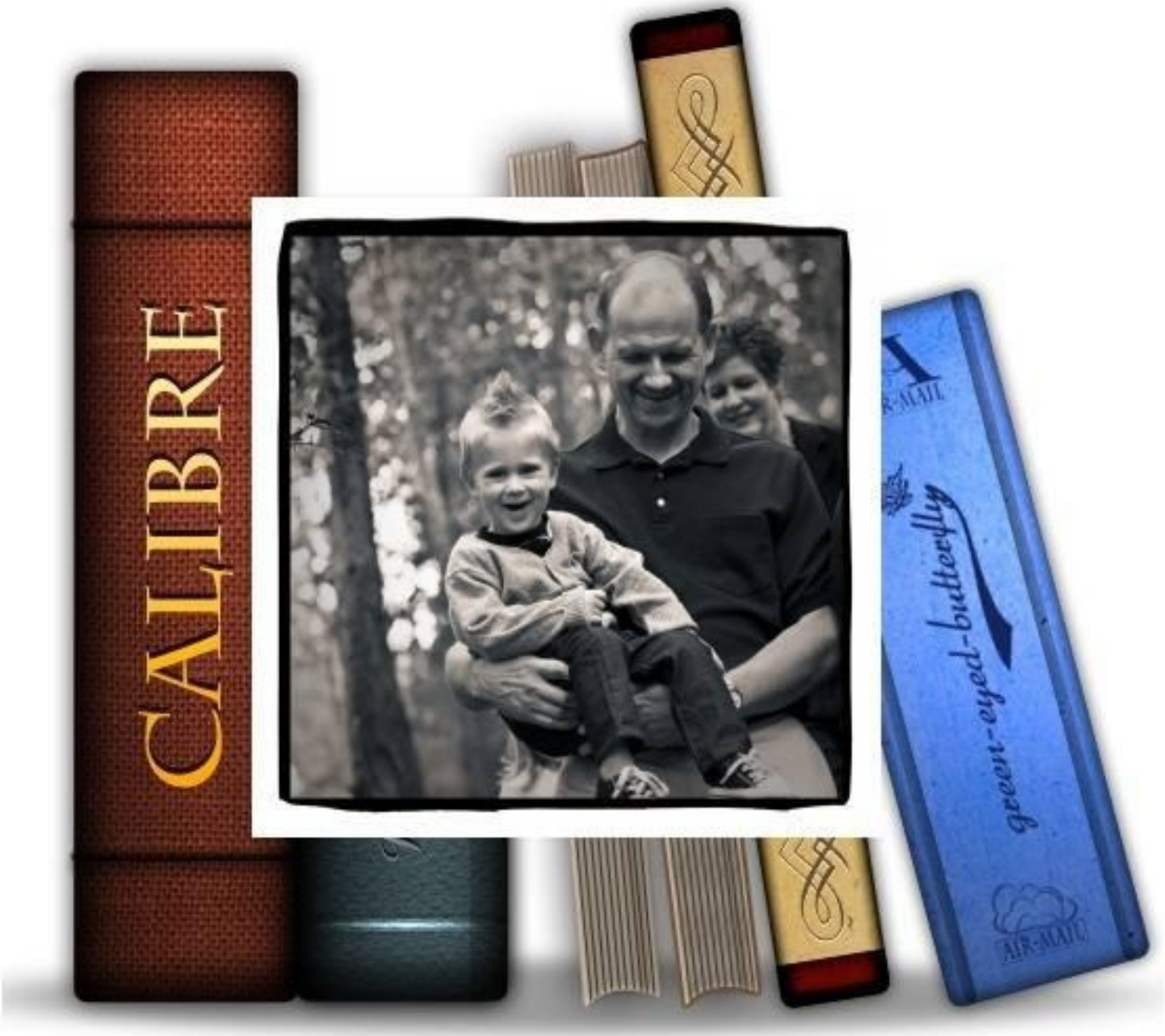
Precious Memories

Bob Sorge



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Precious Memories: A Sorge Family History

By Irma Sorge Louisville, KY Christmas 2007

Introduction (by Bob Sorge)

This is a fascinating history of the Sorge family, penned capably and colorfully by my mother, and edited carefully by my father and myself. The central figures are my parents, Arvin and Irma Sorge. The story begins with how their parents emigrated from Germany to Canada, and ends in 2007 with their children, grandchildren, and greatgrandchildren. You will gaze starkly at depression-era poverty; you will thrill over accounts of Holy Spirit oupouring; you will laugh over some absolutely hilarious incidents; and you will delight in the several accounts of divine healing. While this narrative is intended primarily as a family heirloom, it is certain to be appreciated by a wide readership. Grab a cup of coffee—and enjoy!

Note: This history is available in electronic (eBook) format only. To download additional copies (pdf format), visit www.oasishouse.net

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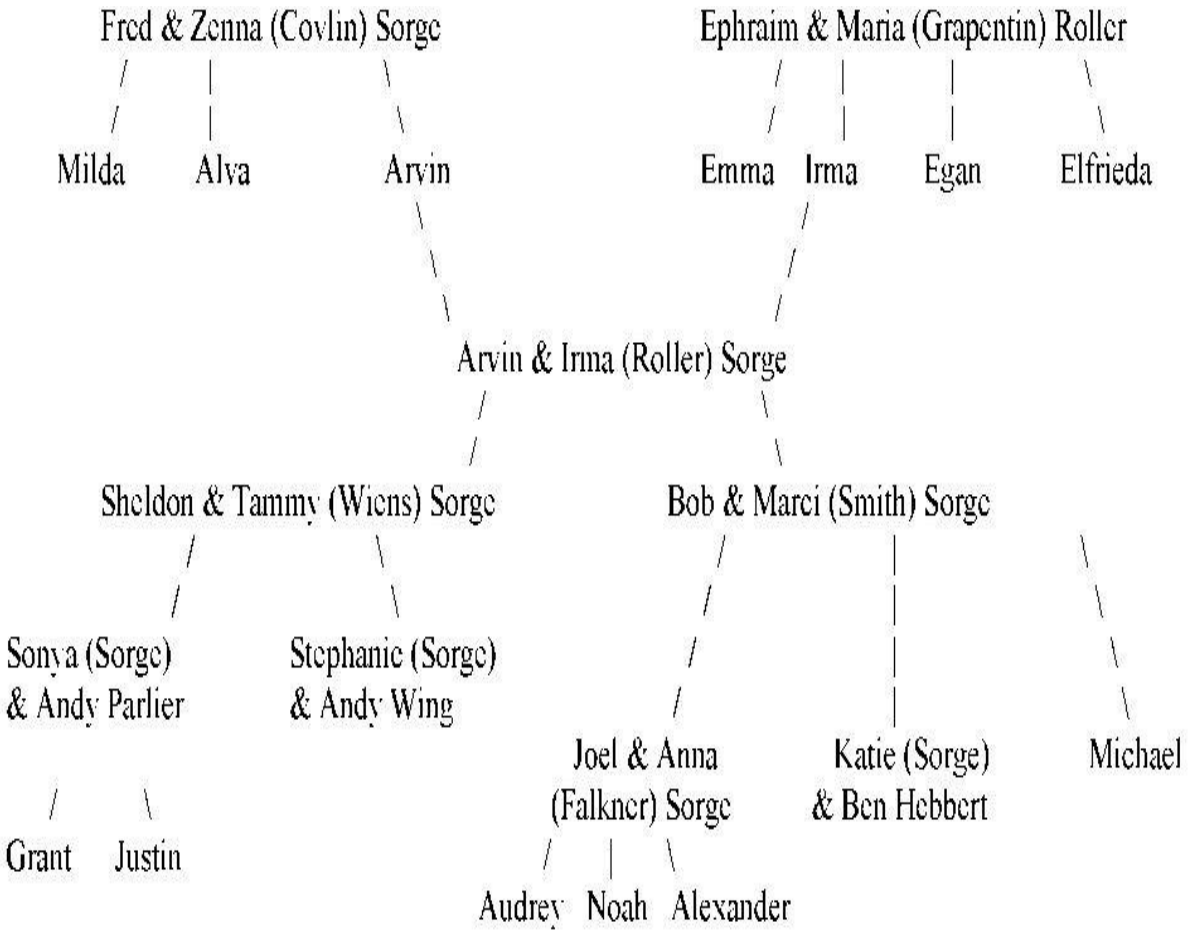

Author's Preface

Sorge Family Tree

Nobody could tell stories like my Mom, Maria Grapentin Roller. In 1970, only a short time before her death, sudden inspiration came over her. For the next hour or so, as though she knew this would be her last opportunity to recall her life story, the memories poured out of her innermost soul, and I sat on her bed with rapt attention, hanging onto every word.

What a rich family heritage we enjoy! Life with such a wealth of experiences should never be lost to the generations that follow. With this thought in mind, I consider it a privilege to capture on paper the precious memories of our family that I trust will live on forever in the hearts of family and friends.

Irma Sorge

My Grandparents

My mother, Maria Grapentin, was born of German parents in a German settlement in Bobrick, Poland, but raised in Germany. Both of her parents were previously married and widowed, bringing several children with them from the former marriages. In this new marriage they birthed another four children,

making it a total of 15 children in the family. Oma Grapentin (Oma is German for Grandma) was highly spoken of by all the children for her unconditional love for each child, regardless of parentage, never showing any favoritism but treating them equally as her very own. She had a reputation for being a terrific cook, and having to feed that many mouths daily was a mammoth responsibility.

Opa Grapentin (Opa is German for Grandpa) was known to be a very unbending disciplinarian, ruling the household with a heavy hand, not given to showing the children affection, but demanding respect. He inculcated a strong work-ethic so that his children might become productive and honorable, making him proud that they bore his name. Patience was not one of his virtues and his temper often got the best of him, thus leaving some deep scars in his children's memories. But with the blend of Oma's love and Opa's discipline, the Grapentin family apparently was highly respected in the community. Thankfully, not everybody knew all that went on inside the family—like the time their young son, Arthur, was learning how to swim. He was greatly afraid of drowning, so he hesitated to dive into the water, until his father lost patience with him and, in a fit of rage, threw him into the water. As a result of the trauma, Arthur began to experience epileptic seizures, a condition they were told would afflict him for the rest of his life.

Oma, being absolutely heartbroken over her little boy's fate, made a vow before God that if He would heal her son, she would abstain from eating at special feast days such as Christmas or Easter. Apparently the Lord heard her cry. On special occasions, she would cook the food for everyone else and then retire to her room to pray for her boy. As long as she lived—into her nineties—she kept that vow and Arthur was spared from the attacks.

My Mother said that whenever she and her sisters were old enough to take an interest in guys, Opa would allow only two girls to go together for a short walk after supper, giving them the exact time to be back in the house. She said that one night she and her youngest sister, Frieda, went out on such an evening stroll, hoping, of course, to bump into certain young men they had crushes on. Suddenly, they realized they were a few minutes later than expected, and they ran home at top speed, not knowing that Opa was standing behind the door with his cane, ready to meet them with a not-so-warm welcome. As they gingerly opened the door, without warning his cane suddenly whacked them over their heads, nearly knocking them over. Mom was wearing her beautiful, black velvet hat with a big red rose in front, which the cane instantly demolished to an irreparable semblance of something that once was worn with such pride, hanging lopsided off her head. The girls had their family's inborn sense of humor, however, and when they considered the very sight of this gorgeous young lady

who, only moments before, had been vying for attention from a would-be lover, now stood looking like something the wind blew in—the sight was more hilarious than the pain they felt from the blows of their father. So with full speed they dashed into their bedroom and covered their heads with blankets, trying to muffle their torrents of laughter. So much for a "night out."

Opa considered Maria to be his "prize" daughter and nobody seemed good enough to marry her, especially not Ephraim Roller, who apparently had a crush on her. The Rollers were not considered to be of the "upper crust" in the community, as they were not as wealthy or influential as the Grapentins. Opa had selected a very handsome, tall young man for Maria, who also was her cousin. But regardless of everything that would appeal to any young woman, she preferred Ephraim Roller. Even though he was not tall, he still was very handsome and had such a gentle spirit, a quality that was not too prevalent in the Grapentin household. The Rollers were considered to be very godly people, peace-loving, faithful in their Baptist church, musically talented, and genuine Christians. So what could be more desirable than that?

Let me say a bit more about Ephraim's parents. Opa Roller spent 50 years of his life in blindness, and consequently a lot of the responsibility for the family fell on Oma. They both lived up into their nineties. None of us grandchildren ever had the privilege of meeting any of our grandparents, however, since all of us were born and raised in Canada. We all feel like something very sacred and special was missing in our lives that most grandchildren enjoy. But we do know we shall meet them all in heaven soon, for they were all believers in Jesus.

My Parents Start Their Lives Together

Wishing to escape military service, Ephraim decided to emigrate to Canada where his sister Lena had already gone. Before his painful tearing away from loved ones and home, he proposed and put a ring on Maria's hand, promising to send for her as soon as he found a place for them to live. During the next two years the postman was kept busy delivering the constant stream of letters while they were apart from each other.

Finally the long awaited time came, and Maria gathered her few earthly possessions for the trip to Canada. With heart-rending sobs and final embraces, she bid farewell to all who were so dear to her heart, especially her beloved Mother and Father whom she never would see again in this life. To hear her tell of the anguish she experienced at that time would still make the tears flow after all of these years.

The huge ship blew its last farewell whistle and the band on deck played farewell music as the ship slowly stole out of the harbor, bearing one precious daughter whose departure was leaving large, gaping sores that never healed in

their hearts. How their eyes strained amid the tears to get one last glimpse of the waving hands they would never again touch.

After nine days of sailing the rough Atlantic, having suffered terrible seasickness, the first glimpse of land over the horizon looked like Heaven to Maria! There it loomed at last, the land of her dreams, the land of promise. The promises of freedom and fortune like they had never enjoyed in their German homeland sounded so inviting. Most compelling of all, however, was the longing to be with her beloved Ephraim. They had endured two years of separation, and now would be able to have a home of their own with a little family and experience the joys of a happy marriage.

Docking in Halifax, Nova Scotia, the next part of the journey was taken by train across the endless miles of the vast Canadian heartland, heading for tiny Ravenscrag, Saskatchewan.

Looking out the window, Maria's heart was going through waves of uneasiness and disappointment because the countryside she saw was nothing like what she had envisioned. It was like living in a nightmare. She was bewildered at the vastness and bleakness of the wide, open prairies. This was nothing like her highly developed, scenic homeland. Her longing to see her lover was clouded by the feeling that she had been deceived. If Ephraim had told her what Canada really looked like, she would never have agreed to come to something like this. In fact, had she had the money, she would have turned around and gone back home. But it was too late for that. She could only hope that the sight of Ephraim would make up for all the disappointments she was presently feeling. But how could she forgive him for hiding the truth from her? If only her parents would know what she is facing, and if only she had listened to their pleas to stay in Germany with them, and if only she could escape this whole ordeal somehow! There was no way out, however, so she would have to face him and try somehow to mask her disappointment. Death would have seemed more welcome at this point.

Finally, the train jerked to a halt in a place called Shaunavon. Although she spoke no English, she came to understand that she was to spend the night there in a hotel, and then continue on the next day by train to Ravenscrag where her Ephraim was waiting for her. But Fred Sorge (my husband's Dad), who was Ephraim's cousin, and who knew about this upcoming reunion, decided to play a trick on them. So the next morning he went to the hotel and told Maria he was sent to pick her up and take her by car the rest of the way. With fiendish delight, he loaded her baggage and whisked Maria away in his Model T Ford. He drove a circuitous route to make sure that the train got to Ravenscrag before they did. As the train pulled in, there stood her beloved, waiting for her arrival. One can only

imagine the shock and dismay that about knocked the wind out of Ephraim when no Maria got off that train!! Whatever could have happened?



Model T Ford

Standing in a daze, not knowing what to do, Ephraim looked up to see this Model T roaring down the hill into Ravenscrag with Fred Sorge at the wheel—and lo! There beside him sat his bride, Maria. The hilarious laughter of Fred Sorge did not seem one bit funny but very obnoxious and by no means a joke, to say the least. However the joy of seeing Maria overcame his strong desire to want to kill his cousin.

Getting her first glimpse of Ephraim after two years was not all that exciting for Maria either. Due to hard work out on the hot prairies, this weather-beaten, suntanned farmer was not the well-groomed, handsome young cavalier who had once made her willing to forsake all others and cleave only to him. But he was all she had, so she clung tenaciously to him for better or for worse, determined to do all in her power somehow to make things work out for the best. Worst of all was the fact that living in the same house with his sister, Lena, and her husband, Fritz, was impossible. Fritz was very hard to tolerate with his shady remarks and unbecoming gestures. Lena, however, was always very warm and affectionate, doing everything she could to make this young couple feel welcome and loved by her.

A few days later, on April 17, 1926, Maria put on her wedding gown and veil which she had brought from Germany. She was a beautiful bride in a strange and distant land without any parent or sibling to witness this solemn occasion. What mixed emotions ran through her heart! Part of her was crying with feelings of desolation while in her heart she was determined to make her vows with this dear young man who was head over heels in love with her. As they stood before the short, small-town preacher who performed the ceremony in English, she was told only to say “Ya” when asked any question. Then all of a sudden Ephraim kissed her—right in front of all the people gathered there! She blushed in shame because she didn’t understand why he could not wait till they would be alone to have a kiss. (A wedding kiss was not customary in Germany at the time.) How could she face the people after this uncontrolled act? What will they think of

them? Such disgraceful conduct is unacceptable for sure.

There was no honeymoon or "getaway," of course, for this young couple. So all the area farmers pitched in as best as they could and brought them some food and a few little things as gifts, like a couple of chickens or whatever might help to set up some kind of living quarters. For the time being they had been given a mattress on the floor in the attic of Lena and Fritz's house. At least that gave them a bit of privacy from the barrage of taunting and shady remarks that Fritz considered to be teasing. This existence was intolerable for the young couple, so they began to look for their own housing. Soon Maria spied a bunkhouse, which is like a little one-room cabin on wheels. They were often used by hired farm workers who needed mobile housing. Next thing you knew, she had that little place scrubbed clean, furnished with a little table and chairs, a stove, a bed, and some shelving for a cupboard. They pulled it onto a field where no neighbors were in sight, and finally had their own little nest. What a joy it was to be on their own.

