

# FRAGMENTS OF FAITH



By Gerald Sutek B.D., Th.M., Th.D.

Foreword by Pastor James Knox

## FOREWARD

*By Pastor James Knox*

Our God delights in blessing His children. Praise His holy name! Our God is faithful to keep His every promise. Glory to His name!

There are many that trust the Lord to take them to heaven when they die. Not so many seem willing or able to trust the Savior to care for them this side of heaven. How sad; not because the needs of such will not be met, for God is faithful, but because such often fail to see that the blessing is not in the provision but in the joy of knowing that GOD provided.

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**"And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all (1 Corinthians 12:6).** In this book you will read the exciting tale of God's methods of operation in the life of one family that has tried, to the best of their understanding, to live by faith. You will read of timely provision, miraculous intervention, and joyous ends to perilous beginnings. You will read of times when faith was strong and the Lord did not move and times when faith was weak and the Lord made haste. But always, in every instance, the author and the reader will be left to lift their eyes to heaven and declare: "Great is Thy Faithfulness, O God my Father!"

As I read this book I remembered many of these incidents as bits in a newsletter, or hurried prayer requests on the telephone. What a thrill to learn, only now, of the details behind those answers to prayer.

This book will challenge you to live by faith. This book will encourage you to pray for the brethren. This book will make you very, very glad that you serve a loving Father.

## PREFACE

*(Please read this preface)*

It has been nearly two thousand years since our Lord, just before leaving this planet asked the question: "Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" Luke 18:8. Since this question was never answered, it remains a valid question. The Laodicean church age mentality has waged a vigorous war upon the saints. This mentality is particularly true in America

and other socialistic societies where the strong economy and the high standard of living make it quite difficult to live by faith. Some would argue this point, but in order for the average American's economy to meet the Biblical standard of living-by-faith, they would have to alter the definition of faith in Hebrews 11, as well as compromise the standard set by our spiritual forefathers.

This book, "Fragments of Faith" tells the stories of a few Laodicean pilgrims battling in a credit-poor and security-counterfeited society to gain some ground in the war between the comfortable seductions of this world and the life of faith. These pilgrims do not claim to be foundation stones, pillars or even shingles on the temple of faith, but simply hope that their stories and struggles will serve as an encouragement to the generation ahead who, if this faithless trend continues, face even more formidable foes.

The author holds no "Camelot-hopes" of "the brethren" agreeing with one hundred percent of the principles set forth here. Nor does he vaunt himself above any who may choose to see these principles differently. He only knows what has worked and has been a blessing to these pilgrims for a good span of time during these last days.

## CHAPTER ONE

### *OUR GENESIS*

In the beginning, or rather, our beginning must start with a God-directed union between a saint and a sinner. This union serves as a good example to any saint to be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh him a reason for the hope that is in him with meekness and fear. At the time of this union I had been out of the full-time ministry of the Lord for some years, due to some of life's complications. I was serving the Lord in a large independent Baptist church in Pensacola, Florida I was teaching an adult Sunday School class and ministering in the music department. I preached whenever the opportunity presented itself, and the opportunity did present itself on the Saturday evening January 19, 1985 in the Waterfront Rescue Mission. I walked in the door of the mission, past the homeless men waiting outside. My accordion was slung over my shoulder and my Bible was in my hand as I stepped onto the platform of the little chapel. My message was a simple salvation message with an illustration about a presidential pardon. This story tells of a criminal who is guilty of a capital crime, imminently facing the gas chamber, when the President of the United States walks in and offers him a free, no-strings-attached pardon. Along with this pardon is offered the total expunging of all records of the crimes laid against him and the invitation to enjoy a beloved-relative status with the President, including joint accommodations, friends, wealth and opportunities. The bottom line of the illustration explains how foolish it would be for that guilty criminal, in his pride to turn down this free pardon and take the gas chamber. Of course, this illustration typifies the offer we have of pardon and join-heirship with our Lord Jesus Christ.

As the men listened with varying degrees of attention, I noticed a young man who was paying unusual attention. Terrell Bear was present that night and could not resist the offer of a free pardon from his sin. He was dealt with and became a joint-heir that very night. I talked to him for just a moment, felt a kinship with my new brother in the Lord and invited him to come to church with me the next day.

Bear (as he will always be known) had little education at the age of twenty one and could not read. He had zero background in things pertaining to the Lord. He was drug up in the suburbs and alleyways of Los Angeles and later Las Vegas. Suffice it to say, he was wise to do evil, but to do good he had no knowledge.

Bear told me weeks later that as he waited for me to pick him up the next morning for church he was sitting outside on the wall overlooking Pensacola Bay. He found himself communicating with his new Friend that sticketh closer than a brother. Bear decided, with the help of the Holy Spirit, that if he were going to get into this new life, he was going to jump in with the same hands, feet and zeal that he had used to serve the old life of sin. He reached into his jacket pocket and threw his marijuana and paraphernalia into the bay.

He sat through my adult Sunday School class and the morning service with quite some interest. Since I have been living in these anti-church times, I still had my doubts as to the spiritual future of this young man. I offered him lunch at my home. As he entered he asked for a pair of scissors as he took hold of his "cute" little pony tail. He was less than eighteen hours old in the Lord and had the world hanging all over him. No one had said a word to him concerning basic training and discipleship. No one, that is, but the Holy Spirit.

He drew a playboy wallet out of his back pocket and asked for something else he could use to hold the few dollars that he had. He wanted to dump whatever it was that was spawning the conviction he felt. At this point my hopes began to rise that I might have a true, straight-shooting young man to disciple.

The pastor of the church had baptized a few folk that Sunday morning, and Bear had asked about that. During lunch he asked if he needed to be baptized, and if so, could I make any necessary arrangements. His baptism was taken care of that very night.

Just before we sat down to eat there was a knock at the door and two more transient bums were looking for food and shelter on this coldest of winter days. I quickly added more water to the soup and we all sat down. As our new guests ate, I took the opportunity to witness to them and led one of them to the Lord right there at the table. The other weakly claimed to be saved and occupied himself with the meat that perisheth. Shortly after they left, Bear asked me to show him how I had

dealt with those men concerning their souls. I had given him a Bible, but he barely knew how to open it. It is one thing to teach a discipleship class on soul winning when the students have at least a basic education; it is still another to teach that course when your student cannot read. Well, I did the best I could in conveying to him the gist and content of the pertinent verses and then highlighted them. For the rest of the afternoon Bear studied to show himself approved unto God.

The next morning I took Bear to breakfast at Hardees and told him to stand in line and order what he wanted and I'd be back to pay for it. When I came out of the rest room, I did not see Bear either in line or at a table. I thought I had lost my disciple, but a second look found him by the door with his Bible opened. He had another bum pinned up against the wall giving him a crude but effective witness. He would point to one of the highlighted verses and give the gist of a verse that he had memorized the afternoon before. Whether the highlights coordinated with the gist, I know not. I knew then that the Lord had given me a disciple of unusual quality, and it was now my job to help mold this lump of clay.

Bear was tired of his life of sin and loved the ways of righteousness, so he learned fast and became an avid student of the Word of God. He quickly took up his mantle of ministry, and we began to do public ministry together. Soon after this, Bear met a Christian girl named Lari. They courted for a few months, and I married them in December of 1985. Bear worked in my business with me through the week and on the weekends we would preach and minister at flea markets, parks, neighboring towns and anywhere we could. This continued for several months, and we all enjoyed it very much. One of the highlights in Bear's early ministry was when he had the opportunity to preach salvation in the same rescue mission where he was saved only a few months earlier. Six men were saved that evening.

One weekend we went to visit my parents in Jacksonville, Florida. While there we held a street meeting in busy downtown Hemming Park. Bear was preaching when a hippy girl approached him. I took her for a heckler and stepped in between. She spoke in a "Valley Girl" accent and asked some far out questions. "Like wow, man, like you guys just go around like the disciples and have just one suit of clothes and things and like, just preach wherever you go...like wow man, that is awesome...you just like trust God for everything...like wow, man, that is neat..." She did all the talking, and I just pacified her with "uhhua" and "yeah" whenever appropriate. We finished the meeting and loaded the car and started on our trip back to Pensacola.

Lari quickly fell asleep in the back seat, and Bear and I talked to stay awake as we drove the three hundred and eighty five mile trip. I asked Bear if he noticed the hippy girl who had approached him as he preached. He said that he had seen her and was interested in what she had said. We laughed together as I imitated her dialect and repeated the "idiotic" dialogue between us. The conversation dwindled to a lull. I was driving; Bear was thinking. After several miles during which I had forgotten the subject of our last conversation, Bear blurted out, "Does anybody do that anymore?" I said, "Do What?" He said, "You know, live by faith and just trust God and go around and preach the gospel in the highways and byways and win people to the Lord and...." I answered being the "great white leader, full of wisdom and maturity" answered, "Of course not!" Then I proceeded to preach to him how those things were done in the Bible times, but it is totally unrealistic to think that any of that could be accomplished in these Laodicean times. I spoke with

such authority and strength I thought that I had wisely ended the matter. Ten miles of silence followed, during which I basked in my great wisdom and strength in having successfully brushed away these immature, foolish thoughts of my disciple. Then Bear abruptly broke the silence with, "Why not?" I, having forgotten the subject, again said, half startled, "Why not...what?" "Why doesn't anybody just trust God today and go out there and preach the gospel like the disciples did?" Bear demanded. "Isn't He still the same God and don't the same principles apply to us about living by faith?" Once again I covered my ignorance, fear and lack of faith by authoritatively listing some very practical, logical reasons why someone living today could not just simply trust God and do that kind of living. Another ten miles of silence convinced me that this time I had succeeded in sufficiently dousing his hopes and faith and that this young whippersnapper would now think in a very practical, responsible and mature way. He grabbed my arm and looked at me seriously and said, "Why couldn't we do that?" My answer was in hopes that I would not have to face this embarrassing contest of his faith versus my "wisdom" any longer, so I said disgustedly, "Why couldn't we do what?" Bear proceeded to undermine my falsely-secure foundation of practical, Laodicean, worldly-secure living-by-sight theology with the simple design of a ministry which would throw worldly caution to the wind and adopt a new "If-God-can't-take-care-of-us-then-we'll-die-in-a-ditch" theology.

## FOUNDATION PRICIPLE

### CONTENTMENT

The very idea of such a simple, faith-filled, gospel-preaching ministry began to germinate in my heart and unfold in my mind as we talked for mile after mile. The Lord began to show us how that if we truly would be content with such things as we have, the Lord was well able to give us our daily bread and that His seed would not go begging. The secret seemed to lie in the foundation principle of being content with such things as ye have. Heb. 13:5. The question was, though being Laodicean Americans ourselves and living in such a materialistic society as we do, could we really be content with whatever the Lord would provide?

*The violation of this foundation principle is at the root of all indebtedness.* There is a good indebtedness in that we were discontent under "Saul's" reign so we gathered ourselves unto "David" who became captain over us (1 Samuel 22:1-2). So forever after we are completely dependent upon "David" (a beautiful type of our Lord Jesus Christ) for our physical sustenance as well as our spiritual contentment. But there is another indebtedness which dishonours "David" our Saviour. Think of the disloyalty of one who has experienced this transformation by "David" who then allows such distorted cravings for the things of the kingdom of "Saul" (a type of the flesh as well as the world and the devil) that he would sneak off from "David" and ask "Saul" for a quick fix for his inordinate affections and then be willing to pay a heavy usury to the kingdom of "Saul" for that thing which never brings any satisfaction or contentment.

Now let's apply this illustration to our New Testament times. Many a saved, heaven-bound saint who waves the right Bible and shouts that he truly is a Bible believer, has dishonoured his saviour

by reading Philippians 4:19 in his daily devotion and in the same week has gone into the bank and asked the loan officer for "X" number of dollars so he might enjoy and have now what the Lord evidently doesn't want him to have now, or maybe not ever. He is willing to pay twelve to twenty eight percent usury to the kingdom of this world to consume the pleasures of this world upon his own lusts for a season. What a distorted witness this is to the world around us. Any unregenerate weakling can get himself into debt and justify it, but it takes a loyal subject of "David" our Saviour to love Him enough to obey him when he plainly said, "...*the borrower is servant to the lender.*" Proverbs 22:7 *"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. YE CANNOT SERVE GOD AND MAMMON"* Matthew 6:24 (emphasis added). And one more, *"Owe no man anything..."* Romans 13:8

IF WE COULD BE CONTENT WITH SUCH THINGS AS WE HAVE THERE  
WOULD NEVER BE ANY RIGHTEOUS REASON TO BORROW MONEY.

Meanwhile, back in our genesis, Bear and I talked while Lari slept for three hundred and fifty of the miles back to Pensacola. By the time Lari woke up, Bear, myself and the Holy Spirit had solved many of the logistical problems of this proposed adventure of faith. When Lari leaned over the front seat we gave her a ten mile briefing of our three hundred and fifty mile strategy-planning session. We asked her if she were on for the sojourn and she simply replied..."Sure."

So we were on. But I had to pull up some very deeply driven tent pegs. I was mired into three businesses up to my elbows. I had to back out of those businesses and maintain a testimony in doing so. We all had many other of life's little entanglements to consider as well. We decided to set a date of departure and skillfully shoot for it. After much prayer and consideration we set six weeks to be the wrap-up and preparation time for our launch. During that time we not only pried the tent pegs up from the hard world, but we also secured the needs which were thought of during our strategy planning meeting in the car. A friend named Aaron Taylor built a four by six utility trailer after our design which included a metal top heavy enough for a man to stand on and preach from. Inside of this trailer could be carried all of our belongings as well as our tents and camping equipment for our pilgrimage. We lettered the trailer with a witness message and mounted our first electronic moving-message signboard in the back to beam out a witness on the highway as we drove along in the night hours. A giant garage sale netted us a nest egg of four hundred dollars and the rest we took to the dump. We loaded our tents into our homemade plywood trailer, said goodbye to a few head-shaking, disbelieving friends and relatives and on Oct. 2nd, 1987 we started the engine of our used Subaru car. Thus was formed the ministry of the SWAT TEAM FOR CHRIST. S.W.A.T. is an acronym for Special Weapons And Tactics. Our special weapons are the Word of God and Prayer and our special tactics are street preaching and publick evangelism. *"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ," Phil. 1:6.*

## CHAPTER TWO

## *OUR EXODUS*

With only one supporting church, no scheduled meetings, no promise of any meetings or regular monthly support and very few ministerial contacts, we had to be extra-sensitive to the leadership of the Holy Spirit. We had some experience but little credibility and zero quality impression to offer to any prospective pastor. To be honest, we hadn't much hope of ever being given the opportunity to present, teach and challenge public ministry in churches and Bible colleges. Our thrust was to minister in the streets of America. The ministry to churches was a secondary thought. We simply had a deep longing to be in the ministry, particularly the public ministry, and to set a good example therein. By our meager and primitive appearance we could hardly have hoped to have a major influence upon the body of Christ to affect them for public ministry in these last days.



*The ORIGINAL SWAT TEAM FOR CHRIST*



We pointed the Subaru east and drove to Jacksonville, Florida. to see my elderly parents for what might well have been the last time. My only contact in that city was my former pastor Dr. Bob Gray and some close friends in his church. While visiting my parents, I called Dr. Gray and asked him if I could put up our missionary display board in the back of Trinity Baptist Church on Sunday night and solicit prayer from my friends and former church brethren. His response catapulted us into a category of ministry that we could never have imagined. Dr. Gray said, "Yes, Jerry, that would be fine...but I have to be gone all next week to preach at the Southwide Baptist Fellowship and I need somebody to take my 'Pro-training Class' at the college. Why don't you and Bear teach my preacher boys how to preach on the street?" Well...Bear and I were both on the phone at my mother's house in what was until that moment a very sedate neighborhood. But when Bear heard Dr. Gray offer that week of teaching at Trinity Baptist College he dropped the phone and started running around the outside of the house shouting, "Glory! Glory! Glory!" I calmly accepted the offer and made the appropriate arrangements like a southern gentleman. My mother came to me and asked if there was something wrong with Bear. I said no, he was just excited over the Lord confirming to us that we had made the right decision, and I told her about the opportunity just given to us. Then she started shouting.....just a little.

The next few days were spent in hasty preparation, getting our heads together and organizing what we felt these green preacher boys should know about public ministry. Dr. Gray had asked us to take them out for on-the-street training as well. This meant that we had to find a location to accommodate or have preach an estimated 25 first-time preacher boys. This was not an easy task. Jacksonville was not exactly overflowing with places to preach anyway, and to complicate things further, Dr. Gray wanted us to take them out on Thursday night in place of their mandatory church visitation. I knew Jacksonville, and I knew there was virtually no place to go street preaching on any night, much less Thursday night. I began to sweat when I calculated that even if each preacher boy preached only four minutes, plus music, plus time for Bear and me to set the example and give instruction, this exercise would last upwards of two hours. That is too long for a street meeting in any city short of a mega-city.

