attached to the machine. I suppose you can understand the scenario and how hard that could be! But, in this situation, I now had the necessary hours to write a book that I never would have taken the time to do before. My life was far too busy for such.

Another thing that I enjoyed doing on my dialysis days was finding the interests of my fellow patients. One lady liked jewelry, another liked music boxes, etc. I would shop and find quaint little gifts for them that I thought would bring a little cheer and happiness (lemonade) into their lives. What joy I got out of taking special earrings to my sweet blind friend who adored wearing them. I tried my best to take a little bit of "lemonade" for others each treatment day. It became fun for me to go to dialysis, as strange as that may sound. I didn't miss a single group session or meeting of any kind. I had no complaints (that's usually what the meetings were for), but I would always go to each meeting and try to motivate and encourage those who were discouraged and depressed. And there were many who were! Life can be quite difficult for those living in sickness and pain, as well as those around them who love and care for them.

After months of testing, the day came that I was put on the list to receive a kidney transplant. May I insert the following right here? *Please give organ donation a thought.* You cannot take them with you and there are 104,063 ESRD patients on the list waiting to receive one kidney in order to live. At your death, you can enable two people to live by donating both your kidneys. It just takes one kidney to sustain life. Only 50 percent of dialysis patients can ever become candidates for a kidney transplant because in order to receive a transplant, you must be in good health otherwise. It's

a paradox but true. *Please do think about it.* This plea is coming from someone who has been on the list of the thousands in need of a donor kidney. *Thanks!*

The story of my donated kidney is such a miracle. June 4, 2002, I received a kidney from a live, unrelated donor, but a perfect match. Amy was a young wife and mother, a 28-year-old loving and unselfish woman. She laid down her life for me and she will forever be my HERO! The transplant surgery for both of us was very easy, almost a “piece of cake.” I stayed in the hospital for five days but my donor was out in just two days. Her recovery has been excellent and I have done extremely well with the exception of some side effects from the anti-rejection medications that we transplant patients must take.

Today I feel good and my new kidney is doing a great job for me! I’m once again able to travel and do just about anything I want to do. I’m one grateful “happy camper.” After my transplant it actually took me a while to quit missing my dialysis routine and the many friends I saw each M-W-F. I had made wonderful friendships and bonded with both patients and the medical staff. I will never forget them or the impact they had on my life during those years. Nor will I ever forget the hours of our lives that we spent together, lying on the machines which helped to keep us all alive. There’s a special bond between dialysis and transplant patients.

What sounded like a terrible situation that had come into my life actually turned my life around for the best because my outlook on life changed in many ways. I now see many things so drastically different from the way that I used to see them. Many of my former attitudes have changed dramatically, as they needed to. I no longer take my next breath for granted as I had done all my life. I’m so very grateful that my eyes can see, I can swallow food, etc. I believe strongly in being compliant with doctors’ orders. I have never missed one single pill of the thousands of anti-rejection medications I’ve had to take since my transplant years ago. And, I don’t plan to miss any of them in the future. I believe that God works through doctors! So what if I have a few occasional health “challenges” along the way? Hey, I’m doing great!

I once heard that challenges are what make life interesting, and overcoming them is what makes life meaningful. I feel that I have been given *a gift of extended life* and I'm most grateful. God has kept me by His mercy and grace for many years. The best advice I can give you if you are experiencing discouragement over a health or any other distressing issue is to trust in our heavenly Father, who will never fail us. The next thing is to cultivate a positive state of mind. Don't dwell on the negatives or the "what ifs"! I'm convinced that this has helped me to stay alive.

Just remember to quickly take those lemons being handed to you by life and make lemonade! Most of the time it's not fun. Sometimes it can be quite difficult, but make the best lemonade you possibly can. Then try sharing it with others. It has worked for me.

JUST DO IT

When I first started having health issues in 2001, I had to have many different tests and they certainly weren't fun. Some of them involved pain and, of course, nobody likes that. Dr. Vaughan always told me, "Geri, whatever they tell you to do, you just have to *do it*. No matter what comes along, you just have to *do it*." So "Do it" became my little motto.

As I got further into ESRD, there were a lot of tests that I had to endure. After my kidneys failed, I had to go on dialysis. Still, I had more to endure and had to just *do it*, just as the Nike slogan said. I had a lot of people praying for me. My friend Evangelist Benny Hinn, who has a beautiful healing anointing on his ministry, also was praying that God would restore my kidneys.

Because of my dream of getting out of the dialysis chair, I knew I was going to be fine. I knew that God was going to heal me somehow. I just didn't know how. I believed He was going to save my life and that I would be able to finish my course. I began to pray seriously and earnestly, as if my life depended on it ... and it did!

The night before I went on dialysis, the Holy Spirit told me that Jesus was perfected through the things that He suffered. "Though he were a Son,

yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered” (Hebrews 5:8). God does not punish. He does not put illness on us, satan does. But He is able to take situations that come into our lives and use them for our good. He will make good come out of them. What the enemy means for evil, God uses for good.

Hearing that word, I knew that I was going to have to go through some things before I would get my new kidney. I was not going to get an instantaneous miracle, even though God still does that sometimes. Knowing I had some valleys ahead of me, I felt I was being led to undergo transplant surgery and that’s what I did.

I went through nearly a year of dialysis before I received my transplant. The day before my surgery I was in tests at Baylor Hospital all day long. They dialyzed me for four hours so that my blood would be clean and at its best for surgery the next morning. I got home after midnight and and got absolutely no sleep because I had to be at the hospital at four a.m. that morning for surgery. Amy, my donor, and I had to do our last testing that morning and then they took Amy in for surgery about an hour before me. I sat there and waited for them to come for me. Finally they put me on the gurney, prepped me for surgery, and rolled me into the operating room. I crawled over onto the operating table, ready to get it over with!