And so life began, with Ephraim working from morning till night in the fields and Maria trying to cook meals from whatever they could glean from nearby farmers. Before long Maria became pregnant, something that brought joy into their lives as their life together began to find a rhythm. The pregnancy went well but, because of poverty, Maria experienced strong cravings for meat, proteins, and other foods which were so necessary for this pregnant mother-to-be, but hard to come by. When someone gave them a smoked ham, she saved the rind and kept scraping it to get even a little flavor of some meat, to keep her going somehow. Many nights, when Ephraim was late getting home from hauling grain into town, Maria would stand outside looking at the moon and crying with heart-wrenching sobs, longing with homesickness for her parents and home back in Germany. She told me how she prayed to God to let that moon shine over her dear Mother and Dad, as that seemed to be the only possible contact from her part of the world to theirs as the moon orbited the globe. If her Mother only knew what was happening to her—but she would never even hint in her letters at the heartache she was going through, as she knew it would have broken her dear Mother's heart.

Here Come the Kids

Their first baby, little Emma, was born on March 11, 1927, attended by a midwife. Both mother and baby were almost lost. It was when Maria finally cried out to God with a vow to dedicate this baby to Him that she came forth, and their joy knew no bounds. What a sweet little baby girl had come to brighten the lives of this young couple. Now there was someone to care for and to nurture and to cuddle and love—it made life worth living. That baby was truly a gift of

love from heaven and how hard it was not to be able to show her to her parents in Germany. Only God knows the rivers of tears that flowed in that little bunkhouse.

But things were looking up and before long the little family moved to Golden Prairie, Saskatchewan, where on March 4, 1929 I (Irma) was born. Mother referred to me as “the golden child” mainly because I was such a contented child and because of my strawberry blonde hair which had mostly a reddish color. So now with two little girls they were a happy little family.

Mother and Dad were Baptists, so they became very much involved in the little German Baptist church where Daddy was choir director and Mother was the organist. Both of our parents were known for their singing, Mother being a lyric soprano and Daddy a rich tenor. Soon Mother’s two sisters, Erna Bielert and Angela Spletzer also immigrated to that area with their young families, so the family circle was growing. Then Mother’s young sister, Frieda, arrived with her husband Ewald and children, but they moved further west to take a homestead in northern Alberta. Being joined by these siblings helped make Canada feel more like “home” for my parents, which was great.

About a year later Daddy had saved up enough to make a down payment on a farm in Success, from which I have my first memories of Saskatchewan. I remember the layout of our house, which to me was very beautiful. There was my crib, Emma’s crib, the old pedal sewing machine, rocking chair, and other furniture. I can picture the school Christmas concert where I stood with Emma and we recited a little German poem that I still remember. Here’s a literal translation: Der Weihnachtsman ist auf der fahrt (The Christmas man is on the ride), Zu besuchen die Kindlein zart (to visit the little children tender), Zu sehen ob die Maedchen und Knaben auch recht huebsch artich waren (To see if the little girls and little boys even right properly behaved were), Drum merkts euch allen dieses fein (So notice everyone this finely), Zu Wiehnacht muss mann recht artich sein (For Christmas must one rightly behaved be) I was only 2 and Emma 4 when we I recited this, and the applause brought the house down. We also sang together, and that is where our public performances began. My mother claimed that I could carry a tune before I could speak.

I remember vividly the Model T car Daddy bought. It had celluloid windows that opened and closed with buckles, and a canvas roof. I remember standing on the back seat of the car, wearing my little blue cloth hat. When the wind lifted it off my head and it was lost out the window forever, it broke my heart.

On one occasion, when Daddy was driving at what seemed to this 2-year-old to be an incredible speed, we suddenly came upon a lake called Big Stick Lake. I was sure we were all headed to our deaths in that foreboding watery grave. It

was my first unspeakable trauma, one that is still etched in my mind 75 years later. I still have recurrences of that horrible feeling when we happened to suddenly come upon a body of water, with small, scrubby-looking bushes nearby. It is an uncanny feeling, a whiff of my earliest childhood memories when I was only about 2 ^ years of age.

I remember seeing a hand-wound gramophone player at our neighbor's house that so intrigued me, as I visualized little people singing inside that little box. It represented the height of modern inventions at that time. Only very rich people could afford such luxury.

The Move to the Province of Alberta

But life was hard for our parents and their relatives as the great depression hit us with a fury. After three years of terrible drought and no harvest, our little family was forced (along with many others) to forsake everything we had accumulated. Mom's youngest sister, Frieda (and Ewald) Bresch had already moved to begin homesteading in northern Alberta. The government would sell a quarter section of land for ten dollars, the new landowners would clear and till the land, which seemed like a win-win proposition for all concerned. At least that part of Alberta was not as dry as Saskatchewan, but full of green trees and plenty of moisture in the soil. With hard work, there was hope that the land would yield a good harvest. Together with Mother's sister, Erna (and Julius) Bielert, the big move began to materialize.

Uncle Julius had a younger 17-year-old brother who, along with my Daddy, led the way with two horse-drawn wagons loaded with family belongings. The long journey of about one month on the road began somewhere in late May or early June of 1933.

We could not afford train tickets, so ingenuity had to kick in. Uncle Julius rounded up what livestock we had into one end of a railroad boxcar. On the other end of the box car he piled up what pieces of furniture and machinery he could make fit. On top of a pile of belongings were a couple mattresses which were positioned in as inconspicuous a way as possible. Those mattresses were to accommodate Auntie Erna with her children—Hilda, Helmuth, Gertrude and Heinz—together with my Mother (six months pregnant) and my sister and me. Since we were unwelcome stowaways on the train, we had to wait until the train officials had come by to check each car for its contents and safety. Then, under cover of night, and before the train would take off, we had to secretly sneak into this cattle car so as not to be discovered.

Given the uncomfortable quarters, plus all the children who were hard to keep happy for the long duration of the trip, the mothers were considerably stressed as they tried to keep things somewhat bearable. I was four years old at

the time and my cousin Heinz, the youngest of the Bielerts, was three. He got most of the candy because they had to find something to plug his mouth to keep him quiet when the train would be inspected at different stopping places.

I do not remember exactly how long it took to get to Ellscott, Alberta, but it seemed to take forever. Often the boxcar would be unhooked and left standing on the tracks for who knows how long, until it would finally be hooked up again and taken further west. But oh, the joy when we finally arrived and were let out of our captivity to be welcomed by our dear Auntie Frieda and Uncle Ewald. What a happy reunion it was for the three sisters especially. After undergoing a long hard trip themselves, Daddy and Ewald Bielert finally drove onto the yard to join in this time of celebration which promised us a new start in a better life. Or so we thought.

As each family got settled on their own parcel of land allotted to them by the government of Alberta, we soon realized things were not anything like they were cracked up to be. Our little home was a terribly run-down, old log house with a sod roof, missing windowpanes, and old splintered plank flooring. How hard my parents worked to make the place livable, plastering the gaping spaces between the logs with a mixture of cow manure and clay to keep the harsh winter weather out. Mother wanted to lighten up the interior, so she made a paste out of water and flour and pasted newspapers over the ugly dark logs. The flour-caked paper became a delicacy for the mice that had made their home in the sod roof above us. They would chew away at night, leaving paper shavings on the floor which Mom would sweep up in the mornings. Not only was she terrified of mice, she now had to live with them in the house.

On the day our little brother Egan was born, a skunk sprayed our dog in the du-gout cellar beneath our house. How the place reeked! Only the great joy of having a little boy could keep our Mom from despair at that point, as the strong skunk odor just about caused both Mother and Baby to suffocate. After having two girls, and then another baby girl who died shortly after childbirth, she finally had a son. Egan became the apple of her eye and Daddy’s pride and joy.

Poverty was the order of the day, only increasing as time went on. Emma was able to attend the little, one-roomed school about half a mile away, but I was brokenhearted that I could not because of a lack of proper clothing.

There was no church in the area, but the Plymouth Brethren conducted services in the schoolhouse, so we would attend whenever we could. There our parents were able to learn English by comparing the English and German Bible they were given. There was a small cabin by the school called a “teacherage” for the teacher to live in, even though she did not make use of it. Her name was Miss Pearl Hutton, a very pretty young woman whom we all adored. She did

allow me to come to school a few days and I sat in a double seat desk with a Ukrainian boy named Yuyu Yamo. I was not comfortable sitting with him but had no choice. One day he had to use the toilet outdoors and was waving his hand frantically at the teacher for permission to go. She was irritated with him for some reason and told him to put his hand down. He was not going to be allowed to go to the toilet right now. Well, you guessed it; the poor kid could hold it no longer. Suddenly, I found myself sitting in the whole mess that he needed to get rid of. Sent out accompanied by the unbearable taunts of his peers, he tearfully made the long walk home. Meanwhile, the smell that filled the school house was intolerable. Not exactly what made my day!

Divine Provision of Shoes

On Sunday mornings, Miss Hutton would teach Sunday school in the little cabin. This was the big highlight of the week for Emma and me. I had one big problem. I did not own a pair of shoes, and all I had to wear was a pair of ugly rubber overshoes. They made me feel very self-conscious beside the other girls who wore nice shoes. I would stick my feet way back under the seat, to hide them from view, but then would feel so ashamed that I would run home as soon as I could get out of there.

One day I asked Daddy if he could possibly buy me a pair of shoes. With an aching heart, he told me he wished he could but simply had no money to do so. I knew then that God would be the only One who could get me shoes. So I knelt down by my little wooden bed and began to pray for money to buy shoes. When Daddy came and asked why I was praying, I told him. He reasoned with me that I should be thankful for the rubbers I wore, and that God doesn't give money away like that. In spite of his begging me not to continue to pray for money, I was not going to be dissuaded. I was determined that the Lord would answer my prayer. I suddenly got this bright idea, and out I went to look for money on our farmyard. Peering through a little piece of broken glass I found, I scraped the ground with my feet, hoping I would find the answer to my prayer. Daddy tried to reason with me not to do this as it was futile. He knew full well there was no money lost on this farmyard because there was none to lose. But I was determined to keep looking.

All of a sudden, as I kicked up the dirt, there it was: a big silver coin! No words could ever describe the ecstasy of my little heart as I screamed with joy, running into the house with this incredible gift from God. I don't know the coin's value, perhaps it was a 50-cent piece. Well, there was no way Daddy could get rest till he hitched up the horse to the buggy and both of us drove off to the only general store in the area to buy me shoes.

When we walked into the store, the clerk asked me what I came for, and I

told him I wanted to buy shoes. He looked up on a shelf and pulled down a pair of shoes my size. They had straps across the front, like a sandal, and were sort of beige color. They fit perfectly, of course. Daddy scraped up a few cents to make up what was lacking (I believe they cost 75 cents as I remember). At any rate, I thought I had wings that I could fly home. I could not even sleep without wearing them to bed. I was beside myself with such joy, wiggling my little toes inside with glee. I could hardly wait for Sunday morning when I would be able to sit in Sunday school and show off the most beautiful pair of shoes on the face of the earth. My little heart was bursting with joy such as is impossible to describe, as I knew it was definitely God who heard my prayer and put that money on our farmyard just for me to be able to buy shoes.

Poverty is nothing to be desired, but we certainly learned what it means to appreciate every little thing we ever got. Nothing was to be taken for granted. We were thrilled if we got some "hand-me-downs" from anyone, and Mom, being a very gifted seamstress, would alter clothing to fit the family. Distant relatives, hearing about our plight, would ship crates of used clothing to us. Each time we would get them we were thankful beyond words.

Reaching Out to God

Because of their poverty, my parents seemed to lose any faith in God that might still have remained, and they were alarmed at their own spiritual condition. Mom especially became bitter and often would blame Daddy, even though he tried his best to provide for his family. There wasn't a church anywhere nearby to attend, so one day my parents decided to write a letter to the Baptist headquarters in Edmonton, requesting a minister to be sent to conduct some services. They wanted to survive spiritually. When the reply finally came, the request had been denied. They said they could not subject their ministers to the inadequate food and lodging we could provide, as they had heard about our plight from some other source. Well, that was the "straw that broke the camel's back," plunging my parents into complete despair. How could they do this to people who had been so active in that denomination in better days? Now they felt forsaken, not only by God, but also by their own denominational leaders. How much worse could things get?

We know the Baptist officials meant no harm. Later we came to realize this was set up by the Lord himself, so as to rid my parents of any human help, that they might call upon Him alone.

At their lowest point, when all hope seemed gone, the Lord spoke to a lay preacher, Julius Schatkowski in Edmonton, and told him to go north to minister the Word to a German settlement of homesteaders in the Newbrook area. Immediately, he packed his little suitcase and started on the 90-mile trek. He

walked because he had no means of transportation. This was in the bitterly cold month of December, when temperatures often dipped down from 40 to 60 below zero. H wore a big fur cap on his head, a heavy, long, cowhide coat, and felt boots. Scarves kept all but parts of his face from frost bite. He would stop at farmer's houses along the way for shelter and food, as people always showed kindness in those days.

Sometimes he could hitch a ride for a few miles with someone driving a horse-drawn sleigh. Eventually he arrived at his destination. When he came to our house to announce who he was and why he came, my parents were very skeptical. In no way did he look anything like a Minister, with his raggedy clothing and frost bitten face and a tooth missing near the front. He said God sent him and that he would be starting meetings in Prochnau's house. With their curiosity aroused, and nothing better to do, they decided to accept his invitation to attend.

The Beginnings of Revival

The room had makeshift seating of planks covered with blankets that rested on sawed off wood blocks. There was an old pump organ in the corner. They were warmly greeted and soon others came and filled the place with a lot of trepidation, not sure what they were getting themselves into. Most everyone knew everyone, so it wasn't hard to feel welcome.

Mom was asked to play the organ, Dad and uncle Ewald played violins, and auntie Frieda played guitar. The song service started out with gusto from people who were starved for something like this for a long time already. Even though everyone was poor, they had a lot of talent that made them sound like a choir in full harmony. It just felt like ointment on a sore even though they were unsure about the preacher.

With very little introduction, this humble man got up and, with his Bible held high, he asked if they believed in this Book. Then, with holy passion, he began to unfold the truths contained within its pages. Everyone sat spellbound, hanging on to every word that flowed from his lips. Right from the start, they sensed something in this man's delivery that they had never encountered before. He evidenced a broken spirit, and tears would flow down his face as he spoke under the unction of the Holy Spirit. A sword pierced the depths of their souls, convicting and drawing them to the Lord.

The meetings continued on for some time and the revival began. People confessed their sin and made things right with each other and with God.

Word leaked out that this man spoke in other tongues, which was something unheard of before, so they asked him to demonstrate that ability. Naturally, he refused to make a show of anything like that, and said that it was now time for

him to leave. But he said he would send to them an ordained minister who would introduce them to the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

The day he bade farewell was like a funeral. Everyone had fallen in love with this dear, humble man of God. What weeping there was, as they didn't know if they would ever see him again. But he knew his calling was as a pioneer preacher, to establish new churches wherever he went, and to encourage and strengthen others in the faith along the way. He had prepared the way for the next minister, and it was time for him to go and minister in other places.

When Brother Ludwig Posein arrived, there was a congregation of possibly thirty to forty spiritually hungry people who were more than eager to gather together to hear about the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. Brother Posein was a man who knew how to rejoice in the Lord like none of them had ever witnessed before. His happy countenance and bubbly personality were so contagious that, without any effort on his own, he instantly won the hearts of all the people there. He began to pour the Word of God into those hungry hearts with a very rich anointing. It was like a river of water in a dry and thirsty land.

Night after night, despite the bitter cold, people gathered to hear more of the Word of God. You could feel the spiritual tide rising in the midst. My Mother still was skeptical, so afraid that they could be led astray. Daddy, on the other hand, was very tender-hearted and desirous to receive everything the Lord had for him. Mother warned him that if he was going to be influenced into believing this strange doctrine that wasn't taught in the Baptist church, she would leave him. However, he knew that what was being preached was Scriptural and from God, so did not let Mom discourage him. Instead, with many tears, he sought the face of God for more of Him.

Then one night, as the presence of the Lord filled the meeting place, suddenly the Holy Spirit fell upon Ewald Bielert, a young man about 18 or 19 years old. The power of God knocked him off his bench, and he lay on the floor, on his back, speaking loudly in an unknown tongue. If it were possible for hair to stand on end, I am sure it happened, as nobody had ever seen anything like this. The whole congregation was in a state of shock.

Then he interpreted the tongue. The part I will never forget, for the rest of my life, was, "Behold, I stand at the door, the hand on the clock of time is pointing at five minutes before twelve. I am coming soon." Those words cut everyone to the heart. My Mom and Mrs. Molzahn ran into the bedroom to hide their heads under the bed's blankets. They feared that the Lord might appear and they could not face Him.

Mom realized what happened to Ewald was nothing short of a genuine experience from God and she needed it badly herself. The next night, she was

the first to receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. What an outpouring of the Spirit followed, as night after night more and more people were being filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Some were being saved, filled with the Spirit, and healed as the revival continued.

The Lord Meets My Dad

In spite of all his tears and intense praying, it seemed like my Daddy was the only one who did not receive the infilling of the Spirit. He felt like the Lord had passed him by. It seemed there was no grace for him, which led him to become very depressed

The meetings were not yet quite over when, one morning, we were having our usual time of daily worship and prayer together as a family. Daddy had just finished crying his heart out in prayer, and then got off his knees. I remember how he clutched his Bible to his chest, stood for a while, and then said to us, "This morning was the first time I even felt a tiny bit of the presence of the Lord. And it was so wonderful, I think I just need to get down on my knees one more time to thank the Lord for that little blessing."

Hardly had his knees hit the floor when the Holy Spirit came down upon our Daddy like a torrent of glory! He was knocked onto the floor, where he lay for about three hours, shouting and praising God in other tongues. We stood beside him, in awe of what God was doing in our dear Daddy. He had been so downhearted from feeling rejected. And now suddenly he was overflowing with the joy of the Lord, In that moment, he was changed into a living dynamo for God, a reality that endured till the day of his death at 85 years of age. Since our last name was Roller, my Daddy inherited the "Holy Roller" title honestly. On the day of Pentecost, Peter was totally changed from a coward to a powerful preacher used mightily of God; in a similar way, our Daddy was a transformed man in every sense of the word. The main characteristics of his experience were the shouts of joy accompanied by rivers of joyful tears. And oh, what singing! Truly the Lord had turned our mourning into dancing.

Sunday morning came and Daddy could not wait to share with the congregation what the Lord had done for this "doubting Thomas" (as he was called). So with this huge grin on his face, he rushed to his front seat, by the organ, to start playing as the service began. Well, there was no way he could contain himself. He was bobbing up and down, playing his violin, and talking in tongues a mile a minute—but quietly, until he would have a chance to give his testimony. Watching him for a while, Brother Posein eventually interrupted the song service and said, "Brother Roller, there is no way you can hide what has happened to you. You may as well let it out." That was all it took for Daddy to explode in loudly praising God in other tongues, which was the obvious

testimony in itself. Talk about the cloud of glory over that place! What rejoicing, what singing, what shouting filled that room, much like on the day of Pentecost. Talk about revival fires burning! Everyone was drunk, as it were, in the Spirit.