(The following story has already been told in the Street Preacher's Manual but for the sake of continuity must be told here again.)

Driven by desperation, Bear and I drove around Jacksonville Tuesday night looking for an appropriate place to take Dr. Gray's twenty five green preacher boys. Whether it was the providence of Almighty God or a trick of the devil I know not, but we happened by the Fantasy World Topless Lounge on Cesary Boulevard at about 8:30 PM The parking lot was filled with cars, but there were no people visible except for the bouncer at the door. We didn't realize that the lounge had been the center of heated controversy for the past two weeks. The owner's interpretation of the law prohibiting toplessness was that it was inseparable from the alcohol license. He therefore relinquished his liquor license, encouraged toplessness and invited seventeen-year-olds in as well. The papers had kept the issue hot, and several groups had already protested and demonstrated against it. We had the utility trailer with the steel top for a preaching platform. It was abundant with a witness for the Lord. We decided to see what would happen when we knocked on the devil's door. We parked on public property, prayed, and when we opened our eyes, there at Bear's door stood four enormous bouncers. They asked if they could help us. We replied in the negative and then asked if we could help them. To say we were a bit intimidated would be a gross understatement. When they asked what we planned to do which was the deciding factor in our decision to preach. When we announced our intentions to them, they all said, "You can't preach here! This is private property." We told them that we were going to preach off of our trailer which was our private property. They said, "We can have you removed." We said, "You do what you have to do but we're going to preach right here." They left to call the police.

I looked at Bear and said, "Well, there's no more debating about it; we gotta preach now." He agreed and got out and mounted the trailer first which left me on ground level with gospel tracts. I envied his position. Bear began to preach and within ten minutes the lounge and the pits of hell vomited their contents into the parking lot. The vilest, most demonic group of sinners I have ever faced stood before us mocking, jeering, gurgling, prancing, growling, and threatening to end our ministry with a martyr's crowning. A whore stood half clothed with sun glasses on at 8:30 PM and said in a "Valley-Girl" accent, "You guys are ridiculous, you know that, don't ya?" Presently, a young male drove his car up and blocked the driveway between us and the front door. He opened all the doors and turned his stereo to full volume with heavy metal rock music. One of the huge bouncers was prancing about the trailer growling and making other virtually inhuman noises. Then he would stop and say, "You're going to jail. I hope you like jail. Maybe we'll come and see you down at the jail." Traffic had now slowed considerably on the four lane street we were parked on, and there was a general disturbance in the area. Bear never stopped preaching, and I, with clammy hands, was offering everyone a tract with no success at all. This was one of the few times I have actually prayed for the police to come.

Then it got worse. The owner came out, cheered by the crowd which expected him to be successful in scaring us off. He was a sight! He was about fifty-five with long, bleached blond hair. He had a dame on each arm and on a choker chain a 175 pound Rottweiler looking for fresh preacher meat. The owner told us that we were parked illegally and that we'd better leave before the police got there or we would go to jail. I told him we'd wait and let the police decide. So he decided to give us a stress test. He ordered his dog to attack Bear, who was still preaching atop the trailer. The dog went wild trying to get on top of the trailer, and might have been successful if it were not for the choker chain. Bear never flinched: he was full of the power of the Holy Spirit. The owner then commanded the dog to attack me on the ground. Oh, how I felt the call to preach! The dog was held fourteen inches from my body as he ferociously followed the command of his master. Wishing I had on an adult diaper, I offered everyone another round of tracts but couldn't find any takers...not even Poochy.

The parking lot was now crowded, the lounge was probably suffering from lack of patronage, the traffic was at a crawl because of the riotous situation, and at long last the police arrived. Oh, was I ever happy to see that policeman! He pulled right into the parking lot and was immediately thronged by the lounge people who were urging him to throw us in jail or make us quit. He hushed them up quickly and gave sharp orders to get the music turned off, the car moved and the dog out of the way. Then he said to me very slowly, even hesitantly, as if to stall as long as possible, "You're parked in an emergency zone." I stalled, allowing for maximum preaching of the gospel, then I replied, "My goodness, is that right? I saw no markings to indicate that. What about all these other cars parked along here?" He answered, stalling yet another sizeable pause, "Well, I don't know who they belong to, but they'll have to move as well." I said, "Well, if we are really parked illegally, I guess we'll have to move. Come on, Bear." Bear came down off the trailer, got in the car, and we drove off quickly to find a restroom. The patrons of the Fantasy World lounge that night certainly knew that there had been a prophet among them, Ezek. 2:5. *"So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." Isa. 55:11.*

Now, remember why Bear and I were out looking for a place to preach that night, because when we drove off in the car Bear turned to me with obvious excitement and said, "Jerry, that's where we can take the preacher boys on Thursday night!" I replied incredulously that on our first opportunity to teach publick ministry in a Bible college that was the last place we would ever take GREEN preacher boys whom Dr. Gray had entrusted to us. I told him that they would all end up in jail with wet diapers and that our ministry would be over before it had started. And, for you that have read the Street Preacher's Manual, now you know the rest of the story.

We did teach at Trinity Baptist College that week and many more times for years to come. We took the preacher boys to another location on that Thursday night, then had them preach in the daytime a couple of times and had fourteen souls saved as a result. Several good preachers who were instructed by us there have carried publick ministry over into their own ministries today.

The school gave us a small honorarium, but the students were so moved by our step of faith that they took up a love offering for us right in the chapel service. We drove out of Jacksonville with a few bucks in our pockets.

While we were teaching at the college we decided to find out if our idea of living in tents was going to work. So even though my parents lived right there in town, and even though Trinity Baptist Church would have put us up in a prophet's chamber, we went out into the woods on the property of the Trinity Rehabilitation Farm and tried out our future design of living accommodations. It was late in the evening and long since dark when we started setting up the tents. Despite some missing and broken pieces, the "Laurel and Hardy Tent Erecting Company" managed to provide a canvas roof over our heads. This also gave us the distinction of being the only guest professors at Trinity Baptist College ever to have had their accommodations in tents at the Rehabilitation Farm. This distinction not only fit us well, but we became very proud of it.

We took off from Jacksonville and drove to our home church in Albany, Georgia, which is where we faced our first real test of survival in this ministry. We were warmly welcomed, but after about a week there and no prospects for meetings, our stay became stale both for us and for our brothers and sisters. Our funds were getting low as well. We adopted another principle in our journey of faith, that we never ask anyone for anything. I must admit that there have been a very few weak moments when we have violated this principle, and whenever we did violate it our tactics were fruitless anyway. But with very few exceptions our newsletters for twelve years have borne the true phrase: "WE CONTINUE TO HAVE NEED OF NOTHING BUT YOUR PRAYER."

In the middle of this test I wavered just a bit and suggested to Bear that we might return to Pensacola and take up our business for a short while and start again with a better nest egg. He very properly rebuked his elder and reminded me of the verse which says, "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." Lk. 9:62. I had done a thorough job in training this disciple!

So we girded up our loins with prayer and fasting and employed our pastor and some men of the church to join us in this. We asked the Lord for wisdom and guidance; He did not tarry in answering.

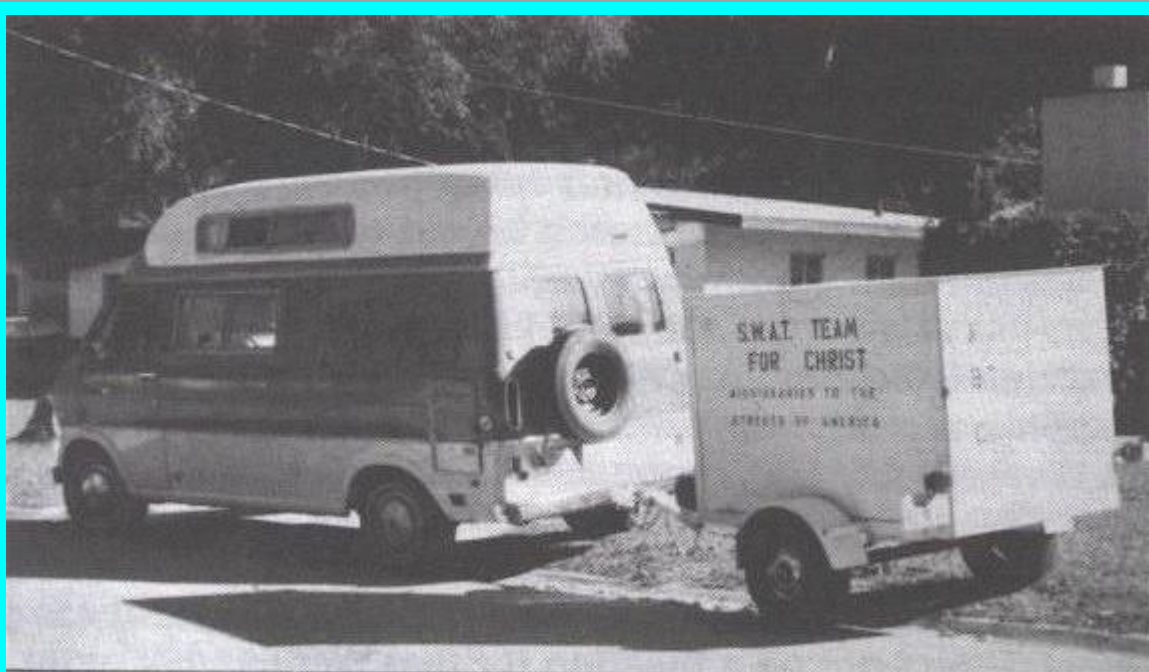
By phone I landed a meeting with a good friend who had a church in Chicago. This was Monday and the meeting was for the following Sunday. We were jumping around for the Lord again, but there were problems. Chicago was a thousand miles away, and we had money enough to get to Atlanta. Our pastor then remembered a favor owed to him by a pastor friend in Macon, Georgia. He called and introduced us and got us a meeting for that Wednesday night. After twelve years of making meetings, I now appreciate what a miraculous answer to prayer it was to get a meeting for Wednesday on Monday of the same week.

We had a great meeting in Macon on the spur of the moment. Nine young folk were saved, many more got right at the altar. The church gave us enough money to get to our meeting that Sunday in Chicago.

Chicago's meeting was a great success and paid expenses to our next meeting in Indiana, and that meeting paid our way to Kentucky which paid our way to a meeting in Pennsylvania etc. etc. etc. for quite a few months.

During this time the weather had turned quite cold, and being in the northern states, we were enduring to the end. We slept in the car with our sleeping bags pulled up over us. We kept clean by buying day passes at the YMCA or health spa. Our existence was primitive and vulnerable but we were still alive and we were very much content with the lot the Lord had dealt to us. After all, we were in the service of the King, weren't we? And all of our needs were being met. What more would one want?

Our Subaru had served us well, but there were a few problems with it. The trailer we were towing was nearly as large and heavy as the car. With the trailer weight pushing the back bumper down and with front wheel drive on the car, there were times on the ice that we were not going when we wanted to go and other times when we were still going when we wanted to stop. On the mountains of Pennsylvania in the winter time, that can be a most dangerous and hair-raising journey.



*The second SWAT-MOBILE*

While remembering the principles of faith whereby we were both bound and liberated from the perverted principles of the world, we prayed and asked our Heavenly Father if He would be pleased to provide something safer and more practical. A pastor told us about a church nearby that provided cars for missionaries doing deputation. I called and told the pastor our situation and said that I was not looking to just use a vehicle, but to trade titles so that we might permanently obtain something more useful for our ministry. He said that he had a 1969 Ford Econoline hightop homemade camper that really wasn't practical for their use, and he liked the description of my Subaru for his ministry. We drove over and when we looked at this van/camper we figured that it must have been parachuted down from heaven just for use by the SWAT Team for Christ. We made the swap and everyone was delighted. We now had a very small kitchen, a larger-than-one-person bed on the floor and two hammocks hanging on top, lots more room but still no heat, shower or air conditioning. We were very content, and we had stayed with the Lord's principles of faith. We still towed the trailer behind, but we gave away our big family sized tent. This vehicle served us well except it was still winter and we were in Rochester, New York, Pike, New York, Altoona, Pennsylvania and other parts north with no heat at night. One time I remember wearing three sweat suits and stuffing three sleeping bags one inside the other, zipping them up over my head with only my mouth exposed and absolutely freezing all night. But I was still in the service of my King and my discomfort compared to his pain for me on the cross was not to be measured.

In the early spring we went back to Florida for some meetings. While visiting my folks, we obtained a meeting in Norfolk, Virginia. We were excited about this meeting, but there was once again a money problem. This van pulling a heavy trailer did not get the best gas mileage, and we had thirty five dollars to make it to Norfolk. That would be if we did not eat or have a flat along the

way. A few weeks before, we were in a meeting in the Washington, DC area and the pastor there gave me an extra accordion. He gave it with no strings attached. As I contemplated how we were going to make it to Norfolk on thirty five dollars, I called a meeting with all the heads and board members of the SWAT team for Christ, hoping that *"...in the multitude of counsellors there is safety." Pr. 11:14*. This meant that Bear and I were going to take a walk around the block and talk about this important matter. I explained the problem to Bear and then told him that we had three choices. Number one, we could borrow fifty dollars from my mother and immediately repay her out of the love offering in Norfolk. Technically that constituted a breach in our contract with the Lord never to ask anyone for anything and never to be in debt. Number two, we had that accordion the pastor had given us and there were no strings attached. We could pawn it and get thirty dollars which would assure our arrival in Norfolk. Bear said, "What's the third choice?" I told him that we could trust God, get into the van and see how far we got. Bear said that as far as he was concerned the third choice was what we ought to do.

The next morning, while we were packing to leave, my well-meaning mother asked with great perception if we were all right financially or if we needed anything. I bit my lip, told her that the Lord was well able to take care of us and with that I kissed her goodbye.

We arrived in Norfolk the next day with an eighth of a tank of gas and two dollars in pocket and happier than any of us had been in our lives. We had some time before we could contact the pastor, so we decided to buy a chicken, cook it and celebrate. We had fasted the whole way; now it was time to feast. We were parked in a rest area along the Chesapeake Bay and were salivating over the chicken frying in the pan when a truck driver came to the door and gave us a good compliment on the witness we had on our trailer. We invited him in and talked for a few minutes about how good the Lord was. The chicken was ready then so we invited him to join us but he begged off shaking my hand and leaving a twenty dollar bill behind. Needless to say, our ecstasy with the Lord hit an all-time new high. We considered it a grand reward for a work of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

However, the story does not end there. We went to the church the next day, had a great street meeting with the men, presented our work as a challenge to the church, sang, preached and fellowshiped. At the end of the meeting a very elegant lady approached me. She had been with us at the street meeting the day before with her husband. She asked me just how difficult it was to play that accordion. I gave her the classic fifteen minute play-by-ear lesson which she absorbed like a sponge. She already played piano and so it was extra-simple for her. Bear was watching all of this from across the room. Then she asked me how someone could obtain one of these accordions. I then asked her if she had one would she would play it on the streets with her husband when he went preaching. She agreed without hesitation. I told her to stand still for just a moment. I walked over to Bear and without exchanging a word, we smiled and he said, "Well don't just stand there, go and get it!" I brought the accordion in, opened it up and told her it was hers if she would keep her agreement. She was so surprised and pleased that she wept. Thus it was that a side ministry of teaching and supplying accordions to street preachers around the world was born.

If we had borrowed the money from my mother we not only would have violated two principles of living by faith, but I would also not be writing this story right now. If we had pawned the



accordion, you would not be amazed at this story of provision and reward. My, oh my, the illustrations that one comes by when one lives by faith! In contrast, I once heard a missionary tell a story of being on deputation and the pastor forgetting to give him his love offering. He ended his story by saying, "If it hadn't been for my VISA card I never would have made it home." I like our stories better, and I think I have the mind of the Lord on this as well.

Whenever I had the time I would scribble down some notes in a big notebook. These thoughts on public ministry were being gathered and arranged from what Bear and I had both learned and taught on the subject. I had little hope that one day they might be typeset and put into book form by which many would be instructed, challenged and encouraged. I said "scribbled" because most of the time that I wrote it was in the back seat of our '69 Ford while Bear tried to negotiate the icy roads of New York and Pennsylvania. The notes were barely legible to anyone but me. We had never heard of a "C.D.", word processor, email or a web site. Longhand was still in style and/or manual typewriter if we could borrow one.