I remember seeing all the many instruments and I thought, “Oh, my gosh, it looks like they could change a tire on a truck with those huge instruments.” I didn’t enjoy seeing them, believe me. I looked down at the end of the operating table and on the wall (they don’t use chalkboards anymore) was a dry erase board you write on with an erasable pen. It was a huge board and the only thing on it was a huge red check mark. It was identical to the Nike check mark that goes with their “Just do it” slogan. I already believed I had made the right decision about having the surgery, but to me the check mark was a sign from God. The Lord was saying, “Just do it” and I was there just doing it. I received my kidney transplant on June 4, 2002, and my new kidney immediately started working. It seems every year since then, I still have some trials to face, but I’ve learned to face

them head-on and “just do it,” like it or not. That little saying has helped push me on to victories with my health issues.

ENCOURAGING WORDS FROM HEAVEN

One Sunday morning as I sat in the service at Gates of Glory Church, the Holy Spirit spoke to me and told me to give a large sum of money to one of the visiting evangelists. Oh, me! Did I really hear from God? My mind started trying to muddy the waters as I questioned this. However, I am so thankful that I was obedient. Not one soul knew of this, only God in heaven. When the pastor called for the offering to be taken, I slipped out of my seat and quietly put the money into the evangelist's hand and returned to my seat.

Pastor Howard Richardson continued with his service. All of a sudden he stopped and walked down the aisle to the row where I was sitting and said to me, “May I pray for you?” These are the words that he began to speak:

“For this is a day like no other day that has been behind you. This day My power shall be made manifest upon your life. I will mark your life and you shall not taste death, but you shall see the Kingdom of God come with power, and I will touch your body and I will revive and restore and renew.

“The journey that is set before you is greater at times than what has been in your physical strength, but there also shall be a new healing. This is a new day and where you are going to go for the Lord and the ministry that has to be done will take a miracle from the Lord. God says He is causing a miracle this day in your joints and your bones and your blood and your sugar. God is going to touch your body in every way and it is going to begin to change. Little by little, you are going to begin to see the power of God step in because your heart is for people who do not know Jesus, that they may come to know Him. Every dollar that is needed is going to come, says the Lord. And it is going to be easier from this day forth than it has ever been, for I am imparting to you Holy Ghost ministry for the lost. A ministry shall begin to spring up and come out of you by the power of God.

“And I will cause your body to be touched from this day forward because of the years left and the time that is set before you. The end shall be greater than it is even now. The Lord will remove your afflictions and your healing will come into view and be manifest. You are not going to be sick anymore, you are not going to be weak anymore, you are not going to be stiff anymore, you are not going to be dragging down all the time. God is getting ready to lift you up and use you for His glory.”

After Pastor Richardson gave this prophetic word, I whispered to him that I was going to have to go on dialysis. This was his prayer in response to that: “God, we pray a miracle right now. Lord, revive those kidneys, revive them right now, God. Revive that body for Jesus. Not many want to work and want to go, and the ones that want to go, the enemy tries to afflict them. Jesus, heal this body today completely. Jesus, Your power is going to destroy this yoke today because China has to be evangelized. The Chinese have to find God as well as Jesus. We pray a miracle today. She is going to see multitudes come to the bleeding side of Calvary. She is going to be there. The Holy Ghost is going to take her there to see it. We rebuke this kidney problem that there won’t be any of this left in the body. The devil is not going to be able to keep you in Dallas on a dialysis machine. We’ve got places to go for Jesus.”

We know that we can never buy anything from God. His gifts are all free. However, I believe that giving the offering in obedience that morning to the other evangelist loosed heaven for me on that day and our Father smiled down on me. I heard words I needed to hear that day. Our God is so faithful!

MIRACLE EYES

Physician’s note:

Subsequent to her kidney transplant, Geri had to go on anti-rejection medications which caused problems with her eyes, namely the development of cataracts and glaucoma. There are so many good eyedrops that can be used to lower the pressure

in the eyes for glaucoma and she was started on glaucoma drops. But as the months went by, the pressure in her eyes continued to get higher and higher, so she was put on more and more drops to try to control the pressure. Finally she was on the maximum amount of drops that were available. Using so many drops every day caused irritation on her corneas which made her vision very poor. She was becoming very frightened because she felt like she was going blind since she couldn't see from the corneal irritation. Therefore, the drops had to be stopped temporarily and she was put on medication by mouth that can only be used for a short period of time because of her transplant until her corneas cleared up.

Cataract surgery was then done on her left eye, where not only was the cataract removed and an implant inserted, but also a laser was used on the inside of her eye to try to lower the pressure. Needless to say, this is very complicated surgery and during the surgery to make things even worse, the posterior portion of her eye started coming forward and creating a very, very, very difficult circumstance in surgery. But despite all this, God was with us and the Great Physician, Jesus Christ, finished that surgery very well. There is only one thing that remains in that eye as a reminder, which Geri has never even seen herself, but from a surgeon's standpoint I can see it. It's a tiny little hole in her iris, which is the blue part of her eye. Every time I look at her eye I see that little tiny hole and it reminds me all over again what a miracle that left eye is.

Then, with time, the right eye followed the same course with pressure uncontrolled on maximum medical therapy. At this point she was referred to a glaucoma specialist who did a combination glaucoma surgery and cataract removal at the same time. After surgery there were some serious complications, but all is well now. The glaucoma surgeon even calls her "the miracle lady" because of how well she has done with the surgery in the eye that he operated on.

