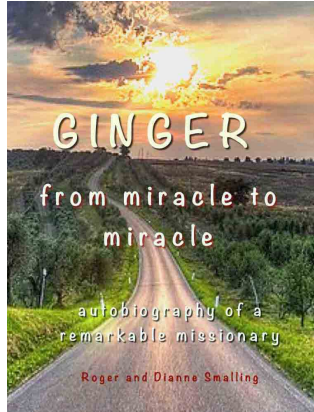


From miracle to miracle

The autobiography of a missionary
to the communist world



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Table of Contents

Forward

Chapter 1: 'til Death Do Us Part

Chapter 2: Culture Shock

Chapter 3: Choose Jesus or Me

Chapter 4: Learning to Be Led

Chapter 5: Healing and Addicts

Chapter 6: Crushed and Called

Chapter 7: Haiti

Chapter 8: England

Chapter 9: Smuggling Bibles on Ships

Chapter 10: Czechoslovakia

Chapter 11: Boxcars of Bananas

Chapter 12: Muslims

Chapter 13: Nuremberg

Chapter 14: Hitchhiking to Holland

Chapter 15: Looking Back

Chapter 16: Growing Pains

Chapter 17: Ministry to Military

Chapter 18: England to China

Epilogue

Postscript

Forward

Ginger was Dianne Smalling's mother. Ginger was a missionary to the communist world before the Iron Curtain fell. This call led her around the world, both to Eastern Europe and Asia.

Gratitude to God for bringing her out of a desperate situation in early life to a ministry of adventure and miracles motivated Ginger to write her autobiography.

The events are not necessarily chronological because she had another intent than entertaining with adventures. She wanted to express the lessons God taught her through these events to prepare others for spiritual warfare in ministry where Satan has strongholds.

Ginger was not a theologian. She was an evangelist with a big heart for people and a gift of exhortation and encouragement. If the reader keeps the above in mind, Ginger will have succeeded in preparing you for spiritual warfare and how to win.

A travel partner, usually a person in training, always accompanied Ginger. She refrained from mentioning their names in the book for reasons of “security” during those tense years. We knew these people personally, and they authenticated for us the narrations in this book. Of some of the events, we were eyewitnesses.

Edited by Ginger's daughter Dianne Smalling and her husband, Roger.

Chapter 1: 'til Death Do Us Part

Mississippi, August 1945

The telegram came as a complete surprise. "Bring wedding dress and meet me in Wilmington to be married." My fiancé, Wings, had spent fourteen months as a P-47 Thunderbolt pilot, fighting in Europe during World War II.

Recent letters had indicated the whole squadron would go directly to the Pacific for two more years of war. What could have happened to reverse the orders? I was too overjoyed to worry long about this, as my mother and I packed my wedding dress carefully into a suitcase. I had been preparing for this moment for over a year, and now it had finally arrived.

The trains were crowded in July 1945. For most of the two-day journey, Mother and I took turns standing or sitting with the precious wedding box between us in the aisle. I had decided to leave it in the box to keep from wrinkling the long train of the dress.

We had corresponded on more or less a daily basis since Wings left. I began to reminisce as the wheels of the train went clickety-clack.

I remember it began two years before, when my mother and I attended a U.S.O. dance held for military men in our hometown. My mother loved going to watch us dance, and I did the Grand Ball that night.

I did not see Wings but later heard he was standing as I danced by. He remarked to a friend, "That's the girl I'm going to marry." But it was months before he actually called to ask me out. For various reasons, after we had planned to spend the evening together, he would have to go on duty, or I would have to break our appointment.

Then he was transferred to another base in another city for further training. I soon forgot about him in the rush of so many lonely soldiers who came to our home to visit.

However, Wings was transferred back to Jackson, Mississippi. Although I was going fairly regularly with a young airman from Chicago, I found myself more and more attracted to this young airman who was about to graduate as a pilot. He asked me to pin his wings on his uniform. At that moment I began using the nickname *Wings* as a special name for him, and he began to call me *Bunny*. When I pinned the insignia on his uniform, he surprised me by bringing out an exact copy of a smaller pair of wings that he pinned on my dress as well. Again, he had to leave, this time for special training before going overseas to war.

It was a time of mixed emotions. I was barely eighteen and found myself falling in love through the letters he wrote with beautiful pictures he drew at the top of the pages. I felt I knew him best through his letters, for in reality we had very few dates. The year 1944 was like that. Emotions were near the surface during wartime.

Then there had been that earlier telegram in which he asked my mother and me to meet his mother in Delaware. Before going to war, Wings had asked me to marry him upon returning. We both expected that to be a short time, but the weeks dragged into 14 months.

Looking back was useless. It was 1945, and I was in love and on my way to my wedding and a marriage that was going to last forever.

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When we arrived in Delaware, I learned most of the men from Wings' squadron did indeed go on to the Pacific Theater to fight for two more years. Wings and another man were sent home on a rest and recuperation leave for thirty days. It never occurred to me what that meant. I only considered myself the luckiest girl in the world, and we eagerly prepared for our wedding.

I remember how hard it rained that day. We had to dress in the church. His aunt was the matron of honor and became so tense I spent an hour trying to calm her down and dry her tears. It was a candlelight wedding, and he sang to me as I came down the aisle. I was so happy!

Afterward we had a hectic reception with my groom dashing here and there to round up more soft drinks for guests. During the war, sodas were scarce. I remember looking down at my new wedding ring and thinking, *I don't feel any different being married*. I thought somehow I would feel different.

Then we were off, driving to the Poconos Mountains, where a room had been reserved in an exclusive hotel. We were ecstatic.

When we got to the room, I went into the bathroom to change from my traveling suit. I was very shy, as I suppose most brides are on their wedding night. When I opened the door to the room, suddenly I was thrown across the bed, and Wings had taken off his belt with his other hand and began beating me. I could not believe what was happening. The belt came down, whap! whap!

I began to scream. He grabbed the guest towels and shoved one into my mouth, then clamped his hand over it as he got near my ear, saying, "Don't you see, you are so beautiful. Don't you see? I have to hurt you because I love you." I felt suffocated as a pillow was thrust over my face. I passed out.

The next thing I recall, I was considering scrambling for the door. I saw that my husband was sitting dejectedly on the side of the bed, his back to me, with his head in his hands. "Don't you see? They are coming. The planes are diving. They are shooting at us." His eyes, as he looked up, were distant, wild with fear.

I remembered visiting with some of the local wives at the Army hospital where their husbands were shell-shocked from the war, some of whom no longer recognized their own family. *So that's it*, I thought. *That's why Wings and the other man were sent home, while their squadron continued on to fight elsewhere*. I felt a rush of love for him, and in that moment I made up my mind: *if I loved him enough, he would get well. If I just loved him enough*.

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We were going to have a 30-day honeymoon until Wings broke out in boils from head to foot. He had to cut away his trouser legs and other areas where the clothes rubbed the boils. I caught the boils too and we limped back to his mother's home in Wilmington. Wings was put in the hospital. I did not mention to her what had happened.

There was a bright spot during our thirty-day leave. The war in Europe ended. I truly believed that since war had brought on this sickness, then with peace it would go away. I reminded myself that *if I loved him enough, he had to get well.*

The boils went away but the beatings and tortures continued on a daily basis. The timing of the beatings was as regular as clockwork. Everything would be peaceful and happy until he made love to me. Each time was preceded by torture first. The strangest part was that he tried to reason with me as if I were supposed to understand that if he loved me, he had to hurt me first. I hated this part of our life but if I resisted, he became gleeful at my resistance. I had no one to talk to about this.

One of our first purchases was a big family Bible. I remember it cost a lot and I bought it from someone who came to the door selling Bibles. Wings and I would sometimes read it out loud together. But Christ was not a part of our lives and though I had gone to Sunday school as a child, this was not anything that caused me to have a real relationship with Christ.

So now my love for my husband continued but was mixed with fear. I was slowly becoming controlled by him. He chose the clothes I wore. The only colors he liked me in were brown or beige. No one seemed to notice my limited wardrobe.

When we went out for a meal, he ordered what I should eat instead of allowing me to look at the menu. When our meals came, he ate part of mine as well as his. Sometimes he would play at "cat and mouse" concerning the food he had ordered for me. Before I could get a bite to my mouth, he would say, "What do you think you are going to do with that?" My appetite would leave. Sometimes I would be unable to keep the food down and threw up in the restaurant bathroom. I began to dread going out to eat.

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Wings had studied Chemical Engineering before the war. Since his parents worked at DuPont Chemical Company, he knew many of the men there. It seemed plausible he would finish his studies and work at DuPont in Wilmington. But he switched from Chemical Engineering to Mechanical Engineering because he reasoned it was something he enjoyed more. He studied hard, sometimes almost all night. Then a few short hours and on to school. In this way he doubled up on needed courses while we struggled on the limited income of the G.I. Bill, living in low rent base housing.

We tried various projects while he was going to school, to earn a little income to supplement the meager living allowance. I worked in a hosiery mill for a while, made jewelry displays out of Plexiglas, molding them in the kitchen oven and tried to sell them at local jewelry stores in the small university town of Newark. We sold cement blocks by renting a cement mixer and using a small garden to make the blocks. We rented an ancient truck to haul the blocks to the work site, usually in the middle of the night because this was the only time Wings was not either at school or studying. I worked in the school laboratory and photo lab where I did the cleaning.

It was in this financially restricted setting that our first child was born in August, 1947. Our son was the best baby I had ever seen. Wings picked him up and Jan spit up on him, so he gave him a wide berth until he got older. I learned I was RH negative; my husband positive and there might be serious problems with future babies. I noticed something else which troubled me. My husband completely unwrapped him to make sure he was perfect when he was born. He hated anything imperfect. I wondered just what he might do if one of our children were born with a defect.

I still reasoned that *if I love him enough, he would get well*. Unknowingly, this enabled his domineering attitude by pampering him in every way. Incredibly, I even peeled the grapes for the first salad I made him. I always put sugar and cream in his coffee and stirred it before serving it. I ran his bath water, turned down his bed covers, picked up the clothes he dropped.

I did not realize I was adding fuel to the fire. He got worse not better. I began covering for him. No one knew we had a problem and I had no one with whom I could confide. His mistreatment was not just torture and beatings but became sexual abuse also. He told me that all couples were like that but just did not talk about it.

I began to get sick. During my marriage, I was in the hospital at least once a year. The doctors could not diagnose many of the things I was suffering from because Wings was very careful to torture me in such a way no bruises showed.

I began to wish I could leave him. Divorce never entered my mind but just escape from the cruelty. I took seriously the vow for better or worse and truly felt marriage was forever. One day, I even packed my bags but before I could carry out my plan I stood there thinking, *have you really done all you can do to help Wings if you leave? Who will love him if you don't?* So I was held by a sense of duty but even more by a love that could not help loving and no longer expecting any love in return. I know now God gave this to me even before I knew the Lord. I shall always be grateful for that love.

Chapter 2: Culture Shock

When Wings was about to graduate at the University of Delaware, one of our friends came excitedly to tell us that the government would let men re-enlist and then pay their way for a year of schooling. Wings applied and was accepted at the same rank he held when he left the service. I shall never forget his first paycheck. He literally threw the dollars into the air in our living room, and we happily walked through the shower of floating bills.

Surely, I thought, now he will be relieved of the pressure of school and job and get more rest. I truly thought lack of rest might have aggravated the situation. I was grasping at straws, something to believe in, hoping against hope that he would be well and our marriage would be happily ever after.

I lost a baby after our son was born. I had a sense of dread about whether the baby would be OK. I consoled myself by reasoning that Mother Nature would take care of it if it wasn't, and that is why I miscarried this child.

I became pregnant again and more nauseated than before. I lost so much weight I could only keep water down. Finally not even water would stay down. I was fed intravenously at the hospital and threatened, "If you don't keep this down, we'll have to take the baby." By frequent trips to the hospital, Dianne finally arrived on my birthday, a month and five days late, in January 1950.

When my husband unwrapped Dianne to examine her, I was horrified to see her back was black and blue all over. I found that she had been born with the umbilical cord wrapped around her throat. They thought she was dead. I wondered if she would be crippled or never walk. Most of all I wondered if her dad would love her if she were not perfect. Thankfully, she flourished.

We were assigned to a base in France, and Wings went with his squadron ahead of us. During the waiting period before joining my husband, I thoroughly enjoyed being with my children. It was peaceful at my mother's home in Jackson, Mississippi. It was wonderful not being tortured every day.

Four and a half months later, the military moved us to join him in France. Wings had found us an apartment to rent. My mother had become so used to having the children around she tried to force me not to go. When I explained to her I had to go to be with my husband, she tried to get me to leave the children with her and go alone. She made quite a pitiful sight as we pulled out of the train station. She was crying and saying, "I'll not be here when you come back; I'll be dead, and you'll be sorry." The memory lingered after I could no longer see her face. As it was, she lived many years after I returned and enjoyed her grandchildren for a long time afterwards.

The Army ship was nothing like I had anticipated. It had not only wives and children aboard but also 3800 troops. The troops were on a lower deck, but I was surprised to see that each evening the wives were dancing by candlelight to music supplied by the ship's orchestra. Over the many days at sea, there were couples kissing and making love.

I was horrified. These women were married; some were mothers and even now en route to join their husbands. I cried and sought out an older lady to speak to about these things. She was very kind and

did not manage to destroy my illusions about fidelity. I saw later that adultery was almost taken for granted in the military. I'm grateful she never told me this.

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Metz, France, 1954

It was culture shock on arrival in France. Wings had rented an attic of a house with no heat and no furniture. We had to boil the drinking water and soak vegetables in a chlorine solution to kill the bugs.

Wings installed a pot-bellied stove in a corner of the room, made a sling for me to haul wood from the cellar up three flights of stairs to keep the fire going, and we hung army blankets for curtains at the windows.

Nothing had changed in Wings except now I was across the ocean from all my friends, twenty-three miles from the base, and I could not speak a word of French. My husband immediately decided I had gained too much weight while I was at home with my mother and ordered me to lose weight fast. I lost twenty pounds and went back to size 9 when we married.

We spent a year and a half in France and then transferred to Ramstein Air Base in Germany in 1955. It was like Christmas when I stepped into government housing after living in France. A brand-new apartment, a vacuum cleaner, and new dishes sparkled alongside crystal goblets in a lovely china closet. The government owned it all but it was beautiful—the most beautiful place I had ever lived in.

As I cheerfully unpacked my suitcase, I had no idea that Ramstein would be the place where my life would change.

I'm glad now that only I knew I was becoming an alcoholic. Drinking did not solve anything, but it was an escape and filled the emptiness in my heart. Jesus was the only one who could answer my heart cry for someone who would understand, someone I could really talk to.

Neither Wings nor I had ever drunk, although champagne or mixed drinks were served at most meetings with our friends at the base. I had never liked the taste of any of it, but champagne resembled ginger ale. Some drinks mixed with fruit did not taste like alcohol at all. I began to enjoy some of these concoctions.

Since none of us could speak German, our friends were other American military personnel and their wives. We would try to make our visits together more enjoyable by debates on various subjects. We would each take sides as we debated subjects such as politics.

One particular night, we decided to debate religions of the world. We met at my best friend's home across the street from our apartment. The usual group was there, and we all greeted one another cordially if not enthusiastically. After the first few minutes we began debating. One person argued that the Christian religion was best, but another disagreed emphatically. I was surprised as the conversation progressed to find my heart beating so fast and tears beginning to roll down my

cheeks. *What's wrong with me?* I wondered. People were beginning to notice, but no matter how much I tried, I could not stop crying. It was getting worse.

I was embarrassed and ran out to my own apartment across the street. I did not even bother to turn the light on in my apartment. I reasoned, *I will get control of my emotions and then return.* Perhaps I thought the darkness would hide my embarrassment.

In a little while there was a faint knock on the front door. I turned on the living room light and answered the door. It was my friend Phyllis. "Who hurt your feelings?" she asked. "If you will just tell me what happened, I'll have that person come and apologize to you." How could I explain that even I was not sure what was happening to me? "No one hurt me," I answered, and "It has something to do with Jesus." Then Phyllis looked me squarely in the eye. Her attitude had changed from sympathy to sternness. "What do you mean, *Jesus?* Are you trying to tell me you're a Christian? Why, you live just like I do, and I am not a Christian." With those words hurled at me, she turned, slammed the door, and returned to the party.

What did Phyllis mean when she said, "You're living just like I am, and I'm not a Christian"? I had always considered myself a Christian. It's true we rarely went to the base chapel, but wasn't that because most of the sermons were about the war effort or military issues rather than God? I was hurt by her accusation but challenged as well. Words from the Bible I had heard from my Sunday School teacher came back to me, like, "When you become a Christian, you become a new creature."

Then the tears stopped flowing. Was I a Christian? Didn't I live a good life? Wasn't that enough? I did not know whom to ask because I honestly did not know anyone whose life was different from mine. But I was troubled from that moment on.

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Dallas, Texas, 1958

It can be a shattering experience to discover that what I thought about being a Christian was wrong. I certainly couldn't talk to Wings about this. To make matters worse, our orders came through to return to the United States.

Again, long days at sea. This time, no wives were travelling alone or troops on the lower deck. But I encountered a new set of problems due to rough seas. Every day, fewer people ate the sumptuous meals. The nights were the worst part. I could feel the swells. I knew for the first time that if I went down with the ship, I would go to hell. This was the first time that I had thought seriously about hell. I made up my mind that as soon as we landed, I would find someone, somewhere, who could answer the most important question in my life at the moment: *how does somebody like me become a new creature?*

Seven days at sea and one day in the port in quarantine. The band on the shore that came to welcome us back to America played our favorite tunes on request. Since I am from Mississippi, I asked them to play Dixie. I was so happy seeing the Statue of Liberty for the first time and so glad to be home again that I almost forgot about becoming a Christian.