Then we met a gracious lady who had a computer (whatever that was) and knew how to use it. She offered to help make this scribbling a bit more acceptable. Unbelievable to me, she was able to translate the scribble with the proper inflection, emphasis and meaning and printed it all out for us. I still did not know what I was going to do with this, but at least it was out of my head. She made two copies which I carried around and shared with select friends. One of these friends (unbeknownst to me) brought the manuscript to the attention of those in authority at Bible Baptist Bookstore and the next thing I knew they had printed a mockup and were waiting for me to give them permission to print and distribute the Street Preacher's Manual. I, of course, gave my permission and the Lord has used that book to influence folk into public ministry more than I ever could have dreamed. It is still in print and still well distributed. Although we have never profited one cent on any of the books that we have produced we have watched the Lord advance our ministry and bless it. We have given hundreds of books away free and those that we do sell we give one hundred percent of the money to missions. This has really been a big blessing to many folk as well as the SWAT team for many years. *"Freely ye have received, freely give." Mt. 10:8*

The weather was getting hot and more and more we were having trouble finding proper facilities in which to bathe. We began to pray for a vehicle that would meet all of our needs. It was not proper to show up at a meeting all wilted and smelly. One hour on the streets and we were wrecks. We *needed* a shower and we would *like* air conditioning. The prospect of obtaining such a vehicle without violation of the Lord's principles was mighty slim, but Philippians 4:19 is still in The Book. On our way to a meeting in Virginia we stopped at a used car lot/transmission repair garage to ask directions. While I was inside asking directions, Bear and Lari were on the lot looking at a much-used twenty three foot bread-truck style, self contained motor home. Bear compelled me to take a look. I had to admit that this was exactly what we had been praying for.....BUUUUUTTTTT...it was "*for sale*" for seven thousand dollars. We had seventy dollars in our pockets. I was praying for something in the "*for give*" category. Lari and I were willing to drop it right there, but Bear kept bugging us about that motor home. We got to the pastor's home and sat in the living room to cool down. Big-mouthed Bear brought up the subject once again. As faith would have it, my pastor friend, Howie Hunter, said he not only knew of the motor home but he also knew the man who owned it. He had put it for sale on consignment on that lot. That set Bear in a zealous frenzy. He begged me to let him call the man and see if they could make a deal for a trade. We laughed at him and reminded him of what we now owned versus what this man was trying to sell. Our '69 Ford Econoline Van, hightop, homemade camper was not much of a trade for this 1973 fully-equipped

twenty three foot motor home. Since the Ford was in my name, Bear continued to beg me to give him liberty to make a deal if a deal could be made. So I relented, more to get him off my back than anything else, and gave him the go ahead. He went into the kitchen to call the owner while we fellowshiped in the living room. But we could not help ourselves from eavesdropping with much attentiveness. Basically, Bear told this Amish/Mennonite man who we were, what we did and that his motor home was exactly what we had been praying for. Then he said, "Look, you can call me crazy if you like and we'll just let it drop right there, but what if we just traded title for title?" We had completely stalled our conversation in the living room and were hanging on whatever response might be forthcoming. Then we heard Bear say, "OK, well, when can you come?...that will be just fine." Bear put down the phone and started his usual running around the house and shouting, "Glory! Glory! Glory!" again. We had to slap him back to reality to ask him what the man had said. He finally told us that the man had answered his "crazy" request with a simple..."Sure." Then Bear said that he was on his way over to look at what we had and to make the deal. The Bible statement "Oh ye of little faith" was very personal to me at that moment. This was my son and disciple in the faith teaching me by example how to live and be sustained by faith. I was happy and humbled.

The "previous" owner of the motor home came within a few minutes and we greeted him. By now, Bear was on the offensive in this deal. He was pointing out all the "good" things about our run-down '69 Ford. He kicked the tires and told him they were new. He told him the last time we changed the oil and that we had just washed and waxed it last week. I stopped Bear and said in the man's presence, "Bear, this man is not first and foremost interested in our van, he has been trying to sell something much better." Then the man agreed and said, "That is correct; I am not interested in your van...when I talked to you on the phone the Spirit told me to give you my motor home." If we had any doubts about whether the Lord was in this or not, they suddenly all vanished. We met the man in the morning and consummated the deal. There was a thirty five dollar title transfer fee in the state of Virginia and the kind man would not even let us pay that. It's a good thing, too, because we would not have had the money to fill the gas tank and drive it out of town. The Lord really knew what He was doing because if He had given us that motor home in "Genesis" we would not have had enough money to maintain it on the road.

It was a wee bit sad to leave the old plywood trailer behind which had served us so well, but it was very joyous to drive our new rig into a secure future with revived faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. *"...no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." Ps. 84:11.*

Although our rig looked a bit ragged and leaked like a sieve, we felt like high cotton rolling down the road in a full-sized motor home that was completely paid for. Our God was fully on our side, and there was no stopping us now. *"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Phil. 4:13.*





### ***BEFORE***

**We now prayed that the Lord would provide for us to maintain and even improve what He had provided. We prayed for someone to paint it and maybe even letter it to make it a billboard for the Lord. Our meetings took us to a camp meeting in June in Washington, DC. We arrived just as a thunderstorm knocked out all electrical power to the outdoor tabernacle. No problem! We hooked a line to our rig, turned on the generator and provided power to much of the camp so that the meeting could continue....what a blessing! I led the singing for the camp meeting and then sat on the end of a pew where two visiting ladies were seated at the other end with lots of space in between. I took little notice of the ladies, but evidently one took notice of me. We told a little about our ministry during the meeting and that lady came to me later and said that she was the wife of a pastor in Delaware. She assured me that if I would call her husband he would give us a meeting. We had never yet been offered a meeting without practically begging first, so this appealed to me very much. A few weeks later I did call and he did give me a meeting at the end of July. His church had done a little bit of public ministry prior to the SWAT team coming, so when we came we were able to**



### *AFTER*

organize a well attended street meeting at the resort city of Rehoboth Beach, Delaware. Several of the folk ministering with us on that street meeting made some attractive offers to improve the appearance of our rig. One offer was to paint it, the other was to paint a mural on one side and to letter the rest of the vehicle. This was just exactly what we had been praying for and we began to make the arrangements. It was a tremendous meeting both on the beach and in the church. We made many new, generous and helpful friends. We got a church going faithfully on the streets which continues to this day. We got our rig painted, lettered and a beautiful mural painted on one side. But the biggest blessing turned out to be the other lady that sat on the bench at the camp meeting who really did not take notice of me, nor I of her. We gathered for the street meeting at her father's house in Rehoboth Beach, and I was introduced to a most zealous servant of the Lord---a very attractive, single young lady named Robin.

## CHAPTER THREE

### *THE SONG OF SUTEKS*

I like the way the Lord works things out. I had prayed six weeks before and asked the Lord if He would be pleased for me to have a wife. I had been content without a wife and was not planning on going AWOL from the battle to seek for one but if He would bring one out to the battlefield it would be really nice. Well, here I was right smack in the middle of a battle in Rehoboth Beach. It was the evening of July 31, and we had about twenty soldiers attacking a beachhead there at the boardwalk. This town, like many others in these last days, was known for its attraction to sodomites. There were plenty out this evening and as we preached from the beach the crowds thronged along the boardwalk to hear us and, for some, to mock us. This became a pedestrian problem, so the police asked us to move to eliminate the problem. We could still preach, pass out tracts and such, but we were asked to just keep moving. I noticed that this young lady was not at all shaken by this "unloving" crowd of Bible haters. I thought that she would make a great addition to the SWAT team for Christ, rounding out the number to a nice even four. In a very short time I asked her to pray about becoming a member of the SWAT team for Christ. Of course, this membership would involve marriage, but at this time I tactfully did not mention that. I wanted a partner who would enhance my ministry, not hinder it, and I needed time to pray about this. Whoever this partner might be would have to be a very unique person who would be willing to thumb her nose at the establishment, material wealth and the world's philosophy of success and comfort. She would have to be completely giving to the things of the Lord and be totally unashamed of Him. She would have to be brave enough to sustain any situation that the SWAT team might encounter on the streets, and yet tender enough to be my personal helpmate. My partners Bear and Lari also had to be considered; this would greatly change their lives as well. The finances, the facilities and the equipment of the team were a major consideration. Was she the one? This had to be thought out: this had to be fasted and prayed out!

In a moment of weak faith, considering all the changes that would have to be made to accommodate another full time partner, I decided against it. In bringing this decision to my partners they rebuked my wavering faith and simply made it plain that the only thing I had to decide was, "Is the Lord in this?" Because if He was in this then He would work out ALL of the details.....AMEN!

After much wrangling in fasting and prayer, I decided to put the proposal to her. But she was wrapped up in life, too. A job, a business, a church, friends, family etc. etc. Why should I think that she would accept? What did I have to offer this young lady? If one measured according to the world's standard.....not much.

Meanwhile, Robin was doing what I had challenged her to do. She was praying and seeking the Lord on this from her angle. Unbeknownst to me, she had made a list, long before we met, of qualities and characteristics which she wanted the Lord to supply in the mate that He might have for her one day. She was checking me out with a godly standard. She also had asked the Lord to show her from her daily Bible reading the answer to this challenge that had been put to her. She did not want to play "Bible roulette", but instead required an answer from her daily reading. The only problem with that was that she was reading in Chronicles. Can anything good come out of Chronicles? The Author of Chronicles put his finger on, "*And who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the LORD?*" 1 Chron. 29:5b. She was prepared to give an answer to the right man that asked her.

To sum this story up, we courted properly for three weeks, all the while seeking the will of the Lord for this possible union. There was no measurable romantic love between us at this point, but we both agreed to do what the Lord would show us to do. The love was quickly to follow. Romantic love is a very shaky foundation to base a lifetime union upon. Almost everyone over twenty five has "loved" someone whom they currently do not "love" anymore. In order that thy whole self be committed unto the Lord, to seek His will, to consider if this union would help you in your personal relationship and ministry for the Lord, and to be sensitive and objective enough to obey regardless of the answer: this is a sure foundation.

"That thou doest, do quickly" was the verse in order for us after we submitted to one another in His will. The ministry was not to be hindered but helped by this marriage and the ceremony was merely a practical but very enjoyable formality. We set the date for the wedding four weeks in the future which meant that we were married seven weeks from the night that we met. Don't try this without the Lord. There was only one "small" hurdle left in the way. The team only had one motor home. It would be unrealistic for two families to live in a one bedroom motor home. Remembering once again the principles of faith by which the team operated, this was no "small" hurdle. Another motor home had to be obtained, without asking, and without debt, within the next four weeks. I don't know about you, but it isn't every day, week or year that someone comes up to me and offers me a motor home.

The team went back on the road minus the prospective member who was left to take care of her worldly affairs in Delaware. Much prayer needed to be made for this pressing situation. I often tease Robin by telling folk that I think she agreed to marry me because she did not believe I could come up with a motor home in thirty days. She was right, I couldn't; but the Lord sure works in mysterious ways.

I was preaching a tent meeting in Boston, Massachusetts. when a lady approached me whom I had met in a church there during a previous meeting. She said, "Brother Sutek, I hear that you are getting married. Congratulations!" Then she asked, "Are all four of you going to live in that motor home?" Since she brought up the subject in the form of a direct question, I felt at liberty to reveal our prayer request. I said, "No, we are praying for another motor home." She then said, "Well, look right over there. There it is." She pointed to a fully equipped, high-top, manufactured camper van. Three days later we drove it out of Boston. All hurdles now removed, we returned to Delaware for extensive work on the motor homes and preparations for the wedding.

The only announcement that we made concerning our wedding was through the SWAT team newsletter. For this and many other reasons, this was going to prove to be one of the most unusual weddings...a faith wedding. We had over two hundred in attendance and many of them publick ministers. We had eighteen street preachers in attendance and each of them gave a "brief" (HA!) testimony. I led the singing and acted as general master of ceremonies. Then we had a friend preach a full message and at the end Robin and I walked up to her pastor and said our vows. It lasted two hours and resembled a wild camp meeting more than a wedding.

One hour before the wedding I was sitting alone in my motor home just praying and watching the guests arrive. Bear walked in and asked how the financial picture was. I told him to sit down. He had a pretty good idea what that meant. Due to work on the homes and preparations for the wedding, the team had not worked in about two weeks and therefore had received no love offerings. I told him that at that point in our lives our net worth was seventy dollars and that was in the form of checks. We were looking to be split up for a week, which included a honeymoon on my part and basic life on the Bears' part. I told him that I would get the checks cashed and split the money with him. I advised him to do the best he could through the weekend; I would call the mission board on Monday to see if there was any money there for us. If money was there, I would have it wired to us. I told him that I expected nothing to come from this wedding, but if it did it would change the picture. At that time there were only two people on the planet who knew of these precarious circumstances, and they were both sitting in my motor home.

At the end of the ceremony the pastor stood to dismiss in prayer, then announced a reception in the basement of the church. He was rudely interrupted by yet another preacher who literally ran up to the platform and bumped the pastor out of the way. He announced to all in attendance that we had done everything "Baptist" here today, "We have had preaching, testimonies, good singing, shouting, great special music and such...everything, that is...except to take up an offering. Now Robin doesn't know it but Jerry doesn't have enough money to get to Dover (about ten miles up the road) and they need some help." He was so accurate in his guess that Bear looked at me from across the auditorium and with a fallen countenance mouthed the question, "You told him our money troubles?" I quickly mouthed and gestured back a firm assurance that I was innocent of the charge. They took up a six hundred dollar offering. Praise the Lord! I wouldn't have it any other way, and the Lord wouldn't either. This way He gets all the glory. AMEN!

## CHAPTER FOUR

### *NUMBERS*

#### OUR WANDERINGS IN THE MINISTRY

The four of us broke all rules of worldly finance, but the Lord glories in that. " *Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the LORD that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself; That frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish;..." Isa. 44:24-25. The secret is to be content, and we were content. Oh, there were times that Robin and Lari went to the grocery store with three dollars apiece. And the time I spent the last five dollars to buy a cap in Wal-mart to keep my head from freezing. Before we drove out of the parking lot a lady drove up and gave us one hundred dollars*

and then disappeared. Do angels always have to be male? I have gone in to pay for gas and an anonymous stranger beat me to it. The same experience has happened with meals in restaurants.

We have long stated that when we preach on the street we would not pick up a hundred dollar bill if it was laid at our feet. We have been true to that. We have never presented our work to gain support. That is, we have never done deputation. We have never added a shopping list to the bottom of our newsletter. There was a very brief time in the very beginning when some well-meaning but faithless person tried to convince me that "*ye have not because ye ask not*" meant that we were to ask the brethren. After a few distressful attempts, I chose to go back to the way that pleased the Lord and gave me peace. We have never found ourselves in a tight spot and called on the brethren to bail us out. We have never made our needs known except between ourselves and our heavenly Father.

I remember one Christmas that we were a bit in arrears financially. We were not in debt, but there were things that needed to be settled soon. We did not pray for money to spend on each other, but we did pray that we might get this backlog taken care of before the first of the year. We prayed for one thousand dollars from an unusual source in order that we might take care of this legitimate need. Within the allotted time three checks came to us from the least likely sources totaling a thousand dollars. *What luck? What a coincidence?* **NO! WHAT A BLESSING FROM THE FATHER OF LIGHTS WHO WILL NOT WITHHOLD ANY GOOD THING TO THEM THAT WALK UPRIGHTLY.**

We were heading out west for the first time with two rigs on the road. We needed a new generator because we did not know what difficulties we were headed into. We had a meeting in Chicago in a church that already supported us. We did not expect anything more than a regular love offering, but they answered our prayer request with enough money to buy a really nice used five thousand watt Honda generator. They knew nothing of our need.

Pastors ask me all the time how much support we have and how much we are aiming for. My answer is always the same. How do I know how much I may need this month or next for I do not hold the future. Almost without exception if we have had an abundance of money it has been for something that was about to happen down the road. And if we have held the money any time at all we have given the glut away to a need somewhere. *"But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality:..." 2 Cor. 8:14. "...working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." Eph. 4:28.*

The Lord delights in confounding the Wall Street Journal and the best banking advisers with the economics of faith. It is sort of like the theory of evolution and how it is confounded by the simple first ten words in the Bible. The very foundation of a life of faith is that if one can see it, feel it, realize it and know it then it is not faith according to Hebrews 11:1 And if it is not of faith, it is sin. The world has a way in which one can plan for a secure future regardless of any obstacle or circumstance which may try to interrupt. One can be comfortable, secure and safe without any intervention from God. What if Job had gone this direction and gotten his security from the



insurance companies, banks and investment plans? There would have been no book of Job written. Most churches, Bible colleges, mission boards and ministries operate on the economics and standards of the world and have made it a successful business to serve the Lord without any help from the Lord Himself. Does the Lord get glory out of that? Maybe I'm just a Bible-believing rebel, but I enjoy confounding the world and I know the Lord does too.

Some years ago we were fellowshiping with some dear friends who have the same mind on finance as we do. We were sitting in their living room which was a partitioned-off section of their church fellowship hall, with their six children listening to one personal story after another concerning the Lord's provision, protection and blessing. Just as soon as our friends ended one of their stories, we began one of ours, this went on for hours. I stopped somewhere in the middle and told the kids what a blessing it was for them to have an heritage like this and to be able to enjoy the true life stories of the faith of their parents and friends. It sure beats Star Wars as a baby sitter.