HEALTH, A GIFT FROM GOD

I doubt that you will ever see much about this subject in print. I'm sure most of us know this and would be very quick to agree. However, I personally think that we should really acknowledge this and never let one day go by that we fail to thank our heavenly Father for our health.

I know that my own health experiences and challenges are very different from yours. However, we've all had illnesses and maybe even a few scares about our mortality.

I enjoyed good health throughout my life. Other than childhood diseases, my worst sickness was glandular fever (mononucleosis, "kissing" disease) which I caught from my fiancé who had acquired it a year or so earlier. At age thirty I began to lose my hearing which was caused by Alport syndrome (kidney disease) which I inherited from my father. Other than that, I went through life enjoying good health. But, I need to add here, I can't remember too many times ever really thanking God in a serious way for keeping me in good health. I would agree that I owed Him the praise, and that He was the reason I had my health. But I just never took it seriously enough to make it a matter of real gratitude to Him.

That all changed when I began to have some very serious health problems. In my mid-forties, after a horrible few months of acute pain, I was diagnosed with psoriatic arthritis, a very debilitating form of the disease. I went through years of chemotherapy treatment for it and I have had four major surgeries.

Kidney failure usually is a gradual loss of kidney function and Alport disease was very slow moving in my body. However, at age sixty-one I definitely began to experience severe problems from it. As I said in another chapter, I became very sick as a result. At that point I had to have surgery on my arm to implant the large *access* which will remain in my left arm as long as I live. It's a very good reminder to me of where I was and what He has done for me. It was used as an access for the needles which connect to the dialysis machine.

God showed His mercy upon my life. I went through the transplant with flying colors and today, eleven years later, I have wonderful kidney function due to the transplant, which is just another form of treatment for kidney failure (ESRD). When one has a transplant, in order to keep the “foreign” kidney inside the body without rejection, many different types of anti-rejection medications are required daily. (This is much better than spending five hours at the dialysis center three days each week.) However, there can be and usually are side effects from the medications. It’s impossible to know exactly which medicine will cause which side effect or problem.

I experienced two two-week long periods of almost complete blindness. I couldn’t see anything and was I scared! It was a side effect from my medications. Not having my hearing or my sight, I began to experience just a tiny bit of what Helen Keller must have lived with her entire life. I was under the care of three eye specialists and finally my eyesight returned. However, I have had many eye surgeries and procedures done to save my optic nerves. Cataracts and glaucoma were also a serious side effect I had from the anti-rejection medications so I had to have extensive surgery for that. At one time I was on nine different eyedrops each day.

I’ve had many serious bouts with *E. coli*, serious problems in both my arms, and neuropathy (no feeling) in my feet, which comes from diabetes. The diabetes is also a side effect from the medication I am on, so I take insulin five times each day for that. A fall caused multiple fractures in my right arm with detached muscles. I was under the care of an elbow surgeon and wound doctor for my left elbow for over one year. It is now all healed up. In September of 2007 I had major back surgery and I came through with flying colors in spite of being a high risk patient due to the transplant.

Do you see why I am so grateful to have life these days? Like the old saying goes, “We don’t appreciate it until we don’t have it.” Health is a true gift from God. He is the Giver of life!

I wrote the above chapter two days before I was rushed by ambulance to ICU in a Montana hospital for another health challenge! I spent my entire vacation in ICU in Kalispell, Montana, and again, God spared my life!

Based on Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network, survival rate of transplants performed from 1997 to 2004 using living donors. Data as of 07/13/2012:

<u>Years Post Transplant</u>	<u>Survival Rate</u>
1 year	97.9%
3 years	94.2%
5 years	90.1%

Excerpt from *Breaking Christian News*:

(Pisa, Italy)—The Italian news agency *ANSA* has reported that scientists at the Clinical Physiology Institute of the Pisa National Research Council followed the progress of 179 liver transplant recipients and found that 93.5 percent of those who were “religious worshippers” were still alive four years after their operation. Fewer of their non-religious counterparts survived.

In other words, according to the report, “The statistics suggest that the mortality rate for a liver transplant patient who does not believe in God is three times higher than for those who do—20.5 percent compared to 6.6 percent.”

October 22, 2001

Dearest Loved Ones,

I hope you will forgive me for this not being a personal handwritten note. However, if you’ve ever tried to read my handwriting you probably are much happier with me using my computer. At the present time I don’t have too much strength, so the computer is much easier for me. As for my health ... I began dialysis on Aug. 21st, after two stays in the hospital during the summer. Since that

time I am on a M-W-F schedule. I leave my home at 10 a.m. and return by 5 p.m. so it takes the entire day. God has given me such a beautiful facility where they do the dialysis. It's really almost like a modern beauty parlor, light and airy. The nurses and techs are all special people that I have grown to love and they do take very good care of us patients. Of course, the patients are all sweet people also. You tend to "bond" with others who are going through the same thing that you are going through. After all, we spend 4½ hours side by side every M-W-F.

I am doing very well and if you were to see me you would never know I had ESRD (end-stage renal disease). The best part is that I have lost a lot of weight which, of course, was fluid that my kidneys were not eliminating. I have been in numerous classes to educate me on the "dos and don'ts." I am on an extremely rigid diet for renal patients plus I can only have 32 oz. of fluid in a 24-hour period. Included in that 32 oz. is water used to swallow medicine, ice chips, popsicles or anything that becomes liquid at room temperature. Gone are the days of my giant Texas glasses of iced tea. Oh, how much I loved that! Dialysis patients have to keep their weight-gain down to 3 pounds (of fluid) between treatments. If you are not disciplined, you can bring on a lot of problems, including death. One of the functions of the kidneys is to eliminate fluid (urine) and with ESRD, the kidneys don't do this for you. So, you cannot allow fluid to build up around the heart and cause heart failure.