We could hardly wait to see my mother-in-law. She and her new husband were both alcoholics. My father-in-law had passed away. When we arrived, I was surprised to see Leo reading the Bible. He

was stone sober. My mother-in-law told me disgustingly he had "gotten religion" while we were gone.

I expressed a desire to go to church with him, and we went on a Wednesday night to hear a guest speaker. We were a bit late, and the only seats were on the back row. This was all right with me. The church was so big, and the people dressed fashionably.

As I looked around, I noticed arched wooden beams across the entire ceiling. Written in beautiful black letters on these white-painted beams were Bible verses. I was absolutely awed by the affluence of the place and decided right then that when I did find out how to become a Christian, I would not do it in such a fancy building. I did not feel at home one bit.

The minister was getting ready to speak. I don't recall his sermon exactly, except he clearly described what hell was like. I became quite uncomfortable as I remembered sinful things I had done, especially my drinking. As I sat squirming in the pew, the minister began to describe heaven. It surely must be a wonderful place, by the way he pictured it.

The more he talked, the more I wished I could go there. Now I felt more uncomfortable than when he was talking about hell. The tears began again. Just as I began to experience a strange feeling around my heart, like it was about to jump out of my body, I heard him say, "If you would like to become a Christian, this is what you need to do. First you need to be sorry for your sins and repent."

I certainly was sorry for my sins. At that moment I felt that I was the biggest sinner in the world. "I invite you to come forward and repent here at the altar and ask Jesus to come into your life, and you will become a new creature." I don't even remember leaving my seat, but I was down front, shaking hands with the minister, crying my eyes out because I was such a dirty sinner. I could feel something happening inside my body. I could feel Jesus forgiving me. It was the most wonderful feeling I had ever known. Was this how he made new creatures?

I forgot about the elaborate church decor and the elegantly dressed people. I forgot I had said I would never become a Christian in that place. I thought of nothing except the feeling that Jesus had forgiven me and that he loved me.

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I told the pastor I wanted to do something to let Jesus know I loved him back. He said, "Fine, you can teach the five-year-old girls' Sunday School class next Sunday."

Clutching my New Testament the pastor gave me, I hurried home to share this wonderful news with Wings. I was just sure he would be as happy as I was. I remember how he tried to act interested as I described the part about feeling the love of Jesus inside. I was almost afraid to go to bed for fear Jesus would leave, or I would wake up in the morning to find it had all been a beautiful dream. It was almost too good to be true.

When I woke up the next morning, Jesus was still there. I could feel his love flowing in and out with each heartbeat. Oh, I was the happiest person in the whole world. I just knew then that Jesus was with me. Together he and I could love Wings enough to make him well again.

The little New Testament became so enjoyable for me to read. Each day I could feel the Lord speaking directly to me from each page. When Sunday came, I remembered what the pastor said with a start: "O.K., on Sunday you can teach the five-year-old girl Sunday School class." I was afraid. But I went.

When I entered the classroom, every eye was focused on their new "teacher." I decided to be totally honest. Here I was, a woman of 31, afraid of five-year-olds. So I smiled and said, "I am a brand new Christian. I have never taught a Sunday School class before. You probably know more about the Bible than I do, so would you mind if we learn together, and maybe you can help me get to know Jesus better?" They smiled, and I felt better.

We learned and grew together. As I searched the Word of God during the week in order to meet their needs and answer their questions, I did not realize that this wise pastor had put me in the best position to learn by having me teach.

This was the first among many lessons I filed away and used in years to come as I nurtured new believers in Christ. The Holy Spirit became my teacher as I read and studied the Word daily, taking it literally and applying it to my life. I believed it all without question.

Each day when my husband left for his studies at the university where he was getting his master's degree, I would let the Lord guide me. I asked the Lord's advice on everything from planning meals to arranging furniture. At the very beginning, he showed me the reality of miracles by doing them in my life. I had not even noticed I had stopped drinking. I simply did not want to drink any more.

Chapter 3: Choose Jesus or Me

Dallas, 1959

Two weeks passed, and Wings and I were enjoying a root beer float together. He looked at me soberly and said, "You've changed a lot, you know." I said, "Yes, it's wonderful what Christ has done in my life in only two weeks."

His expression became a frown, and he answered, "You are going to have to choose between this Jesus and me." I thought he was joking, but he wasn't. I said, "Oh, you don't understand. Jesus is not a rival for my affection. I love you. When the children came into our lives, I loved you, and their coming did not siphon off my love for you. They only enhanced my love for you. Now Christ has come into my life and brought his love, and I don't love you less than before, only more!" But he got more sullen and said, "You will have to choose. It's Christ or me."

I could see this was a critical moment, possibly the most important decision I would ever make. I answered, "If you make me choose, I'll have to choose Jesus!"

Wings started the divorce process. He could not find a lawyer who would take his case because he had no grounds. When he went to one attorney, the man laughed. "I am a Catholic," he said. "Every morning my wife goes to mass. That is not grounds for divorce because your wife loves God!"

Wings became depressed and irritable. I was five minutes late picking Wings up for lunch one day. He was furious. When we came into the house, he began to argue about me being a Christian and no fun anymore. He knocked me down and proceeded to kick me. I crawled under the dining room table to try to get away. I was between the table legs. As he continued to kick, he must have hit his ankle on one of the legs because he suddenly stopped and stormed out of the house. I could hear the car engine as he drove back to school.

I lay there, bruised and crying. I dragged myself upstairs to the bedroom and collapsed on the bed. I was glad the children were at school. Through my tears I said, "Lord, what is happening to me? I thought when I became a Christian I would be the happiest person alive, and in some ways I am, but why am I unable to help my husband? And why am I so unhappy in my marriage? Why these terrible beatings?"

After a while, the Lord spoke to my inner self. He reminded me in the soft, gentle way by which he communicates to me inside, *this is what it means to suffer for your faith*. By this time I knew some of the scriptures that remind Christians, "He who lives for Christ shall suffer persecution." Like a blinding light coming into my mind, I suddenly could understand for the first time that this is what was happening.

Though no one told me when I came to Christ that it might involve being persecuted for my faith, I felt peace knowing this was what was happening. For the very first time I felt I could endure the pain. Now that I finally understood, I could at last say there was a purpose to suffering, if it were for Jesus. With this new revelation in my heart, I fell into a peaceful sleep.

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Albuquerque, New Mexico, 1959

People kept assuring me that if I did not press Wings too much about accepting Christ, he would come to the Lord by simply seeing Christ revealed in my life. I hung on to that, but the gulf between us grew wider.

He began going out for periods of time, not saying where he was going or when he would return. He had always done this on his flying missions when he would fly to various towns and be gone several days at a time. But now he began going when there was no mission and was not flying. When at home, he would seclude himself among his study books in his den for hours. He was becoming a recluse while at home but also left on mysterious trips.

We were stationed at various bases. A short time after being stationed in Albuquerque, Wings gave me the ultimatum to choose between Jesus and him. He began tightening control on the money I was given to run the house and get groceries. His argument was that now that I was a Christian, I might only give it all away to the church. It became increasingly harder and harder to make the money stretch to meet the things he was requiring that I buy out of it.

Although I had worked off and on all my married life, except when we were overseas, he increased pressure upon me, demanding I work full time. While at the same time, putting pressure and limitations on the household budget to force me to work to meet the bills. All this time, he was moving up in rank in the Air Force. Along with promotions, he was also receiving commendations as being the "Most Outstanding Officer." He invented several things. One invention was used by the Air Force in navigation for pilots. It seemed he was almost perfect in the accomplishments of job and school, while failing completely in marriage. This confused me.

One day I telephoned the base hospital and asked to speak to one of the head doctors. I told him I would not give my name but that my husband was an officer stationed at that base. Without going into details, I told him I was suffering physical abuse from my husband, and I asked if they would check him for possible mental disorders during one of the routine medical examinations. His answer shocked me.

He said, "I have lots of calls from wives like yourself who want to get their husbands in trouble. If your husband is an officer and is completing his duties as an officer with no complaints from his supervisors, there is no reason for us to examine him for a mental disorder. I would advise you to solve your marriage problems between yourselves and stop trying to get your husband in trouble." I hung up, stunned.

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During the torture sessions, I managed not to scream for fear my children would wake up and know what was going on. They were no longer babies, and I had a fear, particularly for Dianne, who was developing a very determined attitude toward her father. I was afraid for her because there was definitely a personality clash between her and her dad.

I often got up in the night to prepare the Sunday School lessons I taught. When finished, I would tiptoe back into bed and be there when Wings woke up the next morning. This prevented some of his arguments when he saw my Bible or knew I was doing something Christian.

One morning, at about two A.M., I had gone downstairs to the dining room table, with my back to the staircase. My Bible was open before me, and I was outlining my Sunday School lesson. The next thing I knew, someone was pulling my hair. I thought somebody had broken into the house. I had heard no footsteps but was yanked over the back of the chair and dragged by my hair and arm up the stairs. Suddenly I realized it was my husband.

He threw me on the bed, slid the deadbolt lock on the bedroom door, sat on my body, and began beating me about the head. His breathing was very heavy, heavier than I had ever heard, but what I saw in his eyes caused me to scream. His eyes were glassy, like they were covered with opaque marble. They did not look like my husband's eyes at all.

I couldn't stand it any longer, and before I realized what I was doing, I forgot about being quiet, about the children being able to hear. I must have screamed, for I could hear someone pounding on the door. Dianne was crying and pounding, trying to get the door open. "Daddy, what are you doing to Mommy?" she cried. Wings heard it too because he stopped beating me with his fists.

I used this brief moment to gain time to free myself, grabbed the bolt and slid it open with one hand, grabbed Dianne with the other hand, and barefooted, we rushed down the stairs to the garage.

We always left the key in the ignition of the car in case of fire. I backed the car out faster than I had ever driven before, expecting Wings to stop me, but no one did. Where could I go at that pre-dawn hour? I had on only my thin summer robe and no shoes. Hurriedly, I thought, *I'll go to Marilyn's house.*

Marilyn was my best friend at church. I pounded on the door and shouted until lights began to come on inside the house. Dianne was crying. Marilyn herself came to the door. All she understood was that Wings and I had an argument and I had left. I knew she would never believe things were as bad as they were. Everyone, including these dear friends, considered us to be a happily married couple.

After I had a cup of coffee, I began to get calmer, and when the sun came up, she suggested I telephone our pastor and ask his advice. He said I should wait awhile, then telephone Wings, and if his voice sounded calm, go back home. I did this with great fear. I had no idea how much Dianne heard while she stood outside our door. She was too young to understand or to tell more than what was absolutely necessary. We never talked about that night ever again. It seemed she carried it in her heart, where it did not show. But she began to stand up for her rights where her father was concerned, and now my fear for her safety increased.

When I returned home, the drapes were still closed, and my husband was standing in the bedroom in semi-darkness, writing checks and dropping the written checks on the floor. All the drawers in our bureaus were opened, and clothes were strewn all over. The room looked terrible. I asked, "What are you doing?" "I'm leaving you," he answered. Later I found the checks to be payments for various bills we owed, and I took them to the places and paid the bills. He was gone six weeks. But he came back one day, unexpectedly, with no explanation given.

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Wings became more secretive. He claimed he could not sleep with anyone anymore and moved me into the guest room while he kept another bedroom for himself, along with the master bedroom for his personal study and office. He labeled all his drawers so clothes had special portions of each drawer.

His filing system had always been meticulous. Now he brooded over his business papers in a peculiar manner. I had never been interested in this side of our housekeeping and management, and he had never let me use a checkbook.

Our house was a strange place. A loaded .45 revolver was on the shelf in my son's room. I was afraid he might knock it down as he played with toys underneath. In the den was a huge shield, a symbol of Toledo, a city of Spain noted for its knives and swords. Around the eagle, in the middle of the shield, were real life-sized swords, twelve in all. Guns of various sizes and types were in drawers around the house.

Under the foot of our bed were coiled big ropes that Wings said could be used as fire escapes from the second floor to the ground. I was often tied by my legs and arms to the four corners of the bed. How I hated it! At those times, I felt utterly defenseless.

Jesus and his words became more than food to me during those days. They were like a lifeline held out to a drowning person. Jesus was my best friend and confidante. He was the one I could confide in, the only one who understood what was happening... *really* happening.

Wings decided I must become a blonde. My hair was thick and black. When I went to the beauty shop to have it bleached, the attendant refused. Since Wings insisted on it, the attendant went ahead against her better judgment. It took two days to bleach out the color.

My scalp began to fester. It broke open in protest against the strong solution. At last, the black color was gone, but my hair felt like wet noodles. Then they applied the ash blonde color. It only lasted less than two weeks, and the whole process had to be repeated.

I was unable to sleep at night because my scalp was so sore. I had to see a doctor for treatments. Finally my hair broke off at the roots in protest. I had to wear a turban. What stubble was left was carrot red. This went on for two years. Wings finally gave up attempting to make me a blonde.

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Wings never accepted me the way God made me. I was constantly dieting to stay a size nine until friends approached Wings and commented on how sickly I looked. Then he would set me down and require me to eat until I gained it all back. My stomach never knew what it was supposed to do. Even with the separate bedrooms, the sexual abuse continued as before. Now he was becoming increasingly perverted as his knowledge about how to proceed increased.

He began to talk about newspaper articles he had read. One was an article about a man who had two wives, and the wives never knew about each other. The man managed this charade for years before the truth finally came out. Wings laughed about this and commented frequently on how clever this man was.

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Orange County, California, 1969

We were now living in California. My friend Rosalie from Albuquerque came to visit. My car was in the shop, so Wings loaned me his for the day because he wanted to make a good impression on my friend. Rosalie and I went shopping and put the purchases in the trunk. When we got home and began to unload the car, I accidentally knocked some of Wing's things out. One was a large roll of film, and it began to unroll on the driveway.

My first thought was how angry Wings would be if I damaged something that belonged to him. As I rolled the film back onto the spool, I noticed the subject of the film. It was a woman standing over another woman who was lying on the ground. The standing woman held a long bullwhip. Then I saw the edges of the film, the audio track. With horror the full impact came to me. This was a movie of one woman beating another. I had heard that such things existed but had never actually seen them. I thought, *not my husband. Surely Wings is not involved in anything like this.* But in my heart I knew differently.

Chapter 4: Learning to Be Led

I had so many questions. How could so much evil and pain have any good purpose?

I was seeing only one page of life at a time, while the Lord of the universe sees the end from the beginning. So in the midst of hell on earth, the Christian in me was evolving, like a new plant. The hidden root structure was developing.

It was the reality of his presence that kept me going. I could literally communicate in my spirit with the living God. This never ceased to amaze me. The Lord taught me by bringing special Christians across my path.

For example, when I wanted to share my faith, I prayed, "Where, Lord?" He directed me to the place where I frequently shopped, where I thought I already knew everybody. One day I sat on the brick wall to which the Lord directed me. I saw a man there who looked for all the world like Father Time with a long grey beard.

I was afraid because I had never shared my faith with anyone before and because the man was a stranger. While I was wondering what to say, the man looked straight at me and sat on the wall beside me. "Well, *here goes*," I thought, and opened my mouth to speak.

Before any words came out, the man spoke wonderful words about Jesus, about Christ who made the world and what a big God he is and yet small enough to fit right inside our heart. I sat spellbound as this man taught me.

He gave me Jesus, seen through the eyes of an evident woodsman, a man in tune with God and nature. After that meeting, I never forgot that not all the people Jesus brings are for me to teach. Sometimes they're sent to teach me instead. The Lord taught me how to listen.

An illustration of this happened in the basement of a little church during a prayer meeting. The pastor was standing side by side with a lady. The pastor held one end of a handkerchief, and the lady held the other. "That's our problem," the pastor told the lady. "We bring all our problems to the Lord, but we never let go of our end of the handkerchief."

I must always remember this illustration whenever problems or offerings are being brought to the Lord in prayer. "Ginger, Jesus can't do anything with them until you let go of your end of the handkerchief."

One of the most wonderful things I found about the Lord was the way he was interested in every facet of my life. It never occurred to me not to ask him where to shop for bargains. I needed bargains to make the \$15 a week budget stretch. He showed me how to buy bacon ends in a store I'd never been to before. I divided them at home and picked out the really nice ones for Wings. In this same store, where they had sawdust on the floor, I found damaged vegetables, even cheaper by the case.

Across the street was a day-old bread shop. If there was any item Wings was particular about, it was bread. He ate all his bread toasted, even day-old bread. It was an unwritten rule that, regardless of

the budget money, I was to have a slice of toasted rye bread with Genoa salami on an open-faced sandwich, hot and waiting as Wings entered the door from work each night. This was his appetizer and held him until I could finish dinner preparation. The only item I never found on sale was Genoa salami. But God worked around that.

One of the most wonderful times I looked forward to was driving from California to Jackson, Mississippi, to pick up my parents for a two-week visit with us each summer, then taking them home. The drive took two days.

I loved the road, for I avoided the freeway through Phoenix and chose an older secondary road that passed through quaint mining towns, mountains, and picturesque Arizona stone formations. In the California desert also, I found a wonderland. It was the quietest place I have ever been, with stars seeming to touch the ground on all sides. During these drives I would sleep in my car in the national forests to save money rather than spend it on motels.

I loved taking the time to witness to individuals in the little half-abandoned mining town of Jerome. How beautiful it was there with gorgeous Grand Canyon-like views on three sides. You could see the various strata layers of the rock walls of the canyon, one blue and one red. I loved sunset and dawn, when the sun was just peeking out.

Since I made two trips, one going and one returning, I got to know the people of the town. I loved Jerome. While my parents were in the car, I would not stop. Dad had Parkinson's disease, and the trip itself was hard enough on him, so I limited my exploring to when I was alone.