We wandered around in the ministry through forty eight states, ministering in nearly every city of any consequence, being an example, teaching and training hundreds of preacher boys and church members how to be public witnesses, leading souls to the Lord and being a witness wherever we went. Those old motor homes miraculously held together over many faith-filled miles and the provisions barrel never emptied. We were never out of gas, we never went hungry and in four years we never missed a meeting because of breakdown or illness or anything else. This is not to say we had no breakdowns or illnesses, but they never interfered with our ministry.



### *The SWAT team in Michigan*

We were headed toward a meeting in north Alabama and were driving on I-65. Robin was driving our rig, and the Bears were following when both dual tires on the passenger side blew out just as she was passing a tractor-trailer truck. I woke up from a nap to see the inside of our home twisting and turning and things falling out of shelves. Robin muscled that motor home skidding, sideways at sixty five mph, safely to a stop on the side of the road. I was first out to check the damage and was met by the manager of a rest area where we had landed. He complimented my excellent driving skills, but I had to credit my wife. The semi driver was wiping his brow after a dangerous airbrake stop right behind us and was thoughtfully reading our scriptural witness on the rear of our rig. Bear and Lari testified that our rig had defied all laws of physics but only because of their screaming prayers for mercy and safety. Robin was suffering from shock but quickly recovered and cleaned up the mess inside the motor home.

We had to call a tire crew to help us mount two new tires while on the side of the road, but we were able to find the rare tire size and have all the work done within our budget. Considering that we had all split-rim wheels on my rig and we were in rural Alabama, this was quite a miracle. We did have to postpone our meeting from Wednesday to Sunday but were able to get a good witness in to many souls along the way. We have tried to adopt the attitude that when the Lord allows us to break down that there must be someone He wants to get His Word to. So we have always tried to keep a good countenance and give a faithful witness. Notice I did say that we have TRIED.

Many Christians who have little or no faith always want to challenge stories like ours with their only trump card. They ask, "What are you going to do when someone gets sick or injured or this or that breaks or you have to go to the emergency room or see a doctor?" The world's best INSURANCE policies cannot possibly compare to God's ASSURANCE policy which provides one hundred percent protection. I had developed an acute bursitis in my left shoulder from playing the accordion. It is nearly impossible to get a doctor's appointment while one is on the road. The problem was getting pretty serious, keeping me up at night in pain and limiting my playing of the instrument. We prayed for an answer to this chronic malady; the next story reveals the Lord's answer.

Although we have never missed a meeting, there have been some meetings that were cancelled on us, some for good reasons and some for...oh well. We were on our way to a meeting in Richmond, Virginia which had been scheduled well in advance. This was a fairly crucial meeting for us financially. It was Saturday afternoon, and the meeting was for the next day. I called the pastor for driving directions, only to hear that he had decided to go to a pastor's school, which I will not mention the name of, somewhere in Indiana. So he cancelled our meeting. This, of course, left us high and dry for the weekend. We decided to try to make the most we could of this "unvictorious" weekend, so we pulled into a campground and got settled in. As the afternoon was passing, I noticed a big yellow school bus come in to the campground filled with boy scouts. I found the leader and told him about our ministry and asked him if we could minister to the group of scouts. We sang at their barbecue that night, and as I preached, one of the young scouts showed forth fruits meet for repentance. He was gloriously saved that night. The next morning



was our "cancelled" Sunday which we had mourned. But God meant it for good, for we had church with the scouts, singing, preaching, teaching and rejoicing in the things of the Lord.

The scout leader told us that he was a doctor and offered his services. Robin mentioned my shoulder condition to him. He told her what it most likely was and said that he had the same ailment and had just had a prescription filled for an anti-inflammatory prescription drug. He took a few tablets out and gave us the rest of the bottle. *What a coincidence?* NO WHAT A BLESSED PROVISION OF THE LORD! Philippians 4:19.

## NATIONAL STREET PREACHERS CONVENTIONS

The Lord planted an idea for a national street preachers' convention in my heart and gave the wisdom to Bear and me to develop this. We held three of these meetings in Washington, DC with rich evidences of the Lord's blessing upon them all. The Tommy Anderson family was inspired to go full time into the publick ministry because of this meeting. These conventions seemed to lay a foundation for a network of publick ministers for purposes of communication, prayer and fellowship with one another. This network has continued to develop through the years and has proved to be quite a blessing to a great many folk. At the date of this writing, we have hosted six national street preachers' conventions with tremendous results for both sinners and saints out there on the streets. Now other publick ministry conventions are spawning from this effort.

We have kept no records, but we know of a great many churches that were not doing any publick ministry before the SWAT team came; we challenged them and now they continue in their own publick ministry today. We also know of a great many men, both young and old, who were introduced, trained, challenged and given their first opportunity to preach on the street because of the blessings of the Lord upon the ministry of the SWAT team for Christ. We also know of several families who are now on the road full time doing some kind of publick ministry because of the influence of our ministry. For all of this we can but credit the Author and Finisher of our ministry...the Lord Jesus Christ. To God be the glory. *"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." Ephesians 3:20, 21.*

The Bears' motor home was quite a bit smaller than our motor home and older. They lived in a camper van for a year and a half that would fit easily in most people's garage with the door closed. They had no air conditioning and used our shower. We all used the restrooms in the churches or public restrooms. The Bears started praying for another rig, and it wasn't very long until the Lord provided a twenty four foot trailer that they were able to pull behind their camper van. This gave them more storage space, their own shower, air conditioning and much more living area. Once again, this was obtained without bruising the principles of living by faith.

The Lord also gave us all the patience, grace and love that we needed to live so closely with one another for so long a period of time under so many various circumstances. That harmony was quite a testimony to a lot of people who were looking closely at us, some of whom had not put much stock in the "success" of the early SWAT team. We traveled the country ministering on the

streets, in Bible colleges and several hundred churches from coast to coast. Speaking of coast to coast, it takes a lot of gasoline to get two rigs from the Atlantic to the Pacific. We prayed and planned long and hard before we attempted this venture of faith. In spite of flat tires, breakdowns, small love offerings, no love offerings, cancelled meetings, running low on gas and perils among the brethren, "California or bust" became reality with a gas bill of sixteen hundred dollars. This was a giant step of faith for the SWAT team for Christ and we rejoiced in it. A few months later we were needed again on the east coast, and of course it was another sixteen hundred dollars in gas to return. We made it...Praise the Lord.

The Lord started dealing with our hearts about taking a break from the regular ministry of the SWAT team and being a part of another ministry for a time. We were not tired of our ministry, we just thought that maybe it would be good for us to be used in a different fashion and in a different place. We rationalized that other missionaries take furloughs after about four years and although we did not want to take a furlough, we had been serving the Lord on the road for four years and maybe He would see fit to develop and use some different talents. We prayed and counseled with wise men. At first we thought that we might be of some help in New Guinea, but after careful thought and prayer we reconsidered. After all, we were only going for a year, didn't know the language and couldn't build buildings.

It was recommended to us that with our particular talents and experience we might do well to consider helping a missionary on an English-speaking field. The Lord seemed to put His finger on Northern Ireland.

We had financially committed ourselves to supporting several missionaries by this time and we tried to put the Lord first by being faithful to our commitment to them even before we took care of ourselves. It was one thing to pay these missionaries out of the love offerings which we were regularly getting; it was yet another to pay them out of only the monthly support money alone. At that time we were the lowest supported missionaries on our board, yet we were looking to minister in one of the most expensive countries in the world to live in. But by now we had seen the hand of the Lord and His provision, and we would have been fools not to trust His leadership. We became very excited as the time drew nigh for us to go. To think that the Lord would take our humble offering some four years before, accept it, blow gently upon it and use it was awesome enough. But to imagine that He might allow us to travel abroad and minister for His name's sake was almost more than this vessel of clay could contain.

As it turned out, Lari became with-child and Bear thought it wise for them to stay behind, so Robin and I finalized plans for our part of the team to go to Northern Ireland.

## CHAPTER FIVE

# *ACTS OF THE SWAT TEAM*

## The international wanderings of the SWAT team

We were overwhelmed by the romance, thrill and excitement of going to a foreign country for the first time. The purchasing of international airline tickets, packing, trying to think of what we might need and figuring out what we could do without, standing in line at the airport with real, sure enough foreigners and then realizing that when the plane landed we would be the foreigners. Flying over the green, green glens of Antrim, Northern Ireland for the first time was breathtaking. So was landing at Belfast airport and being searched by the abundant security because of the conflict between the IRA and the protestant British government. It was all more than we could ever have dreamed way back in "Genesis."

Our job description on this tour of duty was to carry on our personal ministry as well as to be of any help we could be to the missionary on the field. We settled into a barren apartment upstairs from the church. This put us on the third floor with the church the second floor above a dry cleaning establishment underneath. The church had its' own door on the street level which led also to our apartment. This was in the heart of downtown Ballymena, Northern Ireland. This location was great for our ministry because we could step out our door and be on a street meeting any time we desired. We took advantage of this on a regular basis. There were a couple of old single beds in the apartment, a very small refrigerator and a couple of chairs so it was rather easy to get settled in. We had lived in a twenty three foot motor home for the previous 3 ½ years so now we could really spread out. We prayed and asked the Lord for direction in what exactly to do for Him and that He would provide our needs. We were content and thrilled to be serving the Lord internationally.

The other American missionaries there told me I would have to immediately purchase a car which was impossible I felt because I did not have the money so it must not have been a "need." They offered me some good old American advice: they told me to get a loan because I could not operate there without a vehicle. One of them tried to help me by purchasing a "good deal" on a car for me and all I had to do was go to the bank and pay him back. Sorry, but the principles of faith would not allow that. He responded by telling me that if I thought that I could get a cheap car like one could find in the USA I would be disappointed. He said they just did not exist over there. Without being a smart aleck, I simply told him that when we "needed" a car the Lord would provide one, and that we would simply walk or take public transportation until then. Besides, I looked around and a good percentage of the local population had been doing exactly that for what looked like a good many years. If it was good enough for them, then it might be good for us to try it.

We walked everywhere in that city for six months and enjoyed every minute of it, even when it rained, and it rained a lot in Ireland. We bought complete rain suits and walked for miles to visit

and for our personal business. When we went out of town we took either the train or bus to Belfast, Antrim, Londonderry, Coleraine, Ballymoney, and other cities. We would carry our tracts, accordion, Bibles etc. in a two-wheeled hand trolley. We did the work of the Lord, but it was like a honeymoon and vacation all wrapped together. That is the way our work for the Lord has been most of the time.

The original plan was for us to only stay one year but I quickly realized that there was a lot to be done over there, so we made our stay open-ended. At this decision the Bears decided not to join us in Ireland but to develop their own ministry in the USA. There was never any schism between Bear and myself nor any between the families; we simply made a friendly parting of ways and ministry.

Our money situation was rather delicate, to say the least. We had, what the world would refer to as a limited fixed income. Add to that the fact that we continued with our financial commitment to our own missionaries which was taken off of the top of our support check. Also, when our check arrived and we took it to the bank, it was cut in half because of the value of the dollar against the British pound. This is not to mention that due to the cost of living when we took our money out of the bank and to the store it was cut in half again because of the high cost of living. One gallon of gasoline was approximately four dollars and fifty cents in American money. One pound of chicken breasts was approximately six dollars. There were times that we prayed the part of the Lord's prayer, "our daily bread", but there were no times when we went hungry. *"I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."Ps. 37:25.*

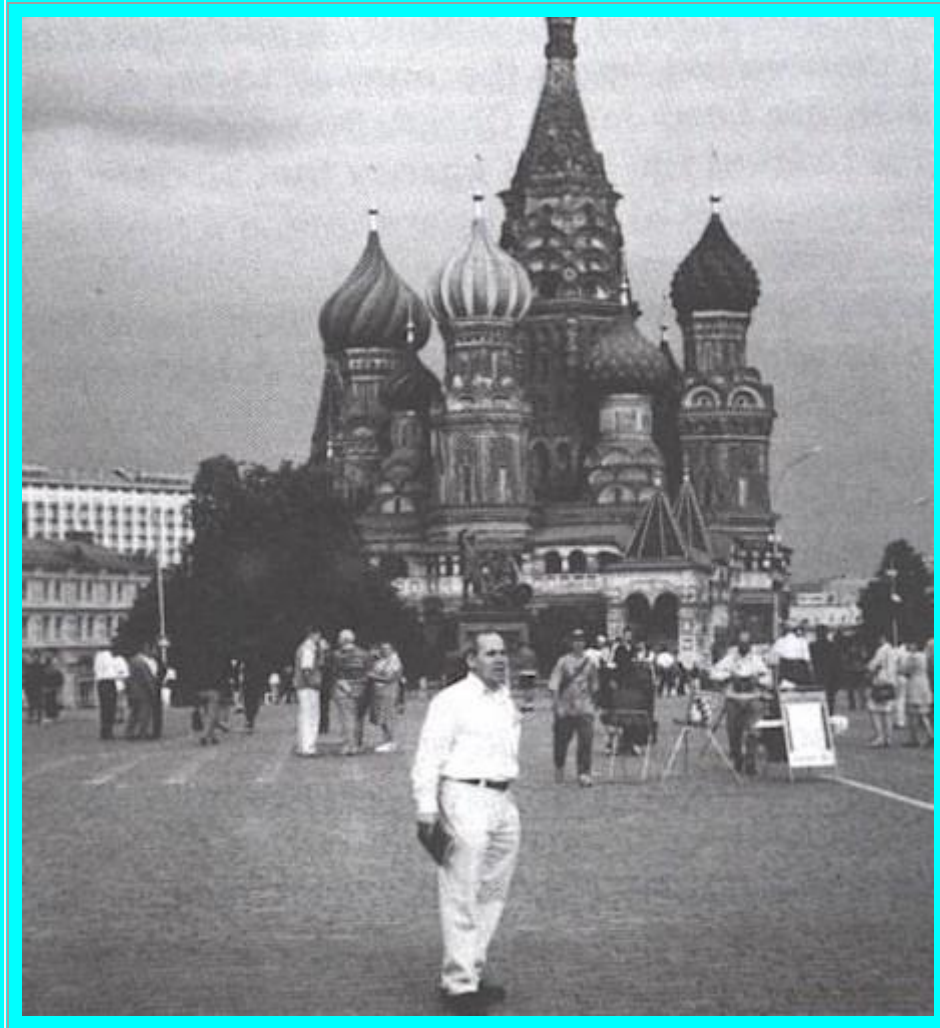
As our ministry in Northern Ireland began to unfold before us we began to realize that there truly would be a need for a vehicle. We began to pray to our Supplier and put in an order for the car that He would be pleased for us to have. It wasn't long till I met a good mechanic way out in the country who also picked up good used cars, fixed them up and resold them. I told him to be on the lookout for a good deal.

He soon found just the right car for our ministry and for a price that I could pay, at least in two payments; that is, if we partially fasted for two months. I told him to hold the car until it was completely paid for so that I would not owe him anything. I put a down payment on it and put it in layaway. When I returned home the mail had arrived, including our monthly support check. To my utter amazement it was five figures. We were used to the low threes. I dared not try to cash the check before I consulted with the mission board director for I felt certain he had made some terrible mistake. He assured me it was no mistake but a person, whom I did not know, had contributed ten thousand dollars to our ministry. Well, who was this guy and what right did he have to give us that much money without even knowing us? I had to find the answers to these questions.

Remember earlier I mentioned that we had never taken any money from the books that the Lord had allowed me to write? Well, this strange donor told me that although he had never met me he had read the Street Preacher's Manual and had followed the instructions therein. He really liked the results of public ministry in his life and consequently wanted to be a blessing to me. What a

coincidence? NO! WHAT A TREMENDOUS AND TIMELY BLESSING FROM OUR GRACIOUS HEAVENLY PROVIDER! If I had used every good business tactic to squeeze every correct and proper cent of profit from all three of my books for fifteen years I never would have cleared ten thousand dollars. It is not that it is wrong to take a profit from the labor of our hands. The world says that is the sane thing to do. But oh, how much richer we are and how much more blessed when we just give it over to the One who gave us the mental faculties to write the book in the first place and stand back and watch Him bless. I was content with my deal with the Lord concerning the books before He gave me the ten grand.

After we did right by the Lord with the money, we paid off the car, bought some appliances that we desperately needed and began our truly international publick ministry. We took trips to Scotland, London and the Republic of Ireland preaching and singing on the streets of Great Britain as we had across the USA. The Lord expanded our ministry during the years we were in Northern Ireland to include preaching trips to Germany, the Republic of Czech, Slovakia, the Ukraine, Hungary and the Philippines. A few years later I made two more trips to the Philippines, one to Russia and the Republic of Georgia and another to Trinidad, which makes fifteen nations in all in which the international SWAT team for Christ has publickly ministered. While many other missionaries were so far in debt they could not afford to travel, we were on a grand evangelistic tour with all expenses paid by the Chairman of the Board of our heavenly kingdom. We made sure we preached and ministered everywhere we went so that it was legitimately a business trip.