As long as the meetings continued, nobody dared to miss a night for fear of missing something new the Lord might be doing. People were being saved, filled with the Spirit, and healed in those meetings. This was living!

These meetings were taking place in the dead of winter. One night, while on our way home from a meeting, the bitter cold actually snapped the draw tree in front of our sleigh to which the horses were hitched. We were still a mile from home, so Daddy had to lead the horses home on foot. Mom carried our baby brother, and Emma and I had to walk beside Mom all the way home. By that time, we were crying with pain from the cold, and it seemed like the wonderful time of blessing had suddenly turned into a nightmare.

Once inside our house, Daddy lit the little heater, and as it began to heat up we stood as close as possible to thaw out. Mom got the feather quilts, wrapped us in them, and put us to bed where we finally warmed up enough to fall asleep.

Then we heard Mom and Dad saying how hard this was on the children, and that they would not be going to the meetings the next night. Furthermore, the sleigh was broken anyway, so there was no way to get there. But as the next day wore on, they began to feel terrible about having to miss a meeting. So Daddy got busy and built a little wall around the stone boat, a sort of raft that had some planks nailed over a couple of logs with a hitch added to haul the manure out of the barn. [Editor's note: This wooden raft was supported by two logs underneath, which functioned like the runners underneath a typical sled. A horse would pull the raft, dragging it along the ground, from which manure would be spread. The Alberta mud or snow would help it slide along. It was called a stone boat because it would be dragged over the stones on the ground, with the two logs functioning like pontoons or runners. The point is, it was a very primitive mode of transportation.] Then he filled it with straw. By evening, my Mom had warmed some large rocks in the oven and laid them in the straw, covering them with blankets. We could sit on these warm blankets to keep from freezing, and so we were off to the meeting—in this open, bumpy-riding Cadillac called a *manure spreader!* Fire was burning in our hearts, and we could not bear to stay away from the gathering of the saints. I think of those days sometimes when I look around today. We have heated cars with upholstered sofa chairs that we can sit in as we ride to church, and yet how often we find lame excuses for not being faithful to the Lord's house. No wonder the Lord said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

A God Who Meets Our Needs

Once the meetings were over, life returned to normal everyday living, but we had received power from above to cope with our hardships and continue to grow spiritually through it all. A church was established in that house that we attended faithfully each Sunday for the three years we lived there.

In the midst of this poverty, dental care was by no means a priority, but Mom had terribly infected gums to the point that the pain became unbearable. Whether there was money or not, she had to go and see the nearest dentist in Boyle. When he saw her mouth he was really shaken, as he knew this case was not going to be easy. Because of the swollen gums, he could not freeze them. As he began to work at trying to extract the first tooth without anesthetic, Mom screamed so hard that he could not proceed. He asked her to leave and never return because her case was beyond his help.

With aching teeth and aching heart my dear Mom came back home totally defeated and scared. What else could she do but cry out to God for help? And He heard her cry. Later, she knew she was supposed to go back to the same dentist and order him to extract every tooth and that the Lord would make it bearable for her.

When the dentist saw her back he was very upset with her, but she sat herself into the dental chair and ordered that he pull every tooth. She would not leave until he did. What else could he do but proceed with the operation? After a couple teeth were out, without any screams of pain, he stopped and asked her what is going on here. When she told him her lack of pain was an answer to prayer, he said he had a Grandmother who believed in God too and prayed a lot. The joy of the Lord came upon my Mom so strongly that she could hardly sit still and keep from bursting out with laughter.

When she arrived home, all of us cracked up with laughter along with her as she gave us this million dollar toothless smile. She looked an old woman from the funny papers. No matter what she looked like, she was one joyful witness of the mighty power of God. And He received all the glory and praise for it, too. What a miracle!

We had learned to believe God for our physical healing, and had seen Him heal over and over as needs arose. We really expected to be healed each time, and yet there also were times when our faith was severely tested.

Emma's Ordeal

Near the end of November, Emma (now 8) began to complain of pain in the lower right side of her abdomen. Along with much prayer, Mom would put hot compresses on her tummy to try to alleviate the pain, but to no avail. Each day she became sicker, and our parents were becoming alarmed at her deteriorating condition. Why did the Lord not heal her when they prayed so earnestly? Then

one unforgettable night she screamed with pain and could not settle down. From then on, she seemed to fade away more each day. My folks knew that unless something changed, she was dying.

Afraid that they could be charged with neglect, Daddy hitched up the horses to the old sleigh and prepared it with hay and hot stones. I will never forget as they carried out, ever so cautiously, my dear sister into the cold winter air and out to the sleigh. Almost delirious with fever, she was to be taken 30 miles away to the hospital in Athabasca. Down the road about a mile lived the McDonalds, and they had a car; so Daddy stopped and asked if they might have pity on our little girl who was dying and drive her in their car to Athabasca. Mr. McDonald was a returned soldier who hated Germans because he had lost a leg in the war. Slamming the door in Dad's face, he said that every German ought to be dead anyway.

Onward they drove, going as fast as the horses could go without jerking the sleigh, because every bump meant more pain for Emma. About ten miles further, they saw a car in another yard, and again asked for a ride. This time they succeeded.

As soon as Dr. Wright saw Emma, he exclaimed how he could not understand what kept this child alive because her appendix had ruptured about 8 days ago (the night she screamed so hard). Her stomach was huge, filled with puss and matter as a result of the infection, of which he drained off several quarts. He could not promise that she would survive the night, but my parents prayed all night and the Lord intervened and spared her life. What a miracle!

Everyone knew, however, that she was not "out of the woods" yet, but was still a seriously ill child. Dad had to return home and leave Emma at the hospital. Living so far away from the hospital, and having no telephones to check how she was doing caused untold grief and sorrow for our parents. Each day they wondered how she might be doing, not knowing if she were still alive or dead. They also felt huge disappointment because the Lord did not heal her miraculously as we had experienced other miracles during the recent revival. Did this mean that the Lord would not always heal us when we asked Him to? So many unanswered questions were a challenge to their new-found faith. How could they be sure the Lord would ever heal them again?

Mom's Healing

It was during this time that our Mom suddenly took very sick herself. She was bedridden with a raging fever, writhing in pain. She had gotten so weak that she could not get up and do anything. So besides all his outdoor farmyard chores, Daddy now had to take over the cooking and care for us kids.

One morning, as we stood by the stove, Daddy was cooking and preparing

the porridge for our breakfast. Suddenly, we heard our Mom, who had not been able to speak anymore, shouting loudly and praising God in the other room. Then she called for Daddy to come and see what happened to her. There she stood, with her hands upraised, full of the joy of the Lord and apparently perfectly whole.

She said she was so depressed, lying in her sick condition, when all at once the Lord reminded her of the Scripture, “Call upon Me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.” It was a verse she had memorized years before. At that moment, she told God if ever she was in a day of trouble it was now. As she called out to Him, instantly the power of God went through her like a bolt of lightning, from head to toe, and she was totally healed. What joy the Lord restored to our hurting family, for He showed us that He had not forgotten us but is still the same Great Physician. He always was and always will be. What a kiss from heaven for our parents! Going through such a deep valley, as they were, over Emma’s perilous condition, they were assured that the Lord still heals, and will heal. He remains the Great Physician regardless of circumstances. Their faith was renewed and strengthened to carry on.

Emma Comes Home

Meanwhile, Emma was slowly recovering in the hospital. They did not have the antibiotics those days that we now have, so all they could do was insert a tube into her abdomen and drain the toxins out of her body. Much care was taken to be sure things were kept sterile so the healing could gradually progress. She was kept in the hospital for a whole month. Slowly, she began to put on a little weight. With the aid of a nurse, She was able to get out of bed for brief periods of time to take a few steps and thus regain the use of her limbs. She definitely became the miracle child in that hospital. All the doctors and nurses became very much attached to her because they had a role in nursing her back to life again.

With Christmas around the corner, plans were made for Emma to come home provided that Mom would continue her rigorous care program until the month of May when she would have to have what was left of her diseased appendix removed. The greatest danger was that if infection should once again set in she might not survive.

So the great day had arrived for Emma to come home again, and Mom was scouring everything in the house into tip top shape to welcome her home. Mr. McDonald offered to get her with his car, and I was allowed to go along. I had not seen Emma for a whole month, although Mom and Dad made a few brief visits to her. I will never forget how excited I was to sit in the back seat of that little Model A Ford and feel like it was a chariot fit for royalty only. To celebrate this event in a special way, Daddy managed to save enough money to stop on the

way and buy ten cents' worth of peanuts, which was to be our Christmas treat as well. I was holding the paper bag with the peanuts on my lap like it was a pot of gold, with the aroma of those peanut shells giving me unspeakable thrills. Of course, I would never think of tasting even one of those peanuts because that would make it one less in the bag, and this treat was mainly for Emma who I missed more than words could tell.



Model A Ford

When we got to the hospital, I stood at the bottom of the staircase, longing so much to go up where Emma was. But Mr. McDonald would not allow me to go up, which broke my heart. My heart almost jumped out of my chest when, all at once, there she came to the top of the stairs. She wore a pretty sweater and skirt, with her beautiful, long, blond hair done up with a big white bow. I thought she looked so pretty, like an Angel from heaven. Then I looked down at my old rubber overshoes and the green wool stockings Mom had knit for me. They were so bulky and itchy. With the cowhide coat she altered for me, and this ugly green tam on my head, and I felt like an ugly duckling in comparison to this beautiful girl who just smiled at me so sweetly. I stood there and cried with mixed emotions that were too difficult to analyze. I had felt the trauma of the past month without my sister, and now the joy of seeing her alive once again. How dearly I loved my sister, more than words could ever express; and yet, I felt so inferior to her. I wondered if she would ever want to be close to the likes of me again. In my eyes she was so beautiful and I was so homely.

Then they carried her down the stairs, and she was placed on Daddy's lap in the front of the car. The journey home had become a reality for the child that had been at death's door, never knowing if she would ever be released to come home again.

Mom was waiting with outstretched arms, welcoming home her little girl as one who had been raised from the dead. Tears flowed down our faces, tears of

joy and thanksgiving to God who brought her back home alive, even though she was far yet from well. Our big rocking chair was padded with comfortable blankets, placed close to the airtight heater to be sure she would be warm, and then ever so gently, she was settled into it.

Once she had a chance to look around our house a bit, she said, “I never knew we were so poor.” The contrast to her hospital quarters hit her forcefully. The hospital had painted walls, while we had old logs papered with newspaper. There was no linoleum on the floor, just worn-out boards with splinters and patches over holes. No running water, only a pail with a dipper. To wash ourselves we had no sink, but a tin basin. There was the black cooking stove, the airtight heater, little homemade beds for us kids that used straw ticks for mattresses, and the little coal oil lamp instead of electric light bulbs, etc. She suddenly came to realize the huge difference, and found it hard to deal with, even though she was overjoyed to be with her dear family whom she had missed so terribly. A lot of mixed emotions washed over her that first night, but soon she settled down and was so glad to be home again.

Early Christmas Memories

Mom found a really small tree in the woods, put it up on our pedal organ, and managed to find bits of colored paper and whatever to decorate it and make it look like Christmas in our home. She even had a gift in a shoebox for us: It was a rag doll that she made for the three of us kids to share. We were just thrilled with this doll as if it were one of the best gifts anyone could ever get. Egan was just two years of age, and he loved that doll as much as we girls did. He was so full of life, and wanted to play with Emma. He would say, “I box you” to her, curling up his little fists, and would have to be restrained by the parents because Emma had to be handled as delicately as fine china. She was only allowed to be on her feet for short periods of time, and someone needed to be by her side to make sure she did not fall or get bumped. Mom and Dad took turns to sleep with her in their bed, as it was the only bed with a mattress on it. Mom had to bind towels around her body to keep the incision protected and to support the area so she would not feel like her insides were falling out. There was much loving care, and she seemed to be doing well.

We Girls Are Filled With the Holy Spirit

Two or three nights after coming home, while Mom and Dad were praying in evening devotions, I was allowed to lie in the bed with Emma if I promised not to wiggle the bed. All at once Emma began to cry, and Mom jumped off her knees and asked her if something was hurting. She said, “No, nothing is hurting, but I want Jesus to come into my heart.” Well, Mom tried to console her that indeed He already was in her heart, as they always led us to pray daily that the

Lord would come into our hearts. But she was not put off by what Mother said. Instead, she cried out in such earnest prayer for the Lord to forgive all her sins and come into her heart. Her prayer convicted me to with the fact that the Lord Jesus was coming into her heart, and I wanted Him to come into mine as well. So, without being told to do this, I cried out from the bottom of my heart for Jesus to come into my heart, too. The Holy Spirit was making my need of the Savior real to me, showing me that I was lost without Him and needed to be saved. Nobody but the Lord taught us to pray this way. In my zeal as a 6-year-old child, I remember how loudly I cried to the Lord. All at once, I saw a very bright white shining light that seemed to come through our little log house, and I instinctively knew the Lord was in that light. As this light came ever closer, I felt it landing on me. Without expecting it, I burst forth in another tongue as all of heaven came down and glory filled my soul. I saw our log house change into what looked like millions of stars dancing all over me, and I felt like I was romping through the midst of them. I was so full of the Spirit that I went on in other tongues for most of that night. Although I had to get up once to use the "pottie," I laid myself back to bed, only to keep on glorifying the Lord in tongues—and experience I hoped would never end. Emma also received the baptism next to me, in a more reserved manner, and spoke out by the Spirit, "The Lord has healed me!" Our parents stood in awe of what was happening to their two little girls, for they had never heard that children could also experience this wonderful infilling. They thought Emma was mistaken about her healing because of her spiritual experience, but she was, in fact, healed that night.

The next night the glory of the Lord came down again while my parents had devotions. I was lying in my own little straw tick bed when Emma leaped out of Mom and Dad's bed and, under the anointing of the Spirit, danced before the Lord. Mother was anxious that she was hurting herself so she caught and restrained her, but Emma told her not to hold her back because Jesus was blessing her so much. So Mom let her go. She continued to dance while I lay in my bed and sang in other tongues. With all of that, the coal oil lamp that stood on the organ fell down to the floor and the chimney broke to smithereens. So Mom held Emma back. Once again, however, she freed herself from her arms and continued her dance. Not once did she touch a piece of the broken glass strewn on the floor, which was a miracle in itself. Daddy, of course, was right there cleaning up the mess and smothering the flames. The Lord continued to fill the house with His glory. Those were the most unforgettable days of our lives, with God encounters that have kept us serving the Lord to this day. We had a taste of heaven on earth. We felt richer than a millionaire, for we had found the pearl of great price, Jesus Himself. Nothing else on earth can compare with that

treasure. We were born again and our lives were given entirely to the Lord.

Emma's Healing Confirmed

As the months rolled by, Emma was constantly getting stronger and putting on some weight. There was no more pain and the drainage had stopped. She was back to normal when, in early May, Daddy got a letter from her doctor in Athabasca with the notice of Emma's operation date. This was something nobody expected anymore, as Emma had been healed by the power of God and now was in such good health. But when Daddy wrote the doctor that Emma was healed and did not need the operation, Dr. Wright became very upset. He threatened Daddy that if he did not bring Emma in, he would be charged with manslaughter because it was humanly impossible for anyone to survive with a ruptured appendix inside. He was a very kind man and only wanted the best for the little girl, but he also felt responsible for her.

Our parents were sure that she was healed, but how could they prove that to the doctor? Finally, after much prayer, they decided to let Emma make the final decision whether to go back to the doctor or to fully trust the Lord with her life. Without hesitation, she declared she was fully healed and thus refused to return to the doctor. None of the threats moved our family's resolve to believe that the same God who healed Emma was the One who would also keep her.

Never again did she have the slightest problem with her appendix. Around age 35, however, she had a miscarriage and infection in her ovaries which necessitated a hysterectomy. The appendix is typically removed as well during such a procedure. After the operation, Emma asked Doctor Anderson what the appendix looked like, and he said it was totally healthy. He had removed it as a matter of procedure, to avoid any possibility of later complications. Emma was then able to share the wonderful story of how the great Physician healed her so many years before. So even though our parents felt like the Lord let them down when he didn't heal her at first, He was even more glorified by a much greater miracle some time later. Truly the Lord does keep His promises, even if His answers are not on our time schedule.

The Move to British Columbia

Meanwhile our Auntie Frieda and Uncle Ewald Bresch had moved to a suburb of Kelowna, British Columbia, called Rutland, where uncle Ewald's brother, Henry, lived. Once they got there, they felt like they had found the "Promised Land" and insisted that all of the siblings had to follow them there as well. So both our parents and Bielerts began sorting through their meager belongings, and whatever was of any kind of value was loaded into a railroad box car. The men accompanied the belongings while the women and children took the train. They somehow managed to scrape enough money together for

two tickets, but had nothing for the children who ranged from my 2-year-old brother Egan to my oldest cousin who was a teenager. The two mothers had prayed so hard and believed the Lord would somehow perform a miracle so that the children would get on free of charge.

Once we arrived at the train station in Edmonton, our dear little brother was beside himself with joy as he ran all over this gorgeous white marble floor in his bare feet. All he had known were the rough splintery planks on our floor, and this smooth-as-glass floor was just too good to be true. Everyone in the place was so entertained by this little guy. Then we ate some of the sandwiches we had taken along. Hilda, the oldest cousin, was holding our glass gallon jug of tea when it slipped out of her hand and smashed before the eyes of all the waiting passengers. Tea was all over the floor. Not only did this mean we had nothing to drink, it also was terribly embarrassing.

Finally the train pulled in, and gathering everything together, we headed for the door. The two mothers literally pushed us kids on ahead of them into the passenger train car, sat us down, and the train started to go. Shortly, a black Conductor called out, “Tickets please,” and everybody on board took out their tickets to present them to him. When he got to where we sat, the two mothers handed him their two tickets. He was waiting for the other tickets, but when they indicated they had none, he somehow looked at these poor people with compassion and waved his hand to say nothing. Without a word, he went to collect the tickets from the other passengers. They knew, of course, that he would not stop the train and throw them out, so they began to praise the Lord under their breath for answering their prayers in such a miraculous way.

How we children enjoyed that train ride! There was a little indoor toilet, a stone crock with a faucet for filling those little paper cups with water, an electric light bulb, and upholstered benches to sit on—it all made us feel like we were in a dream world.

How excited we all were when the train stopped at our destination and there were our Auntie and Uncle and cousins. The Prochnaus, who had also moved there, had brought a horse-drawn flatbed wagon. We piled all our belongings onto the wagon and sat on top of things as we headed for the Bresch’s home. Oh, the joy to be together again and to behold the beauty of the country we had come to. It was all too good to be true.