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California, 1967

On one of these trips, I saw a young man the age of my son walking along the road, his shirt off and his belongings in a big duffle bag over his shoulder. I felt the Lord wanted me to stop. I had to back up a bit because I had already passed him. He got in, and I asked him where he was going. "To California," he answered. Bob was from Detroit and had been travelling on his own since he was thirteen. I found him to be interested in the beautiful countryside, as was I.

We stopped to get a drink of water from a stream and discovered bits of pretty fool's gold at the bottom of the riverbed. Beautifully colored rocks always fascinated me, so I put a few of those, too pretty to leave, in the trunk of the car. And so we arrived in California.

At the edge of the desert where the truckers sometimes dump their overloads before getting on the scales, I found a bag of onions along the side of the road. I couldn't let this bargain from God pass, so they joined my rock collection in the trunk. By the time we left the desert heat, the onions were starting to smell pretty strong.

We arrived home, and my husband unloaded the car while trying to be polite to our new guest. I mumbled something about Bob being a friend of a friend, which was not true. But Wings liked him also, so Bob settled down and became one of our family. From the first, he and my son Jan were like brothers. It was as though he had always been there.

I tried witnessing to Bob about Jesus, but it was not until he and Dianne were sharing at the kitchen table one night that he gave his heart to Christ. Now there were two teenage Christians, as well as myself. This was too much for Wings, who alternated from showing interest in the miraculous events going on around the house and rushing away as soon as they began to touch his heart. I felt he was like a child with his nose pressed against the candy store window. He loved the house full of young people. That was a genuine interest.

Wings himself would bring some young person home he had picked up hitchhiking or whose car had broken down and leave them with me. He knew I would surely talk to them about salvation. I took these things as indications that Jesus was touching his life even more than he wanted to admit. I was happy because I fully expected Wings to come to Christ and could just picture us in some sort of ministry together with young people. But he never actually entered in when the young people were there. He continued his seclusion in his den or on these mysterious trips when he left or returned without notice. He was no longer trying to get me to turn from being a Christian.

His torture took a different form when people were in the home. Now he used periods of long silence without a word, but the sexual abuse continued. We were a house divided, for he would not surrender to God, and I would not give up Christianity.

Chapter 5: Healing and Addicts

Anaheim, California, 1967

Wings was away on a long trip, and the Lord laid it upon my heart once to have an all-night prayer meeting. It began when Dianne and I noticed a girl at church. This girl was fifteen and wore a steel and leather body brace on the outside of her clothes. It went from her hips to her chin, lacing on each side so it could be adjusted as she grew. It held her chin rigid, and already her face was becoming square from the pressure.

My heart went out to her, and I felt if we could get her and her mother to come to our home, we would pray for her healing. The Lord seemed to impress upon me to put a notice on the church bulletin board about the prayer meeting and invite anyone who wanted to come. Dianne and I began to pray, particularly that Paula and her mother would see it and respond.

The night of the meeting, I was delighted to see Paula and her mother were among the guests. Paula looked around and saw she was the youngest person there.

I suggested to the guests that they could pray as a group or divide into smaller groups in other rooms. Paula was in the kitchen with Dianne, and I was in the living room sitting on the couch with Paula's mother. She said to me, "You people seem to be so happy. I wish I could be as happy as you are." "You can," I said, "it's that we love Jesus. You can invite him into your heart also."

"No," she said, "it's not for me." I was surprised to hear myself trying to persuade her. "Suppose he would do something wonderful for you?" Puzzled, she asked, "What do you mean?"

"Suppose he would heal your daughter?" As I said, I did not know why it popped out. She looked at me a moment and then said quietly, "I'd have to believe in a God like that."

Unknown to us, Dianne and Paula had been talking in the kitchen. Dianne asked Paula if she believed in Jesus. "Yes, I became a Christian five days ago," she said. Dianne continued, "Did you know Jesus can also heal you?" "Yes, I believe he can do anything he wants to do," Paula said cautiously. "Well, then, let's pray and ask the Lord to heal you." And they did.

Paula felt nothing. Dianne said, "Well, now that he has done it. Let's go upstairs and take your brace off." "No," Paula replied, "I believe he has healed me, but I'll wait until I get home and then take my brace off." "No," Dianne insisted, "Let's do it right now. There's no need to wait." And reluctantly they went upstairs to remove Paula's brace.

The Lord's timing is always perfect, and this was no exception, for at the very moment Paula's mother agreed that she would have to believe in a God who could heal her crippled daughter, Paula came down the stairs, facing her startled mother without her brace.

"Paula," she cried, "Where is your brace?!" "I've been healed, Mom." Paula answered hesitantly because it was just dawning on her that God had done it. The prayer had worked. The Lord had truly healed her.

Both the mother and her daughter experienced the miracle of what Christ had done at the same instant. The effect on the mother was electric. When Paula leaned over and touched her toes, her mother rushed to her and put her hand on her back, and the area that had once been unable to support her body weight was now completely filled in. The mother could feel it herself.

She fell on the floor on her face, sobbing and beating on the carpet with both fists. I knelt down beside her and said, "You said if God would heal your daughter, you would believe in him." I had to almost shout to make myself heard over the loud sobbing of this mother. I repeated it three times before she heard clearly, and then she cried out, "Lord, I believe. Come into my heart, Lord Jesus."

In the meantime the other people who were in other rooms came in because they heard the noise, and seeing the miracle, they too began to praise God. Some hurried to call our church or friends to come over, so the crowd grew. Faith began to rise, and people began laying hands on one another and praying for one another. The Holy Spirit was moving, and some were being healed, others saved, and some delivered. It went on with increasing joy.

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I remember when the Lord first indicated he wanted this all night meeting; I wondered how we could possibly pray all night. With so much going on at that moment, there was no problem at all. The Holy Spirit was moving. When he moves in power, no one keeps track of time. Hours pass like minutes.

At 3:00 the next afternoon, I was making bacon and eggs and people were still there. It was Saturday morning. That night was the once-a-month meeting when David Wilkinson came to our church. We all went. I sat with Paula's mother, who burst into tears again as her daughter stood beside David Wilkinson with the 40-pound brace in her hand. Praise the Lord for a God who can indeed be touched by our infirmities!

I did not see Paula and her mother for several years. One day I came back to that church and a young woman ran up to me, threw her arms around my neck and kissed me on the cheek. "You don't recognize me, do you?" she laughed. "No, I don't," I replied, "I'm sorry." "I'm Paula Lumley," she answered. "So many things have happened since I saw you last. I began to go out witnessing with people from the church and we went to the prison to witness to the inmates there. I lead a young man to Christ and he is now a Christian and is free, and we are married! And you know the biggest miracle of all?" she smiled, "The doctors said if I ever got married I would never be able to have a baby but we have a beautiful child and everything turned out perfect. Isn't the Lord wonderful?" I had to admit that, "Yes, indeed our Lord is truly wonderful!"

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Anaheim, California, 1969

A group of ladies and I from our church had learned about drug addicts sleeping on a nearby beach. Some were there by choice, others because they had no place else to sleep. In their drugged state, some were being washed out to sea, and all were sick, weak, and preferring to feed their drug craze rather than nourish their bodies whenever they had a little money.

We were concerned, and one of the ladies said, "My husband and I own a big warehouse near the beach, and only half of it is being rented out and used. The other half is empty. I think I'll ask my husband to partition it. We could bring card tables, folding chairs, sandwiches, and drinks. These addicts may come for the food, and we can then witness to them about Jesus."

It seemed like a wonderful idea, and it worked. They came, and we came with food, and later we invited young Christians to come with their guitars and give testimonies and sing.

The first time I sat across the table from a drug addict was unforgettable. I had never seen so much hair on a man: long hair, beard, and moustache. I could hardly see his face. When he looked back at me with soft blue eyes, I suddenly forgot the word "drug addict" and remembered I had a son.

My son was in the Merchant Marines on a ship near Viet Nam. I realized there was a mother somewhere like myself, probably worried about her son. From that moment on, boys like this drug addict became special to me, and though I had never tried drugs, we seemed to be able to communicate.

I took many of these young people to my house. Some I brought home unconscious. I would have the Christian young man who carried him in put him on a couch in the living room, and I would sit on the floor beside him until he came to. Then, I would say, "Don't be afraid. You are in a Christian home, and I'm not going to hurt you. I've got good news. You can be set free of whatever drug you're hooked on if you will just let Jesus take over your life." About 80 or 90 responded and were set free by the power of God and the name of Jesus.

You would think everyone would be delighted. On one side of my house, neighbors stopped speaking to me because of the strange-looking people I was bringing home. On the other side, an older couple with no children of their own said, "We like what you're doing, and if you ever need more room to house people, our home is open for the overflow."

Many of these young people later worked at the Hot Line, a ministry to help drug addicts by phone or on an emergency basis. Ex-drug addicts on a volunteer 24-hour schedule manned it.

When we begin to describe wonderful miracles of God, what should we list as more important than the other? If a man is hurting, he needs a miracle exactly where it hurts. Pain is pain, whether physical, emotional, or spiritual, and Doctor Jesus is the Great Physician.

Chapter 6: Crushed and Called

California, 1971

Ever since Wings had been stationed at the underground testing site near Las Vegas, Nevada, he had considered that city as the ideal place to spend a vacation. I had seen the desperate need of the lost people there, so I put up no objection to his suggestion we spend our vacation in Las Vegas. I made one stipulation. While he went to the nightclubs and bars, I would spend the night witnessing on the streets. I was surprised when he agreed.

In Las Vegas, hardly anyone sleeps, so the streets are crowded and lit with neon lights 24 hours a day. I am sure it was the strangest vacation any couple ever spent. After the night was finished, we would meet each other and have breakfast at 5:30 or 6:00 A.M. The breakfasts were a special price at this time to lure more gambling customers because by that time in the morning the late-night gamblers were sleepy.

While we ate, I would tell him about the people who came to Jesus. It was wonderful that in sinful Las Vegas, there were so many hungry hearts. We would go to the motel and sleep until about two or three in the afternoon and then play miniature golf.

Yes, we were two people going down different tracks. I still thought it was only a matter of time until God would work it all out.

Wings had a friend I never met, but one day he mentioned his friend had a girlfriend that needed a woman to talk to, and he suggested I call her. I was surprised but glad to be able to talk to her about Jesus. We had many such phone conversations. We never met, and she never came to Christ.

Then one day I received a letter in a very official envelope. It read, "The party of the first part sues the party of the second part for divorce." It took a few minutes for my mind to grasp the meaning of those words. *Divorce?* It had finally happened. The paper read "because of incompatibility." After 25 years? I have never felt like I did at that moment.

I was alone in the house when the letter arrived. I was stunned and stood there with the letter in my hand. Then the telephone rang. It was that same telephone friend who called. If ever there was a moment when I could think of nothing to encourage her, it was now, when my own world was falling apart. She did not seem to notice. She continued chatting. "I woke up this morning feeling so happy and strong," she said, "and I remembered how many times you encouraged me in the past. I just felt I should call you. I don't know why, except I wanted to say, "Perhaps you have some need I could help you with." Suddenly with a rush I understood what this dear woman was saying. The tears began to run down my cheeks as I answered, "As a matter of fact, I do have a need. I have just this moment received a letter, and my husband is suing me for divorce."

I shall never forget how the Lord somehow directed a woman who didn't know him to provide a comforting shoulder to lean on and offered friendship even though we never met. I'll never forget her words as long as I live, and I've tried to be that kind of friend to others. "I just wondered if perhaps you had a need I could help you with?" Her kindness helped tremendously until I could get to my Bible and turn it all over to my best friend, Jesus. I'll admit it took quite a while before I let go of *my end of the handkerchief*. That came much later.

"And the two became one flesh." I had heard that phrase, read it, and thought I understood it until the attorney began reading out the division of property, etc. It was as if each word were a knife cutting me in two from the top of my head to the bottom of my feet. I couldn't understand any of it because I was crying so hard. All I could think of was there was a knife trying to cut one flesh and make us two people again, and God said it couldn't be done.

So the loneliness came, a loneliness far more than two people being in separate places. Many times we had been separated by war, flying missions, and his duties as an Air Force pilot. This was not that kind of absence. It is worse than death. Divorce is something that happens to other people or to newly married couples who discover they've chosen the wrong mate, not to people who have weathered the worst, with children all grown, able to relax and look forward to growing old together, looking after one another.

Words from the Bible kept showing me what had happened. A house divided against itself cannot stand. God was right.

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I moved out of the spacious four-bedroom home with a three-car garage into a missionary school where I shared a room with eight other women students and where I was the oldest student in the school. No time to worry or pull myself together, just get on with the call God had put on my heart to serve him, though all alone.

I found studying, after being out of school so many years, very hard. It took a while to get into disciplined study and retention of scripture even though I had studied the Bible faithfully on my own. But I loved the witnessing and other aspects of missionary training. I got excited as I thought of serving the Lord some day in a ministry to Iron Curtain people. This had been the direction of my prayers and thoughts as the Lord developed my call and enhanced the desire by providing books about Iron Curtain people written by Pastor Richard Wurmbrand. He was a minister from Romania who had been imprisoned and tortured for his faith in his country.

The days passed quickly. Both children got married, and the two couples began to serve God in France together. I was glad the divorce had not been instigated until they had mates of their own and had someone with whom they could build their lives together.

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California, 1974

While I was in missionary training school, I had a car left over from the property we divided at the time of the divorce. One day the director of the school asked if I would take two ladies who lived in Los Angeles. I agreed and drove them home.

On the way back, my car engine died. I was still far from the school where I was living at the time. I remembered a woman I knew in the Los Angeles area and phoned her. She invited me to spend the night and promised to help me find a mechanic to fix my car the next morning.

This lady, Gunella, began to share with me her plans for an upcoming trip to Haiti to visit a new missionary school being built, where she was thinking of going to help with translation. Gunella spoke several languages.

I listened and was glad for the open door God was providing for her to serve him. That night as I slept, I was awakened as the Lord began to communicate with me in my spirit. "Would you do something like Gunella is doing for me?" he said. *Why, yes, Lord, I'll do anything for you,* I answered. That was the end of the talk, and I went back to sleep.

When I woke the next morning, I could hear Gunella making breakfast in the kitchen. I dressed and joined her there. "You know, Gunella, it's a good thing I have no money because last night I felt the Lord asking me if I would do for him what you are doing." She did not answer but went into the bedroom. When she returned, she held an envelope. "I wondered who was going with me and why the Lord gave me twice the money I needed." I could not believe what I was hearing or what I was seeing, for she had laid an airline ticket in front of my plate and \$300.

I had heard of things like this happening to others. Now it was happening to me. I prayed, and the Lord confirmed he was indeed directing me to go to Haiti.

Chapter 7: Haiti

The daily news highlighted that a few planes had been hijacked and diverted to Cuba. As a result, I found myself on a nearly empty plane flying the same general route to Haiti. I barely knew where Haiti was located. All I had was a *knowing* that this was what God wanted me to do. Like Abraham going out not knowing where he was going, I went.

As the plane approached the runway, I gazed out on what appeared to be a city dump. I learned later this was not a dump but tin and cardboard structures crudely thrown together as makeshift houses, constructed from whatever the people could scrounge. I had not known that such poverty existed. Upon disembarking, I felt culture shock from seeing lepers for the first time, beggars in rags, and emaciated bodies.

We were traveling with a dear pastor and his wife whose ministry was to take young people to various mission fields and leave them to work during the summer to help missionaries. It gave these youth a taste of real missionary life. These young people were vibrant, eager to serve the Lord without complaint.

A Haitian pastor met us and took us to his unfinished house. There were only holes where the windows were to be in the house of concrete blocks that he was building himself. I suppose he noticed the way we were shocked by the strangeness of the country, compared to our lives in the United States, for he stopped, looked us in the eye, and said gently, "We have a saying in Haiti that you may not like it the first time you come, but later you'll want to come back." He was right.

We prepared for bed. The cots were covered with rubber sheeting that I found was to take care of the immense perspiring one does in a tropical climate. We were given two kinds of pills: quinine to ward off malaria and salt tablets because of losing moisture through perspiration.

As we prepared for bed, someone said, "Wait a minute." Somebody sprayed us with mosquito repellent while another sprayed our bed with insecticide to kill the bedbugs. Between the perspiration rolling down my back, the ringing in my ears from quinine tablets, the stickiness from the mosquito repellent, and the odor from the bed bug spray, I was convinced I would get little sleep. Just then, the voice of the pastor penetrated the curtain separating us and said, "Ladies, this is the mission field." I could picture him smiling.

So as a Christian, I began to evolve in new areas, learning to be happy and content in whatsoever state I am. Praise the Lord for Haiti.

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Haiti is a large island with jungle growth on part of it. Violent storms and floods plague Haiti at certain times of the year. A huge storm had just passed through, and a few towns were cut off by high waters. Massive boulders blocked roads.

The houses are constructed to allow as much breeze as possible; so many have open ironwork instead of solid walls. This looks attractive while serving as a makeshift air conditioner to relieve

humidity and heat. It does nothing, however, to prevent snakes, spiders, or insects from coming and going at will.

I remember one day hearing a dog barking hysterically at the kitchen door. "How stupid," I thought and went to see what all the barking was about. Then I saw it. The largest tarantula I had ever seen was on the door, the size of a saucer.

We took naps most afternoons because the heat sapped our strength. We were visiting mission stations all across Haiti. We traveled in open-sided buses, with chickens tied to poles on the sides. Luggage was tied in sheets and piled on top of the bus. Those who lacked money for bus tickets hung on the sheets and tried to ride on top of the baggage without falling off. The smells were strong.

Rest stops are nonexistent, and to make matters worse, my friend Gunella got sick from the bus motion. She asked the driver to please stop, but he laughed and continued at breakneck speed, going over or around boulders in the road as though they represented no danger. Gunella was becoming more ill with every mile.

At last we had a rest stop, and we looked around for a building. None. When we asked for the ladies' room, we were answered with a laugh, and the driver indicated we were welcome to use any part of the open treeless area we liked. Gunella had never been in such primitive conditions before. She finally decided there was no alternative.