It seems that I'm sounding pretty much like an authority on ESRD these days. I have done exactly what I have been taught to do, nothing more, nothing less. So, I am thankful that I can give you such a good report on my road to health. I have also begun the work-up for my kidney transplant. I will be doing tests through the end of Nov. If a donor matches, I could have the surgery in 2 months. If I have to wait for a cadaver, it could be 1-5 years. Keep in mind, I am now 62 years young, so hopefully it will happen soon! I believe in miracles!

Please don't feel pity for me or be too concerned. I am in the hands of the Great Physician (Jesus) and feel like I am in His "ICU" during this time. If ever I have felt His hand of love upon me, it's now. He is working this for my good and I consider it my blessing to go through this with Him. He has promised all of us that He would go with us through the valley of the shadow of death ("For thou art with me" Psalm 23:4).

I want you to know that I appreciate your prayers, words of concern, calls, and the love you have shown me. Remember that you are very special to me. I hope to see you soon.

With all my love,

Geri Hudson Morgan

May 21, 2002

Dearest Loved Ones,

Many of you have asked that I keep you informed about my kidney situation so I am writing to tell you my good news!

Remember my dream of coming off the dialysis machine (in my Christmas letter)? Unless God sends an instant miracle, I am scheduled to have a kidney transplant June 4, 2002. It will be done at Baylor Hospital in Dallas, at 9:30 a.m. All of my potential donors failed the screening test for tissue match. I am on a "beeper," but without a "living donor" the wait for a cadaver kidney can be five years or more. However, one of my potential donors was a "*perfect match*"! She is a "non-related donor," as they are referred to. She is a dear friend who has been like a daughter to me for many years, Amy Brock. I met her when she was three months old! She is now a twenty-eight-year-old mommy, with a husband and three little

kids. Upon hearing of my need, she said, "I have to do this for Geri." Those around her assured her that she would never match up! AMAZING! After tests, the kidney doctors were amazed, and thought we had to be mother/daughter since the match is so perfect. Can you imagine how my heart feels toward her? There's not a long line of people willing to give you one of their kidneys! As we know, "Every good and perfect gift cometh down from the Father."

Both she and I went through three months of testing to assure the doctors that we are in good enough physical condition to undergo the surgeries. We will have to take some last-minute tests before surgery, but at this time all things look great. I already know to expect a lot more needle sticks! We shall do our very best and trust the Lord to watch over us.

I am looking forward to returning to a life not dependent upon sitting five hours each M-W-F in the dialysis chair. Thank God I have been able to undergo the treatments, but I am most grateful and look forward to a more normal life. I shall truly miss my friends and the medical people whom I've shared many hours of my life with this past year. I've met some truly inspiring people. My life will never be the same for this experience and **I'm so very thankful** that I have lived through this.

This past year I have come to appreciate everything in such a greater way. I am so much more aware of the seemingly little things that I once took for granted. I have good eyesight to see God's beautiful creation. I can walk on two healthy legs (many of my dialysis friends are blind, amputees, and several have died). There are so many things that I just took for granted that have now become so very precious to me. Please listen to me. Don't do as I did! **Never take your health for granted. It is a gift from God, so be thankful to Him for it!** Also, I have become so very aware of the importance and need for organ donation (kidneys, eyes, heart, liver, etc.). Please give this some thought ... from one who's been there in need!

I appreciate your prayers, love, and concern. It's because of those prayers that I am in excellent health and doing so well. Please keep me on your prayer list. I'm resting in the arms of the Lord Jesus and trust Him for my life! My love to you and yours.

Always your friend,

Geri

MY GREAT MIRACLE FROM MY FATHER

As I write this chapter in this book, I am on a plane en route to Montana where I shall be visiting and recuperating for a week. I am most excited about this trip for lots of reasons, the main one being that this is my first trip away from home in a year and a half. When one is on dialysis, travel is almost nonexistent. So, how is it that I am able to make this journey? I had a kidney transplant. That has taken me out of the dialysis chair, just as God showed me in the dream. I received my new kidney on June 4, 2002, at Baylor Hospital in Dallas, Texas. Let me tell you the miracle of my donated kidney.

My good friend, Dr. Vaughan, adopted a baby girl in 1974. I watched Amy grow up, never knowing the invaluable part that she would play in my life twenty-eight years later. Amy learned of my kidney failure and asked to visit with me at the dialysis center. Visitors had to get special permission before they were allowed in the room where patients were being dialyzed. She saw firsthand the life that end-stage renal disease brings to its victims.

As she says, it broke her heart and she could not stand to see me attached to a machine for the rest of my life. Immediately she began inquiring about becoming a donor for me (donate one of her kidneys to me). I was truly amazed that she was willing to do this for me. As I have said many times, there is not a long line of people volunteering to give you one of their kidneys, much less to go through the pain and ordeal of surgery. I continually asked her about her decision. I just could not stand to see or think of her or anyone suffering on my behalf. That was just unthinkable

to me. Many people tried to discourage her from doing it; however, she was not to be dissuaded, thank God!

Soon she began preliminary testing to see if she might be a candidate. These same discouraging people realizing that they could not talk her out of it, then said, "Don't worry, you'll never match so you won't have to do it anyway." This is very rare between non-related people. My first cousin, a nurse, offered to donate a kidney to me, but she failed the test and was quickly ruled out.

After Amy's preliminary tests I got a call from the pre-transplant coordinator who was very excited and amazed. She tried all day to contact me via phone to no avail. She finally reached me late in the evening. Her first words to me were, "How is Amy related to you?" I quickly said she was not related to me, but was the adopted daughter of my friend. She asked me a second time what relation Amy was to me. Again I told her, "None whatsoever." She got even more excited as she tearfully told me that Amy appeared to be a perfect match, better and closer than most blood related donors. She and I both cried a bit on the phone as we realized that it looked like we were going to experience a miracle.