My parents said, “This is home at last, and here we will live till we die.” The Kelowna area reminded them a lot of their German homeland. The fruit orchards, lush green foliage, smooth roads, and nice houses looked to us like the land of Canaan must have looked to the Israelites after coming out of Egypt. When we reached the Bresch’s house

which uncle Ewald built himself, though it was not very big, it looked ultra modern. But nothing was more astounding to us than seeing a huge mountain of apples dumped on their back yard. That is what orchard farmers did with culls that didn't pass inspection for packing. They were the most delicious apples you ever tasted and they were free. It's a wonder we didn't get sick from over-eating those apples. We hadn't had an apple for sooooo long, this was like living in a dream world. We ate apples till we could eat no more. Of course, there was apple pie, apple pudding, apple salad, fried apples with bacon, baked apples and applesauce. We had arrived in the heart of British Columbia's fruit land.

Soon, we all found our own places to live. Daddy found a job on the ranch where uncle Ewald lived. He began to make big money, at least big to us. The wages were one dollar per day, thirty dollars per month, and how rich we felt!

During fruit picking time, we would pick strawberries, raspberries, green beans, and grapes in the fields. Mom would work in the tomato canneries as well. How hard they worked, and how they saved. In time we were able to buy three acres of land and build our own house on it. Daddy gave one acre to the Lord as a site for our first little church building, which served our little congregation for many years.

Mom Gets Lost

During picking time, we would move up into the hills where the vineyards were, and stayed in really nice little houses in a place called Pioneer Ranch. On Sundays a dear man came in his coupe (I remember the rumble seat in the back) to take us to Kelowna to Church. We were thrilled to go to a Pentecostal church, and the people there welcomed us so warmly.

One day, after working so hard in the blazing sun, Mother decided she was going to walk all the way to Kelowna by herself. She was very tired, but so hungry spiritually to get in on the midweek service at church. Well, Kelowna was six miles away, and by the time she got to the outskirts of the city, all the lights came on and she became totally confused as to where she was. Walking at full speed up and down many streets, she was unable to recognize any of them in the dark. Finally, when she could go no further, she happened to see a policeman. Waving him down, she told him she was lost and was looking for the Pentecostal church. He pointed to the corner, where it stood right there in front of her eyes. All out of breath she found a spot to sit in the back and just sobbed as the minister was closing the service.

She began to ask the Lord how come He would allow such a horrible thing to happen to her, when she was so hungry spiritually to be in that meeting where the Lord was moving mightily. Then it struck her, how would she find her way out of this place to get back on the road that led to Pioneer Ranch? Suddenly she

recognized the Lindahls just leaving, and so she ran up to them and asked if they could give her a ride. If they would take her to the road just outside the city limits, she would walk the rest of the way home. They were most happy to do that for her.

No sooner was she in the car when she told them her hard luck story, and then asked what the preacher preached on, and how the service went. Mrs. Lindahl began to share from a heart that was overflowing with the Spirit of the Lord still upon her. Well, the glory of the Lord came down into the car, and they all got so filled with joy and praise to the Lord that suddenly Mr. Lindahl realized he was lost. He did not recognize the road he was driving on. Poor Mom's heart almost stopped, as this was the last thing she needed to hear. But in a few minutes he said, "Oh, now I know where I am" and here he drove unintentionally right up to our house on Pioneer Ranch!

You can only imagine the shouting of joy that followed as they saw how God showed His love in such a supernatural way for my Mom. She would never have traded that experience for anything in the world, as now she felt more loved by her Lord than had she been able to find her own way. What a story she had to tell, which we heard her repeat over and over throughout the years of her life. Isn't the love of Jesus something wonderful?

Going To a Social

Both of my parents were living very sensitive to the Holy Spirit and were so very conscious to not allow anything that could grieve Him in any way. So when they were invited, along with the Bresches, to come to a social gathering that was hosted in the home of the Headblooms (who were from the church in Kelowna), they had a hard time accepting the invitation. They didn't know what would be going on at a social, and feared lest the Holy Spirit could be grieved if they went. How they wrestled in prayer about what to do. They did not want to offend the Headblooms, but were far more concerned about offending the Holy Spirit whose presence they could not afford to lose. Finally, upon hearing struggle, Mr. Molzahn told them they needed to go. He told them these people were children of the Lord who would not offend the Holy Spirit anymore than they would. Furthermore, Sister Williams, who was a woman mightily used of God in the church, was also going to be there. Once they heard that, they decided to go, offering much prayer for God's protection over their souls. The word "social" is what scared them because it was not in their limited vocabulary. They thought it sounded worldly.

Once they got there, they recognized a lot of the people they had seen in church. Everybody was happily milling around, visiting and enjoying the wonderful food that was brought together. Suddenly, Sister Williams spoke up

and said, “Folks, the Lord spoke to me last night and told me that He was going to manifest His glory tonight in this place.” That was all it took for these four anxious guests to have all their guards come down. What followed next was such an outpouring of the Holy Spirit on that place, it was a foretaste of heaven on earth. The glory was so heavy; many were drunk in the Spirit, including our parents and Bresches. Uncle Ewald was a reserved person but deeply spiritual, and of all people, he was so drunk in the Spirit that when they finally left the social, he was driving the car like a drunken man. All four of them were loudly shouting the praises of God in the car with unspeakable joy. Is this what happened to the people on the day of Pentecost, when outsiders considered them drunk with wine?

We had heard our parents tell this story over and over to countless people, as it was one of the most glorious mountaintop experiences of their lives. How they relished the memories of that night, and longed for more of the same. The Lord seems to grant us those special times with Him to encourage us when hard times or dry seasons come our way. We found that we need both the sunshine and cloudy days in order to grow. All may change but Jesus never, glory to His Name.

When Egan was 5 years old, he loved to play marbles, and would sit on the damp grass in early spring having so much fun playing that game with other kids. He must have gotten chilled from the moist earth because he came down with a terrible cold. Mom finally called the school nurse in to see what she thought. Without hesitation, the nurse advised Egan to be rushed to the hospital in Kelowna, as she suspected the worst. This was a terrible shock to Mom and Dad, for hospitals were considered to be the last step before death in those days. He was diagnosed with double pneumonia, so our dear little brother was placed under a steam tent, fighting for his life. We were not given much hope that he would make it, which caused all of us to cry out to the Lord in desperation, pleading for the healing that only He could perform. For my parents, that little boy was the “apple of their eye,” their “pride and joy” as their only son. While Egan lingered between life and death, Mom made a vow to God that if He would heal her little boy, she would dedicate him to the service of God as a minister of the Gospel. No sooner had she done so when there was a turnabout in his condition, and from that day his healing began. It was considered to be a miracle by the doctors. How we rejoiced that God heard our prayers! Our family praised the Great Physician that our dear little brother was allowed to come home.

Life had many mountains and valleys, but God was always with us. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

A Simple Wedding

Our little church started with Uncle Ewald being our lay Pastor. Once there were enough people, we were able to call an ordained minister. A wedding soon followed. My cousin, Hilda Bielert, who was about 18 years of age, was a shy and beautiful girl who seemed much older for her age. Rudolph Molzahn, a fine-looking bachelor but much older than she, had a crush on her and finally won her heart. Brother Schatkowski was called to officiate, and made the ceremony into something more like a revival meeting.

Everyone sat waiting for the Bride and Groom to enter. There she was, dressed in white with a bouquet of homemade red crepe paper roses. No wedding party attending. Mr. Leopold Molzahn (Rudolph's cousin) and my Auntie Frieda stood as witnesses and signed the marriage Registers. The Bride and Groom sat down in front of the pulpit, on wooden chairs decorated with a red paper rose and a white streamer. What extravagance!

Then the preaching started. The sound of blowing noses all over the church indicated mixed emotions running high. Finally, after the long sermon, the couple were pronounced husband and wife. Everyone was invited to the Bride's parents' home for the celebration. My Auntie Erna was famous for her cooking, and let me tell you, they put on a feast like we had never seen before. First of all came a huge, full-course dinner. Then around midnight came the big wedding lunch, the main dish being boiled wieners in a wash boiler on the stove, served with Auntie's bread rolls and mustard. Wieners were such a rare delicacy in those days, Of course, there were all kinds of German tortes, fancy baked things. And then the wedding cake. Truly it was all we could have ever imagined for a wedding feast in those days. There must have been close to fifty guests, which was a crowd in that house.

My parents and the Bresches were an outstanding mixed quartet. When Easter Sunday came along, they would get up at dawn and, with guitars and violins in hand, go from house to house to sing. They would stand under bedroom windows and sing Easter songs like "He Lives," everything being sung in the German language. People would jump out of their beds and rush to their windows to see where this wonderful singing was coming from. In most cases, they would end up joining in shouts of praise that indeed Jesus is risen from the dead. We children were able to hear them through the upstairs window, and it all felt so sacred and wonderful to us. In later years, this custom was not kept up in the same way. But in our home, our parents never failed to strike up the music early on Easter morning, and the family would join in singing as joyous celebration filled our hearts and home. Sometimes Daddy would take out his trumpet and go outside for the whole world to hear. His trumpet would sound,

“Jesus Lives!” and he would get blessed out of his socks. To this day, we still start our Easter by singing those songs in our home.

We loved living in Rutland, where we went to a beautiful school, and had such scenic surroundings. What a perfect place for us kids to grow up.

World War II

In 1938, letters came from Germany begging our relatives to return to their homeland, telling us that God had sent them a terrific leader who has put Germany on the map like no one else ever had. His name was Adolph Hitler. Germans were now coming to realize their full potential in the world. Germany was rising up in power and being recognized by the whole world as the superior nation on earth. They were prospering left and right, like never before, and they told us we needed to pack up and come home again.

It sounded very enticing, to hear from parents and siblings who were beckoned them to return. Just as my parents were in the process of getting the necessary papers to emigrate, news of the World War breaking out in Germany changed the whole picture. Mercifully, God closed that door to our family in order to fulfill His purposes for our lives on this side of the ocean. We shudder to think what might have happened to us, and the regrets we would have faced, had we gone there at that time.

Return to Alberta

Daddy was still working on Simpson’s Ranch, and was having a lot of stomach problems that he felt were due to the lunch kit meals. In order to get away from working for someone else, they sought advice from Brother Posein, whom they considered a spiritual father. He invited them to move to a prosperous part of Alberta, and stay at their place until Daddy could find a farm to rent. This would give his stomach at least a chance to heal. They hated to leave British Columbia, but his health being at stake, Daddy took him up on the offer and moved us there.

We bought a Buick car. It had no rear trunk, so our luggage was strapped to a carrier on the back end. We spent one night in a motel in Omak, Washington. In the morning, Daddy took one suitcase out to the car, ran back to the room to get the second suitcase, and in the meantime someone had stolen the first suitcase which had been left unattended outside. What a huge loss that was! Mom had sewed us girls new Sunday dresses

that were in that case, besides all of the best clothing we owned. She cried her eyes out over that loss, as we didn’t have money to buy replacement clothes at that point.

When we got to Blackmud, Alberta, where Poseins lived, it was anything but a pretty picture. The farmyard was made up of old buildings, and there was

usually deep mud and manure everywhere, so everyone wore high, black, rubber boots. But the Pose-ins did all they could to welcome us and we appreciated their love so much.

Mom begged them to let us move into their milk house on the yard, where they would separate the milk and get the cream cans ready to be taken to the dairy in Leduc. The place needed a total scrubbing from top to bottom, and my Mom transformed that place in no time. Curtains were put on the window, beds set up, a table and stove—we had it made. Shortly after, Daddy found a farm for rent, so we moved into our own house. It was nothing great, but much better than what we had. It had only a kitchen and two bedrooms but we loved it. It was home.

We attended the one-room school from grade one to grade eight, and were part of the Blackmud Pentecostal church where Brother Posein was Pastor (he was also a farmer). Our farm was littered with rocks which needed to be removed so we could work the soil. We kids had to help Daddy gather rocks onto the horse-drawn stone boat so he could drag them away. It was terribly hard work with so little harvest.

Move to The Leduc Area

We girls begged our parents to have a baby, so Mom got pregnant for our sakes. One day at church, while standing by the sidewalk and waiting for Daddy to bring the sleigh to pick her up, another horse-drawn sleigh sideswiped Mom and knocked her to the ground. The fall caused her to miscarry the baby, a loss that plunged her into depression for some time. Then, Emma contracted rheumatic fever and was bedridden for months. We had a lot of adversity hit our little family there, and after 3 years we moved to a much better farm in Wiesenthal, Alberta, near Leduc. Here we began to prosper because the land was flat, with few stones, and the soil produced good crops. We went to a large church that had a brass band and choir. William Kowalski, general Superintendent of the German Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, was the Pastor. What a powerful preacher he was, and how God was working in that place was wonderful.

One of my heart’s desires was to play in that brass band, but there were no girls in the all-male band. One day, however, Stanley Fitz asked me if I would be interested in playing a trombone. Would I ever! I jumped at the opportunity. Daddy bought a beautiful King trombone for me for eighteen dollars. The only problem was, there was nobody who could show me how to play the thing, and the slide seemed to have no beginning or end it. I was determined to learn that instrument, however, and what a challenge it was to try to find positions that made up the scales.

The constant blaring eventually got on Mom's nerves so badly that she ordered me out of the house and into the barn. There were no lights in the barn, so I was not able to see the diagram of the trombone's positions I had drawn for myself. I decided to climb up a high woodpile on our yard, instead, where I carved out a spot to sit. Since the neighbors were about half a mile away, I was sure nobody would be disturbed by my playing. So away I played, I just let her rip. After a bit, I heard this stomping sound, so I stopped and looked around. To my amazement, all the cows had come home from the field and were standing around the woodpile, taken with awe and wonder at my wonderful music. To them, it must have resembled a musical cow trying to moo a song, I suppose. I had a captive audience. Then I saw the curtains lifted in the house, and all the family standing and laughing at this curious scene. Well, I never lived that one down. They complimented my playing, saying it was so good the cows loved it. Within 2-3 weeks, I figured out the notes and was able to play in the church brass band. So at the age of 15, I played trombone in the tenor section and was totally in my glory.

Around this time we got our first piano, and once again there was nobody to teach me how to play. But I was determined to play that piano if it killed me. Emma also was equally determined, but she had gotten a few lessons so she had a head start. However, it was only a few months before I was playing in church and other places, and stuck with it as my very favorite instrument. When I was about ten years of age, I cried with longing to be able to play the piano someday, and promised the Lord if He would give me the ability to play it, I would always play only for Him. It's amazing to me, as someone who has never had a piano lesson, that I have played before thousands of people over the years in both Canada and the United States. I give God all the glory for granting my heart's desire, for I just love to express my heart to the Lord in worship on the piano, organ and keyboard. I have also played the accordion, guitar, violin, and other instruments along the way. But the piano is where I can express my heart the most.

Elfrieda Arrives

One of the greatest joys we had while we lived in Leduc happened on January 31, 1944, when our Mother gave birth to a 5-pound girl named Elfrieda. Emma was 17, I was 15, and Egan was 10. We girls were downright "baby crazy" and kept nagging Mom for a baby until she finally felt obligated to comply. Had we known what she would have to go through to have Elfrieda at age 42, we would have never pushed for it that hard. We almost lost our dear Mom at that time. Her labor was so horrible she actually bled from the mouth (probably caused by her very high blood pressure). But with much prayer God

brought her through.

When she came home with the baby, we were shocked to see how tiny the baby was, and Daddy feared she would not make it. We three older siblings weighed at least nine pounds and now this latecomer seemed terribly shortchanged. But right from the word go, this little girl was a fighter, and before too long put on weight and became a “living doll.” How proud we were when we could take her to church, dressed up so cutely, to show her off. We promised to wash all the diapers and take care of everything, if only Mom would have her; not only did we live up to our promises, but we actually spoiled that little sweetie rotten. She ruled the whole house in no time, and we all danced to her tune. We would not permit our parents to spank her when she was bad, so she got away with a lot of things we would have been chastised for. Not only was she cute, she also was smart as a whip, and could sing like a bird. She was a natural dramatist, entertaining people at two years of age already. For any who have met her, you will notice that gift is still very active to this day. What a lot of fun we have when she is around.

We had made some close friends in the church youth group, and of course had crushes on a couple guys along the way. One Sunday morning, Daddy let me drive the car to church. The whole family piled into our little Model A Ford, with Daddy next to me, and the rest of the family in the back seat. As we came to the church, I saw all those guys standing on the outside platform in front of the doors, so I was suddenly inspired to make our entrance onto the parking lot grandly impressive. In my nervousness I was going too fast. I turned to park next to the church, and tried to slam on the brakes, but without much success. I was wearing stylish high heels, and the brake pedal got stuck on my shoe. With one big bang, I crashed into the church building nose first.

With the sudden thud, all our hats landed on our faces or backs, and 10-year-old Egan came flying over to join us in the front seat, I had succeeded in making an impression alright! Church windows came flying open, and heads were popping out to see what in the world hit the church. All those handsome young guys, in their Sunday best, stood with awe and wonder at how this charming young lady could pull this one off so smoothly to get attention. Luckily, in those days you didn’t have to report damages like this, and since insurance was optional, we had no insurance to cover repairs. Actually, the damage was surprisingly minimal—it was our pride was totaled. How sheepish our family must have looked as we entered the church for worship, having caused such an unnerving commotion on the Lord’s Day.

Return to British Columbia

By this time, Daddy had recovered from his stomach problems, and once

again we were selling things, packing up, and preparing for a move back to British Columbia. We had spent 6 years in Alberta, and were more than ready to return to the “promised land” where our parent’s siblings were eagerly awaiting us.

With God’s help, we were able to buy a 19-acre fruit orchard about 10 miles outside Kelowna, B.C. The location was beautiful, with a mountain on one side and a ranch and lake below us. We were thrilled with the place even though the house was old. Our whole family was able to work the orchard together, and the Lord blessed and helped us to prosper.

Youth for Christ rallies were held one Saturday a month in Kelowna, and they were a big attraction for Christian young people. There they would have a chance to meet other Christians from different participating churches. Emma and I always looked forward to that, as we had about 8 young ladies of marriageable age in our little Rutland church, and not one single young man in that category. All the boys in our church were in their early teens or younger. As we girls talked about our dismal outlook, we wondered if we would ever meet a Christian young man there in our church, and decided to make this a real matter of prayer.