Getting back on the bus, we continued the all-day ride. We had been traveling since 3:00 AM. At the end of the line, we could go no further because floodwaters had cut off the town. We saw a Jeep had come for us from the mission station. After the miserable, hard-seated bus, it looked heavenly.

When I looked around for Gunella, she was nowhere in sight. I found her lying in the middle of the road whimpering, "Let me die. Just let me die here." I said, "God did not bring you all the way from the U.S. to die in the middle of the road." We all helped carry her to the Jeep. Gunella was ill for several days at the mission station and unable to get out of bed.

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I enjoyed chatting with the missionaries, some of whom had worked in Haiti for twenty years. I was particularly impressed by the second generation of young adults: sons and daughters of missionaries who were feeling called of God to continue in their parents' footsteps on the mission field in which they had been born and raised.

Every night we could hear the beating of voodoo drums that, I was told, *gossiped* about the Christian activities in the area. More importantly, I was discovering a truth that was becoming increasingly meaningful to me. I was learning about *receiving* from the people to whom I was sent to minister, sometimes receiving far more than I could ever give in return.

This basic fact of giving and receiving continued throughout all my missionary life. The flowing between human beings was really the life-flow of Christ Himself. He planned that we human beings each have something to give to the other. Perhaps even more important, I saw that the body of

Christ was indeed compacted together, and each joint of that body supplied in some way what the other lacked. How I thanked God for his gift of fellowship with other believers.

I recall the sacrificial self-denial of the workers. At the orphanage, we let off some of the young women who were with us. I remember the gentle faces of certain women who worked there and their love for the children. I learned later that they had such meager resources that sometimes their only food was a watered-down cereal.

A vibrant young girl got out at a small village and introduced me to her mother. We had a cup of coffee together. While we drank, several women came from nearby houses, carrying coffee cups with which they dipped oil from a rancid container on the counter next to us. Selling this cooking oil was how some made a livelihood.

The daughter was lovely and was immediately surrounded by lively village children. I learned something interesting about her. She had gone to missionary school in the U.S., and when she was ready to graduate, she was seriously tempted to stay and work in the U.S. until she remembered the villages where she lived and the children who had never heard the gospel. So she returned to her native hut to live and work in primitive conditions because the need was so great.

She traveled from village to village by a motorbike shipped to her by American believers. It was not an easy ride on those rock-strewn roads. The last time I saw this dear twenty-year-old woman, she was preaching to young ones there in the village.

Transportation was rare in Haiti. I used to see people trudging through the dense underbrush and tropical growth with huge loads on their backs, sometimes furniture. They would set out at 3:00 AM and walk for miles in order to reach the larger city of Port-au-Prince by the time the market opened to sell their wares that day.

Lepers and beggars were everywhere. At night, people would build fires and dance around them to the beat of drums. The desire for the supernatural was strong among them. Easy prey for voodoo.

Years later, I ministered to a man who described his initiation rites into voodoo. He had photographs of himself being initiated. He knelt down before a high priest of voodoo, who took an axe and, raising the axe high above his head, deliberately fractured the man's skull. This was to create an open wound through which the spirit of voodoo entered the person. I saw the pictures and felt his skull. When a person is searching and crying out for God and there's no one there to tell him about the real God, he will accept a substitute. These dear people had substitutes.

It was wonderful to meet natives who had become Christians. One group had actually prayed against a voodoo temple and claimed that spot for Christ. Sure enough, the temple burned down, and the Christians built a church on that very spot. They built it themselves and even made the pews.

The instruments were unusual. They made music with Coca-Cola bottle caps nailed on all sides to rattle and shake. I shared the Word of God at this church, and later when I left Haiti, the whole congregation walked miles in the heat to say good-bye.

One of the last glimpses I saw as our plane climbed from the runway was the white handkerchiefs they waved in farewell. I thought to myself, *"Maybe the pastor was right when he said, 'When people first come to Haiti they don't like it but they always come back.'"*

For years I corresponded with the pastor of the little Bible school at Port-au-Prince. Eventually we stopped writing, but I can never forget Haiti or the Haitian people.

Because of the unrest in Cuba and plane hijackings, Gunella and I were among the few passengers on the return flight to the mainland. I enjoyed the opportunity to lie across several seats and read my Bible. The Lord began to communicate to me. He seemed to know exactly what was on my mind, for he began to question me.

"Did you lack anything while you were in Haiti?" the Lord asked me.

"No," I replied.

"Did you have a place to sleep and food to eat when you needed it?"

"Yes, Lord," I answered.

"Then what makes you think I can't provide for you like that the rest of your life?" Apparently I had been wondering subconsciously where I would go next.

I was not aware anyone knew we were coming, so when we landed I was surprised to see a good friend, Abe Schneider. Abe had been one of my teachers in Bible School. He took us to his car and talked as he drove. Wonderful Abe, a Jewish Christian and a dynamic witness for Christ. He always challenged the students to dare to believe God for anything.

Today, as usual, he was sharing excitedly. "I have been invited to speak at a series of Christian meetings in Hawaii for six weeks, but there's one problem. I was wondering if you could help me out, Ginger? I have no one to look after my mother, who is senile and partly invalid. Could you possibly stay at my apartment while I'm away and look after my apartment and my mother? I'll gladly pay you."

So the Lord provided as he promised, one day at a time. That is how the money came in to pay my fare to the next place God sent me...England. I was surprised!

Chapter 8: England

England, 1972

My daughter had been serving in Vienna as a missionary. She wrote me about her plans to marry Roger, a missionary to France. The wedding was to take place in England. She was overjoyed that I could be there for her wedding. I brought my little box camera and took pictures. They had a semi-professional photographer who also took pictures, but something happened to his film, and mine were the only ones that turned out.

As Roger and Dianne left for their honeymoon, they had no idea I had only five pounds sterling in my pocket and planned to stay in England.

The Lord directed me to go to the train station two blocks away and ask the agent for a ticket to any place that costs exactly five pounds. The ticket agent seemed a bit startled at such an unusual request, but with true British aplomb, he looked at the board and answered, "Tunbridge Wells, in Kent." I said, "I'll take one ticket, please."

At 3:00 p.m., I arrived in Tunbridge Wells and deposited my suitcase with the stationmaster, who said he would look after it but told me to remember that his office closed at 5 p.m. I went outside and was directed to a bus stop and a bench. So, I sat down and began to read my Bible. In a short while a lady sat down beside me and began to chat. When she found out I was an American, she was very friendly, especially when she heard I was a stranger in the area.

Next thing I knew, I was invited to stay the night at her apartment. So I went back and retrieved my suitcase. The apartment was small but cozy. She dragged out a camp bed and began putting linens and blankets on it for me to use. I noticed a picture of a man on the mantel over the fireplace. His eyes had a strange look. Since my experience with Wings, I noticed how people's eyes looked.

The lady tossed a book in my lap to read while I was waiting. It landed on its face, and there was a picture of this same man and a bit about his life. He had written this book. I opened it and began to read. In a little while Mrs. Dodd asked how I was enjoying the book. I said, "Well, I believe in healing but not the kind of healing this book talks about. I believe in healing through Jesus Christ."

She began to laugh in a sinister manner. "That is the doctor who radiated my eye back in place," she said. "My eye used to protrude, and I went to him, and without even touching my eye, he caused it to return to its socket by the forces off the ends of his fingers. Isn't that something? No surgery at all!" I replied, "Well, you might have received a healing, but there is a chance you received more than you bargained for."

I was trying not to shock the dear lady. "Oh," she said, "if that bothers you, it might interest you to know you are in the very center of the Spiritism Movement for all of England." Then she let out a big laugh that seemed to echo off the walls of the room. A chill ran down my spine when I suddenly realized I was in England without a penny, and I was in the very home of someone deeply involved in Spiritism.

As I recall those times, I realize that when the Lord wanted me to learn something new, he usually dumped me right into the middle of it. This was no exception.

I learned early from God that nothing happens by chance. So I wondered how the Lord would bring this lady to himself.

One day in the town park I saw a young woman sitting under a tree reading. "Could that be a Bible she's reading?" I thought. It certainly looked like a Bible. "Are you a Christian?" I stammered. Startled, she looked up. "Why, yes, I am."

"I am certainly glad to see you. You are a real answer to prayer," I said.

I unfolded my story and the story of Mrs. Dodd. Since the Lord arranged our meeting, it was no surprise to discover my new friend was a student under the leadership of a local minister with experience in healing and deliverance. She told me when the next meeting was, and so I invited Mrs. Dodd along with a friend of hers.

As it turned out, this dear minister recognized at once Mrs. Dodd's need and offered to minister to her, but she refused. Afterwards, the Lord had some people I had met at that meeting invite me to come to their home. This invitation came at the precise time as the Lord's personal direction to me saying I had done what he intended for Mrs. Dodd and it was time to leave that home.

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In the same town of Tunbridge Wells lived a lady addicted to prescription medicines she did not really need. She had been using old prescriptions illegally. She wanted to be free of this addiction. At times when I prayed for her, the Lord would show me where she had hidden the pills. She was not being totally honest, so because of this deception, she could not be free. This went on for some time.

One night, the Lord again showed me where she had hidden the pills. I took them and began stuffing them down the sink drain. She became panicky, and I felt for the first time I must have found all the ones she had hidden. She cried out, "Stop, stop, I can't live without my pills!" But I kept throwing them away. Then she looked at me and said, "Now you've killed me." I'll not live through the night, and you'll be responsible."

Satan tried to torment me all night about that. What if she were right? Instead of a corpse, I found a happy, healthy, and free lady when I awoke the next morning. I remembered the Scripture said, "We are helping those who oppose themselves."¹

"All things work together for good..." Romans 8:28

I found that when the Lord sees we need a certain gift of the Holy Spirit, the gift is there at the time.

Another thing I discovered was the reality of our adversary. A course I had in missionary school, the Authority of the Believer, has become profoundly meaningful to me now. I saw how the name of

¹ 2Tim.2:25

Jesus and the word of God had power. I was discovering the best insurance is the assurance of how big our Lord truly is!

I began to see why the Lord had not sent me directly to the Iron Curtain, the mission field to which he had called me. There was so much I needed to learn first. So this was why Haiti and England came first. I was learning the life of faith, among other things. It is one thing to read, "Take no thought what you eat or what you wear," but it is quite a different matter to put it into practice. God was such a gentle and patient teacher.

Chapter 9: Smuggling Bibles on Ships

Sweden, 1974

My favorite missionary chapter was Isaiah 54. It had a special meaning to me for I could not imagine how this chapter, written so many years ago, described my situation so perfectly.

That chapter says, *the children of the desolate* would be more numerous than those I had during my marriage. I began to see this become a reality by my experiences. I had two children and lost one by miscarriage. Yet now I had many more than two, in souls saved, just as precious.

The Lord advised me to enlarge my vision. I could visualize making my tent bigger, putting my roots in him, my stakes deeper and enlarging my vision, lengthening my cords.

It was so very applicable to me, for the Lord said *I have called you as a woman forsaken*. This described the very condition I was in when he called me. He goes on to say, I was *abandoned by my husband* but he, the Lord of Hosts, would be my *husband*.

These verses are the most personal and most cherished of all because they met my innermost need. I never felt lonely anymore, for the Lord was always there.

When people used to ask how it felt to be alone, so far from home, it always took me by surprise because I was not alone. I encourage anyone who feels deserted to share these promises with me. What he has promised me, he will do for you also.

The Lord also provided people to accompany me along the way. Sometimes he teamed me with others for a time. Then they would be gone. I am grateful for the alone times as God and I ministered together, just the two of us.

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When I thought of the Iron Curtain, I always pictured myself ministering in and out of Russia. But the Lord had different ideas.

I first had contact with Russians aboard Russian ships. While I was living aboard a youth hostel ship tied up at the dock at Stockholm, Sweden, the Lord woke me early one morning. I had the distinct impression I was to get dressed and catch a bus. I did so, not knowing exactly where God was leading me.

As I stepped up on the bus, I could see over the railing that separated the road from the water. Right next to us was a Russian ship. The hammer and sickle emblem was on the smokestack. It was a tourist ship. People were coming down the gangplank and boarding a bus at the bottom.

I knew then why the Lord had directed me out so early that morning. It was to see this ship. I knew I was supposed to take Bibles aboard, so I hurriedly gave an excuse to the bus driver, backed off, and walked briskly to a Bible distributor who printed Bibles for this purpose.

By the time I got the Bibles and returned, the people were getting off the bus and going back onto the ship. I surmised that they had gone shopping and sightseeing because many carried packages. I noticed I was about the same size and coloring as many of the women. So I mingled among the crowd and was almost shoved up the gangplank by them.

What I had failed to notice were two people waiting at the top. One was a lady who sat at a desk as she checked each passenger's name and stateroom number as they came aboard. The other was an official-looking officer who gave the cabin key to each passenger. How could I possibly get past these two people? I did not even speak a word of Russian.

I could not have turned around and gone back if I had wanted, for the people were shoving, and there was no alternative but to proceed with the plan. I sent up a quick prayer that went something like this: "*Oh Lord, it's your problem; either you get me in or I can't go.*" While I was praying, I must have accidentally passed both people. Was it an accident or an answer to prayer? I was on board.

People were walking around talking to one another, and I could hear the ship's engines gently throbbing below my feet. What if the ship pulled out? No time for worry. I had a job to do. First I saw a library and went over to a bookshelf and took down a book, pretending to read it. I reached in my bag, took one of the Bibles, and put it in the place of the other book.

Next, the TV room. I went to a TV set and slid a Bible underneath the TV as I pretended to adjust the sound.

No one was noticing. My courage was building, so I began to walk down the corridors. Some of the doors to the rooms had signs in big brass letters I could not read. *Perhaps they are the restrooms*, I thought. I tried one of the doors, and sure enough, it was. I hid one of the Bibles in a place I thought it might be found later.

Soon, both bags of Bibles were empty. Mission accomplished. Now I needed to get off the ship. There was one small problem. The crowd with which I had come on board was not leaving, and no one was coming up the gangplank. The two officials were still there, filling out ledgers, so they would be a problem. I would certainly stick out like a sore thumb.

I prayed again, reminding the Lord I was depending upon him as I approached the gangplank. As I neared the two officials, I kept walking and simply passed by them. I was as surprised as anyone would be. I kept myself from hurrying, though every part of me wanted to run. And then my feet touched the dock once more. No one stopped me.

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I hurried to the shelter where two of my young colleagues were waiting, George and Ed. While George stayed behind and prayed, Ed had gone onto the ship by another gangplank. We compared experiences.

George and Ed were surprised I was able to place all the Bibles. Ed said, "The first person I saw was the captain. He looked at me sternly and motioned to follow him to his cabin. As I walked behind him, I was praying and trying to figure out what I would say. When he closed the cabin door, I held out a Bible and said boldly, 'Here, Captain, have a Bible.'"

Ed said the captain got such a sad look on his face as he said, "I'm not allowed to, but do you have one in English?" When Ed said no, he was ushered off the ship. "If only I had taken my own Bible," he went on, "I know that man had a hungry heart." I said, "Ed, give me your Bible."

I took Ed's Bible back on board the ship to try to give it to the captain. Even though the Lord repeated the process and I passed both people for the third time without being caught, I could not find the Captain anywhere. Realizing I must put forth a last-ditch effort, I decided to question another man who was dressed as an officer. When I asked for the captain in English, he was immediately suspicious. He asked what I wanted to see the captain about. Then when I said it was a personal matter, he said I could tell him, as he was second in command. He made no effort to get the Captain.

I began to feel as if I were not getting anywhere and decided it was time to leave. I went toward the gangplank. No one stopped me.

When the three of us met together after delivering the Bibles to the ships, we prayed and asked the Lord why we had been unable to get that English Bible into the captain's hands. Perhaps some would not only report it but also consider it their duty to turn one in to the captain. The captain would have a Bible in his own language. When God sends you on a mission, just trust everything to him. He will work it out.

I found the Russians to be as hungry to hear about God as any group I had ever met. The problem was that it was difficult to find Russian sailors by themselves. They were always in a group when they were off the ship, and I later learned that in each group there was always an informer.

Language was not a problem, as many spoke English. I found classrooms with English on the blackboards on every ship. This was not surprising considering that Russia planned to spread communism around the world.

So via the ships, the Lord brought the Russians to me rather than taking me to Russia. The same with the Chinese.

I had some of the first New Testaments ever printed in the Mao script. Chairman Mao had decided there were too many dialects in China to preach communism effectively, so he made a new language and it was named after him. Mao, for Mao Tse Tung. The Christians also were aware this was an opportunity to preach the gospel in this new language, so they quickly printed New Testaments in Mao. I had the joy of taking some of the first copies aboard ships.

Chapter 10: Czechoslovakia

Germany, 1980

I moved to Germany in the 80s and used it as a base to take Bibles into the Iron Curtain. The first country to which the Lord led me was Czechoslovakia. I recall being asked to speak about my burden for the Iron Curtain at a church in Holland. I was so overwhelmed by an intercessory burden for these dear Czech people that I began to cry and could not speak for the tears. I kept thinking, *Oh, I've ruined this wonderful opportunity to share with these people about the needs of Czechoslovakia.* When I dried my tears, there was a long line of people waiting to talk to me.

The first lady told me that three years before, the Lord had her put money aside and told her someone would be going to Czechoslovakia. She handed me a check. Next, it was clothes for the people and on down the line with similar stories by every person. I was overjoyed. I had never experienced the miracle of God's provision to this degree before. Later I would see greater examples of his love.