Amy flew to Dallas and continued with the more advanced tests done by the Transplant Institute. After a few days of various tests, she returned to my condo, where we discussed the events of her day. She laughed as she told me, "The doctor thought you were my mother," the match was so good! I added fuel to the joke by telling her that I had held a deep, dark secret from her for many years ... I was actually her birth mother. Of course, she knows she is adopted so we shared some giggles over that one.

The surgery date was set for June 4, 2002, so we both made preparations to undergo our surgeries at that time. We were both advised of the risks involved. I attended the numerous required transplant support group sessions to learn as much as possible about every aspect of kidney transplantation. It was there I learned that only fifty percent of dialysis patients are ever considered for a transplant and the waiting list for donors can be five years or more. I was told that a transplant is not a cure but is

another form of treatment. Most transplant patients have to take massive amounts of medication, which is an easy trade-off from fifteen hours each week on the dialysis machine!

I wore a beeper in the event a kidney became immediately available. With Amy's available kidney I did not need that, as God had provided a live donor for me, a live donor being the best. God suddenly provided a ram for Abraham to sacrifice in place of his son, Isaac, at the last moment. When it looked doubtful that I would get a kidney, God provided a ram on my behalf, in the form of Amy's left kidney, and saved my life. I live today because of it.

After my transplant I was immediately put on about forty pills and five insulin shots per day. I also had four eyedrops daily to protect my eyes from the massive amount of steroids I have to take for anti-rejection. Anti-rejection meds are a must for any person living with a transplanted organ. I've had no problem with my new kidney, but I have had some serious side effects from the medications, including glaucoma.

In October of 2002 I became quite ill with an E. Coli infection in my bladder, new kidney, lungs, and bloodstream while visiting in Florida. I had to be carried aboard a plane and rushed to Baylor Hospital in Dallas for another hospital stay where I received excellent medical care. I've never been that sick nor do I ever want to be again. I now know what it feels like to be "near death."

The new kidney transplant stayed perfect throughout the episode. Thank God, once again He rescued me and saved my life for His purposes. I have a small plaque on my bedroom wall with this written on it: "YESTERDAY HE HELPED ME, TODAY HE DID THE SAME! HOW LONG WILL THIS CONTINUE? FOREVER, PRAISE HIS NAME!" (Author unknown) The sweet Holy Spirit spoke these words to my heart, "You do your best and I'll do the rest." How hard I try to uphold my part of the deal!



**Geri on the dialysis machine beginning to write
this book (see book lying on tray)**



Geri and Baby Amy



Geri and Amy after surgery

I think the words of these two beautiful songs written by Brother Andrae Crouch express my heart perfectly:

How can I say thanks
For the things You have done for me?
Things so undeserved
Yet You give to prove Your love for me.
The voices of a million angels
Cannot express my gratitude,
All that I am or ever hope to be
I owe it all to Thee.
To God be the glory!

The other one so perfectly conveys my feelings about my entire ESRD (kidney failure). For, through it all, I have learned to trust in the Lord Jesus.

Through it all,
through it all,
I've learned to trust in Jesus,
I've learned to trust in God.
Through it all,
through it all,
I've learned to depend upon His Word.

For if I'd never had a problem,
I wouldn't know God could solve them,
I'd never know what faith in God could do.

I shall live and fulfill the call God placed on my life. He has sustained my life for His purpose, not my own. Thank You, my Lord and Savior.

Until He calls me home, I shall continue to play the notes, while He makes the music.

I Play the Notes, but He Makes the Music

11/01	Book started
09/13	Book completed
04/03/12	Prophecy about book

Pastor Howard Richardson spoke these words under the anointing of God to me:

“These things have to be finished. What I have for you and what I’ve given you even in writing of books has to be finished. It has to be finished. I am keeping you till the work is done. It has to be done. Satan cannot cut your life short until what I have ordained is fulfilled and completed.”

If you would like to accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior and secure an eternal home in heaven, pray the following prayer now from your heart:

Father,

I ask You, in the name of Jesus, to forgive my sins. Wipe them completely away with the blood of Jesus, and give me a brand-new start in life. I accept Your Son, Jesus, as my Savior. I ask Him to step onto the throne of my heart and be my Lord, Master, and King. I believe Jesus was born of a virgin by Your miraculous power and was raised from the dead after three days in the grave. Thank You for hearing my prayer, for cleansing me from all my sins, for embracing me as Your child, and for preparing a home for me in heaven with You. I pray this prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.

OTHER RECOMMENDED READING:

An Instrument in God's Hand, by Dr. Elizabeth Vaughan



Appendix

ENCOURAGING WORDS

A minister

What a testimony you have for the Lord and His goodness. We need to hear more of this, as it encourages the unbelievers to realize that Jesus is alive and well.

Rev. Gwen Shaw, minister for over sixty years. Ministered in over one hundred countries as a missionary, even to presidents and kings. Founder, End-Time Handmaidens and Servants.

It is wonderful to hear of the Lord's sustaining power in your life, the recovery from illness to write your book! I'm sure it is greatly inspired and will touch many lives.

Transcriber of this book

I typed your tapes and laughed, cried, and was truly blessed.

Elizabeth, a nurse

Surely your steps are ordered by the Lord. What an exciting life you live. I would like to come visit you, sit at your feet, and listen to you share words of wisdom. I am so excited about your book. I can hardly wait to read it.

A couple from Texas

We always find your writing inspirational and uplifting. Your positive attitude and ability to reach out to others comes through in all of your writings.