Emma Meets a Man

We had taken notice of some handsome young men at Youth for Christ, but usually they were already spoken for. There was one guy, however, who particularly got Emma’s notice, and he actually gave her a second look and a big smile. Well, that did it for her. She was hooked. When she came home, she went on and on about this guy named Alfred. She told how she instantly felt something go through her heart, like cupid’s arrow, and she felt this was the man for her.

Egan was about 12 or 13 years old, and Emma was scheming how she could maybe get him to go and talk with Alfred, and maybe help to introduce them. Here’s how she worked it out.

A water baptismal service was to be held at Okanagan Lake, and everyone was invited to attend. Egan asked Alfred if he had a ride to the baptismal service, and since he didn’t, he invited him to ride with us. The invitation was happily accepted. After the baptisms, a meeting followed at the People’s Mission. Alfred joined us for the ride, and somehow Alf happened to be seated next to Emma. So the “handwriting was on the wall.”

That same day we had our noon meal in the City Park and Alf was only too happy to join us for that also. He dug into the meal as though he had not seen food like this in ages, which went over big with the family. We all liked what we saw in him, and were enjoying watching this romance taking shape. Soon, Alfred was motivated enough to ride 13 miles every weekend to visit Emma, and

not long afterwards gave her a diamond ring. Emma was ecstatic, and a wedding date was set for January 7, 1948.

The wedding day finally came in mid-winter. Mom was the chief cook for the huge wedding reception of approximately 150 guests. The Rutland hall was prepared and beautifully decorated.

The church itself was also beautifully decorated. The wedding party looked great as they led the way to the altar, followed by this beautiful bride on the arm of her proud father, Ephraim Roller. It was a time of rejoicing for everyone as we felt God had led these two together in His great plan and purpose for their lives.

Alf was a good provider and hard worker as a sawyer at a MacMillan and Bloe-dell sawmill. He operated the most dangerous carriage that would make your hair stand on end to watch. At one time the big saw blade broke into scraps, but he was able to jump down and run to safety just in the nick of time. He spent about 24 years at that job, and then went to work for Gorman Brothers sawmill for another 10 years.

He built their first house on St. Paul Street in Kelowna, where Emma became pregnant with Wesley. Although she struggled in health because of two previous miscarriages, she was able to give birth to a healthy baby boy, the pride and joy of their home. That little baby was the center of attraction for the whole family, being the firstborn of that generation among us.

My Unhappy Courtship

Along with all of that excitement, other things were happening in the Roller household. I was in an unhappy courtship and extremely distressed. I knew in my heart I was out of the will of God, but didn't know how to end the relationship. It was as though it had a stranglehold on my life. I had felt the call of God on my life to the ministry since a child, and yet my parents did not encourage me to go to Bible School. They felt that was not God's order for a girl to pursue. Naturally I was attracted to young men around me, but I never felt any of them was God's will for me.

In June of 1949, the District Conference was held in Kelowna at Evangel Tabernacle. The evening services were open to everyone, so our family attended. So did the young man whom I was seeing, and he was sitting next to me. Ushers in the church were made up of young ministers, and there was this one guy that stood head and shoulders above them all. Immediately he caught my attention because I always had this admiration for tall guys (the guy next to me was average height). Somehow he caught my glance at this tall man, and whispered to me to take my eyes off that long-legged guy. When we came home that night, the topic of conversation was upon this giant who ushered, and that was as far as the discussion went.

The next night, however, while I was on the platform playing my trombone in the orchestra, I happened to notice Pastor Greatorex introducing this same tall guy to my Mom, While shaking the young man's hand, Mom looked like she was going to jump out of her skin with excitement. Well, for the rest of that service I couldn't wait to find out who this guy might be.

After the service, we all gathered at the back of the church and got acquainted with the tall young man, Arvin Sorge. My Mom's excitement was over the fact that his father, Fred Sorge, happened to be my Dad's cousin. Arvin, however, was a total stranger to us, and Daddy immediately invited him to come and see us before he would travel on to pioneer a new church planting in Ocean Falls. The thing that really stood out to me, even more than his height, was the expression of a man with a pure heart who was given wholly to the Lord's service. I wanted so badly to get to know him.

My boyfriend smelled the rat, as it were. He was so upset with my parents for inviting Arvin to our home, and he warned me to not even speak to him when he came to visit. I felt torn, because I felt obligated to honor the wishes of this boyfriend, and yet longed to be free to get to know Arvin. Because of my torn emotions, I avoided him in the house as much as possible. He wondered why I couldn't even talk civilly with him. When I did sit down and play the piano, he came and stood by the piano and enjoyed my playing so very much. He asked me if I had ever thought of going to Bible School with that kind of talent. I told him that I had often thought about it, but it hadn't happened.

Arvin came home with us on a Friday night, spent Saturday with us, and then on Sunday morning, as I was washing the dishes, he offered to dry them for me. I was blown away because I never expected that from a guest, and thought it spoke of what a fine gentleman he was. While doing the dishes, I asked Arvin what Bible School he had attended. He went for two years to Bethel in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, and then graduated from Western in Winnipeg, Manitoba. I so wished I were free to go myself, but how could I with this boyfriend's iron grip on my life?

Sunday after church, we ate a delicious picnic lunch in the City Park, and the group that had gathered with us included both Arvin and my boyfriend. That afternoon Arvin caught the bus that took him away, and I thought this would be the last time I would ever see him. I could not get him out of my mind, however.

Each time I tried to end the relationship with my boyfriend, it created such an uproar that I thought it was a hopeless case. He even threatened suicide one night when I tried to break it off, which scared me so much that I kept up the relationship out of duress. But I was very unhappy, and he saw it too. That's why I spent a day in prayer and fasting, begging the Lord to cause him to be the one

to end our relationship.

He came on weekends to help Daddy in the orchard, so joined us for meals. When I did not show up for dinner, he asked my Mother where I was, and she said I was in the other room praying and fasting. He replied that he knew I was praying to get rid of him, and he ran out of the house terribly upset, also refusing to eat. He went straight back to work, and after washing up he came to me late that afternoon to where I was sitting on the front lawn, praying quietly by myself. With a broken heart, he told me how much he loved me, but that he realized I was not happy and that he was calling it off. I was so overcome by the quick answer to prayer I could hardly speak. After some other parting words, he took off on his bicycle down to the highway. But then he turned about and came back to me, begging me for one more chance. He promised to make me very happy, etc. But the Lord had strengthened me enough to be able to say “no” to him, and so off he sped, and that was the end of that relationship. Hallelujah! My Mom and Emma were close to the window, and overheard everything. They were crying for his sake, although they were also very thankful, as they knew how unhappy I was. My Mother didn’t know that I had told the Lord, if He would set me free from this year-long relationship, I would give my life in His service and go to Bible School. Knowing how she did not approve of girls going to Bible School, I had to break the news to her, and to my surprise, she said that she had prayed for me while I was praying and had told the Lord that I would be going to Bible School if this broke up. I felt like a big burden had fallen off my back and I had a new lease on life. I was FREE, hallelujah!

Off To Bible School

I was so excited about starting a new chapter in my life, and instantly began thinking about how to choose the right Bible School, as there were several I knew about. As I began inquiring, I received different opinions but nothing seemed to click. Then, I remembered Arvin Sorge who had talked to me about Bible School while he was in our home. I forgot what he had said, mainly because at that point I had no hope of ever being able to go anyways, being caught in the other boyfriend situation. But now I was free. So I asked Mom if I should send a letter to Arvin, asking for his recommendation. We knew he had gone to Ocean Falls to pioneer a church there, but we didn’t have his address, so she thought it was a useless attempt. Well, I told her I would write his name and city on the envelope, and whether he would get it or not was fine by me, either way.

To my delight, a return letter from Arvin was in our mailbox a few days later. He advised me to go to British Columbia Bible Institute in Victoria (on Vancouver Island). He felt it had one of the best reputations. His Mother had

attended Victoria for a year and she had so much good to say about that school, so he passed it on to me as a recommendation. By this time, I had spoken to Pastor Greatorex in Kelowna who also advised me the same way, so I took it as a confirmation. There was, however. a little postscript at the bottom of Arvin's letter saying he would be interested to hear of my decision. He had no further interest in me, but for some reason wanted to know if I indeed had found some other place or would consider Victoria.

I replied to his letter promptly and then got busy with getting myself ready to go to Victoria within the next few weeks. Meanwhile, Arvin and I started writing each other as pen pals.

The day I got on the train was not easy for my folks. Even though they were very happy for me and knew God was leading me, their hearts were torn to have to bid me good-bye. It was my first time leaving home and my parents were very much attached to me. Three others from Kelowna were also going to the same school—Jean Jeanroy, Doris Bismeyer, and a fine young man named Lionel Hannestead. I was not traveling alone, which made the trip very enjoyable.

I felt guilty to be so happy when I knew the pain I was causing my beloved family by leaving. But it was such a great adventure for me. I took the bus in Vancouver, then got on the beautiful B.C. Ferry, absorbing the breath-taking scenery—it felt to me something like "Alice In Wonderland." Victoria is known for being one of the most beautiful places on earth, surrounded by the Pacific Ocean, with lush foliage, flowering trees, parks and mountains. Often referred to as Canada's little England, Victoria has many beautiful houses designed to reflect something of England's culture and architecture. All the yards along Beach Drive were manicured to perfection, with rockery and flower beds such as I had never before seen, not even in the beautiful Okanagan Valley. I felt like it was all too good to be true.

Life in Victoria

The Bible School had separate dormitories for the ladies and men. Dorm life was not my "cup of tea," learning how to live without any privacy to speak of in the same room with a bunch of girls. After being there for just a couple weeks, I was offered to stay in the home of the McPhersons. In return, I took care of their two children after school and made supper for the family (since Mrs. McPherson worked as supervisor of a T.B. Sanitarium from noon till midnight daily). They paid me $25 a month in addition to free board and room, so I jumped at the opportunity. It gave me more independence and the enjoyment of family life. I fell in love with the two children, Glenn (10) and Sharon (8), and their mother, Laura, whom I highly respected. Her husband, Doug, was a returned Air Force veteran who had come through a lot of trauma, so was usually very irritable and

often very mean to the kids and Laura. Toby, the dog, was Doug's idol. I wished he would have given his dear children half the affection he gave Toby, so that hurt me a lot. Consequently, the children were always on edge with their Dad, never certain what kind of mood he would be in.

I was able to lead both of the children to Jesus and that just put such a deep bond in our hearts for each other. Laura also had to "walk on eggshells" with her husband, as almost any kind of action or remark could make the sparks fly, which would often leave her crying in her room, which broke my heart. But she loved him regardless, and bent over backwards to show extra affection and love to the children to make up for Doug's failure to do so. I was treated royally by all of them, and I loved being in their home. I ate breakfast and supper with them, and then lunch at the Bible School dining room. It was a perfect arrangement as far as I was concerned.

I enjoyed the teachers and the classes a lot, and I got to know all the students because the student body was not large at that time yet. I was very active with the musical part of the school, playing the trombone in the band and singing in the choir and small groups and doing a lot of piano playing for services and other events. The one person I admired for his terrific piano playing was Jack Symonds, and we did a lot of duets on the piano too. We became close friends. There were other guys that were friendly with me and yet I had this secret pen pal in Ocean Falls with whom I was developing quite a relationship, so I was not pursuing any other guys seriously. I was just having fun.

Arvin was glad that he could tell the young ladies in his little church that he had a female pen pal, so that they would not try to shine up to him, which he felt could be too much of a distraction for him being their Pastor. But he actually was not having romantic ideas about me either, as he well remembered how I gave him the cold shoulder in Kelowna. He had written that I should give myself a chance to go out with some of the guys at the school, as he did not want to stand in my way. But I felt more and more drawn to him, and responded to that suggestion with saying that he must not care as much about me as I do about him. Well, that made him realize he better make this a matter of prayer, because the way he would respond could well affect his future and he had to know God's will in something as serious as this The more he prayed about it the more he felt drawn to me, and so he offered to come over during the Christmas break to give us a chance to get better acquainted.

There was one big problem: Nobody at the school knew of my secret friend, and there was a girl in the dormitory who claimed Arvin Sorge was HER boyfriend! She had his photo hanging over her bed. She was from Creston, Arvin's home town, and I overheard her one day raving over this guy named

Arvin Sorge, who was her flame. I felt horrible to not let her know that indeed I was corresponding with her so-called boyfriend. So I wrote and asked Arvin how come his photo hangs over her bed? He explained that this girl was hot on his trail all the time, and had gotten a hold of that photo with hopes that he would physically tussle with her to get it back, just to feel his touching her. Well, he was not about to comply with her wishes, and just figured if she wants it that badly let her have it.

Arvin Visits Me in Victoria

On the day Arvin was to come and meet me, I was in the lower auditorium with my coat on, and from there Pastor P.S. Jones and his wife were coming with their car to take us out somewhere away from the school. While I was waiting for him, this other girl (along with some others) was also in the room, and they were asking me why I was keeping my coat on. I just said that I was going out with someone, but didn't say who it was. Well, when Arvin walked in and this girl saw him, it was not good. The look of horror on her face was indescribable. I felt like some kind of a witch to pull off this sort of trauma on anyone, but I didn't know how to tell her beforehand, as she was not the type of person who could handle it. She had been in London during the Blitzkrieg (the German air bombardment of London during WW2) and as a result suffered with her nerves terribly. So she was weak emotionally, and this was by no means something easy for her to cope with now. In fact, she suffered a breakdown over it, and one of the faculty members took her into their home to give her support and help her to get over this heartache. Arvin was not happy to see that happen to her either, but he felt she asked for it as he never gave her any kind of indication that he cared for her. But be that as it may, we had to make this time together meaningful one way or another, so we spent as much time as we could together getting better acquainted. When he said good-bye to me on the front porch at the McPherson's house, he finally managed to get enough nerve up to give me a little "peck" of a kiss, sort of a friendly gesture, nothing too romantic. But it was a kiss, and meant very much to me. What I appreciated was his high moral standards and there would be none of this mushy stuff going on because that had to wait until marriage in his books. So I was lucky to get that little "peck" from him, which was more than enough to get the feel of his sweet soft lips, which he still has to this day.

Arvin Visits Me in Rutland

After finishing my year of Bible School, I was having my ups and downs as far as knowing if our relationship was going to last. I had a history of having those kinds of fluctuations, which I felt helpless to control. So when he wrote that he was coming in June and stopping at our place in Rutland, I knew he was

going to no doubt “pop the question” and I did not feel ready. So I wrote him that I was considering going back to Bible School, thinking that he would get the hint. If he ever had gotten a hint of my vacillating feelings it would have been over in his books. Thankfully, he didn’t pick up on it. So he wrote to tell me that if I want to do that, it would be fine, and we’ll talk about it when he comes. So I was not able to shake him off, and was not a bit excited about his coming at this stage.

When the bus stopped at the foot of our lane, earlier than expected, Mom came running in to alert me that Arvin was here. I was brushing my hair, and she came back and said, “What are you doing in here, don’t you see Arvin is here?” Then she looked me in the face and, discerning my fluctuating emotions, waved her finger at me and threatened me with, “Woe is you if you break THIS boy’s heart. He is too good for that.” There I stood, totally in shock. It seemed that not even my dearest Mother could understand me. I thought to myself that I must be abnormal, and I will never be happy with anyone. So I prayed for the Lord to please let me die in that bedroom, as I could not face Arvin. I really meant it.

And then I heard him coming around the corner of the house and greeting Mom and Emma. When I heard Arvin’s voice, suddenly everything changed, and for the first time in my life I heard God’s voice, saying, “That is your husband.” I knew that I knew I had just heard from God, and with it came a rush of peace and joy such as I could not describe, as though I had just been born again. I realized that I had been given a brand new heart. I was ecstatic! With that news from heaven, I rushed out of the house to meet him, giving him such a royal welcome that my Mom stood speechless, trying to figure out what in the world changed this girl. One look into his eyes and I was overwhelmed with a love I had never known before.

Wedding Bells

June 13, 1950, was the big day when, in the Kelowna Park, Arvin popped the question, and boy was I ready! Now, with a ring on my finger, I was totally committed to marrying this guy, the sooner the better. I never once wavered after I had heard the voice of the Lord, which wrought in me such a supernatural change. I knew this was for real and that it would last as long as we lived.

Arvin then went to see his Mom and sister in Creston, and stopped by at our place on his return trip to Ocean Falls, at which time we made plans for a wedding date of August 28, 1950. As it turned out, our wedding was the fourth time we saw each other.

Much of our courtship was by correspondence, so we knew we were in for a thrilling experience just getting to know each other after marriage. We would never recommend young couples follow our example, as in the natural we were

really taking a giant step of faith getting married practically as strangers. But when you hear from God there is no turning back.

The next couple of months were busy with planning and preparing for the wedding. Mom knew how to take things in hand, and everything was taken care of shortly. I wore Emma's gown and veil, and Julie Buchenauer, well known for her talent in making wedding bouquets, made a gorgeous arrangement of dark red roses, carnations, and baby's breath that was fit for a queen. She had laid the floral arrangement in the coolness of our root cellar to keep it fresh; when Mom happened to rush into the cellar for something else, she saw the arrangement, and somehow the reality of it all hit her and pushed her over the edge. I remember her bracing herself against the wall and crying her heart out, as she felt it was somewhat like a funeral having to part with her daughter. Daddy asked me a few days before the wedding if I might reconsider marriage, and opt out in order to look after them as they aged, as this was his dearest desire. But then he did admit it was unfair to expect that of me, and wished me God's blessings with tears running down his face. It hurt me so deeply to think that I was causing my beloved parents such pain, and yet I knew that I knew I could never turn back. They dearly loved Arvin, so that relieved the deep hurt a lot of course. They were gaining a wonderful son-in-law who would be good to their daughter.

Sunday the 27th (the day before the wedding), Mom, Emma and I were baking and decorating cakes all day, scads of them! Arvin's Mother came ahead of time to help as well, so things were shaping up. All kinds of other food was being prepared and by Monday we had finished decorating the reception hall and wedding cars and loaded up the food in cars as we took things to the Hall.

When we got to the church with all the attendants in place, the wedding March began, and when I walked down the aisle on my Daddy's arm, I felt like I was walking into the arms of Jesus. Not a trace of nervousness or tension, totally relaxed and enjoying every minute of the ceremony. Arvin actually was suddenly hit with reality that he is getting married to a girl he hardly knew, and his heart started pounding, so that people saw it through his suit jacket as he stood at the altar. Thankfully it didn't last, and soon we were pronounced husband and wife.

The reception was wonderful. Our church band played background music and the food was super good, as only my Mom could make it. There were around 150 guests, and what a presence of the Lord was in that place! What a glorious beginning to a marriage made in heaven!