The leaders of a Bible study group even emptied their pockets and gave everything in them. They said, "You'll need food for yourself for the trip. Come and we'll share our food with you." Everything, including Bibles in both Czech and Slovak, was given. *Freely you have received, freely give. Mt. 10:8*

So, without contacts inside to give them to and not knowing how to hide Bibles or what a communist border would be like, we went, led by the Holy Spirit while he opened doors. The total dependency upon God and not on ourselves was vital in this ministry. The moment I tried to help God out, we found difficulty. If we left it all in God's hands, there would be no problem.

[Editor's note: Ginger was accompanied by two colleagues on this trip but did not wish to state their names for security reasons.]

It was not so important that we not get caught, because as Americans the most they would do would be to throw us out of the country or put us in prison. Our main concern was the people to whom we ministered, particularly in countries like Romania, where Christians were already undergoing persecution. For this reason I cannot share about certain methods we used for smuggling the Bibles.

This was another ministry where I learned from the people to whom God sent me. I shall never forget the eyes of the Christians there. It was like looking into the eyes of Jesus. Something happens to a person who suffers for Christ. They are in some way conformed more to the very image of Christ. I can never forget those eyes.

I wondered what the people would be like if I got to truly know them. I did indeed get to know them, sometimes staying weeks with them and ministering daily in underground churches. Unlike our churches in the West, they preached from sunup till nighttime, taking time out for meals and praying together before we retired for the night.

The homes were mostly mud brick, fashioned out of clay, mud, and straw, baked in the sun to dry. I suppose they were similar to those made by the Jews in the time of Christ. The floors were dirt with carpet overlaid.

Some homes had electricity, and some did not. Except in the main cities, not one home had an indoor toilet, running water, or heat. The stove in the kitchen was the only source of heat in most homes, and in winter the family would put their beds around the stove for warmth.

It was not unusual to find chickens roosting around the stove. Food was prepared the old-fashioned way, from scratch. Long before daylight the woman of the house would get up and kill a chicken. She would pluck the feathers and prepare it for dinner. She would make homemade noodles and then cook the chicken with noodles.

They certainly were famous for their chicken dishes. Every square inch of their tiny plot of land where their house sat would be a garden growing a variety of things. It was very carefully used.

Since the big farms belonged to the commune, which meant they were government-owned, private enterprise was nonexistent, and so there were no competitive prices, no labels by different manufacturers on products, and also no incentive to work to make a better product because it was government-owned anyway.

Shortages existed, particularly in food and clothing. Sometimes the shortages were not real but government-ordered shortages to harass the people. It was hard for me as a Westerner to imagine this.

I want to clearly point out that the Christians in these countries are far from sad. They were the happiest and most loving people I have ever met. They bore no grudges against those who were making their lives so miserable but instead prayed for them and witnessed to them. I learned a lot about forgiveness through my Iron Curtain brothers and sisters and a lot about taking the form of a servant and putting others above oneself. They would give the best, and sometimes the only, food they had.

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When I traveled in my car, it used to get covered with mud, and my shoes would be equally muddy. In spite of no running water in their homes, the next morning when I woke up, my car would be washed and my shoes cleaned and polished. They ministered in love to one another. *In honor preferring one another. Rom. 12:10*

I began to think these people must be a special breed of Christians or that persecution made people become almost perfect. I even heard some Western Christians say, "What we need in America is a little bit of persecution." I talked to the Lord about this and was surprised at his answer. He illustrated to me that it was like a tube of toothpaste. Only toothpaste comes out. You'll never get whipped cream or something else.

He said persecution is like the pressure applied to a person. What comes out depends on what they have inside. This is why so many of the East European Christians have borne up so well under

harassment, imprisonment, and torture without renouncing their faith. They became strong in Christ before the persecution came. Even without Bibles, they passed scripture down from father to son by memory, and they used what they had with access to God in prayer.

I have never heard prayer like I heard in communist lands. Many times I felt if I had opened my eyes, I would have seen Jesus right there with us. They knew how to get hold of God.

As I ministered among them, I realized how much they needed God. It was a matter of life and death that even the youngest Christian among them learned how to be totally dependent on God and totally obedient. They knew how to hear his voice.

Their whole method of evangelizing was different. They did not just say, "Pray this little prayer and Jesus will come into your life and you'll live happily ever after." No, they were more apt to witness like this: "I want you to know that if you accept Christ, you will become a new creature. Your life will change, but it will bring persecution. If you witness to your own children about Christ, the authorities may discover it and come take your children away to a home run by the government. If you have a job, you may lose it and go to prison, suffer torture, or even die." They do not encourage people to make hasty decisions, but those who come to Christ keep the faith.

I have pictures of places where Siberian Christians get baptized, winter and summer. Sometimes the ice is two feet thick. They would take a saw and cut a hole large enough for the pastor and the baptism candidate to climb into. When I asked them if they felt cold, they smiled and answered, "The love of Christ is so warm."

One feels so inadequate ministering to such people. In Hungary, at a pastor's home, I found the pastor's wife sitting on the porch crying. I asked her what the problem was. Her nineteen-year-old son had just been beaten to death because he was a Christian. He had gone to the wedding of a friend, and a gang of youths had attacked him and killed him. What could I say at a time like this? How could I relate when I had never lost a son?

The Lord gave me something to say at that moment. He reminded me that all things work together for good to those who love God. I sat down and put my arms around her shoulders, and she looked at me. "I've never lost a son," I told her, "and so to some degree I cannot relate to the heartache you are feeling, but I have lost someone who was very dear to me because of Jesus." And we wept together.

For the first time, I understood that unless I had gone through some sort of suffering myself, I could never have related to these people. For the first time, I could *count it all joy!* James 1:2

[Chapter 11: Boxcars of Bananas](#)

Marseilles, France, 1974

I'll never forget the time I was traveling in my VW van to Marseilles, France, to take Bibles aboard Russian ships. I kept getting *faith* scriptures in my daily quiet time. *Take no thought about what you eat or what you wear.* I thought, *Yes, Lord, I already know that.* The same theme of scripture kept coming to me until I realized that God was pressing this on me for a particular reason.

It was summer, and though summers in West Germany are not hot like in the States, nevertheless, as I drove to Marseilles, France, I kept thinking how nice a watermelon would taste. Was I seeing things, or was that actually a watermelon sitting on the picnic table I just passed?

I backed up, and sure enough, it was not only a watermelon but also a half of one sitting there with no one around. These European watermelons are about a quarter of the size of American melons and four times as expensive.

I thanked the Lord, ate what I wanted, and left some sitting on the table for the next person to find. This is what I do when God supplies things in this manner. I was praising the Lord as I drove on.

Next, I came to a grape vineyard, where I parked alongside, preparing to spend the night. A man approached the van and said, "We've already picked the grapes here, but there are a lot left. If you would like to have some, please help yourself." I enjoyed the fresh, juicy taste, which also quenched my thirst, and I took some along the next day.

In Marseilles, I noticed a sign over the Post Office door where I had my mail forwarded. I asked someone what it said, and they translated it for me. The post office was closed because of a nationwide employee strike. I did not think much about this, presuming it would be open the next day, but it wasn't.

The post office was closed for four and a half months, during which time I ran completely out of money and food. As I took the Bibles to the docks to go aboard the ship, I found it handy to put them in a shoulder bag. About the time when I had eaten all the food I had, a man who was unloading oranges off a ship onto a train offered me some. The next day, I saw them sweeping onions into the sea because a crate had broken, so I got onions, then green peppers, tomatoes, avocados, peanuts, and grapefruit of a sour type.

As I thought about how good some sugar would taste on that, the Lord actually directed me to a box of sugar cubes on a pile of lumber. Only two cubes were missing. The Lord had actually supplied sugar for my grapefruit.

It was uncanny to see the Lord supplying my needs in such miraculous ways. As I walked down a street one day, I felt the Lord wanted me to turn onto a smaller street and pick up a brown sack sitting on the sidewalk. When I looked inside, there were nine eggs. I could hardly believe my eyes. I sat down on the post office steps to inspect my "gift."

As I was looking to see what might be wrong with the eggs or why someone would discard them, a person walked out the door and knocked two of the eggs off the step and broke them. I hurriedly gathered the others up and left.

“How shall I cook them, Lord?” I asked. By now the compressed gas in my van cooker had run out. The Lord directed me to pick up a big tin can just discarded behind a restaurant to take it to the sea wall and make a fire and boil them in the can using seawater.

The seawater provided just the amount of salt needed. This was a kind of existence I had never known before, but it paved the way for me to have witnessing opportunities with hobos and others I might have never met. I shared sardines once with a bunch of men who lived at the dockyards in abandoned boxes and who managed to tap into the tank cars of wine for their alcoholism. Each had a story of better days before wine had taken its toll.

I used to wash my hair at an outdoor faucet. My hair was long and took a long time to dry. In Marseilles, winter is one of the mildest of European cities. Even so, I would pray to endure the pain of the icy water as I rinsed my hair.

Witnessing opportunities were everywhere. I had never seen a city like Marseilles. It was full of Algerians who lived there because of higher wages. Many slept on the streets under newspapers to save on hotels so they could pool their money for an old car, load it with gifts for their families, and drive home in style.

I shall never forget what it looked like with so many sleeping all over the streets. Young men hawked communist newspapers, and others sold all sorts of things on the crowded, winding streets, haggling over prices. It looked more like Turkey or Algiers than France. I slept in my van that was parked in the dockyards every night, but God protected me.

As the weeks dragged into months, I began to wonder if I would ever leave France. It took a long time before I could honestly relax and leave the time of my departure up to the Lord.

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As I walked in a deserted area of the dockyard one night, I accidentally kicked something in the dust. As I stooped and picked it up, I saw it was a wedding ring, a gold band. I looked around to see who had lost it, but there was no one. I put it on my thumb.

When I returned to the van, I turned on the overhead light to read my Bible. It fell open to Isaiah 54, and I found myself looking at verse five. *For thy maker is thy husband, the Lord of Hosts is his Name.* I felt he had now confirmed our covenant with a wedding ring. I have worn it ever since, and when people wonder why I have it on a different finger, I smile and answer, "Because I'm married to a big husband."

One day, I noticed a man standing inside the boxcar of a train parked at a siding. His head was sticking out over the top of the boxcar, so I asked him what he was standing on. He answered, "bananas."

"Bananas!" I said. "That's an awful lot of bananas. Where are you going with so many bananas?"

He replied, "We're going to dump them in the sea to keep the price of bananas up. There are 46 boxcars of bananas, and you can have all of them if you want."

I could hardly believe that these perfectly good whole stalks of bananas, just unloaded from a ship from the Ivory Coast, were to be dumped because of such a selfish reason. So I agreed to take as many as I could stuff into my van. I ate quite a few, but mostly I tucked French tracts into the stalks and rang doorbells to give them to housewives in order to witness to them about Christ. These bananas were one of the strangest things I have ever witnessed, but they were effective.

As the Lord usually does, he supplied more than I could use. One day while I was at the sea wall, I saw a very old couple living among the boulders of the sea wall. They had formed a makeshift home with castoff furniture, divided by the boulders into what amounted to rooms. Only one thing was missing: a roof. They draped a single sheet of plastic over what must have been their bed.

They had lived on the wall for a long time. I could tell because the salt had bleached all color from their faces. Their hair was white, and with white lips and no color, they looked unusual. I wished I could speak to them in their language and wondered what their story was. Anyway, they were the delighted recipients of the Lord's surplus bananas. I praise the Lord now as I remember that some of my happiest times were studying the Bible, sitting on the sea wall, while some of my freshly washed clothes dried on nearby rocks. When I began to relax and take one day at a time, I learned patience and also faith in God, who never fails.

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Marseille, France, 1974

While stuck in Marseille during the strike, I had taken Bibles on board a steady flow of Russian ships and had chances to share Christ by giving out French tracts.

The Lord led me to an English-speaking Anglican church outside of which several prostitutes worked the street. I talked to each one about Christ. They were open to the gospel but very fearful that the men who owned them might see us talking together, so our conversations had to be short.

Since I was around the dockyards with my Russian Bibles, I had opportunities to witness to the alcoholic men who lived in discarded wooden crates. These ate whatever they could find lying around. My heart went out to these people.

In a marketplace crowded with Algerians, young French men sold communist newspapers. When I asked if they had ever been to a communist country, they all said, "no." I asked how they could be so sure communism was the best thing for France if they had not actually seen it firsthand. I described what I had seen in countries like Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Hungary. They would listen awhile and then, when they got tired, would shout, "Well, communism may not work for them, but it will be a different kind of communism here in France, and it will work for us."

I tried to point out that even the picture on the front pages of the newspapers they were selling showed angry men with rifles and bayonets affixed running toward their enemies. I pointed out the basic difference between that kind of hate and Christ's message of love, even for our enemies. They softened a bit when they saw my own attitude was one of love toward them.

Communist posters were everywhere. Communists verbally attacked me when I put up some Christian posters. Anti-God communism was gaining ground.

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Once I boarded a Chinese ship docked at Marseille. I needed an explanation to get past the guard at the top of the gangplank. His sole purpose was to keep strangers like me from boarding. I saw no clear way to get on and relied on the Holy Spirit to give me an approach to use. It was the same as taking Bibles behind the Iron Curtain: total dependence on the Holy Spirit.

On this occasion the Lord directed me to say, "Parlez-vous français?" I said this to the Chinese guard at the top of the gangplank. He made a phone call, and another Chinese man appeared and motioned for me to follow him. He led me to a big dining room where I was seated and served tea and rice cakes and where other men came and welcomed me. They all spoke English, and I noticed that each had an identical uniform of blue slacks and a loose-fitting shirt.

It was not until I was seated by one of the men that I saw more closely another uniform under their clothes and a braid on the sleeve of the undergarment, signifying rank. This was an attempt to make it seem that all men are equal under communism.

Behind the table was one of the most beautiful tapestries I had ever seen: a huge one of the Great Wall of China. On another wall, a portrait of Mao Tse Tung. I asked questions about the tapestry of the Great Wall because I wanted to show an interest in their country. They happily told me how high it was when it was built and how long. I asked, "Why was it built?" This seemed to cause a little hesitation until one of them answered, "To keep undesirable things and people out of China."

I thought to myself that people build walls and put up bamboo and Iron Curtains, but there has never been one that could not be penetrated with the Gospel or high enough to stop the Holy Spirit. This visit was so amiable that they invited me to come again anytime I noticed their ship in dock. I talked to the Lord about it and was amazed when I discovered the reason for the friendly attitude.

Unknown to me. The Chinese communists were wooing the French. When the Holy Spirit led me to use the one French phrase I knew as I went up the gangplank, just the fact it was French caused these men to assume I was French, and they welcomed me aboard as a goodwill gesture. Since they spoke good English and assumed I was French, they must have really wondered how I learned to speak English without a French accent.

Only the Lord could have known how safe I was using my one French phrase because if anyone aboard that ship had been able to speak French, I would have been discovered and unmasked.

Chapter 12: Muslims

Germany, c. 1980s

I heard about a refugee camp on the outskirts of Nuremberg, Germany, where I lived. I thought they could possibly use some of the smaller-sized clothes that people had donated for the Iron Curtain. Since most Eastern Europeans were stouter, I began to take carloads of the smaller items to the camp. These were refugees from India, Pakistan, Poland, Africa, Turkey, and Ethiopia.

They were glad to get the clothes, but the Lord reminded me that my first duty was to tell them about Christ. I prayed, "I could never make them understand me. I don't speak their languages." The Lord reminded me to try English. I did and was amazed to find English speakers among every group. So I gave out English Bibles and in the meantime prayed about getting Bibles in their specific languages.

The Lord answered as Bibles began to arrive from different sources. My apartment closets were not only full of Bibles in the thirteen Iron Curtain languages but also Urdu, Arabic, and others.

The next stage was to get these people to church. So I asked some, "If I come on Sunday, would you go to church with me?" Some agreed. I said, "I don't think you quite understand. I'm not inviting you to go to a party or to dinner but to church to hear about Christ!" They answered, "Please don't leave us behind!"

In the first trip to church, I took fourteen men, crammed tightly into my van. As I opened the door to let them out, they literally fell out on the sidewalk. I took them to an English-speaking military chapel. I thought the chapel members would be delighted the Lord had sent so many nationalities to their very door. But I learned they considered the foreigners *disruptive* by their very presence.

The pastor took me aside one Sunday to suggest I take my flock to the fourth floor of the church building and teach them myself. By that time, there were two carloads each morning coming, about twenty in all.

On Saturdays I began to write study guides to distribute on Sunday. These began with basic doctrines of the Christian faith. I would make carbon copies with my typewriter and distribute them. Since almost all were Muslims or members of some Eastern sect, I began at the very basic fact of Christ himself.

I began with the Word of God. I held up the Bible. "How many of you believe this is God's Word?" Every hand went up. "If this is God's Word, then it must be true because God cannot lie, right?" They agreed totally that God, or *Allah* as they called God, could not possibly lie. I emphasized this point until I was sure they believed it. Then I said, "If God in his book says he has a son, would you believe it?"

Earlier they had told me they believed in God, but they did not agree with the idea of Jesus being God's Son. They agreed that if God himself said he had a Son they would believe. It was wonderful to show them passages that showed God the Father acknowledging Christ as Son. They read out loud from the Bibles given in their own languages, and they were amazed.

The Lord had brought translators for each group in a remarkable way. The Lord had me ask the Arabic people, "Which one of you speaks the best English?" They all pointed to one man. Then I would do the same for each nationality. I found that by using translators in the three basic languages, Urdu, Arabic, and whatever other major group was in the camp at the time, we could preach the Gospel to at least three groups plus English every week.

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Between Iron Curtain trips, I reached out to American military personnel stationed on the several bases surrounding Nuremberg. One day, an American soldier told me of a local German Lutheran pastor and suggested I ask him to help. He turned out to be the Lord's answer to my prayer.

His congregation had just recently completed a beautiful new church building, and their old building was only being used for Sunday School. He would be very happy to lend us either his old building or meet in the larger new one. I told him the older one was large enough.