*Preaching in Red Square-Moscow*

## A DIFFERENT KIND OF FAITH

We had ministered in Prague of the Republic of Czech which whet our appetite for Slovakia. We were praying that the Lord would allow us to go and minister in that country when a friend stopped by who was well-traveled. He had been to Slovakia and he gave me the name of a man, whom my friend had never met, who was a Christian publisher there. There was not any other information on this Slovak man, but at least he was a contact in Slovakia. I did not even know if he spoke any English. Shooting blindly in the dark, I called Alex Erdelyi on the phone and told him that I wanted to come to his country and do some public ministry for the Lord. In very broken English, Alex extended a very warm invitation. I asked him if I could afford a hotel and/or restaurants etc. He said that he would gladly take care of all the arrangements and that when I

arrived at the Vienna, Austria airport that he would be there to greet us and be our guide and escort. Well, we couldn't ask for more than that...but....? This was a man whom I had never seen, living in a country that was less than two years out from under the Soviet Union and still very economically poor and unstable. Was he telling me the whole truth without exaggeration? Was he trying to impress me? Could he do what he had offered? Would he really be there to greet us? Could we stand to be with him for ten days? Was he just interested in however many US dollars he might get from this? The only person who would know the answer to these questions was my big Brother, the Lord Jesus Christ. So we called on Him, and He gave us peace to trust His travel agency that all details would come out right.

When we landed at Vienna we saw a small Slovak man holding a homemade sign which simply read, "SUTEK". I am smiling as I write this for it is so pleasant to remember. For the next ten days Alex was our friend, escort, guide, travel agent, historian, driver and host. I had not thought to tell Alex when I called him that we were very conservative, non-charismatic Baptists, but that may not have made any difference anyway. It was arranged for us to stay with a most pleasant Baptist preacher and his wife in their apartment in one of the old-style high-rise, communist concrete communes. They were most hospitable but did not speak a word of English and were charismatic. We did not know that the term Baptist in Slovakia was synonymous with charismatic. But neither they nor we had the Bible gift of tongues because for the next ten days we laughed until we cried trying to make ourselves understood with one English-to-Slovak dictionary.

Alex had ministered during the hardcore communist years with a man known as Brother Andrew. Brother Andrew became famous for his book "God's Smuggler" and others. He was actually a missionary from Holland who smuggled Bibles, tracts and other contraband behind the iron curtain into Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Yugoslavia and other countries held captive from God's Word. Alex took us to see some of the places where they hid Bibles under false floors in churches. Alex's daughter spoke five languages and willingly acted as an interpreter for us. He had contacts throughout his country and also in Hungary. Through Alex we were able to minister in a Hungarian church and in the only ACE Christian school in Slovakia, as well as several other places we could never have arranged on our own.

Alex was a Christian publisher, and he took us to see his ministry. He had a warehouse which occupied several basements of friends' houses. The Christian literature was stacked up to the ceiling everywhere we went. Alex lamented that during the hardcore years of communist control he could not print fast enough to keep up with the demand for this same material, such as Sunday School literature, tracts, New Testaments, devotionals etc. He said he often risked his life as well as the life of his family in order to deliver these greatly desired materials. But now that the iron curtain had lifted from his country, nobody wanted them anymore. They were all pursuing material gain like the western countries and couldn't be bothered with the things of the Lord.

Alex took us to meet a pastor friend of his in Budapest, Hungary. He invited me to minister in his national Hungarian Baptist church. This friend had also worked with Brother Andrew and Alex in the dark times of communist oppression.

Alex had made special arrangements for us to be able to have open street meetings. His daughter served as our interpreter. The special arrangements included quite a lot of meetings with government officials who finally granted permission. I am not sure whether he was being overly cautious due to the short time out of communism or if this was genuinely required.

Alex was a great host for a wonderful ten days, and we fully intended to remain in touch with him and even minister again with him, but once we left, the Lord definitely closed the door to that area, and we have never been able to get in touch with Alex or any other acquaintances there in Slovakia.

## MEANWHILE, BACK IN NORTHERN IRELAND

We stayed three and a half years in Northern Ireland. I pastored a church with some wonderful folks in it. We did extensive public ministry not only abroad but also in our own town and many cities, towns and villages throughout Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, Scotland and England. We passed out three hundred and fifty thousand gospel tracts in our years there, knocked on nearly every door in our town several times, led several souls to the Lord, taught a great deal of Bible, preached several special meetings even across denominational lines and made many lifetime friends.

## DESIRE FOR ADOPTION

While still serving in Northern Ireland the Lord disturbed the contentment of Robin and me by putting a desire in our hearts to adopt a child somewhere in the world. We put no racial, ethnic or nationality restrictions on the Lord, but we did ask for a child with a clean heritage. By that we meant that with what the Lord had called us to do we did not feel we should deal with the sins of the past generations. Others who adopt may have different circumstances and ministries that may allow for dealing with these problems, but we felt our ministry was not equipped for such possible complications. We really did not fully understand all the implications involved in this request, but we did feel at peace with this leading of the Holy Spirit. Still several questions arose. For instance, how can you find a "clean" child? If the mother and father are married and morally clean then why would they have a baby to adopt? We prayed along those lines and asked our heavenly Father to grant our request, somehow, by faith. We prayed without the slightest knowledge of a prospect, without provision, without knowledge of procedure and, typical of our life to that point, without contact with the "world" of adoption agencies. We just prayed and desired the best gifts.

## CHAPTER SIX



## *THE GOSPEL OF MARY (PART I)*

A national pastor in the Philippines whom we supported invited us to come to his country and teach and train in his Bible college and church on the subject of public ministry. We prayed, and the Lord supplied both the peace and the money. We were very much excited, as you might imagine. We scheduled three weeks for this ministry in the Philippines. During our time in the Philippines I preached in twenty five churches, met fifty national pastors, taught a couple of hundred Bible college students, directed and participated in many street meetings on three islands and saw many souls come to the Lord Jesus in salvation. It was the most thrilling ministerial trip we had ever taken. The Filipino people were very hospitable and receptive to our ministry, which made it quite unusual for us.

The last week we were there Robin asked one of the national pastor's wives to pray with us about adopting a child. She shared with her our desire and stipulations. The next day the pastor's wife, Mrs. Alicia Loquias, told Robin she thought they might have the ideal situation right there in the church. She went on to describe a family that were saved and loved the Lord, whom the Lord had blessed with seven children ranging in age from twelve years down to ten months. The father was a rice farmer and all would have been normal in their lives but for the fact that the mother was dying of cancer. The parents had been praying that the Lord would provide a Christian family or couple to adopt their ten month-old baby girl. The reason was that after the mother died, which was to be very soon, the father could not care for a baby as well as the other children while maintaining his rice crop. The tradition in the Philippines in a situation like this is for the family of the mother to take in the baby, but in this case the mother's family were all Catholic. She told her sisters that she would not allow them to take her baby, but instead the parents were trusting the Lord to provide a Christian home for her. This was quite a strong testimony in such a Catholic culture as the Philippines.

**Anyo ng Pinagkalooban**  
*Description of bearer*

Sex F Taas 52  
*Height (sm/cm)*


ulay ng Buhók BLACK  
*Color of Hair*

ulay ng Matá BROWN  
*Color of Eyes*

anda o katangiang mapag-  
kakilanlan/*Distinguishing*  
*marks or features*

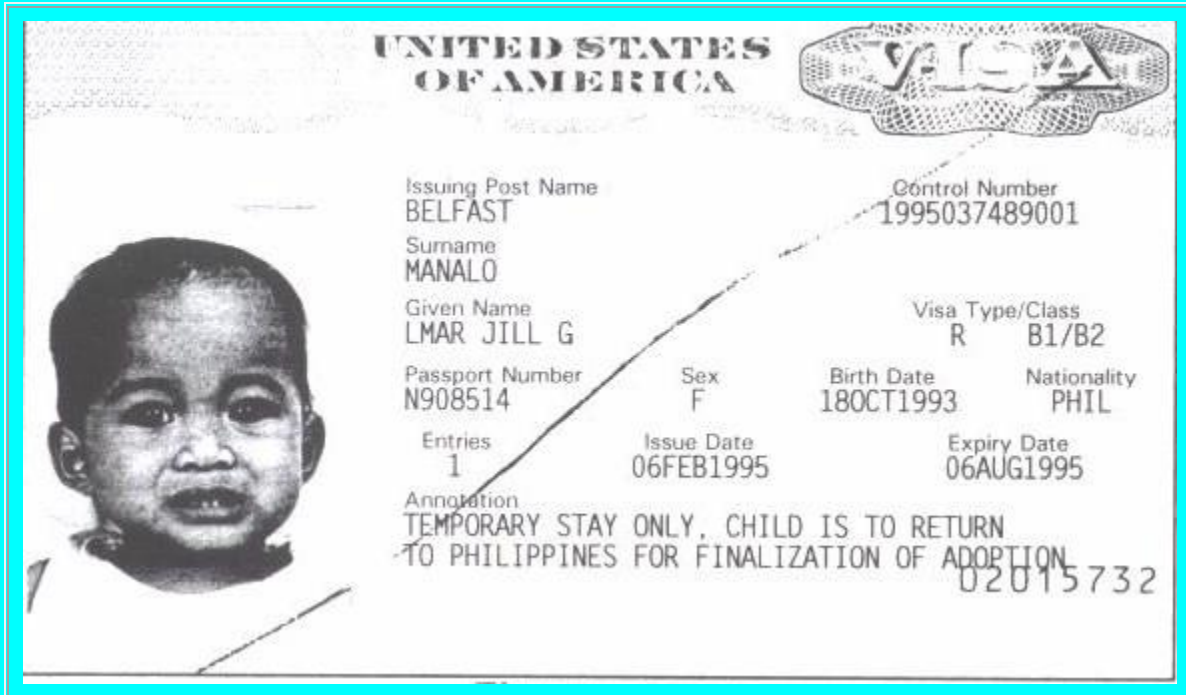
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THE SIGNATURE OF HO



MAR 2011

*Love at first sight*



*First passport*

The pastor arranged a meeting with the parents, the child and my wife and me. One look at this undernourished waif of a girl and the decision, on our part, was settled. The reason for the undernourishment was due to the fact that her mother was so ill she could not nurse and they had little money for milk. Upon the recommendation of their pastor, we all knelt and prayed. If we could get the Lord in on this, then all the other red tape could be taken care of. But without His approval, all would be in vain. There was peace all around from our Heavenly adoption agency. We cried together, prayed some more, passed the baby around, cried some more and then the reality began to settle in that none of us even knew how to spell "adopshun" much less pull this complicated, international, legal maneuver off. We prayed for wisdom, and right there the Lord brought two verses to mind which carried us through this red-tape-entangled nightmare to completion. Proverbs 21:1: "*The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.*" and Philippians 1:6: "*Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:*"

The Lord reminded the pastor that there was a lady in his congregation who was a social worker and did regular home studies for adoptions. When she was consulted she immediately agreed to write a home study for us which she felt assured would be acceptable to the authorities. Within a day she had finished and went with us to what she thought was the next logical step. We went to the social services of the Philippines. The very sign on the door repulsed me, for I did not want to accomplish this adoption through worldly means, and what was more associated with the world than the social services?

What heightens the miracle of this story is the fact that Robin and I did not qualify in any aspect of life according to the government. The "world" is looking for younger couples. We were itinerant, living on a visitor's visa in a foreign country. We had no provable stable income because we lived by faith. Our higher spiritual standard of living simply did not meet their comparatively lower material standard and thus would disqualify us.

If we had been sodomites with a television set and a membership card in the Greenpeace organization on our way to a Harai Krishna convention in Pakistan, they would have cut the red tape and sent all three of us on our way.

I confess I had my boxing gloves on as I sat in the office of the man in charge. He patiently heard our story and then seemed to turn into a devil before our very eyes. If I exaggerate I'll find forgiveness from the Lord, but he seemed to salivate as he proposed to us that we leave this ten month-old baby with the state for, "Oh...maybe two years," until we returned from the US where we would have to go to qualify with our government. It was like looking the devil in the face as I rose and without grace told him that we would never leave this baby with the government and if that were the only way...we would not take the baby. I walked out in the middle of the meeting, as my wife made apology for me, all the while thinking of how the devil was so very anxious to have that child at this vulnerable age so he could program that empty computer before the Lord had the opportunity.

As the three of us cooled down outside, I was informed by our social worker that what I had done was not a good move, because no matter how we accomplished this adoption the social services would have to give their approval in some form or fashion. But I remained adamant not to go in that direction. We again prayed for wisdom, recalling the verses that the Lord had given us the day before. "There must be another way," I mumbled, and just then the social worker said, "I know an attorney."

The story that follows travels the full cycle from the roller coaster heights of joyous expectation to the discouraging depths of one-more-dead-end-road. As I write this five years after these events, I marvel at how we ever endured the emotional turmoil. But as the Lord leads us through trying situations it doesn't seem to be as stressful in the midst, for He giveth us more grace as the burdens grow greater. We just kept prayed for wisdom and strength to do right at every intersection. This is one of those times that we can praise Him for not revealing the next page of future that lies just ahead. All the revelation we had for these tests were our two verses: Philippians 1:6 and Proverbs 21:1.

Never in my forty nine years had I ever had the need to hire an attorney. To make matters more complicated I had to leave for a preaching trip out in the boonies for a couple of days, and Robin had to handle this by herself. The attorney was sympathetic and hopeful that it all might be accomplished within two to three months. We were so naïve we had actually hoped and dreamed

of taking this baby home with us the next week. The attorney told us of some of the paperwork that was going to have to be gathered and of the forms to fill out and such and sent Robin away to do some homework. Just before she left, the attorney noticed that the baby was born in Nabunturan, and he dropped the comment that his cousin was the judge that would handle this matter. Robin left the office quite hopeful.

With all of our modern communications technology one wouldn't think that getting a certain form from the American embassy in Manilla mailed or faxed or pony expressed to Davao (a major city in the south of the Philippines) would complicate life so very much. But we did not understand business life in the Philippines. We hastened the process with every lever available to us and still it seemed to come by oxcart.

Since OUR DAUGHTER (by faith) was born in Nabunturan it was suggested by the attorney that we take a two and a half hour bus trip there and obtain a certificate of residence to help the red tape stick. So, accompanied by a guide we endured an extremely HOT, smoky, smelly, noisy, dirty, tiring "eternal" (seemed like it) bus trip to Nabunturan. As we sat sweating in the hallway, waiting for our turn with the clerk, the story spread about our adoption of a well-known local girl baby named L-Mar Jill G. Manalo. We were the only foreigners in the village, and as the story flooded the community, the residents would come by to take a glimpse. The Manalo family joined us there, and we took turns passing the baby between us without any fuss, to the great amusement of the locals.

Another prayer we began to pray, since the adoption appeared within our grasp, was that the physical transition of the baby would not cause a great upheaval. One must consider that this baby was accustomed all her life to certain body smells, foods, ways of being handled by mother and siblings and even skin color. Everything about us was totally foreign to this child; she had every reason to object. Once in another village my wife picked up a baby, and she began to scream because Robin was the first white lady ever to hold her. For that matter, Robin was the first white lady ever to hold this Manalo baby, and the answer to this prayer was evident from the very start. This unnatural phenomenon was amazing to the locals as they stood by, observing with great interest.

We also met with the judge and the attorney in a preliminary meeting, and although they were both on our side and cheering for our success, the judge said there were some procedures which simply had to run their course and there was not time to complete them before we had to leave. The judge set a date for our hearing just six weeks away in November 1994. He asked if a return to the Philippines at that time posed any problem. Despite the fact that we had just spent our life savings to make this first trip and I had zero prospects of another three thousand dollars coming in soon, I prayed a Nehemiah prayer, took a short breath and told him, by faith, that it would be no problem. If the judge had suspected that we were anything less than financially capable, he would probably have ended the proceedings. 1 Cor. 2:14 *"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."*

Once back on Northern Irish soil we resumed our normal duties but with a fervent overtone of prayer for specific provision. In order to get international airline tickets one must order them three weeks in advance. We were back to month-by-month living with absolutely no vision of sufficient funds for another trip to the Philippines or money to pay court and attorney fees. By faith I ordered the tickets from a travel agency with whom we had done quite a bit of business.

We were also sending money regularly to the Manalo family for the care of our little girl, to whom we had given, by faith, the name of Mary Bethany. The entire church in the Philippines was faithfully praying for us and this entire matter. They were claiming the same verses and, by faith, everyone, including the baby's family, was calling her Mary Bethany so that she would start getting used to her new name. By now the story had appeared in my newsletter as an important prayer request, thus soliciting many churches and families to pray. To all who were faithful in praying for us during those tumultuous times, we are truly grateful.