Shirley, a nurse

I am so touched and inspired by your life's journey and how you've handled it.

A bookkeeper

I am keeping your Christmas letter with my Bibles as a comforting affirmation of the Lord's presence in our lives.

TV evangelist

I am sitting here looking at my birthday card. You have a gift for writing. I read your letter and cried and cried because it touched my heart. Even the envelope makes me happy. God has blessed you to bring joy to many.

A nephrologist (kidney doctor)

You have a gift for narrative and direct communication, with meaning and feeling. You have a way of touching all sorts of folks. I'm looking forward to your book. I know it will be an inspiration to patients, doctors, and nurses.

Betty, in Virginia

Whoever asked you to write about your life really hit the jackpot. You are an inspiration.

A doctor

I admire your gallantry and resourcefulness in overcoming and surmounting the very considerable challenges life has confronted you with.

Another minister

I love your honesty and encouragement. I cried and cried when I read the chapter.

Dorothy, a writer

Your testimony is in exact harmony with what I'm trying to impart in my book. However, you've been there and I haven't. My prayer is that I can encourage others to be like you.

From China

Thanks for the chapter. What a wonderful treat. I was moved by it.

Another minister

You are quite a writer. I smiled all the way through reading your book review. I love to read anything you write.

A nurse

The highlight of my Christmas is receiving your Christmas letter.

A note from the East Coast

I can't wait to read your book. You are remarkable. I save your Christmas letters and reread them periodically because they are so interesting. You have a true courageous heart, Geri. I salute you.

A pre-med student

You have a great spirit and enthusiasm toward life that I really admire.

A journalism major

Yours has been an inspiring journey of faith, family, and friends. What amazing experiences and opportunities you have had to touch so many people and make a difference in their lives.

A minister

You are such a marvelous testimony of God's goodness!

A friend

Reading your Christmas letter each year has become one of the important things of the holidays.

A medical technician

While reading your Christmas letter I felt the love of Christ. Though it is directed to many, it felt personal and brought me joy. I can see why many, year after year, look forward to receiving it.

An evangelist

Your lemonade chapter was truly a blessing and a faith-builder. I'll share it with others as it was truly encouraging. I feel I know you so much better now.

A sweet Christian lady

I enjoyed your Christmas letter so much. It lifted my spirit so much that I read it to my friend. She asked for a copy of it to read to her husband who is in grave condition.

Other nice comments

You have taken heartache, sadness and sorrow, and made something positive out of them. You seem to thrive in spite of adversities, and are an example of God's perfect will in our lives.

Your most challenging life is so inspirational that I'm sending copies of the chapter to two of my friends that have cancer.

PROPHETIC WORDS

Through **Kathryn Kuhlman, 1973**

Full Gospel Businessmen's International meeting, Statler Hilton Hotel, Dallas, Texas.

"Dear Jesus, right now the power of God ... I give You praise, wonderful Jesus, the spiritual hunger that is there ... Blessed is he who hungers and thirsts after righteousness for he shall be filled. Oh, I give You praise, wonderful Jesus, I give You glory. Holy Spirit, continue to come upon this body. *As long as you live, remember Kathryn Kuhlman had nothing to do with this whatsoever.*" (Words were spoken by the Holy Spirit to me. I recognized their source!) I was thirty-three years old.

Through **Rev. Marvin Crow, 03/18/78**

"I have given you hands of faith that will take you into kings' palaces. You shall be in the presence of both small and great. I have anointed you and I have gifted you. I will make you a blessing unto many, saith God."

Through **Rev. Aquilla Wilkins Nash, 03/23/78**

"You will stand amazed at the door of opportunity to minister unto a vast multitude of people. I have placed My Word within you and anointed your ministry."

Through **Rev. Chuck Flynn, 05/24/80**

“Your hands are anointed.”

Through **Rev. Maryiann Sitton, 08/30/95**

“You don’t know how many nations you are going to affect. The anointing of a minstrel is a special anointing. It isn’t like playing for a church service; it’s a gift. You are handpicked by God with a very unusual, powerful anointing. You have had a challenge in life because of the psalmist in you.”

Through **Rev. Howard Richardson, 04/15/01** (four months *before* dialysis started and fourteen months before my kidney transplant)

“My power shall be made manifest upon your life, My daughter. This shall be a day that I’ll mark your life and you shall not taste death. For I will touch your body and restore and renew. The journey that is set before you is greater at times than what has been in your physical strength. But, there shall be a new healing. Where you are going to go for the Lord and ministry shall take a miracle. I will cause your body to be touched to finish the work that you are going to be a part of. You’re not going to be sick or weak. God is getting ready to use you for His glory. His power is going to destroy this yoke because China has to be evangelized. You’re going to see multitudes come to Calvary. You’re going to be there. The Holy Ghost is going to take you there to see it. You’re not going to stay in Dallas on a machine. You have places to go for Jesus.”

Through **Rev. David Oblander, 05/18/01** (one year before transplant)

“As you look unto Me I will be your preserving strength. Even as I have preserved you from death in past days and kept you in dangerous situations, so I shall preserve you. I will give you connections and I will give you favor with man. I will put you in high places that I might use you to influence My kingdom in those places.”

Prayer through **Rev. Sigi Oblander, founder of Women of Vision, international evangelist and author, 05/18/01** (before dialysis started)

“I thank You that Geri will walk in the miraculous power of God. Thank You that she lets the wind blow in her face and she’s not afraid to face the wind like a mature eagle. Give her peace and rest, knowing that her life

is totally in Your hands, that the limitations of her body will not stop her destiny, in Jesus' name. Amen."