Our congregation was now forty each Sunday. Some of the Arabic men who had already come to Christ insisted on walking to church to make more room in the van for new ones. The location was perfect, only less than a mile from the refugee camp.

Sometimes I would be at the refugee camp when newcomers came who were unaware that the camp was closed from Friday evening until Monday. I would see the plight of these dear ones who had no money and no place to go. I invited some of them home with me.

I had five Africans one night and a Vietnamese family another. All were precious.

At Christmas, the American soldiers thought we should invite some of the refugees for a real American Christmas. Since I could not entertain them all, we invited the translators. They had a great time. They shared their escape stories and showed pictures of wives and children they left behind and may never see again. I realized I had endured nothing like these people had. The Lord truly taught me through them.

I shall never forget one man who begged me to come to his country of Pakistan to tell his people about Jesus. "A missionary came once about five years ago, and two hundred of us came to Christ. This is how I became a Christian. There are so few who have ever heard. Won't you please come? I know all will listen and want Jesus if they can only hear about him."

At that moment, I wished sincerely that I could be two or three people. I wish this every time someone speaks to me like this. I too believe they would come to Christ if someone would only go and tell them. I told this man I could not choose which country God sent me to, but if God would allow it, I would be honored to go to his country. I've never forgotten his plea.

As I began to become more involved with the refugees, I obtained magazines and literature telling of the plight of the Cambodian refugees in their leaky boats. I would use the backside of my bathroom door as a sort of bulletin board to encourage my visiting soldiers to pray for these various needs worldwide.

One day when I was alone at home, I knelt down and began to pray for these people. I said, "Lord, you remember when I first started out there were times when I slept outdoors or under a bridge. Now I have a warm apartment and lack nothing. Those refugees have so little. I know you don't waste experiences I've had, so they must have been put there for a reason. So, Lord, I hereby relinquish this easier mission field and ask you to use me in a broader area. I volunteer for a harder assignment because I know it won't be hard to find a replacement for me here in West Germany."

It may sound foolish, but it was a very serious time with the Lord for me. When I got up off my knees, I felt he had heard that prayer.

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From my apartment in Germany, I continued to do Iron Curtain work, traveling in my bright orange van.

Some Western Christians hold the erroneous belief that if you are a Bible courier in the will of God, you will never get caught. I've had many people say this to me. It is important to explode this fallacy because it is similar to the attitude, "This or that person must be out of the will of God if they are put in prison or have any sadness come into their life."

Some imagine everything is supposed to be sweetness and light when Christ comes into one's life, rather than what the early Christians embraced when Christ taught, "You will be hated of all men, for my name's sake." Or, "He that will live godly shall suffer persecution." I say this to lead up to an experience that proved to me beyond doubt the value Christ puts upon one human soul.

At the borders of communist countries, we had delays and some close calls, but we would get through without a problem. One day, a guard asked me point-blank, "Do you have Bibles?" Now, what would you have done if you were in my place? Would you cover up the fact that 1,000 Bibles were inside? Would you pretend you did not understand his question when he was speaking English? I hesitated.

This was enough to bring a sly smirk to his face, and he took a wrench and began dismantling my car, piece by piece. If you take enough screws out of a car, no matter where the Bibles are hidden, they will eventually be found. They were found. He was so delighted he almost jumped up and down in glee.

While he was working in the back of the car after we were already caught, we put a tape recorder on top of the car at the front with a tape preaching the gospel in the language of this country. We turned up the volume so he could hear.

We figured since we were already caught, we would do as much witnessing as possible however we could. Eventually they arrested us, taking us into the guard office and stationing eight men with machine guns around our confiscated car. We were questioned in both English and in their language. They wanted to know if we were members of a large Bible smuggling organization.

Meanwhile, they spread the Bibles out on a big table. They had found 700 and thought that was all we had. They differed among themselves about what to do with us. Should they put us in prison or

send us home? They left to decide the matter among themselves and left a man to guard us. We decided to have a Bible study and got out our big Thompson Chain Reference Bibles and began to read.

This caused the guard consternation. He motioned for me to hide mine under my dress so the other guards would not see it. I used a sort of sign language, pointing to the sky to represent God and hugging myself to show God would take care of us, and proceeded to read. This aroused the guard's curiosity, and he walked behind us to peer over our shoulders to see what we were reading.

Seeing his interest, we turned to the back of the Bible, where there were pictures of Jesus on the cross, the empty tomb, and other pictures that represented Christianity.

My co-worker spoke in a whisper, "I'm going to get one of the Bibles out of the car, which they have not found. You pray." He managed to get back to the car and, in spite of the heavy guarding of the car, got a Bible and put it into his shirt. He slid back into the seat at the table beside me. "Pray that God will send this guard to the restroom," he whispered. I did, and when the guard went to the restroom, my friend followed him in.

When he returned, he told me what happened in the restroom. He held out the Bible to the guard and said, "Here, have a Bible." Surprisingly, the guard took it and began to read it. My colleague told me, "I became afraid the other guards might come in; they were just on the other side of the wall. I motioned for him to hide it inside the baggy coveralls he was wearing, but do you know what he did? He used the same gestures you used to say to me, *Never mind, God will take care of me*, and kept reading.

In a while, the leader returned and told us we were free to go. He looked displeased, as if he had been overruled in this decision by a higher rank. I believe they possibly meant for us to turn around and go back to our own country, but we pretended they meant for us to continue on into his country. No one stopped us.

As we drove slowly through the various barricades separating the two countries, we heard someone running beside the car. It was that guard. Was he coming to tell us to go back? No, when the last barricade loomed ahead, he shoved the regular guard aside and personally manned the handle that lifted the barricade for us to pass under.

All this time we were being scrutinized by guards in towers above us, watching every move through high-powered binoculars. For one second our eyes met. Neither of us smiled, but in that instant I saw why God allowed 700 Bibles to be confiscated. Here was one man, a lost soul, whom God considered far more important.

We got to our destination inside that country, making sure we were not followed, and managed to deliver the other 300 Bibles that had not been discovered.

Chapter 13: Nuremberg

Nuremberg, Germany, 1980-83

With my apartment filled almost day and night with people praying and studying the Bible, I was definitely overdoing myself and not getting enough rest. One day an Irish brother in Christ dropped by for a visit. He noticed I looked ill. I finally admitted I have been feeling unusually weak recently. He insisted I allow him to take me to a doctor. I reluctantly agreed, and before I knew it, I was being admitted to the hospital on an emergency basis.

I spent four days in intensive care, where they determined my heart was overworked and a main valve was completely closed. They said my gall bladder needed to come out, but my heart was not in good enough shape for them to operate. They also told me I had a mass in the lungs and were unsure as to what it was. I needed several operations but could have none because of my faulty heart.

As I waited in the emergency room for the doctor's verdict, the Lord gave me two encouraging scriptures. "I will live and not die and declare the work of the Lord," and "The Lord hath chastened me sore, but he hath not delivered me unto death." These were encouraging because I now knew I was in the hospital for a purpose: to witness to the lost. I began immediately.

The first person was the man who brought me my dinner. He noticed the sign on the end of my bed in the Intensive Care Unit, saying I was a missionary. He asked if I would mind if he asked me some questions. I said, "No, go ahead." He continued, "Every time I talk to pastors and people like that, they are immediately turned off when I tell them I meditate."

He looked me squarely in the eye, possibly to see if I would be "turned off" also. I said, "It depends upon what you are meditating on, since Psalm 1 says, 'In your word he meditates day and night.'" I was looking forward to having a longer conversation with Jim but did not see him again until I was being discharged from the hospital. We made an appointment then for him and his wife to come to my apartment.

Jim came to Christ, and his wife, who was a weak Christian, rededicated her life to the Lord. There were nurses, patients, and visitors whose lives were changed during that hospital time. They never operated on me but released me to go.

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I lay on the couch in the living room to rest, but people brought friends who needed help spiritually, and my guests stayed until 4:30 a.m. The next night was almost the same. I felt extremely weak when they left. I felt like I did during my time in the hospital, as though I were dying.

I felt the Lord indicating I should get up and sit at the dining room table. When I obeyed, I was immediately aware I was not alone any longer. The sense of his sweet presence was a wonderful feeling.

For the first time I understood the Scripture, "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." The Lord and I stood side by side at the very brink of eternity. With one part of my senses I realized

where I was, but another part seemed I was with the Lord. It was like he was waiting for me to decide whether I wanted to stay or go. I thought, "You decide."

It was lovely communicating without words along this flow, melting our spirits into a oneness I had never known before. I understood better the unity Christ meant in John 17 that "they might be one" even as he and the Father are one. Time seemed suspended.

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England, 1985

Off and on I had ministered in Great Britain. However, it came as a surprise that the harder place the Lord directed me to was England. I had imagined an island somewhere or a jungle... but *England*? It did not seem at first to be a harder area.

So, I put my furniture up for sale and made plans to move. In specific ways, the Lord directed me to one special town in England, even to the type of house I would live in. He said it must be downtown, have no garden, and should have privacy for ministry.

I wrote about this to a friend in that town. Amazingly, by the time I arrived, she had found just such a house. An 83-year-old lady had owned it. The entire back garden area was cement, not grass. The British fondly called the house a "terrace house," which means it is attached on both sides to other homes. It was not what I would have chosen on my own, but it met the Lord's specifications, so I moved in without checking out others.

When I found it would be impossible to move my furniture from West Germany to England, I gave away some and sold the rest. A couple I knew who had large pieces of furniture had no way to move them into their home, so I asked a master sergeant who owned a van to help them. I began to talk to him about Christ. He said he was not sure that even Christ could help him. He came back later to talk alone with me. He was awaiting trial for a terrible crime.

I told him Christ could forgive any sin except when a person refused to become a Christian. He confessed his sin to the Lord and asked Jesus to come into his life. I praised God for delivering him, for Lou was a child molester. He was later brought to trial and sentenced to a dishonorable discharge with forfeiture of all pay, including retirement, which he would have received in two years. He was also sentenced to three years in Fort Leavenworth Military Prison. Before he left, his wife and his eldest son became Christians also.

We had time to go witnessing together and to help Lou get grounded in his faith before he left. From the beginning, his greatest burden was for the other soldiers, that God would save them and none would turn out like he used to be. I have seen him many times weeping before the Lord for others.

Lou and I corresponded. His letters were full of good news of what the Lord was doing inside the prison. He became actively involved in a Christian fellowship there and later became the leader of the Spanish-speaking branch. He witnessed to everyone inside and to the guards also. He received a lot of persecution from fellow inmates.

It was wonderful to visit with him once when the Lord let me pass through Kansas City. Even better was the letter that arrived one day saying he had received an early discharge and was a free man. He wrote from Puerto Rico, where he lived.

Lou decided to surprise his parents, so he did not tell them he was coming. Lou wants to work with prison inmates and to write a book about his experiences in hopes of deterring would-be child molesters.

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When I moved to England, I found the immigration laws had changed from previous visits. I was able to get a six-month visitor's visa in hopes I could extend it from inside the country.

When I saw the house my friend had located, which met all of the Lord's specifications, I took it immediately and began what turned out to be almost one full year of fixing it up. It needed rewiring, and there was only one small gas stove in a downstairs room to heat all three floors. Besides these modifications, people had kindly offered free furniture that filled all the downstairs rooms. I could hardly walk through some of the rooms for the amount of furniture.

A two-burner hot plate was my first stove. There was only one difficulty. I moved in during the worst winter in 30 years, and in order to cook, I had to put on a heavy coat, scarf, hat, and gloves because the kitchen was so cold. I discovered the cost of the electricity required to cook by the hot plate cost more than the hot plate itself.

It comes as a shock for Americans from warm states not to have a bath every day. Keeping warm becomes almost an obsession to some Americans, more important than food or drink.

I had a friend print a sign for my downstairs front window, printed in Old English script. It read, "This is the Lord's House. If you love Jesus, you are welcome here. If you don't know Jesus, you can find him here." Since I lived on one of the main streets downtown, almost everyone who lived in Grantham eventually passed by the front window.

The first day, 30 people came asking about Jesus. This developed into a day-and-night witnessing opportunity. A lot of people prayed to ask Christ into their lives. I encouraged them to go to various churches locally.

I also experienced a broadening in the realm of trusting God for every need. I had lived by faith without regular support except when God spoke to someone to give money to help in my ministry. This was from the beginning until now. I found it to be as reliable, perhaps more so, than promised pledges from regular donors.

Chapter 14: Hitchhiking to Holland

I ran out of Bibles during my time in Marseille. I asked the Lord, "How can I continue this ministry without Bibles?" I recalled that Brother Andrew, another minister to the Iron Curtain, had Bibles in Holland, but I was in southern France. I lacked money for gas to drive there.

I felt the Lord was saying to me, "Hitchhike." This thought came as a shock. "Ladies don't hitchhike," I said. No reply. I have learned that when the Lord has already directed me once, he usually does not repeat it. So, I began packing to hitchhike. I rolled up my bedroll to prepare to hitchhike. "*You won't need that*," came the thought. *It's at least two and a half days away, and it's mid-winter.* So I put my Bible under my arm, locked the van, went to the highway, and stuck out my thumb.

My second ride was in a beautiful Citroen, one with suspension springs that was smooth and fast and felt like riding on air. While witnessing to the businessman who picked me up, we saw a terrible accident on the opposite side of the highway and then another. He began to take sips out of the wine bottle on the floor next to his feet and looked nervous. We saw a third accident, and he began to look frightened. After a few minutes, he pulled into a motel and slammed on the brakes with screeching tires. I said, "Where are we going?"

He answered, "Lady, I'm not going any further with you talking about Jesus. I'm going to buy your dinner, get you a room for the night, and leave you here." He did that, politely but firmly, and left me.

My room even had a shower, and I took a thorough one. This was the first bath I had in four and a half months that was not from a bucket. While lying in bed that night, I said to the Lord, *So this is what you were trying to tell me when I rolled up my bedroll. You already had a sleeping place for me for tonight.* I laughed for joy, thanked him, and fell asleep.

The following day was bitterly cold. I was travelling north, and although it was warmer by European standards, the rest of Europe was in the midst of winter. Snow was piled alongside the roads, and flurries were blowing. It was late evening when a truck driver picked me up. He looked at my tired face and said, "I usually travel with a relief driver, but he's not along on this trip. There's a bed behind the seat. Why not crawl back there and sleep while I drive?" My second night on the road, and again I did not need my bedroll.

I arrived at Brother Andrew's headquarters in Holland. They knew me because I had been a regular courier for Iron Curtain Bibles since the beginning of my ministry. "How many do you need?" they asked. When I told them, they said, "Bring your car around and we'll load them." I replied, "My car is in Southern France." They asked, "How do you plan to get these Bibles to Southern France?" I said, "hitchhike." They insisted, "No one will stop on the freeway for you with these big boxes of Bibles."

They found a backpack that they loaded with Bibles, helped me strap it on, and I left.

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Everything went smoothly until I came to Paris and was let off by a driver on the north side of the city. By that time, I knew enough about hitchhiking to know that cars will not pick up hitchhikers unless they are on the other side of a big city. Hitchhiking across Paris would be impossible. So I decided to walk across the entire city.

It was scenic but tiring, and the distance was twenty-two miles. I was exhausted carrying the heavy load of Bibles. On the other side, I got some short rides, but hunger and thirst were beginning to gnaw at my stomach. I saw a grocery store next to the highway. I would have to descend an embankment to reach the store but thought perhaps someone might have discarded food I could eat.

Sure enough, someone had dropped a carton of eggs, breaking some. Since the carton was wet and soggy, they had left it there. I looked inside. God had kept four eggs for me. The raw eggs tasted surprisingly good and provided the nourishment I needed. I climbed back up the hill to the motorway.

I was walking through tall grass along the edge of the road that came up to the calves of my legs. It was windy but not too cold. I felt a sudden impression inside that I should look at the ground as I walked because the Lord was going to lay some money there for me. I brushed the thought aside, but it refused to leave. It was the Lord speaking. Sure enough, there was a crisp franc note on top of the tall grass. It looked to me as if it were printed in the Bank of Heaven.

I picked it up and crossed the highway to a service station. "Is there a bus that comes by here going to Marseille?" I asked. "Yes," the clerk answered, "one comes here every two hours, but they don't stop unless you signal them." As I went out, I looked up, and there was the bus! I got on board and held out the bill without knowing its value. "Is this enough for a one-way ticket to Marseille?" I asked. "Yes," the driver answered and handed me change in coins.

I leaned back in my seat, but then I began to worry. "What if this bus doesn't go to the area of Marseille where my car is?" I thought. I could almost feel the anger of the Lord, who interrupted my worrying sternly. "What do I have to do to prove myself to you?" It seemed I could hear him saying, "I've provided all you need for the past four and a half months, taken you all the way to Holland and back, and even laid money in the grass for you, and you think I would let you get on the wrong bus!"

Nothing humbles me quicker than for the Lord to remind me of how good he has been to me. He had been more than faithful. He had kept his promises as *Jehovah Jireh*, my provider. I relaxed and closed my eyes.

When I opened my eyes, the first thing I saw was my bright orange van. I hurriedly pulled the cord to stop the bus and got off, right by my van's front door.

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With the new load of Bibles, I was *back in business* and had learned lessons in the process.

When the postal strike finally ended, mail began to flow, and I checked the Post Office General Delivery window to see if there was anything for me. "Yes, there is one letter," the clerk said. I was delighted because I recognized the return address on the envelope, and it was from the missionary

organization that forwarded my money to me. I assumed that letter contained money, and that meant I could leave Marseille at last.

The clerk refused to hand me the letter. "There's postage due on it," he said. "Well, if you will just give me the letter, it might have money inside, and I can pay you." He refused to give it to me until I paid the postage first.

People in line behind me were becoming irritated while the clerk and I decided how to handle the situation. I learned something about the French. Once a Frenchman makes up his mind, it takes a miracle to change it. This trait helped them through many wars, but it makes them hard to deal with in situations like this.