In preparation for the return trip I was also gathering Bibles, song books, Bible help books, Sunday School materials and accordions to supply our new friends in the Philippines. Denominational lines were crossed in this effort, with donations coming from the Free Presbyterians, Free Methodists and Independent Baptists. In Northern Ireland most of these churches still adhere to the King James Bible as their authority.

Holding on to our scriptural claims of Philippians 1:6 and Proverbs 24:1, we also added a new request, though in light of reality it seemed nearly impossible. We asked the Lord to grant that once Mary Bethany was placed in our arms we would never have to be separated from her again. We had been told by several authorities that the normal procedure was to place the baby in the care of a state home until our home study was completed and all other legal transactions were satisfied.

The travel agent called on a Monday and told me the tickets were in his office. I asked him when was the latest that I could pay for them. He said Friday. We had a couple hundred dollars toward the three thousand dollars needed and still no prospects. We stoked up our prayers and stayed true to our rules. No one knew but our Heavenly Father. On Thursday we received a check in the mail for a little more than twenty one hundred dollars.

The Lord works in mysterious ways, His wonders to perform. Robin's father had died in June, but the settlement of the estate was much encumbered with many entanglements. We had been told by her brother, who is an attorney and the executor of the estate, not to expect any inheritance money for most of a year, and only then if the house had sold. But there were some small insurance policies which had been paid to the estate, and although it was out of character for her brother to do this, he decided to divide the benefits of these policies between the siblings and write those checks before the estate was settled. That check, along with what we had managed to save in those few weeks, paid for the tickets on Friday. Praise the Lord.

Now that the tickets were in hand and non-refundable we made final preparations for another two-and-a-half-week trip to get our baby girl. As I made arrangements for the church to be ministered to and our apartment to be lived in and cared for, Robin shopped for clothes and things for the baby.

During our first trip to the Philippines we had taught several scores of Bible college students how to play the accordion by ear. Many of them took to it very quickly and one even accompanied himself for a musical special on Sunday evening after his first lesson Sunday morning. Many, yea, too many of them wanted to incorporate this instrument into their churches and street ministries so they asked me where they might obtain one of these newfangled things. Well, I was in trouble because an accordion is not an instrument even remotely familiar to the Philippine culture, and therefore there were no accordions to be had in that country. I told them that I would do what I could to bring them some from Northern Ireland.

This was a whole lot easier said than done. During the interim time spent back at our home in Northern Ireland, I contacted as many pastors, friends and music stores as I could, asking for donations of accordions for Filipino pastors. Thus, when we were ready to start packing for our return trip I found myself with three full sized accordions along with one hundred song books and Bibles, plus other spiritual literature, all of which had been requested and promised. To ship such things is financially impossible and to carry them on the plane as luggage seemed equally impossible. I dared not check the accordions to be put in the luggage compartment of the plane for they would be mishandled and therefore of no value upon arrival, if they made it there at all. Our clothes and necessities alone put us up to the limit on luggage weight, and the accordions and books tripled that weight. Normally the airlines have little mercy on luggage weight overages on international flights. What were we to do? Proverbs 3:5,6. We prayed and committed it all to the Lord and continued to pack.

Except for the luggage glitch, everything seemed to be falling into place for this trip. It seemed that the whole church and much of the town of Ballymena, Northern Ireland was excited with us. Truly it was the talk of the town, and we could hardly function in the community without facing questions concerning our pending trip and adoption of this tiny Filipino waif. The excitement mounted until it was difficult to sleep and with only a few days before we were to spend twenty four hours en route, we desperately needed that sleep. One night, rather 3:15 in the morning, the phone rang. It was the daughter of our attorney in the Philippines. She was also an attorney and was delivering a message from her father. She said that the court date had suddenly been changed to May 4<sup>th</sup> of the following year. With a mixture of grogginess and horror I tried to find out the "whys" and "wherefores" of this tragic news, but she knew no details and left me wide awake with heart pounding and head swimming. We sat up, talked, prayed and planned for the rest of the night. With all the plans we had made, with the non-refundable tickets, and with our hearts longing for our baby girl, we pleaded with the Lord for direction and peace; He did not fail us. We decided to go as planned and, if necessary, sit on the court steps until they changed that court date to a time when we were scheduled to be there.



First thing the next morning I was on the phone trying to communicate with the attorney, the judge, the governor, the president, the prime minister or anyone else in the Philippines who would listen. The attorney was out of town, and the court and the judge were in a village called Nabunturan, which is the mountain village where the parents of Mary Bethany lived. Nabunturan is a place that will never be disturbed by any Y2K problems of the future. There is one cell phone in the entire village and that is in the mayor's office. There is no telegraph, television or much of anything electric in this quiet community. I doubt if a satellite even flies over this area of the globe. There was no way to communicate with the powers that be in this remote jurisdiction except by way of a letter which takes two weeks to deliver, or by human message service. Unfortunately Nabunturan is two hours away from the nearest person that we knew. There was nothing to do but send a message anyway, which would arrive after we had already left. We wanted to inform them that we were still coming in hopes of getting a court date which would match our brief window of time in the Philippines.

Departure day came and we could barely load our luggage and extra necessary things in the car. What would we do at the airport check-in? Belfast to London is a shuttle flight which is usually very restrictive on weight. We thought that if we could pass the luggage weight inspection at this point we probably would not have any further problems. We instructed the person who drove us to the airport to stand by in case they would not accept our luggage so that these things would not be entirely lost. With more prayer than probably went up in that airport since the last crash, we were waved on board with no problems. This was the first hurdle passed, but we had to change planes in London and then again in Singapore; maybe the Lord would come back by then.

London was a nightmare we wish we could have slept through instead of living out. We had to claim all of our luggage and lug it all through Heathrow airport and, thanks to the IRA, we had to pass through four security checks. We were ready to turn around and go home by the time we got to the check-in window of our next flight. I took my wife's passport, ticket and luggage and went to the window as she stood afar off acting nonchalant while guarding our five-times-overweight-carry-ons. I proceeded to check the bags and attempted to check the book boxes but the "kind" lady swiftly rejected them and then asked to see our carry-ons. She told us, in no uncertain terms, that we could never take all of those carry-ons with us on the plane. So I checked what she would allow and we found a corner in which to cry to our God in prayer for wisdom. Here we were in London with way too much stuff and no one to take it back for us. These were important tools for the ministry in the Philippines; the Lord had allowed us to amass them and so why would He not act now to avoid leaving them in the Heathrow airport to be confiscated or destroyed? Wisdom was soon coming. I opened the duffel bag which contained just one accordion, dumped the boxes of hymnbooks, Bibles and SS literature into the bottom and put the accordion on top. I then had a duffel bag that weighed at least a hundred pounds, plus my own large carry-on, plus another accordion slung over my shoulder. Robin had her own large carry-on plus one accordion slung over her shoulder. It was ridiculous to think they would allow us to board the plane with more weight and bags in hand than we had checked, but we were going on the wisdom of our Lord.

When they called for the boarding of our flight, I told Robin to go in line just ahead of me and act nonchalant. With the accordion mostly on her back and my duffel bag tight between us we passed our boarding cards to the nice lady with a smile (though I was suffering a hernia) and walked swiftly onto the plane. Now the next problem was to get the hundred-pound duffel bag into an



overhead compartment. We found our seats and scrambled for extra overheads. I put all the "smaller" stuff away and was trying, with my last ounce of energy, to jam this enormous duffel bag into the tiny overhead compartment when the stewardess came up behind me and offered to help. She really did help, too, and the three of us managed to close the overhead with a bit of a bulge. Whew! We were safely off to Singapore with all of our belongings.

Singapore is yet another huge airport, and our plane docked at the far end. We had to lug all of our carry-ons the entire length of Singapore airport without the help of a cart which was only available after we received our checked luggage. I was hoping that there just might be a chiropractor who had set up an office in that airport. Using the same strategy we had used in London we successfully boarded the third plane for Manila. I considered calling ahead and scheduling back surgery upon landing.

Now, as was meticulously planned before leaving Northern Ireland, we were to meet at Manila International airport, the pastor for whom we had brought the accordions, songbooks and Bibles. We would then be shed of this huge burden which seemed to be growing heavier the longer we lugged it. We knew it would be absolutely out of the question for us to take these things onto the next flight which was a domestic flight from Manila to Davao City. The Philippine Airlines would never allow our extra "carry-ons" on a domestic flight and besides, we did not want to carry them on anything else, going anywhere, at anytime.

After we had lugged our carry-ons the length of a third airport, received our checked bags and passed everything through customs, we looked eagerly and anxiously for our Filipino pastor friends. We had but a very short window of time to greet them and pass these items on to them because we had to hail a "jeepney" cab and race across Manila to the domestic airport to board our fourth flight of the day. Our last plane was due to close to boarders in a very few minutes. We suppressed our panic. After looking and waiting for our friends for twenty unsuccessful minutes another powwow with our Lord was called as we told Him our plight. We had three accordions, one hundred Bibles and hymnbooks and no one to receive them. What a waste to have lugged them all the way from Ireland to Manila and then have to give them to some rumba band. There was no easy answer, but as we prayed and watched, Robin spotted a Salvation Army lady who had been on the plane with us and was now awaiting her ride. As we watched, a man in Salvation Army uniform drove up and greeted her and put her bags in the trunk. Robin wisely suggested that we give the things to him, and if they could later be retrieved for the Filipino pastors, fine; if not, then the Salvation Army would be the grand recipients of this special delivery package from Northern Ireland. We spoke to the kind man and told him our emergency and dilemma and he immediately agreed to help. We loaded his trunk, ran to the first jeepney we could hail and instructed the driver to speed to the domestic airport. It was getting doubtful that we could make our last flight on time.

We screeched to a halt in front of the domestic airport and began to hustle our bags inside, we were enthusiastically greeted by none other than our Filipino pastor friends whose accordions we had just minutes before given away to the Salvation Army!

They explained that they had gone to the international airport and couldn't find us, so they thought there might be a misunderstanding and came to the domestic airport. We barely had time to hug them, give them the information they needed to find their accordions etc. and say goodbye. We were the last ones to be checked in for our domestic flight, and we were spinning with the events of the day. By the way, the pastors did retrieve their accordions and books after most of a day of running around Manila to find the right Salvation Army and meet the right man. The Lord's ways are not our ways, but He always has the right end for the story.

Immediately upon landing in Davao, after twenty four hours of laborious, continuous travel, we were greeted by pastor Loquias and his family and loaded onto another jeepney for a very difficult, two hour ride up into the mountains to the village of Nabunturan. I stepped out of the jeepney at nine o'clock in the evening and into the pulpit to preach to a church full of folk who had been waiting hours for us to arrive. After the meeting we were taken to a nice house for the night and were told that our baby would be delivered to us the next morning. We melted into our beds with unbelieving minds as we coursed through the events of the past thirty-six-hour-long day...Thanksgiving Day, at that.

The next morning Mr. and Mrs. Loturio Manalo brought their thirteen-month-old L-Mar Jill G. Manalo and placed her in our hands from which, five years later through many rough, bureaucratic storms, she has never been separated. Our hearts thrill at this remarkable fulfillment of our prayer request never to be separated from Mary Bethany again. Praise the Lord!

We were told at that same morning that it would be highly unlikely that we would receive a court date to match our limited time in the Philippines. Never worry; our God is greater than the court system of Nabunturan, and He had assured us that "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Philippians 1:6 and "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord...he turneth it whithersoever he will." Proverbs 21:1.



*Mary Bethany passing her first tract at 13 Months*

Upon immediately checking with our attorney, we were informed that he was doing all he could do to hustle a court date. He also said that the letter I had written directly to the judge did not help matters at all. Addressing the judge directly was not the thing to be done in the Philippines and the judge was miffed at my attempt to impose my own strained circumstances of life, however complicated they might be, over the calendar of his court. I explained that I had acted in haste, desperation and ignorance and asked him to express my apologies to the court and to the judge. He promised to keep us informed of the developments; we settled in to the parenting stage of our lives.

It seemed that all the enemies of the Lord and righteousness had been mustered to battle this adoption and we in our ignorance had not aided in the victory of this war. We were not operating in accord with the ways of the world, and we did not know how to bribe or pull strings to effect a swifter end to the conflict. But, through lots of prayer, the court gave us a hearing date of Dec. 15.

The blood of the battle was still flying on the morning of the court date. We were to be in court at ten AM in Nabunturan with Mary Bethany, her parents, our attorney and witnesses. Mr. and Mrs. Manalo lived in a very remote mountain region and, to avoid any more glitches, we brought them to Davao to be with us on the eve of the court date. We were two hours away from Nabunturan if we had no jeepney break downs. I had to leave the house at six AM on that morning in order to go to the airport and secure by faith "three" tickets to Manila for the following day. We were anxious to get home for many reasons. The holidays were fast approaching, we had already been two and

a half weeks away from our church, our scheduled flight was just two days off, and our money was running very low. The plan was for Robin and the entire entourage to pick me up at the airport on their way to Nabunturan. I took care of my business and then positioned myself in the most accessible place to be picked up. The agreed time for pick up came and passed and all I could do was wait in the hot sun and pray. With absolutely no time to spare, a taxi drove up and Robin jumped out and started explaining. Actually, she said, "Get in! I'll explain as we go." The explanation was as follows. The pastor was supposed to have the jeepney ready for our journey to Nabunturan by 7AM. When that time came and went, my frantic wife inquired and found out that the jeepney had broken down two days before and was supposed to be fixed and ready. But the enemy saw fit that the jeepney was still not fixed. The pastor advised her and the Manalos to take a bus which would have made us very late and wilted because an air conditioned bus is not always available. Besides, Robin had no way to communicate with me. So, in desperation, Robin had ordered an air conditioned cab and had made a financial deal with the driver to drive us all the way to Nabunturan very quickly, which he seemed to delight in doing. The pastor, his wife and the Manalos all objected because of the extra expense, but we justified it by the urgency and extreme importance of the occasion. To us, this was one of the most important dates in our lives, and we were not about to be one minute late; but to the Filipino people, who have a sort of siesta mentality, being late was no big deal. The cost of the cab was forty dollars.

The judge, the attorney, the clerks and court personnel all seemed to bend over backwards to help us toward our goal. As we sat in the hall of the courthouse of that tiny community, word quickly spread about our unusual adoption case. Everyone knew the Manalos and their painful decision to give up their infant for the future welfare of the entire family. The employees of the courthouse clamored around to see the white "Americanos" which were so rare in those rural areas. Some, half joking but with a hopeful tone in their voice, asked us to adopt them so they could go to America.

The judge really wanted our case to be final on that day and for us to be able to leave with the adoption completed, but there were some technical, political objections that simply had to be addressed before the adoption could be perfect. He told us that we would have to return once more the next spring. Our hearts began to ache and our faith began to fade, but then he added that he would grant us both international custody and power of attorney for the child and that we could travel with her back to Ireland. This decision was extremely unusual, if not unprecedented, in the Philippines. We thanked our Heavenly Father for His faithfulness.

Now I had the simplistic idea that we would fly to Manila on Thursday, I would go to the British embassy on Friday, present my paperwork on our daughter and either obtain a visa for her or receive permission for her to travel using my passport and visa. After all, I had "international custody" and "power of attorney" granted by a legitimate court in the Philippines. Who would ever question that? Our plane tickets back to Northern Ireland called for us to leave on Saturday December seventeenth, and we had every intention of being on that plane and back home for the holidays. We stayed with another pastor friend in Manila for Thursday and Friday nights, but we hardly unpacked our bags in anticipation of our flight out on Saturday.