Through **Rev. Maryiann Sitton, 09/12/02**

"It hasn't entered into your mind or thinking what God has prepared for you or the awesomeness of how He will use you when you play. They will fall under the power, be healed, run and dance. It will be amazing. After all these years of loss and pain, you will never be the same. Those years are rolled away and you will gain in strength from day to day. God has totally liberated you from all the past with its sorrow. He's with you in a way that you never dreamed of. People will say, 'How can this be?'"

MY FAVORITES

Rule for Christian Living

Do all the good you can,
By all the means you can,
In all the ways you can,
In all the places you can,
At all the times you can,
To all the people you can,
As long as ever ... you can.

John Wesley

Indian Prayer

Great Spirit,
Grant that I may not criticize my neighbor
Until I have walked a mile in his moccasins.

Small minds talk about people.
Average minds talk about things.
Great minds talk about ideas.

Author Unknown

Every person on this earth is like a violin. Whatever wood we are made of, whatever unique and distinct qualities we have, the music is always the purest and most beautiful when we put ourselves in the hands of the Master.

Author Unknown

IT TAKES A MUSICIAN

“He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God” (Psalm 40:3).

When Ira D. Sankey went to York, England, on one occasion to assist Dwight L. Moody in a revival campaign, he asked the deacon of the church for a little organ with which to accompany his solos. The deacon, who did not care much for organs, said grudgingly that there was a small harmonium they used to have years ago. It got out of tune in some way and was put in one of the upper rooms of the chapel.

Mr. Sankey and the deacon went up, pulled aside the rubbish, brushed away the dust, and brought out the instrument. Sankey sat down and began to play and sing as only that great song evangelist could. The deacon, astonished, said, “I didn’t know there was any music in that thing! Why, it is sweet; it is quite a good harmonium.” Then he looked at Mr. Sankey and said, “Look here. I believe you put music into it before you brought it out.”

So he did! Every great musician does. Organs do not play, nor do harps; it takes the musician to do that. If we give ourselves up to Christ, He will take our whole being and put us in tune. Only thus can we be instruments of usefulness to those about us.

Author Unknown

THE SECRET TO OPENING A ROSE

Once a little boy was trying to open a flower bud. Under his persistent efforts the blossom fell apart in his hands. Exasperated, he looked at his mother and asked, "Why does the bud fall apart when I try to open it, but when God opens it the flower is beautiful?" Then he answered his own question, "Oh, I know! When God opens the flower, He opens it from the inside."

That story demonstrates the difference between being conformed and being transformed. The former forces someone's personhood or a group's identity from the outside. The latter opens up the individual or the community from the inside. The difference in results is dramatic. When God opens persons from the inside, they can be the uniquely gifted individuals they were created to be, revealing dimensions of God's grace in a particular combination that no one else can.

Marva J. Dawn in *Morning by Morning* (Eerdmans)

THE BANK ACCOUNT

This came across the Internet, author unknown:

A ninety-two-year-old, petite, well-poised, and proud man, who is fully dressed each morning by eight o'clock, with his hair fashionably coifed, and shaved perfectly, even though he is legally blind, moved into the nursing home today. His wife of seventy years recently passed away, making the move necessary. After many hours of waiting patiently in the lobby of the nursing home, he smiled sweetly when told his room was ready.

As he maneuvered his walker to the elevator, I provided a visual description of his tiny room, including the eyelet sheets that had been hung on his window. "I love it," he stated with the enthusiasm of an eight-year-old having just been presented with a new puppy. "Mr. Jones, you haven't seen the room, just wait," I said. "That doesn't have anything to do with it," he replied.

“Happiness is something you decide on ahead of time. Whether I like my room or not doesn’t depend on how the furniture is arranged; it’s how I arrange my mind. I already decided to love it. It’s a decision that I make every morning when I wake up. I have a choice. I can spend the day in bed recounting the difficulty I have with the parts of my body that no longer work, or get out of bed and **be thankful** for the ones that do. Each day is a gift, and as long as my eyes open, I’ll focus on the new day and all of the happy memories I’ve stored away, just for this time in my life.”

Older age is like a bank account. You withdraw what you’ve put into it. So, my advice to you would be to deposit a lot of happiness in the bank account of memories.

It’s a great decision and one that I am choosing to follow.

FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVE ASKED

Many people have asked me to write a brochure with tips on buying at garage sales, so here are some things I have learned through the years:

1. Never be afraid to get your hands dirty. If that is a problem, wear rubber gloves to look through dirty items. If this is still a concern, forget “g-saling,” as you will never make it. It’s not for you—go home! Remember, it takes patience. You can spend half a day looking and come home empty-handed. Usually you find something you like or you might come home with your car loaded with treasures.
2. Look through even the worst-looking, insignificant boxes. Some real treasures may be in them, as most folks think nothing could possibly be in such a box. They overlook it, you find it! It’s yours to keep.
3. Never look or act excited when finding a rare or good piece. If the owner sees or hears your excitement or reads your body language, the price will suddenly go up, or they will choose not to sell it. “Oh, that was Aunt Suzie’s and I better not sell that piece. Sorry.”
4. When shopping thrift stores, never divulge to others what treasures you found in the store or the price that you paid for them. Should that info get back to the shop, they will immediately “screen” their merchandise more carefully and good pieces will be sent to antique dealers or they will raise the prices.
5. Don’t think of going with someone who doesn’t share your passion for junk shopping. They will quickly “rain on your parade.” Your fun time will be ruined listening to them complain about it being so dirty and a waste of time. It might be a lot more fun to just go alone!
6. Buy old antique pieces even if you don’t like, want, or need them. They can be resold to a dealer, sometimes at a hundred times what you paid for them.
7. Always be sure electronic items are working before you put your money down. Most garages have an electrical outlet and it’s better to be safe than sorry. I learned the hard way!