Finally the Holy Spirit whispered the solution to me, and I offered it to the man. "Suppose I give you permission to open my letter and see if there is money inside. You can take the money for the postage and give me the letter and remaining money." He reluctantly agreed.

I thanked the Lord that the money came in cash, American dollars, and that the clerk accepted it instead of French francs. This was one of those times I was glad France and the United States were allies.

It was a happy day when I filled the gas tank and the van started right up, another miracle after it had sat unused for so long.

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When I went to the port to give out Bibles, the guard said, "This is a closed port. No one is allowed on the docks except tradesmen with passes to come and go. There are no exceptions, and there is no way you can get a temporary pass at all."

When God sends me to a place, there is always a way. "Impossible" is not a word in his vocabulary. I asked who was in charge and was shown to a very official-looking office of the harbor master. As I waited to see him, I noticed how busy the office was and how many other people were also waiting. The others waiting were different from me. They all had appointments and carried important papers. I only had my Bible.

While I waited, I noticed a man rushing from one office to another. He entered into the harbor master's office and used stamps off his desk. He seemed to be making himself at home there yet also in a big hurry. I told this man I only required a pass for one day, a temporary one. I told him I felt God had sent me. I knew he probably would not understand, but I had to tell the truth, even though I did not explain I intended to take Bibles aboard Russian ships.

He looked at me, took the form I had filled out, went behind the desk, grabbed a rubber stamp, stamped the paper, and then disappeared down the hall with my form. A younger man followed him, looking very insecure. When he returned, he smiled at me and handed me the paper. It said, "One-day permit to go on the dockyard. Officially granted."

The guard at the dockyard gate, who told me earlier it could not be done, looked in amazement at the paper in my hand. I had about four hours left yet had no clear idea as to what God wanted me to

do next. I assumed he would make it clear when I went inside. That afternoon, I boarded five Russian ships in four hours, distributing Bibles—a day of real ministry for the Lord.

[Chapter 15: Looking Back](#)

Jackson, Mississippi, Early childhood

The earliest recollection of my childhood was as a toddler, waking up alone in the back seat of a car. I managed to open the door and followed the sound of music and the lure of bright lights into the bar hall.

My father noticed me, and he reached down, swung me up onto the bar, exclaiming, "Everyone, I want you to meet my little girl." The cigarette smoke burned my eyes, and the smell of sweat and beer mingled in my nostrils. The beer had foam on top, and Daddy always gave me a taste. It was bitter.

My mom and dad met regularly with their friends in this bar, leaving me asleep in the car outside. I don't remember why the pattern changed, but my mother waited outside each night, and Daddy drank alone. When Mother decided he had had enough to drink, she would send me in alone to beg him to come out. She figured he would listen to me more than her.

At home, they were always arguing and fighting. Daddy would take me to the drugstore and buy me things after one of their fights. He would ask me, "Who do you love the most, Mommy or me?" I always tried to say I loved them both the same. He would ask me, "If Mommy and I get a divorce, would you rather live with her or me?"

I used to be awake and try to figure out all these grown-up conversations. I was an only child. I had questions such as, why did I always share a bed with Mommy while Daddy slept on the couch? My friends told me their parents slept together. I figured it was because Mommy didn't love Daddy enough, and that's why they didn't kiss each other. I decided at age five when I got married, I would love my husband so much we would be happy, and he would not drink like my daddy did.

Home consisted of boarding houses where the three of us shared one room and ate meals at a communal table with other guests. To my childish mind, boarding houses meant no seconds at the dinner table and not enough to eat.

We were always moving from place to place. My dad ran bunko games that were played with four people and a pair of dice. There was a prize for the winner, usually a blue glass vase big enough for one flower. He must have had hundreds of blue glass vases packed in boxes all over the house. I remember police came frequently to our house, and after they left, we would move again.

I was extremely shy as an only child and did not make friends easily. I kept thinking if we could just stay in one place, I would get more courage to make friends.

I was unaware I looked or acted differently from other little girls. That was because of Mom. She married at 15 and played with paper dolls two weeks after she married. He was 15 years older than she and had been married before.

She and Dad had a son who was stillborn, and I guess this was a bigger shock to Mom than most people realized, because when I was born, she dressed me like a boy and had my hair cut like a boy in men's barber shops.

I had two outfits for school, a navy blue skirt and a red plaid skirt, with matching jerseys. I could alternate them to make combinations or wear them to match. I did not realize we were poor. The jerseys fit over white shirts I wore with a boy's tie and saddle shoes, brown and white with rubber soles. This was the era of Shirley Temple, and all the other little girls were curly-haired. I pleaded with Mom to let my hair grow a little longer. That did not work, and I became more introverted as I grew older, and other children teased me about looking like a boy.

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The library in the new boarding house where we moved was like discovering gold, and I buried myself among books like Little Women, Little Men, and Huckleberry Finn. I loved the new world they opened up.

My grandfather and his wife owned the new boarding house where we moved. I was required to always refer to my grandmother, a second wife, as Mrs. Patton. Both were very strict.

Sometimes, when my dad and mom were having a big fight, they would not want me around, so they would slip a coin in my hand and rush me off to the movies. This also was another world for me. I took the pictures seriously. To me, they were real! One movie in particular moved me, and I cried over it afterwards. It was called **IMITATION OF LIFE** with Hattie McDaniel.

In the South at that time a definite dividing line existed between white and Black people. I could never understand this. This movie dealt with two girls who were children together on a plantation. One was the owner's daughter, the other the daughter of the maid. It was not unusual for hired people to bring their children to work with them, and this maid did so.

The little girls became friends. When they were older, the white girl looked at the Black girl and remarked, "Why, your skin is almost as light as mine; you could pass for white." The other girl answered, "But my mother's skin is black, and people know that." The plantation owner's daughter told her, "As a Black girl, you will be so limited in education, choice of husband, or earning a good salary. Why don't you just disown your mother, and you'll be free to be white?" She persuaded the girl to do this.

The Black girl's mother grieved and finally died from grief, but when her daughter heard of her death, it was too late. She hurried home for the funeral and ran along behind the horse-drawn carriage, begging her dead mother to forgive her. The unfairness of it all tugged at my heartstrings.

I could never understand racial hatred because of the color of someone's skin. I vowed that someday I would undo all the unfairness I had seen as I grew up in Mississippi: the separate drinking fountains, the separate entrances to restaurants, and the separate seating on buses. As a child alone, I had time to form definite opinions of what I would do when I grew up.

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I had a very kind Sunday School teacher while living at my grandfather's boarding house. She must have been wealthy because she had a Christmas party for us and gave us each a shiny little

cross and a silver child's purse. These were the only feminine things I owned, and I kept them secreted away under my clothes in a drawer.

Some missionaries came to our church, and I did not know much about what a missionary was, but they talked about faraway places and told interesting stories. I remember they asked who would like to become a missionary when they grew up, and I raised my hand. I also memorized scripture because I wanted to receive a gold star by my name and be recognized as doing something. But I did not know Jesus at that time. This period was the only time I went to church on a regular basis.

I have discovered that when we reach out to Jesus, no matter how feebly, he remembers even though we forget. I know now that the Lord saw my childish hand go up and took it as a pledge on my part. At that time, I was giving all I knew to give.

By the time I was ten, I was looking very different from the other girls. Some of my early pictures showed me dressed in riding pants and boots. With my tie and haircut, you would have sworn you were looking at a boy.

Mom became ill with severe heart trouble and was confined to the hospital for months. Daddy was traveling, so who was going to look after me? Not one relative wanted this gawky child. Finally, they agreed to keep me a week or two at a time, and I was passed from house to house. The ones I liked best were my uncle and aunt, who had three boys. We played baseball and rode their bicycles. Then, I overheard them saying they did not want me any longer. A cousin and his wife took me in.

I had a different feeling about their home. They were expecting a baby and only had one bed, yet unbelievably, they shared it with me! No one had ever shown me that much love before. I assumed if a person let you sleep with them, they must love you. They were the first people in whom I saw Jesus.

My cousin Earl taught Sunday School, and his wife helped by singing in the choir. They were so happy and smiling, and I felt peace for the first time in my life. The only bad feature of living with them was Ruth had doctors' orders to eat lots of liver, and so we had liver several times a week. I found by mixing it with mashed potatoes, I could get it down, and because I loved Ruth and Earl so much, liver became one of my favorite dishes. I always order it when I see it on the menu, even today, and fondly remember them when I eat it.

Chapter 16: Growing Pains

My mother recovered enough to come home. She and Daddy came and got me. Now, Mom and I stayed in boarding houses while Daddy traveled all week and only came home on weekends.

I did not know that my mother needed psychiatric help or that she was raising me in an unusual way. She had missed her teenage years by marrying early and decided to live them through me. She was determined to develop this ugly duckling of a daughter into the most attractive and popular girl in Jackson.

For the first time, she let my hair grow out and stopped taking me to a men's barber shop, although she herself continued to wear her own hair "shingled up the back," as she called it, until the day of her death. It was such a happy time for me to get rid of those hated boys' shirts and ties and to let my hair grow until it actually touched my collar. She told me every day how pretty I was, and even hearing a compliment for the first time sounded nice. But she had difficulty with my shyness. It could not be cured overnight, for I had spent years alone or with books.

She seemed hardly able to wait until I was of dating age. Since Daddy was a Mason and Shriner, I joined Rainbow Girls at thirteen, and the girls were taken by bus to visit other Rainbow Girls in another town ninety miles away. The girls there got blind dates for us, and I met my first boyfriend. Mother was delighted. She tried everything to get me invited by other popular girls at school into a sorority. This was very important to the young people, whether they were invited to join or not. Every day she inquired if they had asked me yet. I used to dread the same question, and her insistence made me feel even shyer around my schoolmates.

The war broke out in 1941. Theo, my first boyfriend, had entered the National Guard and was with me at a movie in uniform when we came out and heard the loud cry of the newspaper boys shouting, "EXTRA, EXTRA, Pearl Harbor attacked." December 7th. We did not realize the full impact this would have on our friendship.

Theo was drafted and did not get back for four long years. By that time we had both changed too much, and he was bitter over the unfairness of it all.

Wartime meant soldiers coming for training in my hometown. For Mother, it meant opportunities for me to be popular and, through me, feel as though she herself were a girl again. It was years later that I realized this.

She entered me in a bathing-beauty contest against my will. She sewed pads in places where I was not yet developed, and although I was not the winner, I did come in second. It was the most embarrassing moment of my life when I had to walk down that runway with people looking up at me from below and in my bathing suit. I was horrified and wished I could drop dead on the spot.

I simply did not have the nerve to stand up to my mother, and with her heart problems, I wanted to avoid anything that might bring on one of her seizures.

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Jackson, Mississippi, 1944

The U.S.O. held a dance on Saturday nights for the soldiers. Mom came with me and watched us dance. I was all dressed up in an evening gown but was so shy I hung back against the wall, and no one asked me to dance. One night, Mom walked up beside me and literally pushed me onto the dance floor. I knocked into a very popular young man, who, sizing up the situation and seeing my shyness, was too polite not to ask me to dance. It took all her maneuvering and scheming to coerce me into being a normal person.

I began to love to dance, so that was no problem for her anymore. The soldiers were eager to have dates, and since they outnumbered the girls in the town about three to one, it was easy to be popular, and Mother was satisfied. She wanted me to have two dates a night rather than one. I would come home and share it all with her later.

I shared everything with Mom. I was unaware of her fantasies or imbalance until later. When the soldiers left the area to be transferred to another base, I would say goodbye and feel nothing. However, one day I received a letter written by a soldier I had broken up with, and it was a very loving letter.

It was followed up by a visit from this soldier, who greeted me a little too warmly at the door. We went outside to talk. "I broke up with you," I said irritably. "What right do you have coming into my house as if we are still going together?" He answered, "That's not what your letter said," and handed me a letter signed with my name. I could not believe what I read. It began, "Sorry about my handwriting. I hurt my hand, so I hope you can read this." Then it continued in a loving way as if written by a sweetheart, and even though it was signed with my name, it was in my mother's handwriting.

For the first time, I saw I was being used as a pawn to satisfy my mother's fantasies. She was living her missing youth through me. As far as I know, those fantasies took the form of letters or dreams in her mind.

After high school and a short time at a business college, I got a job at Standard Oil Company. I was earning my own money for the first time, though I had worked some after school and weekends during high school.

This was regular work, and I longed to pay my mom rent and budget the rest. I did not take into account that my parents had never had a regular income due to Dad's drinking and moving from job to job. They saw my paycheck as a chance to better their situation. Soon they were so deeply in debt, I would have to borrow ahead on my next week's salary.

I soon realized that despite our difference in ages, I was the adult in the family. I tried to make our life a bit better, trading in the secondhand couches and beds for better ones and paying the difference. Mom was a wonderful cook but a terrible housekeeper and had absolutely no interest in cleaning or repairing a home.

Because of my regular salary, we progressed from boarding houses to a one-bedroom apartment. I remember how we would have to take the secondhand mattresses out in the backyard and burn the bedbugs off with lighted newspaper.

My dad, when home, always slept on the couch in the living room, and I would have to tiptoe past his snoring alcoholic form to get to the bedroom when I came home at night.

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Whether it was because of my age or the Lord's protection, I never had any difficulty with the many soldiers I dated, even though many were far older than I. A soldier I met went off to Algiers. When he returned, he was a major, and I could not believe what an old man he had become. Twelve years' difference in our ages did not seem to matter when he left, but after he had been gone awhile, he seemed old, and he appeared to realize how young I was. We never saw each other again.

Wartime was a time of hasty decisions, sometimes regretted later. Many of my girlfriends married, and some even had babies out of wedlock. I thank God for his protection of me.

The train and bus stations were always either very joyful places or tragic ones, depending on whether a person was welcoming a son home from the war or meeting a flag draped over a casket.

I began to visit patients at the hospital. Terrible sights. Some of the worst cases were the men suffering from jungle rot, a sort of fungus that grew out of their ears and noses. Others were affected in their minds. Some had never seen their sons or daughters, born after they left. Some who were shell-shocked could not recognize their loved ones. My compassion grew.

People mature during wartime. It has nothing to do with age. Even though no bombs dropped on America, I began to feel compassion for those in England and France, where they lived for days in air raid shelters. I felt so blessed to be born in the United States. I still did not know Jesus, nor did I attribute my good fortune to His doing or caring.

Chapter 17: Ministry to Military

Nuremberg, Germany, 1980-83

I traveled in and out of the Iron Curtain for years without a single automobile breakdown. Six weeks at a time on mostly unpaved roads. Oh, the faithfulness of God during those long journeys!

When I decided to sell that car, I realized I had driven over 100,000 miles on the same set of tires. Have you ever heard of tires lasting 100,000 miles without a single flat?

I had no trouble selling the car even when I told the owner it would be with one stipulation: that I take it on one more trip into Hungary. The new owner agreed. A few days later he phoned me and said, "You can still drive your car to Hungary but I want to put new tires on it before." Even up to the very last journey the Lord provided what I needed. I never want to take his miracles for granted.

Behind the Iron Curtain, no one ever asked, "To which denomination do you belong?" Nor have I had to argue about doctrine. None deny miracles or the power of The Holy Spirit.

I asked how they came together for meetings when they could not phone one another. They answered, "It's very easy. The Holy Spirit just speaks to Sister Sue and tells her to come to a certain place at a certain time. Then he speaks to Brother James and tells him to come to the same place at the same time. So, we all end up at the same place, led together by the Holy Spirit. Isn't that the way you do it in your country?"

[Editor's note: For much of Ginger's Iron Curtain ministry, she was based out of Nuremberg Germany. Three American bases nearby allowed her ample ministry among military personnel.]

Among our American soldiers in West Germany there were Satan worshippers. I found they were meeting in the basement under the PX at night. I met one face to face when a friend and I had taken her husband to the base to go to work one day. Bill said, "There's Joe, he really needs Christ." I called him over to our car and began to talk to him about Jesus. He sneered at me and said hatefully, "I don't need him, I have something better now," and he rolled up his sleeve to reveal a demonic tattoo of a hooded figure, symbol of Satan worship. Then he hurried into the barracks.

I felt burdened for Joe. We were having Bible studies at that time at Bill and Betty's home. Many came and some were coming to Christ. One night, we had been witnessing to one soldier who informed us he was not ready to give up his sinning. He said he was enjoying himself too much. Much to our surprise Joe walked in, disheveled and nervous. I knew it must have been a real emergency to have him come here after he had bragged about Satan. Joe was ready to come to Christ, but he first had to be delivered from the satanic forces that bound him. He was far from free now to make his own choice, and the spirits that held him captive were determined not to give up easily.

We took authority over the spirit of witchcraft in Jesus' Name. When the evil spirits realized they were losing their power over Joe, they determined to kill him rather than release him. His own hands, controlled by demon forces, began to try to choke him. It took about four strong men to hold him down and to pry his fingers loose from his throat. When at last Joe was free, the pillow

someone had hurriedly pushed under his head was soaking wet with perspiration. He was completely exhausted and fell asleep. No one was noticing the look on the other soldier's face, who had so casually rejected Christ before. He blurted out, "If that's what it takes to get free from Satan, I've got to accept Jesus. I can't afford to wait any longer." Kneeling beside Joe, he confessed his sins to God and asked Christ to become Savior and Lord of his life.

Joe, in the meantime, became a regular member of the Bible study group. Besides the tattoo he had on his forearm that I had seen, he also had 666 tattooed on his upper arm. He hated these symbols of his old life and asked us if we would pray and believe with him that God would remove them. We did, but nothing happened. We told him the Lord wanted him to know, "You may bear the outward signs of your old life just as the alcoholic or prostitute bears the signs of decadence, but these are not important. I have done an operation to remove the scars, which are important; I have circumcised your heart, and I look on the heart, not on the outward man." Joe cried when he realized this.