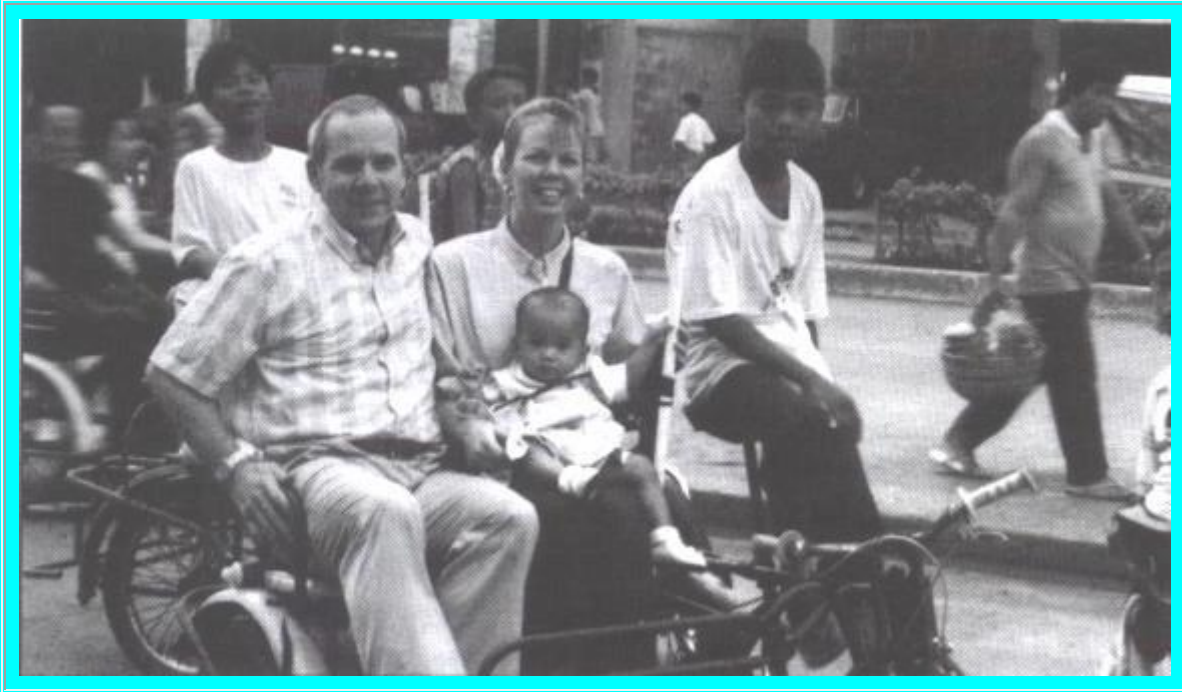
It was no small task on Friday to take a bus into Manila and find the British Embassy. Manila is a major city of some ten million people. It ranks in the category of New York City. I was going to just

swing by the embassy, pick up my quick visa and be home for supper. I arrived at the embassy at 12:30 to find out that they closed at 2:00 on Fridays. Fortunately, I was able to present my papers and request to a man behind a bulletproof window. After carefully reviewing all my paperwork, he looked up and said, "There is no way you are ever going to bring this baby in to Great Britain." Faint yet pursuing, I listened as he began to relate an incredible story of how we would first have to go to London (without the child) and have a home study done on our family, which normally takes two years and costs in the thousands of dollars range. Secondly we would have to finalize the adoption in the Philippines and be approved for adoption in Great Britain. Then, and only then, could we apply for the paperwork to properly immigrate her into Great Britain. Well, my head was swimming, my heart was sinking and my wallet was empty, and I had to go back to a bags-packed-ready-to-go wife expecting to leave for home the next day. She was anxious to show off her new Filipino baby girl to the church and the waiting city of Ballymena, and I had to explain to her what this agent of the British government had just told me. This situation was very taxing on our faith and seemed more like a box canyon than a dead end road. The enemies of the Lord had sealed off the box canyon and were sneering, rubbing their hands and licking their lips.

We prayed and encouraged one another in the Lord. I called and rescheduled our flight, shooting in the dark for a future date in hopes that the miracle and nightmare would be over. The airline told me we were only allowed to reschedule one time. We would lose our tickets after that. I prayed a quick Nehemiah prayer and selected January 7<sup>th</sup>. We definitely were shooting in the dark with absolutely nothing to go on, but miraculously the Lord moved the target in front of my bullet. We remembered the verses and promises that the Lord had given us and reminded each other that the Lord had still kept every one of them. We just had to wait on Him to move and use His wisdom to get through this dark valley.

I called Northern Ireland and gave the grave news to the church. They assured me that they would function fine without me and that they would bear our burden in prayer. We settled into our pastor friends gracious home sleeping on one single bed or the floor with just a fan in that tropical climate. We tried to get used to taking a cold dipper shower, consisting of just pouring a cold dipper of water over your very warm body, which is very hard for a materialistic, Laodicean American. We entertained ourselves with Scrabble, malls, walks and the baby. We tried to stave off constant hunger with a Filipino diet of mainly rice and fish, and fish and rice, and rice and rice, and fish and fish. Thank God we did not starve to death, but it was a real challenge to our western appetites. It was also good for us.

Money was another subject. I stated earlier that we had enough money to sustain us for two and a half weeks in the Philippines; but now we were facing another three and a half weeks, the holidays, possibly more travel, assuredly more fees, renewal of our visas in the Philippines (this unbelievable story will be told later), an untold number of international phone calls and, beyond that, an unknown future. The phone calls were absolutely necessary but were made via a phone card which deducted the cost of the phone call immediately from my bank account in Northern Ireland. Since the phone company would not tell me how much each international call amounted to, it became impossible to keep an accurate balance on my checking account. I did not have much in the bank to begin with, but now I had no choice but to trust completely in the Lord. I promised Him that I would make no unnecessary expenditures if He would keep me from going into overdraw.



*Enjoying our wait in the Philippines*

**We continued to bombard heaven with prayer, and the embassy with our requests and inquiries. We also pressured the London office for an exemption from the normal process. A missionary friend back in Northern Ireland got a petition going on our behalf and presented it to the British government. Another friend in our church in Northern Ireland managed to get the famous Ian Paisley (member of both the British parliament and the European parliament as well as a prominent protestant preacher and pastor) involved. His son, who works in his office, actually called us in the Philippines and encouraged us with the assurance that they were doing all that could be done in our behalf. I informed my mission board in America of the situation, and they sent a very official letter, with proper seals and all, to the British government, and another one to me to present to the Manila embassy. I had pastors and people of position in the Philippines write personal letters to the embassy on our behalf urging them to reconsider their normal procedure. All this flurry of activity was on our behalf, but with the holidays upon us and the closing of offices both in the Philippines and in Great Britain, not much was accomplished through the end of the year.**





### *Ministering to a national church in Philippines*

Thanks to our host pastor and other national pastors, we were able to minister the gospel to many souls through these trying times. I preached nearly every Sunday and Wednesday in some church. I ministered on Christmas day and New Years day with sweat dripping off my fingertips as I preached. I was able to teach public ministry in a couple of Bible colleges and do some street work as well. We made contact with the pastors to whom we had supplied accordions and songbooks and saw them in use in their churches and on the streets. The extra time spent there was not a bad time at all but was overshadowed and frustrated by the fickle decisions of the bureaucracies.

We discovered one day that our visas were about to expire. When we entered the Philippines we only planned to stay for two and a half weeks so, we did not pay attention to the stamp on our passports which only allowed us twenty three days. The immigration officer who wrote the date could have been a doctor, judging from his "prescription style" handwriting. I took an interpreter named Fidell with me and started out early in the morning to spend the day at the immigration office in downtown Manila. One must get there when they open or fail to get anything accomplished the same day. We arrived at the train dock at seven AM and looked over a virtual sea of humanity waiting for the next train. We were not one hundred feet from a door to the train but there had to be seven hundred people in front of us waiting for that particular door of the train to open. The same scene appeared at every other spot where a door to a train opened. I watched in trepidation as the train stopped, the door opened and the mob began both to exit and board. The automatic doors would close sometimes with arms and briefcases outside of it which would cause it to reopen long enough for the arm and briefcase to disappear inside. It was forty five minutes before we were in position to board. I wasn't sure that this was any great victory,

considering what faced me. When our train stopped, I did not have to worry about getting on board. I was literally carried on by the momentum of the human wave. There I stood with a Filipino against both arms, one pushing on my back and one I could easily kiss by just nodding my head. I love the people of the Philippines, but not all of them at the same time, in one close place.

We made it to the office at 8:25 and waited the five minutes until it opened. When I walked into that immigration office I saw twenty four numbered windows already with lines of waiting people. There were different codes written above each of the windows, none of which made any sense to either Fidell or myself. I asked someone official what the procedure was, and they told me that I first had to obtain an application for a visa extension at Window seventeen. I took my place in line at that window and ten minutes later received my application. The lady at the window told me that when I completed it, I was to file it at Window eight. I filled out the application and took my place in line at Window eight. Fifteen minutes later I filed it and that lady told me I had to present my passports at Window eleven. At the end of that line I was told I first had to be interviewed over at Window four and then bring the interview paperwork and the passports back to Window eleven. This went on for most of the morning until I was told that I could pick up my passports and extended visas at around 3:30 pm. We had a bite of lunch and went sightseeing for about an hour. When we returned I took my place in line at Window thirteen. Thirty minutes later I was told to check at window 7 because there were some complications. Fifteen minutes of waiting in line later, Window seven told me something had to be cleared with an officer at Window twenty two. No one spoke English at Window twenty two, so in my utter frustration and willing to face another line at Window twenty two, I turned and faced the two hundred plus people in that office and shouted in my best preacher voice, "FFFFFIIIIIDDDDEEEEELLLLL." Fidell, as well as ninety two others, were startled out of their siestas by this unusual explosion. Fidell came running over and interpreted. We found out that Window twenty two was only for travel agents. We headed for the line at Window twelve. This time Fidell told me that only one passport was allowed to be brought by each person. Fidell and I regrouped at the end of that line again and Fidell took one passport and I took the other. When we finished we were told to return to Window thirteen to get the passports signed. At the end of the line at Window thirteen the man told us to come back in fifteen minutes. Fifteen minutes later I was in line there again and this time I met an American businessman in the same line. Funny, I would not normally strike up a conversation in a line at a governmental office, but the chance to talk to another American was too good to pass up. He told me that he regularly had to extend his visa due to business complications and that I would be very lucky indeed if I got mine completed the same week, let alone the same day. The office was about to close and with this news I was disconcerted. But at the infamous Window thirteen I found both passports with visa extensions and signatures. I hurried out Door Number Three and took a long combination bus/jeepney ride home. I greeted my number one wife and we sat down to a supper of, you guessed it, rice and fish at Table Number Five. That is Philippines bureaucracy at its finest.

Mary didn't seem to be the least bit disturbed by all the frustrating flurry of bureaucracy. Looking back, this time period may have been designed by the Lord as a sort of half-way house or adjusting period. She was still in her Philippines environment but away from her mother and father. If we had taken her directly to Northern Ireland it may have made a difference in her acceptance of everything. As it was, she never displayed one moment of confusion, anxiety, or disturbance. We, of course, filled her every waking moment with love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance and all, against such there is no law. Our deep flowing confidence in the Lord seemed to rub off onto Mary's spirit. We were all very happy and content in the Lord in the midst of this storm whirling all about us.



It wasn't until January third that anything broke for us on the immigration horizon. We had either gone to the embassy office or called them nearly every day they were open between the holidays. I don't know this for certain, but I am reasonably assured that our case had been the subject of some meaningful conversations between the embassy and the London home office. I cannot measure the effect of the many phone calls and petitions that came into the main immigration office in London. Also, to be considered is the political pressure from the office of Ian Paisley. On January third I was told that there was one important paper that they needed for consideration. I was to obtain the full transcript of the court decision in Nabunturan. They did not promise anything, but just the way they were talking and acting toward us gave us renewed hope and zeal. I called and had the transcript sent the fastest postal way possible. It was supposed to be there the next day, but one must try to understand the postal system in the Philippines. Remember back when I mentioned about the "siesta mentality"? Well, we were still scheduled to leave on the seventh and on the fifth I had my host (a Filipino pastor) go to the post office to find out if the papers had come. He asked at the desk and they said no. He pursued further, and went into the back room, looked on a table for special delivery mail and found it. He then asked why it had not been delivered since it had arrived the day before. Their response was that the lady who handled all the special delivery mail was on vacation until the following Monday.

I literally grabbed the papers from his hand and ran to catch a bus. It was already ten AM on Thursday the fifth of January and they close the office at two PM on Friday. I had to confirm my flight by Thursday night or lose our tickets. I made it to the office and presented the paper. After a long (delay of game) huddle, the same man who three weeks prior had said: "There is no way you are ever going to bring this baby into Great Britain," now told me, "OK, you will have to pick up your visa tomorrow before two PM". I flew home on the bus and called to confirm our flight, rejoiced with my wife and the pastor, made some calls around the world, prayed, thanked our Heavenly Father and tried, in vain, to sleep.

The next day was very hectic with a very critical schedule. I had another national pastor pick up Robin and Mary and take them to his home on the opposite side of Manila close to the airport. I made my way back downtown, collected the visa, then took various jeepneys to the pastor's home which was located in a completely different type of neighborhood. I was very unfamiliar with the surroundings and had great difficulty finding the house. I was concerned that I was going to worry everyone by being late, but I actually arrived ahead of the pastor and my family due to unusually heavy rush hour traffic coming out of Manila on Friday afternoon.

Early the next morning our friend dropped us at the airport, and we made our way to the plane. The flight home was the easiest part of the entire previous six and a half weeks. Mary slept the whole way except for a couple of hours. During her waking hours she was calm and very lovable. Many on the flight with us commented on her unusually good behavior; especially considering all the circumstances.

Somehow due to the crossing of the International Date Line, we arrived home on the morning of the seventh. We were warmly greeted by several in the church family and barely got our bags upstairs, when I could wait no longer. I was dying of curiosity as to the condition of our finances. It was Saturday, and of course the banks were closed, but I ran to the machine in the wall of the bank. I quickly punched in my magic number to get my current checkbook balance. The

information stunned my eyes but settled my heart. Here we were adopting a child, travelling internationally, staying some six and a half weeks in the Philippines, living abroad in Northern Ireland and my total net worth in life was a dollar and twenty five cents.....but at least we were in the black. The Lord had brought us through the most trying valley of our lives without a scratch on our bodies, souls or spirits. He had fulfilled every single promise and covenant that we had established with Him in our ignorance and had defied the most strict governmental rules of two countries. *"Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the LORD that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself; that frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish; that confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof: That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers: That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid."* Isaiah 44:24-28. This is one of my favorite passages of Scripture.

## CHAPTER 7

### *THE GOSPEL OF MARY (PART II )*

Mary was a hit show in Ballymena, Northern Ireland, whose population is extremely Caucasian. There are a few Pakistani folks there but they are very dark. Mary was the first Filipino most of the town folk had ever seen. She was bald as could be, really cute and her personality won everyone's heart. Robin was walking downtown one day carrying her baby when a woman she had never seen before came right up and took Mary out of Robin's arms, lovingly shouting, "Ahhhh, de wee baabey, de wee baabey." Shop owners would pull toys and stuffed animals right off the shelf and give them to Mary. Our travel agency took up a collection among the office workers and bought Mary quite an expensive snow suit and other items. Everywhere we went she was the main attraction and topic of conversation. The story had spread quickly about these Americans who had adopted a baby from the Philippines, and the novelty of this adoption just seemed to press the town folks' love button. The church was even more alive with affection for this new "weean" (slang contraction for wee one). We had about eighteen small bus kids when we brought in every week from the other side of the tracks. These all took to Mary as if she were their own. Mary, with her already warm countenance, seemed to lap up the attention and the affection.

With more factors to consider than I could write in another book this size, we began to pray and seek the Lord's wisdom concerning our ministry in Northern Ireland. We were still scheduled to return to the Philippines in May to finalize the adoption. At that time we had no knowledge of any other option. My parents were elderly and longed to see their new grandbaby. There were situations in the church that were extremely precarious with little prospect for improvement. After much prayer, counsel and consideration we felt the Lord was leading us back to the States.

Extraordinary events which took place in the next few weeks and months bore witness that this was the correct decision. We received the peace that we requested of the Lord and made preparations accordingly. We gave most of our belongings away, sold a few and packed only necessities. After serving there for three and a half years we had made many lifelong friends and good-byes were tearful and difficult. Our years of service in Northern Ireland will always be a very fond chapter in our lives.

I gave little serious consideration to the possibility of there being any problem bringing Mary into my home country. After all, I was a citizen of the USA with rights and privileges. I marched confidently into the American consulate office and presented my magical papers and requested a visa for my child. Watching through the glass as the man examined my paperwork it was almost like déjà vu as he looked up at me and said, "There is no way you're ever going to bring that baby into the United States." This time a slight pinch twitched through my heart, but I was quick to recover, being fortified by past experience with these bureaucrats. Being the veteran of these situations as I now was, I wanted to laugh in his face and say, "My God is bigger than your god." We took note of specific requirements and regulations, made a request for an exemption, left it in their hands and went home to pray. We knew the routine by now, and we were confident that "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord", and "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

To shorten the story, after much prayer, several trips to the consulate and some compromises the same man said, "OK, pick up your visa on Friday." Actually, the man put his position on the line for us by agreeing to issue us a six-month visitor's visa with the promise that we would, indeed, take Mary back to the Philippines to finalize the adoption before this visa expired.

Barely a month after landing in Northern Ireland we landed in the USA and were quickly passed through the immigration. That, by the way, was the last quick experience we have had with the Office of Immigration and Naturalization Service, henceforth to be referred to as the INS. Considering the events and stresses related in the previous chapter, coupled with the thirty day wrap-up of all our ministry and business in Northern Ireland, plus three international trips in a short period of time, we were suffering from exhaustion. We had only a couple of hundred dollars, but we decided to recuperate somewhere to settle our minds and hearts and allow our bodies to come apart for while before they physically came apart. We spent some time visiting with relatives which included ten days of R&R with the Bear family. This was a most refreshing time of reunion and mutual counsel.

With time quickly pressing us for decisions and money running quite low we got the wheels turning to resume our ministry of the SWAT team for Christ in the USA. This ministry has always consisted of both doing the work of publick ministry and challenging others to assume the responsibility of their individual publick ministries. Once again, with much prayer and counsel we considered how we might resume this ministry of travel and how this ministry might figure in with another trip to the Philippines.