I Accompany Arvin to Ocean Falls

We stayed for about 3 days in the cabin on our yard before we left for Ocean Falls. First was a train to Vancouver, and then in Vancouver we took a luxurious

Ocean Liner all the way up the coast to Ocean Falls. We had spent one night in a hotel in Vancouver, and now this beautiful, scenic, 23-hour voyage—for us it was our mini honeymoon.

Ocean Falls was tucked between the highest mountains I had ever seen. The town was a company town (almost all the homes were owned by the paper mill), so all the houses were painted white and it looked like a fairy town.

Arvin worked at the paper mill since the fledgling church was too small to support him. We found a second-floor apartment to live in, which overlooked the town, opening up to a beautiful view. The streets were mostly raised wooden planks; since there was so much rain, this was the only way to deal with all the water running down the mountainside. I loved the place right from the beginning, and found so much pleasure setting up house in our own little nest.

The small group of believers gave me a royal welcome that really meant a lot to me. The group consisted mainly of single young people, but over time there were others added. We called ourselves "The Christian Fellowship." The services were held in the Legion Hall, a very nice building with a piano in it. We would conduct street meetings as well that drew as many as 200 listeners to our music and preaching. We had a top notch trumpeter, and I played the accordion, while our group sang the wonderful songs of salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord.

I felt a great desire to start a Sunday school, so we ordered all kinds of materials and put posters out announcing the opening of Sunday School. I was so psyched, expecting a huge turnout, and after all of the preparation only one boy showed up. What a letdown! But the next Sunday, he brought a friend and though it never really grew a lot, we had around 80 children for Daily Vacation Bible School, which was tremendous. Our services were always held Sunday nights, and we felt like we had the greatest church in the world, even though I don't think we ever had more than 40 attending. We had such deep love for each person, and so much fun and fellowship. Everyone always came to every service, unless they had to work or were sick. We were so happy to be there.

Arvin and I were so madly in love with each other, it seemed like neither of us could ever say a harsh word or do anything hurtful to our darling. I tried to make the best meals for my new husband, and found myself running out of lunch ideas (Arvin came home for lunch each day at noon). Supper was easy: meat, vegetables, potatoes and salad.

The Famous Lunch

On one particular day, I was going to make something we were frequently served for lunch in Bible School, which I must admit I found very hard to stomach myself. But when you are hungry you put lots of pepper on and eat it

anyway. It was creamed peas and salmon on toast, which had such an offensive odor while it is being cooked, you could hardly take it. But I was going to try it anyway and see if Arvin might like it.

As he was coming up the road towards our apartment, he began to get a whiff of something that was very unpleasant. The closer he got, the stronger the smell. When he got to the second floor, it was putrid. When he opened our door, it hit him full blast. In shock he said to me, "Honey, what stinks in here?"

Having been in the house while I was cooking, I was not aware of the smell, but coming in from outside was a different story.

I could not believe what I heard coming out of the mouth of my beloved! The word "stink" did it to me, as he was describing my lunch that I made with so much love for him. I was crushed. I wondered if our wedded bliss had come to a screeching halt and our marriage was over. No amount of his apologizing did any good. I was a basket case, crying my eyes out.

All afternoon while Arvin was at work, I bawled till my eyes were swollen like red golf balls. When he came home after work, he took one look at me and said in disbelief, "Do you mean you have been crying all this time, when I told you how sorry I was

for what I said?" Well, it was because he had used that terrible word "stink" to describe my carefully prepared lunch, and that was no little matter to me.

Next thing I knew, I felt a strong hand on the back of my neck, gently but firmly pushing me toward the sofa. He said, "Now this is enough, we are getting down on our knees and praying about this." By the time he was finished praying, I knew I deserved a good whipping, and felt very ashamed of myself for acting like a spoiled brat. I begged his forgiveness, which took care of the upheaval and restored our wonderful love relationship as it was before.

That was about the worst clash we had in our marriage, so now we can look back and even laugh about it. But at that time it was such a deep wound, I figured it was incurable. Arvin had certainly "nipped the thing in the bud" and because of the way he did it, my admiration of the man even increased. He was truly a man after God's heart.

We Move To Newbrook, Alberta

Arvin had to work a secular job full-time while establishing the church, and he began to have stomach problems that the doctor said was due to stress. So, when we received a call from Newbrook, Alberta to come and pastor the church there, we felt the Lord was leading us to accept that call. Our little flock was heartbroken at this news, but we had a single young minister, Anatoly Boymer, come to replace us. He was a very short man, about 5' 2", which made it very hard for the people to get used to after being accustomed to Arvin's height of 6'

5”.

The day we left was very hard on us. The young people hung on our necks just crying their hearts out, and saying things like “we’ll never have anyone play the piano like you Mrs. Sorge, and have those great sing alongs,” etc. We knew we had to go but our hearts were with those precious people who were like our own flesh and blood family to us. What a heartbreaking departure for us!

On our trip to Alberta, we stopped at Mom and Dad’s to spend a few days at home first of all. We did not own a car, so Arvin went into town and bought a ‘37 Chrysler 4- door Sedan. It was really a nice car. We went to get it in Alfs car, and while Arvin drove our new car back to Aicheles’ house, I was supposed to drive Alfs car behind him. I had not driven a car for some time now but felt I knew how to do it without batting an eye.

I had no driver’s license, so we took the back streets to avoid the possibility of being stopped by a policeman. So I just turned on the engine and slowly started following Arvin, whom I lost in short order a long way ahead of me. The problem was this crazy car of Alfs, though he treated it like an idol, with utmost care, and which ran like a charm when he drove it, was now acting like a bucking donkey for me. I could not figure out why in the world the thing would bolt forward and then jerk as if it were catching its last breath. So I made it to the first stop sign and hoped it would smarten up, but to no avail. The thing was almost snapping off my head with violent jerks, especially when I would start up again after each stop sign. Well, I heard people behind me honking their horns and yelling at me, until I totally lost it, cracking up with laughter for creating such a scene, but not knowing how to correct it. I forgot the car had a rear view mirror, so with all the commotion behind me I was twisting my head off looking backwards while lurching forwards. Each stop sign was at least a moment of relief till I pushed the gas pedal to the floor to start up again, jerking violently till I got to the next stop sign. Just as I was nearing the Aicheles’ house, I suddenly remembered that you have to shift gears on a car, and realized that I was driving the whole way in high gear only instead of starting in low.

I was more than relieved to at least know how to drive on to their yard without jerking onto it. Of course I never breathed a word to Alf, as I knew he would have really been mad at me, fearing that no doubt I would have ruined something on his precious car. So what he didn’t know didn’t hurt him.

We soon found ourselves on our way to Newbrook, confident that we were going there in the will of God. It was a cold blustery March day when we arrived in the great metropolis of Newbrook, about 90 miles north of Edmonton. There was one light on the main road and from one end to the other of town it was about H of a mile long. The population was about 100 people but there were

many farmers in the surrounding area. Our church was the only church in town, so if you wanted to go to church you had to come to ours. The church used to be a Lutheran church and was the typical little white building with a steeple on it, a woodburning heater in the middle of the floor, homemade pews, a pedal organ and a piano, and seating for about 100 people.

The first Sunday morning the head deacon, Mr. Eckert, asked me to play the piano because they heard that I play the piano. So I gladly played and Arvin preached.

The next day, while I was still unpacking, Mrs. Eckert and the school Principal's wife came to visit me with sadness written all over their faces. They came to tell me that my playing was so "worldly" the young people fairly danced down the aisle. They let me know that my style of playing was not acceptable in this church. Well, I was blown away. The dear ones in Ocean Falls cried at how they would miss my playing, while here in Newbrook they were crying that I came. I wondered, what kind of strange people have we come to anyway? I asked them to show me how I ought to play, and they gladly took me to the church and demonstrated that for church you play as the notes are written in the hymn book, no frills added, only 4-part harmony. By this time, I had played for hundreds of people and never a complaint, but now we arrive in this little hick town where my playing style was not appreciated.

I made up my mind right away that we came to be a blessing, and if my playing was not a blessing, I will try to learn how to play 4-part harmony only as written. I felt like I was in a vice, unable to express my heart as I was used to doing. I had to crucify my own desires to express my heart with the talent the Lord gave me, so that I might please these strange people, which was very hard for me to do.

Later, all the young people were invited to come to the Johnson's house for a time of fellowship, and I was asked to play the piano. The kids just sang their hearts out. I felt like a bird let out of its cage, and played with all that was within me, the way I was used to playing. These young people sure did know how to sing with gusto, and I was in my glory. All at once, one of them spoke up and asked, why I don't play like this in church? Well, I told her that it is because I was told that you don't like my playing. You should have heard those young people gasp with shock as they told me they had been praying for years that the Lord would send them someone who could bring some life into their song services. The first day I played, they told me, they went home praising God for answering their prayers. But then when I never did it again, they were devastated. One young man, who was a school teacher, then spoke up and said he knew who must have talked to me. As it turned out, apparently the wife of the

school Principal was overcome with jealousy that someone came to town that played better than she, and so she wanted it stopped right away before it was too late. Sad how people can be that jealous!

Some time later, as I began to work in my runs and embellishments, dear old Grandma Burger approached me with, “Do you know how you play the piano?” She peeked through her little tin-rimmed glasses at me and said, “You play like somebody takes a stick and hits it into the mud and the mud flies everywhere.” She was Mrs. Eckert’s mother, and of course they were in agreement. But in spite of my “worldly playing” which I resumed gradually, they were good people and they dearly loved us.

There was very little that I thought I could not do in those early years. I was about 23 years old, and ready to tackle things that would make me tremble now.

Branham's Healing Crusade in Grand Prairie, Alberta

We happened to visit a home of one of our parishioners and while there, I was shocked to see their little girl come running to me on all four. At first I thought maybe this was a big dog running in the house, when I realized it was their little girl who was unable to walk on her two feet. How sad that was for me. Shortly after this visit, Polly was telling me she heard there will be a huge healing crusade in Grand Prairie. She and Mrs. Teichman, who had a spastic little boy, wanted to take the bus to be able to have those little children prayed over by Brother William Branham whom the Lord was using in healing ministry at the time in a wonderful way. I could not imagine how they would manage this trip on a bus with all the care these two children would require, so I offered to drive them there in our car. When I asked Arvin if I could do that, he said our radiator had a bad leak, but if I will remember to keep water in it, we should have no difficulty.

With much excitement and joy, we started out on this long 289-mile trip without a worry, just looking forward to getting those little children healed. I had done very little driving, but I was ready for whatever. Polly Slaboda sat next to me with Carol on her lap, and we also had Mrs. Teichman with her large spastic boy plus Mrs. Slaboda's mother-in-law in the back seat. Besides that, all of the necessary baggage was in the trunk. Polly brought freshly baked bread and canned meat and other food, and soon we stopped for our first picnic lunch by the roadside, happy as larks. The sun was shining and the food was so delicious, we were blessed.

Sometime in the late afternoon, I suddenly heard a strange sound coming from the front of the car, and for the first time I remembered Arvin telling me not to forget to keep putting water into the radiator. I was convinced I had burned out the motor and the damage was done. I felt terrible about my neglect. Luckily enough, there was a bridge and a sharp turn off to the left where I pulled the car over, near a creek below. When I lifted the hood, steam billowed out of the engine. I said, "I guess we have burned out the engine, ladies." Polly was a woman who knew how to take things in hand, so she ordered Mrs. Teichman to use the children's "potty" and go down to the creek for water. While I would fill the radiator, the water just ran out almost as quickly as I poured it in. Meanwhile, Polly was beating a violent herd of wild cattle away with a long pole she found lying on the ground. Taking a little extra water along in a jar, we all jumped into the car. I quickly started the car, stepping hard on the gas pedal to be sure we would be able to back up that sharp incline, only to hit into the dirt so hard, it rolled back down again. So I tried again, but this time there was this sort of squealing sound and the motor died. Well, now we knew for sure we had burned

the motor out. Dusk was descending already and there was no-one around to help us. Suddenly, we heard some kind of motor vehicle approaching and we ran to the road to wave it down. It was a man on his way to Alaska. We told him of our horrible dilemma and he also tried to figure out what was wrong, but could not. He said he had to keep going but would send a tow truck when he got to the next garage station about ten miles down the road. So there we stood, screwing and unscrewing anything we thought might help, and waiting and waiting for that tow truck. As Polly was looking around the car she noticed that our exhaust pipe was totally plugged up with dirt from when I backed up the car into the bank earlier. So like a "jack of all trades" with her pretty yellow dress, she lay on the ground and, with her big butcher knife used for cutting bread, she whittled out the packed clay inch by inch. Eventually I was able to blow out the remaining dirt when I started the car up again. Wow, what a relief that was! So back into the car we piled, after filling the radiator with water again, and this time I actually made it up to the road—just as the tow truck arrived. So I just rolled down the window and told the man that whereas we thought we had burned out the motor, now the problem was solved and we were on our way. He said he would follow us to be sure we made it okay.

Talk about joys being crashed in about two minutes! Suddenly the car was filled with blue smoke that came billowing out from the front of the car. Instantly, we all burst out of that car, babies, Grandma, and whatever else we could salvage. We were certain the whole thing was going up in smoke. Polly started to gather gravel off the road to throw on the fire, but when it stopped smoking, she waited. The tow truck man pulled up and told us to get in. While he was putting on the tow chain, Mrs. Teichman said that one time that kind of thing happened to them and they found that they had the hand brakes on. So I checked and sure enough, that was the culprit. I rolled down the window and called out to the man that we found the problem and that we could go now. Joyfully, we drove about 100 yards or so, when the car stopped dead in its tracks, and we knew for sure we had burned out the motor now. We gladly let the man put the chain on the bumper, and he started down the road with this load of women and kids over those horribly rough roads full of potholes. The chain kept jerking off from time to time, partly because I would put on the brakes when I shouldn't have.

The men at the gas station stood waiting for us. Just as we were pulling in, I remembered that we had not put gas in the car since leaving Newbrook, and no doubt we could be out of gas. So I rolled down the window and yelled at the man to "fill her up." Once he had done that, I stepped on the gas and away we purred in total victory! I am sure we left some very puzzled men at that station. But why

should we care? We were on our way rejoicing.

We finally got to Grand Prairie, and knew we would have to find a motel to spend the night. These farmers' wives knew very little about having to spend money to sleep somewhere, and wanted to get away with the cheapest lodging possible. Four dollars in one place was far too steep for them, so we finally found an old, decrepit hotel where we all could sleep in one room for two dollars. The place looked haunted and spooked us out, but it was cheap. With only a curtain in front of our door, and those wild-looking men lying on cots next to us, we didn't feel very safe. But we were so completely exhausted, we fell asleep right away and slept like logs. We finally were seated close to the front in this big arena and the service started with such a sound of glorious victory, we were full of anticipation of what the Lord was going to do for our motley crew. Does Jesus really care that we made this trip, and would He meet our needs?

Both children were prayed over, and then we left, knowing we had to drive all night to get home on schedule. With no telephones, we had no way of letting Arvin or anyone else in Newbrook know how we were faring, so we HAD to drive home that night. We stopped at the last gas station to fill up before leaving the city, and the man said, "Do you know that your radiator is running water out of it?" I told him we knew that but had to drive home regardless. When he heard how far we had to go, he warned us that it was impossible to do. However, we had jars of water in the car and thought we would make it with God's help. Then, about 5 miles down the road there was another garage, and we felt like we should see if they might have some radiator seal or whatever. They poured in what they had, and off we drove into the blackness of Northern Alberta bush country, where you don't see a house or sign of life for many, many miles. We had gone only a few miles when I saw the car's red light come on at boiling point. We decided to just get up this one hill yet, find a parking place, spend the night in the car till daybreak, and then in morning look for water to fill the radiator. As we got to the top, there was a garage station lit up, and we drove on to the yard and parked there. The proprietor and wife and other people came out as they saw us park there, and these people were in a jolly mood. They were parting from having had a drinking party in the house attached to the back of the garage. So when they heard of our plight, they insisted we come in and they would make room for the whole shebang of us to sleep. They even made breakfast for us in the morning. We could not believe the kindness of these strangers to our bewildered bunch.

We were on our way early next morning, and stopped at every puddle of water we saw to keep filling up the radiator. Whether the water was clean or muddy, in it went. We also stopped at every gas station to make sure we would

not run out of gas again. We finally got to Athabasca, the big city in those days, and I wanted to make sure I had enough gas to get home, about 30 miles further, so I pulled into the station and said, “Fill her up.” The man was so happy for some business, but after he filled it up, he said, “thirty cents, please,” which of course was a laugh. But I didn’t care. I was taking no more chances.

By the time we got home, I began to tremble, a new experience for this healthy young woman, as the strain took its toll. Arvin did not have to repair the radiator for some weeks, as it was sealed solid with all the twigs and mud etc. We were more than happy to be home, and the best news of all is that the little girl began to walk on her feet and many years later we heard that the boy grew up healthy as well, which was nothing short of a miracle from God alone. So our trip was more than a thousand times worth it all.

Catering a Wedding

There were a lot of other wonderful things that the Lord did while we were there, which would take too long to write out, but we mention some of the highlights only.

We had been in Newbrook for a short time when we invited Hillevi Ost, a dear friend from Ocean Falls we greatly missed, to come and stay with us. We had lots of room, and she could finish school while living in Newbrook. What a treat it was to have her in our home for a year. Her sister, Eleanor, followed a little later, and fell in love with one of the guys at church, Sefrin Drisner. Her mother and family were far removed, so I volunteered to cater for her wedding, even though I was only about 23 years of age myself. They had about 100 guests. I made a chicken cold plate meal, having roasted a bunch of chickens, made a huge canner of pork and beans, a huge potato salad, green salad, and jellied salads. With no refrigerator, I had to try to keep things as cool as possible, which was an impossible task. Then I baked banana cream pies for dessert for all of those people, plus other cookies and cakes. I worked so hard, in the heat of summer, but I did it so gladly for my dear Eleanor. Then we had stuff to serve for a late night lunch, which I had made ahead of time—big bowlfuls of egg salad and chicken salad to put on buns, etc. Everyone was still so full from supper they didn’t eat that much lunch and so I had oodles left over, which I scraped into bowls and stored in our little pantry. It was a hot day and warm in the pantry.

Suddenly a violent thunderstorm came in, and such a downpour of rain, people had to rush home. Arvin took the church bus and drove some people home. Suddenly I felt sick and had to go to bed. By the time he got home, I was writhing in pain, throwing up, thinking this must be because I was three months pregnant. Looking back, we realized I had gotten food poisoning. I was deathly

ill for days on end till I got over it.

But the wedding was lovely and the Bride was stunning, as Eleanor at one time was “beauty queen” in Ocean Falls. The young couple were happily married and moved to Edmonton. Hillevi moved there as well, where she met and married Gerry Walters.