What is it like to live behind the Iron Curtain? Many Westerners only visit the major cities of Eastern Europe, so they are unaware that the roads they travelled on are not typical of the country itself. The streets are mostly unpaved in smaller towns and villages. The houses are mud brick, painted inside and outside with a thin paint, similar to whitewash. They paint them every year to keep out the dampness. Dirt floors are typical in village homes.

Though villagers lack indoor plumbing or water, they are thankful for the bit of land just surrounding their homes. They use these few feet to raise as much food as possible to help feed their families. They also raise their own chickens, ducks, or, in some cases, a pig. Many times the pig will belong to several families who pool their money to buy it, then split the meat when it is butchered. Grapevines are trained on trellises and provide both shade and fruit in the rural areas.

Hungary raises a lot of fruit. It is the only place in Europe where I've seen watermelons the size, shape, and price of American melons. On summer trips to Hungary, I would bring big melons back for my American military friends.

For Eastern Europeans who live in town and have no space to plant crops, shopping takes up a large part of the day. The lines outside food stores seem strange to Westerners, but those are a part of daily life in all Eastern Bloc countries.

Hungarian and Romanian breads are huge round loaves, brown and crusty. Since they are heavy, they make a good supplement for other meager products. Unlike our modern supermarkets, there are no assortments of canned vegetables. Rather, in many places the labels are left off the cans entirely, and only a stamp in big black letters announces the contents.

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When I actually saw these conditions, I began to appreciate private enterprise. No discount coupons, no pretty packaging to catch your eye, no gas price wars at the pumps. The price is the same all over the country because the government owns everything. Lines at the pump and no clean restrooms. The workers who fill your tank expect a tip. It was explained to me that their wages are unbelievably low.

The lack of different brands is true not only of food items but also of pots and pans or whatever. Since competition has been done away with, the products produced are very inferior. Large department stores may have only a few items on each shelf.

One must remember that communism as an ideology is not the same as communism in practice. This is why it is so important for those of us who have experienced these things to share with those who have never been to a Communist country. Communists preach a theory they do not practice. Their ideology states that all will be equal and that there will be no extremes of either poverty or wealth.

On paper, this would seem ideal. In reality, extremes exist between the poor and the wealthy in communist countries. Stores exist that aren't unavailable to the average citizen. They are for high-ranking officials only. In contrast to the unlabeled cans of the open market, such stores contain imported products from all over the world. They even have Western cigarettes and liquor.

Besides the luxury of purchasing products the average citizen never sees, these communist officials sun themselves at special resorts that cater to them. I have ministered in several of these along the shores of the Black Sea and other areas.

Automobiles are a great luxury to the average person. Even if money exists to buy a car, the waiting list is five years! So instead of a socially equal system, an even more drastic division exists between the wealthy and the poor. This includes the size and availability of homes and apartments.

The lure is constantly put before the people. "See how much better off you would be if you would just be one of us?" Throughout history some fall prey to these temptations, and some Christians become traitors to the cause of Christ because they insist on laying up treasures on earth rather than in heaven.

The first time I saw miles of electrified fences surrounding places like Czechoslovakia, I could hardly believe the government would take such elaborate precautions to keep people from escaping. Many risk their lives to have the freedom you and I enjoy.

It is important to understand that people under communism did not vote for this form of government. It was by force, not by choice. In countries where Russia dominates, they immediately indoctrinate the army, police force, and government officials into communism. If the people resist, they get rid of them.

They preach communism all day, every day, in every way. I have seen billboards all along the roads. I have heard communism doctrines expounded in their state-registered churches. I have even heard communist doctrine broadcast as I visited the zoo. It is everywhere on radio, in newspapers, and on TV broadcasts. It is especially emphasized in universities and schools.

While adults go to work, the state looks after the children and teaches beginning communism, even to toddlers. I have seen young people drawing chalk posters for school on the streets in Romania. It was disturbing to see how many had political overtones. Some depicted peaceful people being attacked by tanks. On the tanks or planes were American or British flags. It was easy to see how they came to view the Western nations as oppressors.

One of the deceptions used to recruit children into joining Young Pioneers Communist Youth is to make the early outings as a sort of campout, similar to Boy Scouts. The appeal is strong for young people to have such a holiday, unaware of what they will be taught other than camping.

I have various friends whose children, through indoctrination at school, became ardent communists and began to consider their own parents as enemies of the state. Many of them informed school officials of their Christian parents' activities. This has resulted in torture and imprisonment for some. The division of families and causing children to turn against their own parents or husbands against wives and vice versa is some of the severest pain our brothers and sisters face on the other side of the Curtain.

You might think that people who lived under the shadow of communism and oppression would be an unhappy group of people. They are not sour at all, although they are quieter and more serious. The Christians have a penetrating gaze, born of having to learn to size up people quickly. They have had to learn who their real friends are and trust God at times when they were unsure of the loyalty of friends and family.

These experiences have molded and tempered them. There's not much flesh mixed with their Christianity, and they have, for the most part, laid aside differences over minor doctrines and traditions. Their strongest asset is prayer.

Once I knelt on a dirt floor alongside a woman whose home consisted of nothing more than two beds with straw mattresses, a simple stove, a round table, two chairs, and an oil lamp. Yet as this dear one prayed, it was like an angel choir. Her husband was not a Christian; in fact, until he had become ill himself, he was her most outspoken critic as she served the Lord. Yet her prayer was all love, forgiveness, and Jesus.

Their empathy was beautiful. I remember sharing about the Satan worshipper who came to Christ, and the whole church congregation broke into audible sobbing. I learned I had to be careful because they truly felt such compassion for their brothers and sisters in the West. When they told me they would pray for specific needs, I knew they would do it. I wondered if we in the West were as faithful to pray daily for the needs of our Eastern European brothers and sisters.

We have read of people who have carelessly taken Bibles into Russia and gotten caught and were thrown out. Big headlines came out in the newspaper, and the people who got caught got off free; some wrote books about it. We don't hear any more about the incident, and we tend to think, *no harm done!*

May I just share what happened in one particular case where someone took tracts and went into a communist country and stopped in villages and put a tract through the letter slot in the middle of the night? Then he went on his way and eventually came out of the country without getting caught.

The story continues from brothers in Christ inside that particular country. In one of the villages where the tracts were distributed, there was a Christian man who had spent many years inside a communist prison for his faith. He had just been released from prison. That morning, people woke and found tracts in their mailboxes. They thought Brother X was responsible. The police came, and

he had to go back to prison. We do not realize that the penalty for our Iron Curtain brothers and sisters is much higher than for us.

The incident I mentioned earlier when people are caught at the borders with Bibles sometimes tightens the borders much more than usual. This makes it harder for regular couriers who take Bibles under God's leading. Many things that *need doing* are not necessarily meant for you or me to do. We must go with the anointing of God and leading of the Holy Spirit, not in our own presumption.

Chapter 18: England to China

Grantham, England, 1985-87

No aspect of the Christian life is more important than learning to differentiate between the voice of God in your spirit and your own impulses or those of others who may urge you to do whatever.

Spend *time* with the Lord. This may sound childishly basic, but there is no substitute for it. Ask in prayer for God's guidance, then practice on minor activities, acting upon what you feel are his leadings. Get used to following him daily at home in little things before venturing to a foreign field. Then as your faith and assurance grows, venture further.

Believe it or not, you can follow God's guidance in seemingly mundane activities, like preparing dinner or rearranging furniture. God is interested in practical things. Many of us feel we are ready to die for Christ but would not think of asking him to help us choose the wallpaper.

Some people feel waiting on God means total inactivity. Not so. Quiet times are necessary, and time alone with the Lord has no substitute. Yet we never learn without the practice of acting on his leadings.

Figuratively speaking, trust God to shut a door if you're pushing on the wrong one. He is not only a door opener but also a door closer. I have had times in the ministry when I was going along a mile a minute in a way I thought God wanted me to take, and all of a sudden, no matter how hard I wanted to go, I was directed on a way that seemed like a detour but turned out to be God's way.

For instance, I was led by the Lord not long ago to go to South Mexico to meet a particular man. All was going well until the travel agent called to say I could not get my scheduled flight. The nearest flight to Mexico I could get was Houston, Texas. This is a long way from Mexico City, but after prayer, I felt the Lord urging me to take that flight.

When I arrived in Houston, I totally relied upon the Lord to lead me. Guess what! He brought to the home where I was staying in Houston the very man I needed to see! If I had gone on another flight, we would have missed connecting, for he was on his way to Houston. Only the Lord knew that.

Always remember we only see one part of our own story at a time while the Lord sees the whole picture. This is why absolute dependence on the Lord is one of the hardest lessons I've learned but one of the most important. Just letting God be God without getting in his way and messing things up.

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While in England, the Lord indicated that my main ministry was not yet accomplished. He showed in several scriptures that what I had learned as I ministered in Eastern Europe would later be used to minister in other persecuted countries. It began to take place in a way I probably would have never expected.

I had removed several hundred bricks in my back garden in England, and when I began to clean up, I suddenly felt a tremendous pain in my back. I could hardly get back into the house. When I went to a doctor, he diagnosed it as a severe back sprain.

Friends from India, who were Catholic, came with their car and almost carried me to their home to look after me. This helped me recover more rapidly than if I had been on my own.

One of their neighbors, an Italian lady I had not met previously, offered her assistance by lending me a large breadboard to put under me to support my back firmly as I lay in bed. She used this board to roll out her homemade noodles, so I realized it was a big sacrifice on her part.

During this time, I received a letter from a friend who was unaware of my suffering. She wrote that friends of hers would be coming soon to Grantham to shop for antiques. She asked if I could please let them stay at my home.

I was delighted to have this retired pastor and his wife as guests, but I had doubts that I could be the kind of hostess I longed to be with an injured back. I did not know God was sending this dear couple to arrange a new facet of ministry I had never dreamed of before. I was about to experience an agape love for a whole new race of people I had not known before.

James and Georgina arrived at my door, and we became friends as soon as we met.

God arranged every detail. Today, I smile when I remember when certain countries were only dots on a map for me and the people seemed half a world away. I love the way God causes strangers to become family and best friends.

The day the couple arrived, my doctor allowed me to get out of bed. I did not mention my back injury. There was no need.

We all went out to enjoy *antiquing* in the historic old town of Newark. The cobblestone streets, old castle, quaint houses, and scenic areas made Newark a favorite tourist attraction. We enjoyed every aspect of shopping and browsing. Lunchtime came, and it was about 1:00 before we noticed we were getting hungry.

Since we had not found the particular type of clock James and Georgina hoped to buy, we agreed to eat somewhere and shop more after lunch.

I was unfamiliar with the Newark restaurants but thought they might enjoy a Chinese meal. I asked the folks around where we could find a good Chinese restaurant. They directed us to a beautiful place in the heart of the tourist area. It was called the *New King Wabl Restaurant*, located across the street from a famous castle in the downtown district.

Most of the noontime customers had already left when we arrived. We had the restaurant almost to ourselves.

We ordered our meals, and when the food came, we bowed our heads to give thanks. As I opened my eyes, I was surprised to see the Chinese waitress standing there with tears in her eyes. "You're Christians!" she exclaimed with joy. "I just prayed this morning that God would send Christians across my path. I'm a Christian too." She sat down as she talked.

My first thought was that she might get in trouble with her employer because she sat down at the table with the customers. I learned later that she was the daughter of the owner of the restaurant. Her name was Linda.

Before we parted, Linda and I exchanged addresses and arranged her to come to my home for a visit. When she arrived, she shared several things that happened before she became a Christian, which had caused her anxiety. The Lord reassured her through my counsel. She invited me to her home where I ministered to others in her family.

I was delighted to discover a rapport developing between us as I made visits to her home. It seemed mutual. I found myself refreshed and feeling like a part of their family. They began to treat me like a family member and I loved them more as we exchanged visits.

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During my daily Bible study, I kept coming across scriptures telling me that God was opening up a new ministry for me, this time to the Chinese. I became acquainted with other Chinese through my newfound family and was invited sometimes to speak in a Chinese fellowship in Nottingham.

So, what began as a shopping trip with American friends developed into a new friendship and ministry among the Chinese. This turned out to be the tip of an iceberg that would later lead me to live and minister in Hong Kong and main land China.

I am convinced there are no accidental meetings with people. God arranges encounters among Christians that lead to new friendships. Some of my most cherished friendships have been when the Lord arranged these special encounters.

A fun part of this has been getting to know members of other races and cultures, to reveal misconceptions we have toward one another. God knows how to break down barriers we build to hide our insecurity about meeting other people.

Agape love helps us to love one another without hypocrisy and preconceived reservations. To be accepted for whom we are and be appreciated for being ourselves is one of the most precious aspects of the family of Christ.

Psalm 133 speaks of the unity of the body of Christ. It is not a forced unity spoken verbally. Words are easy to come by. It is the acceptance which is hard to give and hard to receive totally.

Falling in love with the Chinese family was a gift from God. Discovering they loved me in return was an added blessing. It was the cherry on top for me when the Lord spoke clearly that he was calling me to live among the Chinese.

I'll never forget one experience with Linda and other friends in a group. I was invited to be with them during Christmas and New Years when a large group of relatives and friends from many countries came to Newark for the holidays. There were three houses full of people.

In one, the women slept on pallets on a farmhouse living room floor. The men slept on pallets on the top floor. We were literally wall-to-wall people and we talked, sang, prayed and praised almost all night.

Everything was so orderly, in spite of the need to borrow bedding, covers, portable heaters and prepare food for so many people. I admired their ability to function so smoothly in every detail of hospitality.

When we parted after New Years I really cried because in such a short time, I had felt these dear people were already lifetime friends. In spite of my inability to speak Chinese, we seemed to be able to make one another know what we were saying. It is a miracle of God that language was the least of our problems. The language of love removes all barriers. If one is determined not to become friends, one can speak one another's language fluently and still never communicate.

Missionary life is like a perennial school where one learns incessantly and experiences new things. It encompasses geography, spelling, literature, music, grammar, food, social and spiritual aspects; continually enlarging our perceptions and causing us to cast aside traditions, opinions, preconceived ideas and many other things that form barriers to understanding and friendships. There is hardly a day one does not learn something new or experience a different aspect of God's way of accomplishing things. I praise God for allowing me to be a missionary.

The Word reminds us to, *Despise not the day of small things*. What begins as a seed, becomes a fruitful tree and multiplies. A trickle from a crack in the rock can become a river before it flows into the sea where it increases itself a thousand times over.

Ministries begin like that, in small, seemingly insignificant ways. The world watches in disbelief and people laugh at the Noahs who build seemingly useless ships and talk about floods to come. Men of vision are jeered, persecuted and derided, yet conquer through obedience.

After years in the life of faith, I still stand amazed at the miracles God does on behalf of missionaries. He provides a table before us in the presence of our enemies and subdues them without firing a shot. He uses our weaknesses to do exploits. He restores *what the canker worm has eaten*. That is what God has done for me.

MY GOD IS REAL!

Epilogue

Though Ginger's autobiography ends here, it represents only about half of her adventures.

The Chinese family she met in England told her they owned an apartment in Hong Kong, and she was welcome to use it if she wished, rent-free. They handed her the keys.

Ginger left for Hong Kong in 1989. She contacted a ministry there that smuggles Bibles into China and spent several years as a Bible courier.

On one trip, she traveled the entire length of China by train. She had been puzzled why the Lord would have her do that. Then she discovered that the Chinese on the train who knew any English were anxious to practice on her. LOTS of Chinese. She was equally anxious to tell them about Jesus, and nobody objected.

She even made it to Mongolia, having obtained an unobtainable visa in the most peculiar way. She went to the Mongolia Consulate and asked for a visa. The attendant explained that a visa for an American was impossible.

The attendant asked, "Why do you want a visa?"

"I'm a Christian and very interested in what the culture is like in your country."

Ginger told us that while the consulate was arguing with her about why she could not have a visa, he was filling out the forms. He said, "I don't know why I am doing this!" Ginger replied, "I do!" and got the visa.

One peculiar incident occurred while in the capital city of Mongolia. She had no idea what to do, so she went to the museum, where she was met by a guide who spoke passable English.

During the tour, she was looking for a cultural bridge to communicate the gospel to the guide. Among the gaudy symbols of gods, demons, and other typical Asian artifacts, she noticed one that appeared to be a cross.

"What is that cross there for?" she asked. The guard explained its cultural significance that had nothing to do with Christianity. Ginger began to explain the cross of Christ. The guard listened intently and thanked her, saying he had never heard of that before.

We know nothing of what became of that guard nor remember other incidents Ginger explained when she returned to the United States.

Ginger eventually returned to the United States and settled in Colorado Springs. Her doctor insisted her heart would not tolerate much more travel of the sort she did.

Ginger could not accept that. She told us it grieved her to think she would die in the States rather than on the mission field. She was called to be a missionary and a missionary was what she was determined to be.

Why she chose Africa for her next round of adventures is unclear. In 1994, accompanied by her grandson Paul, she arrived in Nairobi, Kenya. From there, they settled in the town of Bungoma, near the Uganda border, rented a lodging and began a routine of village evangelism.

Paul thinks this six-month period probably extended Ginger's life. She lost weight from walking around the villages and acquired a taste for peanut stew.

In October, upon returning from an excursion to the villages, Ginger experienced chest pains, went to bed and passed into the presence of her Lord.

The Lord had granted her wish. Her remains are buried where she wanted to be...

On the mission field.

Postscript

Ginger's husband, Wings, passed away in California in February of 2016, at age 95. As far as we know, he remained hostile to the gospel to the end.

Paul, Ginger's nephew who accompanied her to Africa, resides in Oregon, is married with one child, owns a videography business, and is an elder in an evangelical church.

Gunella, who traveled with Ginger to Haiti, passed away in 1999.

Ginger's daughter, Dianne, resides with her husband in Florida and works with him in Hispanic ministry.