We truly needed a motor home and trusted that the Lord would, indeed, again provide the right one. Our faith was extremely tested on this point. It is the way of the flesh to take what its perverted, worldly wisdom determines is the path of least resistance only to find in the end that this path is up hill all the way and sometimes ends at the bottom of a dangerous precipice. We looked at a twenty seven foot class C (that is, a cab-over style) motor home that we surmised would fit the bill. We discussed borrowing from a relative the necessary money against an almost certain future inheritance.

Allow me to pause here and read your mind. Being an American and thereby understanding the mentality of the last days, Laodicean American, I feel can do that. You may argue that this family, in their predicament and with what they have been through, has a right to have the home of their choice, and that whatever manner they may choose to obtain it (short of stealing) is certainly their American privilege. But where did we get this theology? We certainly didn't get it from the Bible. Jesus did not have a place to lay His head. Thousands of Christians through the ages have not had homes. *"They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."* Hebrews 11:37-40. I am not trying to make anyone feel bad because they have a nice home or nice things, but let us please rethink the theology that we deserve them or have any right to them. And please let us consider whether God's principles were in any way violated in the acquiring of them.

We came dangerously close to picking up the telephone to call our relative, which definitely would have resulted in the acquisition of the covetous desire of our flesh. A thousand justifications could have been made, and unfortunately, there would probably not have been very many of the "brethren" who would have seen anything wrong with this "American" ritual. No one that we knew, would have dared to counsel us against such a culturally acceptable action. Yet this would have been the first major violation of the principles of faith which had been such a great source of blessing upon our ministry since its beginning. No one could in any way venture an accurate guess as to the resulting effect this wavering of faith would have had on our lives and ministry for their duration, but one thing is certain: I would not be writing this story with all of its miraculous facets, and you would not be reading it in God-exalting amazement. Thank God that we held onto His principles, and I can finish telling this unbelievable story of faith. What fools we would have been to have lived with the enjoyment of so many blessings and miraculous provisions of the Lord for so many years and then, in a moment of weakness, to have taken matters into our own hands and begun a lame walk by sight. Isn't this the story of Israel over and over again in the Old Testament? Do we not all point to Israel to use them as an illustration time and time again in our preaching? Why, after all the proper teaching, the preservation of the Word of God, the stories of the blessings and provision of the Lord through the Bible and in the lives of saints past, would we reject such a bountiful God and worship and serve Baal by being hearers of the Word but not doers?

Because we did not bow to America's Baal, I am able to bring a climactic end to this story. A friend took me to see a motor home that had been sitting on a used car lot for over six months. This motor home was far better suited to our needs than the one with which we were tempted. This one was thirty four feet long, with less mileage and more amenities. The price tag was \$18,500. I went a few miles up the road and checked out other motor homes close to its equivalent

which were priced at thirty thousand dollars and up and were not in as good of condition. I returned and offered the dealer \$16,500 which he accepted. My total net worth was what I had in my pocket which was three hundred dollars. I offered him a hundred dollars to hold it. At this point my wife flipped out. She asked what I thought I was doing since we had absolutely no prospect of any money of that size coming in the near future. I felt the peace of God allowing me to go out on the limb of faith where the fruit is and make the deal. I was still not in debt; I just had not figured out how I was going to get out of this situation without either losing a hundred dollars or gaining a thirty four foot RV. We did not subtly solicit "prayer" from the brethren or supporting churches on this. No one was solicited for financial help; yea, no one but the friend who was with me even knew about this transaction. Now, what I have said above is absolutely true and accurate and no fact is left out. I say this in order to preface the next sentence. This all happened on a Monday and on Tuesday I paid cash for the motor home.

Completely unbeknownst to us, Robin's father's house, which was not even on the market, sold at top dollar. Since the sale of the house was in cash with no other complications, the estate was able to be completely settled. On Tuesday Robin got a surprise phone call from her sister, who told Robin that she had a check for her. After the tithe, yea, double tithe, extra giving to missions and friends' ministries, we were able to pay for the RV and buy everything else we needed to set up housekeeping. We were on the road in America again. Praise the Lord!

Meanwhile, time was pressing on toward the return trip to the Philippines. I called our attorney there to confirm dates. He told me in no uncertain terms not to take Mary Bethany back to the Philippines. He said that the laws had changed and if we took her back now, we might not be able to get her out of the country again. He told us that there had been a rash of adoptions of Filipino children into neighboring countries to be used as slaves and also for perverted purposes. The Lord had used a very short window of opportunity for us to get that girl out of the Philippines and into our custody. I asked him what I should do, and he told me to start adoption proceedings in the USA.

The prospect of having to adopt in the States was one of our biggest boogey men. We avoided this route like stomach flu. It was one thing to trust the Lord, but it was altogether different to trust in the US government agencies which were involved with the adoption of foreign children. We had always doubted that we would ever qualify with the US authorities by passing all their adoption inspections. We could not show stable income, we lived in a motor home on the road full time with no permanent physical address....there was just no way we could be approved. We knew there would have to be an extensive home study of adequate physical facilities and philosophy concerning discipline. There is no way government agencies were going to accept my Bible answers to their new age questions. It would have been different had we been able to present ourselves to the authorities in the Philippines. They have different standards, different laws and different philosophies. We perceived this to be a certain dead end road with no other option. If this new angle was truly of the Lord even though we could not see it then, our covenant with Him and His promises to us would remain intact. And now we fully understood, also, why the Lord closed down our ministry in Northern Ireland and led us back to the USA. We had had every intention of raising Mary Bethany in Northern Ireland but His ways are not our ways. Romans 8:28 is still in the Bible; we were checking it daily.

Let me run time back a few months to when we landed in the USA from Northern Ireland. Remember how exhausted we were? Well, one of our layovers on that trip was in the Cincinnati airport. We had a couple of hours there before flying on to Florida. We were sort of lounging and napping in front of the boarding gate. Mary Bethany, barely fifteen months old, was toddling up and down the empty main hall. A lady from forty yards away came running up and just raved over Mary Bethany. She asked where she was from and how we had gotten her. I napped on but my wife, though perturbed at the interruption, answered her questions and endured the small talk. In hopes of getting rid of her, Robin offered her a gospel tract. She then said that she, too, was a Christian and that her church recently had a man in for a meeting who made it his ministry to help Christians adopt children from Brazil and other third world countries. She gave us the phone number of her pastor who would be able to help us contact this man. Robin only halfheartedly recorded it because at this time we were still headed toward the Philippines and thought that such information was of no value to us.

We now faced this subject of adoption from the beginning all over again. We knew we had to have a home study, probably an attorney, and who knew what all else. In calling on all our resources and remembrances, the information we had received from this bothersome lady in the Cincinnati airport drifted to the surface of our minds. With some difficulty, we reached the brother she had told us about, and after twenty thousand questions exchanged between us, he gave us one particularly valuable bit of information. He put us in touch with the one and only private social worker in the entire state of Florida who does adoption home studies and whose home studies are acceptable with the state. If we could employ this lady, it would mean that we would not have to deal directly with a state social worker which was our worst nightmare.

This private social worker not only accepted our unusual case, but she let it be known to us that she was a born again Christian and even a Baptist. WOW! She seemed to take special interest in our unusual circumstance and at every junction of events assured us that each hurdle could be cleared. We did not falsify any information concerning our status or of our philosophy, and she did not compromise anything on her report. But she, without direct words, led us to simply trust her to write this home study in such a way that it would lead to our acceptance by the state while still preserve her relationship with the state. This examination of every corner of our personal, financial and philosophical lives lasted nearly a full year. No stone was left unturned, I can assure you.

One of the most important factors which the state looks at in these home studies is the financial status. Now remember we live by faith and also remember that the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. When the questions concerning past, present and particularly future financial security came up, we found it most difficult to convey, even to this fellow Christian, how the life of true faith really works. Neither could we hope that she could successfully communicate this to the state. But the Lord works in mysterious ways, His wonders to perform. Remember the inheritance? Yes, oh yes, the inheritance! This was the first time in both of our lives that we had ever had any money. Having done right in the tithe, missions and other giving to the Lord, the purchase of the motor home and all other necessities of life, we still had a substantial amount to point to in the bank. Many times we had felt strange with the seeming conflict of living by faith and having money in the bank. We tried to find ways to get rid of it, but for a certain period of time it just was not to be. Now listen to me very carefully: because we could not only point to the money in the bank but also the very unusual fact that we were completely,

one hundred percent debt free, this part of our examination was passed without any further scrutiny. It pays to obey the Lord in ALL things.

We managed to stay on the road while all this investigation was going on, but there was another pressing situation. The expiration of Mary's six-month visitor's visa was fast approaching. We were in a "Catch 22" situation. We could not leave the country in the middle of adoption procedures, and even if we did, we could not then return her to the USA. If we stayed, we would have an illegal immigrant on our hands with whatever complications that might involve. Also to be considered was that how we handled this dilemma might affect the adoption procedure. We considered seeking professional legal help for this problem, but one can't simply hire any run-of-the-mill attorney. He must be a specialist in matters of immigration. Specialists are never cheap, and the one I called wanted a five thousand dollar retainer fee to start out with. I called such an attorney in Miami upon recommendation, and oddly enough, although he required the same amount, he answered all my questions over the phone and let slip one very valuable piece of information; he told me not to worry too much if the expiration date comes and goes because it is illegal for our government to deport an infant. That tidbit of knowledge saved me many thousands of dollars. We prayed and thanked our Lord for direction at another difficult crossroad.

We were truly an enigma to many bureaucrats. "Surely you do not have that child with you now, while the adoption proceedings are going on?" they would ask. This certainly was not the normal course of events. The baby was supposed to be cared for by a state home until we passed qualification to adopt. But the terms of our covenant with the Lord called for no separation once we had received her into our care. "How did you ever get her into the country?" The only answer we had for this was, "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord." At this time Mary was a bureaucratic conundrum. She was technically an illegal immigrant but could not be deported and could not leave the country while her adoption was in progress. We were careful not to go too close to any borders during our travels, lest we face unanswerable questions. I'm sure that had the Lord revealed all of these complicated impossibilities to us at the beginning we would have bailed out and this chapter of our lives would have had to be left out. Thank the good Lord that He only reveals to us what we can take care of for the moment.

On one occasion, after Mary's visa had expired, we were riding with some friends in the vicinity of the border of Mexico. A lady in the car was ranting and raving over the plight of those living in that section of the country because of all the illegal immigrants. Robin and I silently let her go on and on concerning this subject and when she finished, Robin simply looked at Mary and said, "I don't think that all illegal immigrants are bad." No one but Robin and I fully understood that comment.

At the end of much legal and governmental wrestling, the day finally came to go before the judge to finalize the adoption. Much prayer was solicited for this momentous occasion. The scene was set at the court house in Daytona Beach, FL. All three of us had to appear before the family court judge to be interviewed by her. Although all paperwork was thought to be perfectly in order, anything could happen. Ours was not the everyday simple adoption. There were many extenuating circumstances, and we wondered how the judge would look at things. The final word was hers. The only assurance that we had was, "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will" Proverbs 21:1. The judge asked us why we wanted to adopt this child. We told her that we believed it was the Lord's will for us to do so. Also that we



desired a child of our own and that we loved her. She then asked us a very important question. She said, "Did this child enter the USA legally?" If she had said, "Is this child at this time in the USA legally?" we would have had to answer no, which could have foiled the entire matter. But, without doubt, because of the verse above, the judge chose the words which we could give a positive response to. The result was that we were immediately granted all legal rights of adoption, her name was officially changed to Mary Bethany Sutek and the state of Florida now recognized us as a three-member family. WE (THAT IS, THE LORD AND US) DID IT!!!!!!! PRAISE THE LORD!!!!!!!!!!!!!! We had not played the world's game. We did not violate any of our covenant rules. The Lord had brought the victory! "*Blessed be the LORD, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant.*" 1 Kings 8:56

To bring a close to matters pertaining to government, let me sum up our present status. Although nearly everyone thinks that once an adoption is final, the child automatically becomes a citizen of the USA, it is not true. Adoption and immigration are as unrelated as Kansas and Tokyo Rose. Once the adoption is accomplished the bureaucratic procedure of becoming a citizen begins. We filed our application in April of 1997 and as of the date of this writing, September of 1999, we have not been successful. We have done all that anyone has ever suggested we do to obtain Mary's United States citizenship as well as her US passport without success. Actually, this trial follows the whole theme of this book in that our life is a life of faith. Not just a day of faith or an act of faith but a walk of faith. We continue with our original covenant principles trusting that the Lord who brought us through the Red Sea and sustained us in the wilderness will yet give us that mountain that we long to conquer.

Now, one more story remains to be told before this book can be complete. I can't leave my readers asking questions about all that money in the bank. It may be none of your business, but I want to clear the account and close the books on the inheritance.

Since that inheritance money, sitting in the bank, served a very vital but unplanned need in our securing the adoption, we felt it needed to be used or disposed of in a manner that would both honor the Lord and serve in the ministry of His gospel. We still squirmed over the discordance of a life of faith with money in the bank. At one point, in the middle of an uneasy night, we made a hasty decision to send it all to our home church to be distributed to missions. A call to our wise pastor resulted in counsel to hold off this decision and pray more about the matter. "It is not a sin to have money in the bank," he said, "if you have truly given it to Him; He will direct the disposal of it in the fullness of times."

Without any thought of the money, we noticed that our motor home was rapidly deteriorating mechanically. It was not a matter of our discontentment with our present facilities. It was a matter of survival in a ministry of travel. We kept putting Band-Aids on the cancer until one day we realized it was not going to report for duty any longer. We found a brand new motor home for just a few dollars more than a good used one would cost. The dealer gave us within fifteen hundred dollars of what we had paid for our old motor home. We prayed and received the peace and blessing of the Lord to proceed. We completely paid off this home in cash. While signing the necessary papers, the dealer asked me what I had planned to do about insurance. I told him that I would simply transfer my current liability insurance. Shocked, he said, "I have never allowed a

motor home to be driven off my lot without full coverage." He also added, "I understand that you might not have carried full coverage on your old motor home, but you cannot afford not to carry it on this new one." I told him that he was about to break that record of non-insured motor homes leaving his lot. I added that this was one of the reasons we had completely paid for it before we took possession of it, so that we could avoid the extremely high cost of comprehensive insurance. I explained to him that all the insurance companies I had spoken to would not insure a motor home which is lived in and traveled in year-round. I was quoted by only one company that said they thought they could do it but it would cost twelve thousand dollars per year. If I had financed the motor home through a bank, they would have required full coverage. After a thorough witness of the gospel of Jesus Christ, I explained that when I got behind the wheel to drive this new motor home away, I intended to pray and give the home completely over to the possession of the Lord. I would promise to do my best to be sober and responsible in the care and use of this great gift. I would promise to be as wise as possible in the driving and maintaining of the machine, but beyond this, if the Lord put the thing in a ditch tomorrow, that was His business. I was neither flippant nor foolish in this answer. I said it with many years and experiences of faith to back it up. If Job had had insurance, the book of Job would never have been written.

After all of the needs of our ministry had been taken care of, there still remained the sum of five thousand dollars. At first we reverted back to our early Egyptian philosophy and tried to invest it toward the security of Mary Bethany's future. I chose a moderate mixture of "high yield" and "comfortable risk" investments in order to possibly triple the principle by the time she was of age. When we analyzed this decision, we felt it was not only a form of gambling, but, even if it did triple (though there are no guarantees that the US economy would continue to rise) fifteen thousand dollars would not even pay for airfare to a mission field by the time Mary Bethany is ready to go. We felt this would be a bad investment. We talked and prayed and decided to make an investment in the Lord's work in her name. With this investment as her heritage and inheritance, when she did need anything from the Lord, He would be sure to provide for her. *"Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again."* Luke 6:38. We pray this legacy will serve as a foundation stone for the next generation who will live by faith.

Our life and ministry of faith continues on after our celebration of these events. The Lord blesses and traveling back and forth from coast to coast (an event that used to be a monumental undertaking) has become an annual and sometimes a semi-annual event. We watch the hand of the Lord provide for us in areas of finance, health, marriage, parenting, opportunities in the ministry, protection, talents, abilities of leadership and friends. Our ministry now truly has a worldwide influence. Many preachers and pastors have been trained, challenged and now are consistently displaying a public witness on the streets of many cities, towns and communities across America and in many countries around the world.

As to the future: having seen the bountiful hand of the Lord in so many areas of life over so many years, we would be complete fools to go back to Egypt and trade our God, by whom we enjoy life more abundantly, for one of the gods of slavery. *"The borrower is servant to the lender"*. Proverbs 22:7b.

*"WHEN THE SON OF MAN COMETH, WILL HE FIND FAITH ON THE  
EARTH?" Lk. 18:8b.*