We Move to Onoway, Alberta

We have a lot of good memories of our time in Newbrook, but we didn’t stay too long, as we accepted a call to come and pastor a much bigger church in Onoway, about 40 miles west of Edmonton. This was a German-speaking church, and Arvin could not preach in German, being very limited to speak German at all. But they really wanted us to come, and they were sure I would teach Arvin enough German for him to preach it. This was not an easy assignment, but Arvin applied himself diligently and in a couple of years he even was invited to speak in other German churches, which was a miracle.

Our salary was $90 a month, from which we gave 10% tithe and 10% to missions. When we took off our car payments and expenses, we actually lived on a little over $20 a month. But we had a good garden, and the farmers kept us stocked with all the meat, dairy products, and eggs that we could handle. They were so generous.

The Lord Provides A Dresser

When it was time for Sheldon to be born, I was wishing I had a chest of drawers or a dresser to be able to put his diapers and clothing in. But we did not have that kind of money, so I told the Lord I would just use cardboard boxes and make do.

Before going to see my doctor in Edmonton for the final checkup, I was sitting at the piano on Sunday and playing while people were leaving church, Mrs. Hildebrand, a recent immigrant from Poland, came up to me and reached over to my hand to give me something. She told me God told her to give me this. When I looked at what it was, I could not believe my eyes, as she gave me a $20 bill. I had never had anyone give me anything up to this point, and I refused to accept it because I was sure she needed it more than we did. She was wearing such an old coat, and her kids were all wearing old “hand-me-downs.” They were terribly poor, having come to Canada with nothing. I argued with her that God would never take this from her to give it to me. She finally got upset with me, and demanded I take it “or else.” So when I showed Arvin what I got, he was as shocked as I was. Immediately I thought, “I wonder if I could buy a dresser with this money?” So I knelt down by our bed and prayed about it. All at once I saw in my mind a red neon sign saying, “Campbell’s Furniture Store.” So I got off my knees and told Arvin what I saw, and he said we will definitely stop

there today.

After my checkup, we were running late getting to that store because we had stopped at other secondhand stores to see how much dressers were costing. They were costing from $40 to $60 and even more, so we hurried over to Campbell's Furniture Store and got there just as the owner was locking the doors for the night. But when he saw us, he let us in yet, and here was what looked like an acre of furniture. Then I looked down the long corridor and saw a dresser at the end. I headed straight for it, and without any hesitation I asked how much the dresser was. He replied, "it is $18.50," and I instantly said we wanted it. It was unbelievable, as this dresser matched the bed and chest of drawers we already had, with the same design and type of wood. It also had a big round mirror. It was as good as new. I was euphoric!

When the truck delivered it to our place in Onoway, Arvin asked how much it would cost for delivery and he said $1.50. It all cost exactly $20 to the cent, and we had this beautiful piece of furniture which we used for 14 more years before selling it. What a miracle provision, and what a wonderful heavenly Father who would know my heart's desire and use this poor woman to make that sacrifice. I am sure He rewarded her 100fold for her obedience. This happens to be one of my very favorite stories in our lives.

We felt like millionaires! The next big luxury was when we had saved up enough from our small income to buy a secondhand refrigerator. How could life get any better than that?

Sheldon Arrives!

On March 17, 1954 in the Misericordia Hospital in Edmonton, the Lord helped me to give birth to our first boy, Sheldon Warren, 8 lbs. 13 oz. He could not be mistaken by anyone, as he was the spitting image of his Dad, a little Arvin in miniature form, too cute for words. After ten days in the hospital, we carried our own precious little bundle in our arms to the car and headed home to Onoway, crying with joy most of the way. What a gift from God. Arvin and I were overwhelmed with emotion as we realized that now we were a family and were given the privilege of raising this child for the Lord who gave him to us.

Sheldon had a voracious appetite; it seemed like we couldn't feed him fast enough. He would yell for more between each spoonful of pabulum. So we cut a big hole in the nipple of a bottle and thinned out the pabulum so he could suck it through that hole, which he did, hardly taking a breather between gulps. One 8-ounce bottle was not enough as he yelled for more, and so we kept giving him as much as he wanted. At one year of age he weighed 37 lbs., which was really far too much, but our baby was happy and so were we. People referred to him as the "fat baby" which I did not appreciate, even though I knew it was the truth. Not

only was he fat, he was extremely brilliant from the word “go,” taking special interest in the record player. He would watch the records by the hour, sitting in his high chair, and soon he memorized each one by heart. Music was definitely his first love.

With no running water in the church’s basement apartment in which we lived in, Arvin had to pump the water outside and carry each full pail down the long narrow staircase. We would heat water for washing clothes in a copper boiler on the wood stove in the kitchen, then dump it into our washing machine. From the washer, we fed the clothes through a wringer and into a galvanized steel tub to rinse, and then would hang them outside on a line to dry. In those days diapers were not disposable, but hung out for all the world to see. Arvin had to drain the washing machine into pails and carry the water up those long stairs and dump it on the back yard. He also did this with what we called slop water, from washing dishes and bathing ourselves.

Our toilet was outdoors behind the church, and on cold winter days when there were blizzards and snow drifts, it was a bone-chilling experience to sit on those icy boards and do your business. The only comforting thought about that was knowing we were not the only ones living that way, as this was normal living in the cold North country in those days. We actually did not seem to realize how deprived we were, as we felt so blessed to have each other and a new baby and a place to call home. We had enough wood and coal to keep us warm and also plenty of good food. We grew terrific gardens and our church members loaded us down with all the meat and dairy products you could ever wish for, so we felt very rich. We often were given crates of eggs, and so much cream that I made our own butter. We had cream on everything we wished. For me, it was hard to keep the weight off; but Arvin thrived on it without seemingly gaining a pound. We would go picking wild berries, made jam, and baked our own bread. We loved to pile cranberry jam on the bread and pour cream over it —it was delicious beyond the best cheesecake in the world.

The church had a brass band and choir, so we had a lot of joy in the services People really loved to sing those wonderful, old-time hymns. We had a strong youth group and Sunday School, so we really felt blessed.

Alberta Beach Camp (the denomination’s regional campsite) was only a few miles away from us, and we were asked to operate the little grocery store during Camp meeting times, which we did for about five years. At that time I also became the main campmeeting pianist, so we were very involved and we loved every minute of it. What a pretty campground with scores of little cabins. Later, people built beautiful summer homes on it. It was the highlight of summer activities for hundreds of people from surrounding towns and countryside. There

was lots of music, with a brass band and other instruments that enhanced the shout of praises unto our Lord. Campmeeting lasted for two weeks each summer. Wonderful guest speakers brought forth the Word of God with countless souls gathered around the altars finding Christ as Savior, Healer and the One who baptized in the Holy Spirit.

As long as my brother, Egan, was home with my parents, my Daddy was able to operate the orchard. But once he left, he just could not handle it anymore. Egan felt the call of God to go into the ministry, so went to Bible School in North Vancouver where he met Lee Krahn, a most beautiful blonde Mennonite girl, who stole his heart instantly. It wasn't long before there was a serious courtship, and after their second year of Bible School they were married on Sept. 19, 1954. It was a beautiful wedding in Abbotsford, with the reception in the dining hall of the Fraser Valley Campground. We all were thrilled with Egan's choice of a Bride, and he was a very handsome Bridegroom too. What a wedding with so many guests! Our family was growing.

The Kelowna Trip

In the spring of 1956 I became pregnant again, hoping to have a sister for big brother Sheldon, now 2^ yrs. of age. While Arvin was busy making some extra money helping farmers during harvest time, he wanted me to take Sheldon and spend a month or so with my folks in Kelowna. Time seemed to fly by far too quickly, and soon I had to return home again, which of course involved saying sad good-byes. Who knows when our next time together would be? So my dear Mother wanted to make doubly sure that her six-month pregnant daughter would be able to make the trip comfortably on the train.

I had to take along a big bag of huge, juicy, red Delicious apples Daddy grew in the orchard. She also insisted that I needed a large bed pillow to recline on those hard train benches. I also had Sheldon's bag of clothing and another bag of food for the trip. At least Sheldon was big enough to walk on his own. Once we were loaded down enough to make my dear Mom feel I would lack for nothing, we got started on our long trip home. We had a stopover in a little place in the mountains called Sycamous, arriving there at 11 p.m.. We got off to wait for the 1:00 a.m. train which would take us through to Edmonton. Sheldon was totally exhausted, and I laid him on a wooden bench next to me, where he fell into a deep sleep. The little train station was so dismal and dark, with only a lantern or small light in a corner. We were the only waiting passengers, alone except for the ticket agent who would peek through his window at me every once in a while, giving me the creeps. At last I could hear in the distance the sound of the train whistle as it neared our station. I began to arouse Sheldon, saying "Shelly, die Choochoo Bahn ist hier," which was German for, "the choochoo train is here."

But there was never a sign of waking up with this boy. I became frantic, yelling into his ears and shaking him, with no response but a little grunt. He continued his sleep as if in a trance. In my desperation, I had to roll him off the bench onto that dirty floor, but with all my bags and stuff in my arms, I was unable to lift him off the floor. So I pushed him across the floor with my feet, trying to get him through the door, so the train attendants would at least see we were there and coming toward the train. I was panicking, as I was afraid they would leave us behind. But I could not awaken this baby no matter how hard I kicked him without hurting him. Two train attendants were standing on the steel steps of the train, watching me struggle with this child, and no doubt wondered what kind of a woman would treat her child like this. Yet, they never offered a helping hand. One finally yelled at me, “Lady, hurry up. We are leaving.” I said, “I am trying,” and was next to tears. Then he ordered another man to go and help me, and he just came and jerked my suitcase out from under my arm and took off without giving me a hand to pick up this huge 40 lb. dead weight child off the ground. So I had to get down on my knees with this big 6-month baby inside my body, and somehow hoist Sheldon onto my shoulder, all the while juggling all the other bags and pillow. I am sure it was a sight to behold. All I could do was stagger to the train steps and somehow, with God’s help, climb aboard. I had just made the last step when the man before me let the iron door swing, which hit Sheldon full force on his forehead.

Well, he awoke alright, with a bloodcurdling scream. A huge, goose-egg bruise formed on his forehead. All I could do was push my way through the narrow doorway into the passenger car, where people were asleep. What a rude awakening it was for the passengers, as this screaming baby came through the door! I threw him onto the first seat which was happily empty, and then with all the other stuff I was carrying, I got my feet tangled around the wrought iron legs of the bench. I was sent sprawling on my big stomach between the two seats, with my swollen legs stretched out into the aisle. I could not believe what was happening to me, as I lay there with my child screaming next to me. I knew if I were to break down and cry now, it would be disaster. So I made a quick decision not to cry, but to laugh for release. I began to picture myself in this predicament. The conductor must have thought this woman is drunk, to laugh at such a time as this. But it was all I could do to keep my sanity. All I could think of was, “if my Mother only knew.” Nobody came to help or see if my baby was okay. All I could do was pray, knowing he could have suffered a concussion.

This was one of my worst horror stories. I always did want to sue the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, or at least send them a letter about this nightmare, but Arvin did not let me. He was just glad to see me make it home,

and did not want to make a case out of it. Surely the Lord will take care of that someday too.

Bob Arrives!

On January 16, 1957, our dear little Bobby was born, 7 lbs. 14 oz. When the nurse brought my baby to me for the first time after they cleaned him up, I took one look at this little guy and told the nurse that this is a mistake. This could not be my child, as nobody in our family has ever looked like this! He had poker-straight, long, black hair that looked "spiked"; and his skin was wrinkled and dark, making him look like a little old Japanese man. So reluctantly the nurse took him back to the nursery and before long returned with the same baby, to tell me that he truly was my very own baby boy. I was shocked at how skinny he was. During the pregnancy my specialist doctor insisted that I was not to gain any extra weight (beyond normal) while carrying this child, and the poor little guy was totally undernourished.

When Arvin came in the next day, he stopped at the nursery to see Bob before coming to my room. The first thing he said to me was "But Honey, he really looks funny." Well, that hurt my feelings so badly, because by now I had gotten used to him. The more I looked at him the more I loved him, and thought he was such a sweet little guy. I would not have traded him for all the gold in the world.

Once we got him home (to Onoway) and began to feed him, and once he lost that long black hair, we could see he was truly a "Sorge" alright. We watched him develop more and more each day into one of the most stunningly beautiful little babies in the whole world, as far as we were concerned.

We Move to Sylvan Lake, Alberta (1957)

Bobby was two months old when we were called to come and pastor a church in Sylvan Lake, Alberta. Sheldon was 3 years of age and spoke only German, as we had served a German speaking church in Onoway.

Moving from a German speaking church was a welcome change for Arvin, even though he loved those dear people in that church. However, he had no vision for a German church in an English speaking country, and so we gladly accepted the call to pastor Gospel Chapel. Sylvan Lake is a beautiful summer resort town, which in later years became the fastest growing town of its size in Canada.

The church's parsonage was attached to the back of the church, with a Sunday school hall and rooms at the other end. We were so delighted to get out of the basement and be on ground level again.

When we first got to Sylvan Lake, Arvin had to carry water from the neighbor's place, and also had to carry out the wastewater and dump it in the

ditch by the road. But after a while we got a most modern feature: running water. A well was drilled and a faucet installed in the kitchen, and we were thrilled with that. Our kitchen stove was propane, which also felt very modern after the wood and coal stove of our former place, and we had a hand-cranked telephone. Talk about upgrading! There still was no indoor plumbing, so we had to use the outhouse at the far end of the building, and of course there were no bathroom facilities.

With time, the men of the church decided to dig a basement under the church by hand, and Arvin along with two other men did most of it themselves. Once that was done we built a large open room with partitions for fellowship and other needs, plus two washrooms, and a new foyer at the entrance. It felt like a new church. Later on, a shower cabinet was installed under our kitchen, and you had to climb through the kitchen floor trap door down a ladder to get into it. It was rather dark and eerie down there, to say the least, but we were overjoyed to have the privilege of taking showers now, and crept out of the dugout looking like a shining nickel. One of our relatives thought it was a horror chamber down there and refused to shower in it, even though we thought it was wonderful.

The church auditorium was very small compared to the Onoway church, but we loved it and soon it was packed out, especially for Sunday school with scads of children. We even won a Sunday school enlargement contest with a new church in Edmonton one year. The growth forced us to enlarge our facilities, so we dug out the basement. We had some very wonderful people in that place, and the Lord blessed us in so many ways.

Sheldon's Healing

Sheldon was very eager to learn how to read so we taught him phonics, and at age five he was able to read the Bible or whatever you handed him. The school principal heard about him and came to meet this little "genius." He was so impressed with Sheldon that he ordered him to be allowed into grade one against all rules at age five. However, this action stirred up a furor, as so many other parents also wanted their children admitted if Sheldon could be. So we had to take him out to keep the peace; but the Principal decided to start him in grade 2 when he started school. So that gave him a quick head start. Soon he was encouraged to skip another grade, which we felt was too much of a social leap and discouraged that. But he was always right at the top of his classes in school, as he truly was blessed with a keen mind.

Around the age of seven, Sheldon came down with something that looked like the flu, which the doctor in Red Deer also suspected when we called him on the phone about it. But when he continued to have bad pain in his arms and legs and neck, someone suggested it could be polio. He had all the polio shots, so we

did not think of that. When we got him out of bed he just fell to the floor, which alarmed us to say the least. We took him right into the Red Deer hospital for a checkup, only to find out he did indeed have polio. However, it was already past the stage where anything could be done for him, so they sent him home. They wanted further observation to see if there would be any kind of paralysis that might require braces or the like. What a shock this was, as our little boy was so healthy up to this time. We felt inclined to take him to a Christian chiropractor for therapy, and he confirmed that Sheldon indeed had actually quite a bad case of polio. He began to work at reflexes in his legs that seemed to be lifeless. How we earnestly cried out to the Lord for a miracle, and indeed He heard our cry. We saw a total recovery so that he was able to function normally as before. How we praise the great Physician for what he did for our dear little boy.

That summer, I went to my parents' home for a couple weeks with my little boys.

I gave Daddy a helping hand painting the outside of the house, which I enjoyed doing. However, after a long, tiring day out in the hot sun, I insisted that I should yet finish painting under a certain overhang. I had to stretch beyond my reach, and something happened. Suddenly, I felt my strength drain out of my body and I had to get down as fast as I could. My heart was pounding and racing so I knew I was in trouble.

When I got myself checked out, I was told that the aorta valve had collapsed from overstretching myself. I was told that bed rest was all they could recommend, and how could I do that with a couple of little boys to look after? Weak as a kitten, I found it hard to sleep with the pounding of the heart in my ears. I knew I needed a miracle. So I asked for the anointing of oil in church one Sunday morning and trusted the Lord to undertake for me. I was so weak I could barely walk. The next few days I was worse instead of better but I kept repeating the promise of God that I would recover. On Thursday, as I was standing in the living room, too weak to do anything, suddenly like a rush from heaven I felt the power of God come down upon me. It went from the top of my head through to the bottom of my feet, and I was instantaneously healed. My strength totally returned on the spot, my heart began beating normally, and it has continued to do so to this day, praise the Lord. What a miracle that was, and what a boost to our faith, to believe in the healing power of Jesus Christ our wonderful Savior.

A Lesson in Hospitality

One thing that stands out to me was the time a very fine young man from England came to stay with Harry Bennett, a bachelor of English descent who attended our church faithfully. Harry lived on a farm and would take in young men from a group home for mentally challenged people. He gave them a sense

of significance by having them help with odd chores around the place. When we met Harry's friend from England, Johnny Malin, we saw he was definitely of the "upper crust," well groomed and dressed and very handsome. He was about 19 years old. When I saw him, I immediately felt like he must miss his mother and home in England, and would find it terribly lonely in this part of the world all by himself. Then I thought of how his mother must miss him and worry how her boy is doing, and I just wanted to make him feel as welcome as possible in our midst. So when I asked him if he would like to come and eat dinner with us after church, he was visibly overwhelmed with joy to actually be invited to the Pastor's house. It gave me a lot of pleasure to entertain him as he was a very refined young man and would express his appreciation profusely.

Each Sunday after the morning service he would stand at the door and I just would ask him to come for dinner. One day I asked him if he had been looking for a job yet, and he said, "Work isn't my line." I was not too impressed with that response, so from then on my attitude began to change toward him. I felt like he was taking advantage of our kindness, remembering the Scripture, "if a man does not work, neither should he eat." I still would ask him to come, but in my heart I felt trapped and I did not know how to get out of this routine of inviting Johnny every Sunday for dinner.