8. Stationery and note cards, etc., can be bought very cheaply ... even new Christmas cards. I never buy paper goods unless they are of the highest quality. You then can use it for correspondence, giving a very professional and expensive look. It has cost you very little and no one knows the difference.
9. I've gone to g-sales when it was literally freezing, with ice all over the ground. Not many people are that fanatic, which means more finds for you, as there is not much competition out there with you. And, too, the people giving the sale realize that and will sell cheaper just to be able to go inside where it is warm.
10. Pick up nice gift boxes (Tiffany, Neiman Marcus, Polo, etc.) and use with merchandise of the same name; i.e., a Polo box at one sale with a Polo item from another sale and you've got a "Polo gift" to give someone. It looks nice and you haven't spent much. Of course, we are talking about new items, ones never used.
11. If you have certain patterns of china, crystal, etc., look for and buy the single pieces you may find at sales. Buy one item at a time, several times, and you have a pretty full set of nice stuff. I have a friend who has done this and has cabinets full of Fostoria and other expensive pieces. It's been done one piece at a time.
12. Carry a magnifying glass with you so that you can easily identify better pieces. Most valuable pieces will be marked with the maker's logo/name brand but not always. Generally, items from Italy, Czechoslovakia, France, and Germany are good ones.
13. If looking for high quality clothes, look through all the clothes (junk and all) on the rack. You never know what's squeezed in between ... maybe even a Chanel. I've found them that way. Never buy clothes that cannot be washed or cleaned.
14. Always ask the seller for their best price (g-sales). Never pay what it's marked unless that's the only way you can purchase it. If you can't live without it, go for it. When asking for a bottom price, ask in a very disinterested tone of voice, with not much enthusiasm over the piece. Hold it in your hand as if it is a very dirty item which you really don't care to buy unless it is very cheap; use "body language."
15. Shopping at homes in older neighborhoods can be good hunting grounds, especially if it belonged to a little old lady who never

threw anything away. They usually have wonderful antiques, old household pieces, as well as good antique costume jewelry.

16. I shop in used goods shops where the homeless do their shopping. These people usually are looking for warm clothes and blankets and not for antiques or higher quality items. So, these things remain on the shelf for you and me to look through. Also, when shopping in these places, do not act excited over a “find.” Walk out slowly, smiling, and watch around you for your safety. Never go to these places after dark! It’s really best to have a friend with you when you go into these very low-end stores.
17. I never buy anything that isn’t of the highest quality. I’d rather spend five dollars for an item worth fifty dollars than go to a retail shop and spend five dollars on something worth only five dollars.
18. I prefer g-sales to estate sales, as things are always much, much cheaper and you can find some excellent buys when they are not being sold by an “expert dealer.”
19. I prefer to shop at sales that look extremely messy rather than those all organized. Same at the flea markets. The “junkier” the better has been my experience.
20. Don’t expect to find clean diamonds (items), as they are always in the rough! You must bring them home and clean them up ... then everyone is amazed at your beautiful find. They were completely overlooked because of the layers of dirt on them.
21. When going to g-sales, never adorn yourself with fancy, expensive jewelry or designer clothes. When g-saling try to “dress down,” in jeans, etc. A gold ring on your finger can easily raise prices very quickly. Also, it may not be too safe to wear a lot of jewels among some of the bad element out there in today’s world. Should you happen to find a sale and you are dressed up but just can’t miss it, simply turn your rings around—turn your diamonds into the palm of your hand and leave only the gold band showing on top of your finger. Also, if you do drive an expensive car (aren’t they all expensive these days?) try to park where it cannot be seen by the one holding the g-sale. That can help hold down prices, too.
22. Remember that all used goods are usually pretty dirty. I buy only things which I can safely clean/even sterilize before using.

23. Don't be afraid to hit sales near closing time. By this time people are ready to sell at any price just to be finished. Some of my best finds have come at closing time; i.e., a ten-thousand dollar Hammond organ, bench, speaker and "sideman" (plays all kinds of percussion for you) and a two-foot stack of music ... all for three hundred dollars at closing time.
24. Even if you have money to spend, don't act like it. A rich "air" is easily picked up, so try and be an "average Joe," mixing in with the other shoppers. No designer billfolds!
25. Don't be afraid to say, "I bought the same item at another sale for \$2.50," but never lie or exaggerate. Maybe they will match the price you paid. It's okay to say, "Oops, that's too high for my pocketbook." Doesn't hurt to try.
26. At g-sales, gather up a load of stuff in your arms and ask, "What will you take for all of this?" Most don't want to have to look or sort through the items and will just take what you offer them. Exception to this is when there are several different people participating in the sale and they have separate money ... a pain to both them and you.
27. If you find an item that you simply must have, buy it at that moment, even if they say, "Well, I don't know, as that belongs to Suzie and she's not here." Push hard for a price and try to buy it then!
28. Look for brand-name boxed items that have never been used. These can make great Christmas gifts or other occasions when you feel at ease doing it that way. Many times I give my finds to people as gifts, saying, "I found this while out shopping and couldn't resist buying it for you." If worded that way, if there is a flaw or a spot, they know that I picked it up "someplace" other than a retail shop.
29. Always be on the lookout for things that other people like or collect. Nice things that I see may not work for me but will be just exactly what they will love to have. They were not there to buy it and you were.

Maybe some of these tips will help in your Saturday shopping. For me, shopping at garage sales has been my favorite pastime. My challenge is to spend fifty cents or less on my “finds.” Several times I have come home with 18K diamond rings which I bought for twenty-five cents. You wonder how this is possible. The rings were filthy and most people probably overlooked them, thinking they were only costume jewelry. With a little bit of patience, you, too, can become an excellent shopper!