One Sunday I was really battling a bad attitude and told the Lord about it. The Lord spoke clearly to me and said, "I want you to treat Johnny as if it were Me." Well that changed everything, and I was bending over backwards trying to serve Johnny as if he were Jesus. Johnny was just soaking it up and looking at me as if he could not believe the love he was receiving from me. Suddenly, another voice spoke to my mind saying, "Now you will never get rid of Johnny, look at how he is lapping up this kind of attention." I knew this was not the voice of the Lord, so I ignored it and kept pouring all my love onto this young man.

The following Sunday I looked for Johnny, but he was gone. He never did stand at that door again. Then the Lord said to me, "You have passed the test."

Many years later, on a Sunday we happened to have free, we decided to go to Vancouver and attend Glad Tidings Church where we had heard God was richly blessing. It was a great service, and then people gathered around the altar to seek the Lord.

The praises of God were loudly filling the place. All at once this fine, well-dressed gentleman comes over to us and with great enthusiasm calls out our name while he rushes to greet us. What a surprise it was to see this person was indeed our dear Johnny Malin!

We were in awe as we stood there overcome with emotion!

It was then that he poured his heart and told us how we had blessed him and

loved him when he was so alone. Now, he wanted to take the opportunity to return a blessing on us, and invited us to his home for dinner. We had never dreamed this could ever have happened, but indeed we were seated around a table of wonderful food that his sweet little wife had prepared. Their cute children also ate with us. Their home was in the best of order and the children so well trained. What an unforgettable day that was for us all. How glad I was that I entertained Johnny as if he were Jesus, for truly it was more than worth it all.

There were countless times that I invited strangers into our home for meals, and even to lodge with us. Who knows how many times I entertained angels unawares? I am so glad I could do that, and only wish I had done more.

More Sylvan Lake Memories

We always made sure that our boys heard the Word of God every day since they were old enough to talk. We received a child allowance check from the Government in those days, and eventually had saved enough to buy the ten volumes of books of The Bible Story written by Arthur Maxwell, a Seventh Day Adventist. The cost of $65 seemed like a fortune to us at that time, as funds were so limited. But those books have been a goldmine that God used to give our boys a firm foundation for the rest of their lives. Those books are written for children and yet adults get just as much out of them so that we still read them together even when they became teenagers. Morning devotions was such a precious time for our little family each day. Consequently Sheldon could compete in Bible Quizzes against teenagers at the age of 8 and win most of the time. He was so eager to learn how to read, he was able to read the Bible at five years of age without going to pre-school, just with the little bit of help we gave him by sounding out phonics, and he was off to the races. He memorized many Bible verses and whole chapters when he was four years old. He was asked by the Sunnyside Camp in Sylvan Lake to quote his memorized Scriptures before hundreds of people. He was called the “boy preacher.” How he loved to set up his little bench for a pulpit, wave his arms, stomp his feet, and preach the Word—quoting it as fluently as if he were reading it. What a memory that little boy had, and still has for that matter. Bob also quoted a lot of Scripture as he tried to keep up to his older brother as best he could. We have a tape recording of them at that stage that still is an invaluable treasure to us.

We have many fond memories of our 5 ^ years in Sylvan Lake. My sister, Elfrieda, came to spend the summers with us each year while we were there, and she got a job at a Bakery, and then as a telephone operator.

The time came when she was not able to come to our place for summers anymore because our dear Mom took ill and needed her at home. By this time, my parents had sold the Rutland orchard to a cemetery company, which uprooted

all the fruit trees and burned down the buildings that were home to us for so many years. The cemetery overlooked Duck Lake and so was called Lakeview Cemetery, where both of my parents lie buried today.

We Move to Ladysmith, B.C. (1962)

Once again the Lord was leading us to another place in His service and this time (fall of 1962) we got a call to come and pastor the PAOC (Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada) church in Ladysmith, which is located on beautiful Vancouver Island. We had never been there so had no idea what we were going to, only that we felt led by the Lord to go there. We took a ferry from Vancouver to Nanaimo, and then drove the short distance to Ladysmith. It was foggy and dark when we arrived; all we could see was the white center line of the road in front of us. It was hard to find the parsonage, but once we got there, we were welcomed to the house by the Gereluks who immediately became dear friends. All we wanted that night was a bite to eat and a place to sleep.

Next morning, when we awoke and the fog had lifted, I looked out the window and could not believe the gorgeous view before my eyes. It looked like we were in a tropical country surrounded by mountains and greenery. Islands dotted the ocean inlet. There were huge green trees like you might expect to see only in a magazine. Breathtaking scenery! It was too good to be true. There was lush green shrubbery and flowering bushes, like the garden of Eden. The stunning view made us feel like we were living in luxury. The small parsonage was comprised of a very tiny kitchen, a living room, two bedrooms, and a small bathroom. But with time we enlarged the kitchen and put in new cabinets and floors, a big new bathroom, two new bedrooms, and a back porch. It was sooooo beautiful to us and we loved living on that hill. Our church was not large, but very nice with very precious people whom we learned to love and appreciate so much.

While we were pastoring there, my little sister Elfrieda found the man of her dreams, Orville Posein from Chilliwack. We knew Orville in his infancy when we lived in Black Mud, Alberta, and thought he was the most beautiful baby boy we had ever seen anywhere. Never in a million years did we ever dream that someday this boy would marry our little baby sister who was not even born yet at that time. And now, over twenty years later, this handsome young man takes an interest in my little sister Elfrieda. So we heard by letters all about this budding romance and before long things were getting serious between the two. In a short time wedding plans were underway. Our parents were overjoyed, as they could never have wished for a better choice in the whole world for their little girl. Mom used to pray that the Lord would grant her the privilege of seeing her last child married and taken care of before the Lord called her and Daddy

home. Mother's health had been failing for some time already, so the timing was right for this child of their old age to be married and settled in a home of her own.

The wedding took place in Kelowna, B.C., on Oct. 12, 1963. After a beautiful reception our little sister took off as a married woman. That was bittersweet, as on one hand we were thrilled for her and on the other hand it felt painful to see her leave our Mom and Dad at home. Things at home were never the same without her there, and as much as Mom and Dad were happy to see her get married to this fine young man, they also dearly missed that little girl who was the life of every party.

Living in Chilliwack had its challenges, but after a year of marriage they were blessed by the arrival of Charmaine, the sweetest little girl you could ever see. I was so excited to be able to be there in time for her arrival home from the hospital, and stayed several days. Everyone doted on that little baby. She grew up so quickly into a real "charmer " that would just steal your heart away. How dearly we loved that little girl!

Tales about Sheldon and Bob

Bobby was five years of age and Sheldon was eight when we got to Ladysmith, so both of them attended school there for the next four and a half years. Johnny and Billy Gereluk became best friends with our Sheldon and Bobby respectively. It was great for the boys to have such good friends from the church, as well as other neighborhood kids.

Bobby became known as the Pied Piper of our street, because all the dogs in the neighborhood seemed to follow him wherever he walked or rode his bike. He seemed to be able to look into their faces and communicate with them as if they understood every word he said. Once, an overshoe of mine was missing, and Bobby confronted this one dog that he suspected of the crime, and asked him, "What have you done with my Mother's overshoe?" With that, the dog hung his head and slowly started walking to his house at the end of our block. He went down into the crawl space below the garage and— wouldn't you know it—came out with my overshoe in his mouth. Later, Bobby looked under there only to see a pile of odds and ends the dog had hidden there, and yet he knew what Bob wanted him to get out of that pile of rubble. It really blew our minds to say the least.

I was teaching piano to both of the boys at this time, and both of them did very well. I did, however, have to bribe Bobby with 25 cents a week if he would practice, as he found it too boring. Sheldon, on the other hand, enjoyed practicing and quickly excelled. But the 25-cent investments were more than worth it in the long run, as Bob took off in his teen years and became a very

accomplished pianist also. Music was such an integral part of our lives, as all of us played instruments and sang, which was such an asset in the work of the Lord wherever we pastored. As teenagers, the boys became church pianist while I played the organ, so we were a closely knit team all their teen years until they left for college.

Sheldon would try to play games like Monopoly with Bobby, but being three years younger, Bobby didn't seem to catch onto games to Sheldon's satisfaction. One morning, Arvin read from the Reader's Digest to me about the benefit to pregnant mothers of taking iodine. They claimed it would feed the brain and enhance a child's intelligence. Sheldon happened to overhear Arvin telling me about this. Some time later, while Sheldon was playing at Gereluks' house with their Johnny, he decided he ought to go into the house to pay a little pastoral visit to Johnny's Mom who was suffering from a breakdown. Sitting next to her bed, he began to talk about all kinds of things. Aloah was intrigued at this little boy's intelligence as an 8-year-old kid. Finally, she mustered up a little courage to ask him, "Sheldon, is your brother Bobby as smart as you are?" With a sigh of concern, Sheldon said, "Oh, sister Gereluk, I am afraid my mother was not taking enough iodine when she carried Bobby." Of course, Aloah had no idea that Sheldon overheard his Dad read that article, and yet it struck her so funny that she actually laughed for the first time in a long while. The laughter must have been medicine for her because her depression began to break.

We were introduced to eating oysters for the first time because they could be collected freely on the beaches. At first, while preparing them, they made me heave and shudder, as I was convinced that God never made this kind of slime to be eaten by anyone. Later, I learned that if you precook them in hot water for a couple of minutes, the meat would set and all the slimy guck would come off. I learned to strain them, then roll in eggs and crumbs, and fry till nicely browned. It made all the difference in the world, and we actually served oyster feeds to a lot of people after that. I never did acquire a real taste for them myself, but Arvin and the boys liked them a lot.

The Word of Knowledge

It was during our Ladysmith days that I had my first experience with the gift of the word of knowledge (1 Corinthians 12:8) working in my life. We had a young evangelist and his wife ministering in song one Sunday morning, and as they were singing the Lord said to me, "There's a spirit of adultery working in that man." I was shocked and told Arvin after church what happened. That very week we got a phone call from his wife, crying hysterically, and telling me that her husband came home with this blonde lady. He introduced her as the woman he was really in love with, which sent his precious little wife into untold shock

and disbelief. She thought their marriage was perfect and had no reason to believe otherwise. What followed was so heartbreaking. This dear woman was left alone to raise her little children. We did hear that after many years the marriage once again did come back together, which was a total miracle of God in answer to that woman's constant prayers.

In the following years of ministry, the same gift operated through my life on many occasions. God would reveal things to me that I had no way of knowing. Every time the word of the Lord was proven true and became redemptive in restoration in most cases. I never sought for that gift, neither do I say that I have it operating all the time, but it comes whenever the Lord gives it for a particular reason as He wills.

I had been having pain in the abdomen for some time so I went to get it checked out. The doctor discovered a growth on my bladder that needed immediate attention. I was referred to a specialist in Victoria (the largest city on Vancouver Island) and before I went I asked to be anointed with oil in church. I wanted the Lord to heal me. I felt pain all the way to Victoria, but after the specialist examined me by cystoscope, he told me there was no lump there. He sent me back to my family doctor for him to check me out again. Even he could not find the lump, although he insisted it had been there before. I knew, then, that the Lord had healed me as He promised. Our faith was strengthened once again to believe Him for all our needs.

I also had a huge cyst at the end of my first finger on my right hand. It was terribly enlarged and throbbing with pain. I had the doctor burn it off, thinking it may have been a wart, but it grew in again larger than ever. At the same time, I was still having a lot of dizziness as an after-effect of anesthesia in connection with my bladder inspection in Victoria. To finish my story about those ailments, I must explain the move that happened right about that time.

We Move to Powell River, B.C. (1967)

We enjoyed our ministry in Ladysmith very much, as the people were so easy to work with and the Lord was blessing. Arvin drove school bus to supplement our income and we were able to live comfortably. After four and a half years once again the Lord had other plans for us and we accepted the call to take the church in Powell River. To get there from Ladysmith, we had to travel north up the Island to Comox, where we took a ferry over to the mainland. Powell River was a town built around the local pulp and paper mill, with a population of 15,000 people. It was a progressive town and very scenic and beautiful. The church building was almost new, more beautiful than any of the buildings in our previous pastorates. The parsonage was a neat but modest house, very "homey" with two bedrooms and a nice sun porch entry. We had a

nice back yard with a garden plot, fruit trees, and garage, so what more could you wish for? We loved it from the word “go.”

We were only there for about one week when we talked to Ernie Rowledge, a man in the church, who was working in the mill’s steam plant, and I asked him if there might be a chance for my brother-in-law Orville to find work there. Orville had just earned his second class steam engineer’s papers, had been working in the Chilliwack hospital in the boiler room, and he was looking for a greater opportunity in that field. As it turned out, they had just hired two men the week before, and yet Ernie spoke to the chief about Orville. The chief engineer in the steam plant asked Orville to come and see him, and hired him right away. It all happened so fast, poor Orville didn’t have time to really weigh things that much. In a few days, they landed in Powell River with their baby, Charmaine, and stayed at our place until they found a house of their own.

Well, this was the icing on the cake for Elfrieda and me. We never dreamed the day would come when we would be living in the same community. She was always very close to me, and it was like a dream come true. Having them in our church was a huge bonus, as we had the opportunity to do music together, plus so much more. What a blessing they were—and still are, as they still live in Powell River forty years later. Cheryl Lynn was born the next year, and we had the joy of being with those two little girls during the cutest years of their lives.

Now back to my finger. The District PAOC Conference was held in Kelowna, and I was asked to play the piano. My finger was so swollen and painful, it was agonizing to play the piano. However, there was prayer for the sick the last night of the conference, and Mark Buntain (Canadian missionary to India) was praying over everyone who came up to the front. I also went up and asked the Lord for healing of the dizziness and this huge throbbing finger.

The very next day, on our way home to Powell River, I felt an itching sensation inside the finger and wondered what that meant. When we got home, I was able to just lift that whole cyst out of the finger like a dried up pea and with it the dizziness also went. Talk about being filled with joy and thankfulness! Our Lord once again touched my body.

Life in Powell River

Orville was able to purchase a nice boat, which we used often to go fishing for salmon and cod, since Powell River was located right there on the Pacific Ocean. We also had a small outboard boat we used for fishing, in which Bob, at the age of eleven, landed a trophy cod. Bob snagged the fish, but his dad had to pull it aboard with a gaff hook. When Bob posed for a snapshot, he could hardly hold the 31-pound fish high enough off the ground for the picture to be taken. The meat was superb, and we enjoyed it for many weeks afterwards.

Sheldon became an accomplished pianist at an early age. He did such a grand job playing in church, he on the piano and me on the organ. Then he organized a young male quartet with some of his buddies, and soon they were asked to perform in churches other than our own. Those young men would practice by the hour, and that proved to keep them occupied in doing the work of the Lord when others their age were pursuing other distractions of life.

Bob had a close buddy, Ron Zahar, and they also were developing their musical talents on the piano and organ. They loved to make recordings of imaginary radio talk shows, using their humor and musical talents in creative ways. They spent many hours together doing that, and it also prepared them for future ministries in ways they couldn't have imagined.

One Sunday morning, as I was at the organ, I noticed a man slipping into the back seat of the church, whom I had never seen. After the service I rushed to the back to get acquainted with him and invited him to come home with us for dinner, which he accepted. He then told us that he was a university student from Ontario and had hitchhiked across the country to visit an uncle that lived in Lund (near Powell River), who was the last living family member left. Eager to meet his only living uncle, he finally made it excitedly to Lund, only to find his uncle's door locked and nobody at home, even though he had notified him of his coming. Well, he felt like his world crashed around him and he didn't know where to go from there. With no other choice, he decided to head back East. On his way he noticed our church and felt it was a place of refuge at least for a few moments till he could get some kind of a grip on things that had just happened to him. He didn't know how his uncle could have done this to his own nephew. The pain of rejection was more than he could bear.

As I said, I had invited him home to have lunch with us. He was very soft spoken and of few words at the time, so that when the meal was finished he politely excused himself and got on his way back East without telling us the whole story.

It was only later when we got this letter in the mail that this same man wrote us the full story. He told us that we would never know how God used us to help him survive that fateful day by giving him a meal in our home. It was the only little ray of light in the deep darkness he was going through at that very hour, unbeknown to us. His letter just broke our hearts, as we had no idea what suffering he was going through, and how we wished we had known so we could have helped him more somehow. Yet we were so thankful that at least we had the privilege of pouring a little oil on his wounded spirit and prayed that the Lord would heal that broken heart. How we need to be in tune with the Holy Spirit to be able to sense needs in people's lives and be available to minister to them in

Jesus Name.

Life is full of challenges, especially in the Ministry as we deal with all sorts of problems in the lives of people God brings our way. But we have always known that we would never be happy doing anything else, as we loved being in the Ministry, knowing we were called of God. We wanted our lives to be poured out in service to God and others by the power of the Holy Spirit at all times.

Irma Discovers Tumors

Things went along just great and then in early spring of 1970 our journey took a very sharp turn, as for the first time in my life I faced a major physical challenge. I had discovered two lumps in my breasts that frightened me half to death. I prayed and sought the Lord earnestly as to what to do, and the Lord impressed upon my heart to trust Him and not to go to the doctor with it. The Lord seemed to impress on my heart that if I went to the doctor it would be my end, so I never did. My condition was grave to this seemed like committing suicide, and yet I was afraid to miss what I felt the Lord wanted me to do. So I just committed myself to seeking the Lord for healing, reading the Word and books on divine healing to strengthen my faith.

I knew all of the promises of healing in the Bible were for me, but for some reason I was unable to grasp it in my spirit. The weeks that followed were filled with fear and darkness in spite of doing all I could to believe the promises of God in His Word. I became weaker in body as I lost my appetite. Soon I was bedridden. Arvin was strong in the Word and would spend untold hours quoting it to me and praying for me, while I was just floundering in my despair.

Finally, the blackest day of my life came. It was March 17, Sheldon's birthday, and I was so weak I felt I could not so much as get out of bed to wish my boy a happy birthday. I felt devastated. Arvin was giving the boys breakfast in the kitchen and I could hear him running back and forth into the bathroom and blowing his nose, which made me wonder why, as I did not know he had a cold or anything like that. Finally, I forced myself out of bed and, while hanging on to the wall, made it to the kitchen to at least wish my boy a happy birthday. I knew the 16th birthday was such a milestone in his life. I then saw that Arvin was weeping uncontrollably, and when I saw that, I felt like the bottom had fallen out of everything. Slowly, I crept into my bed again.

I knew he was at the end of his endurance with my case. I had so leaned on him for strength to help me through this horrible trial, but now he had crashed and it seemed that not it was all over. I fell into something like a stupor while Arvin took the boys to school. I was left alone in the house. When I came to myself, I was shaking all over with fear and felt I was dying. God was there, however, and in my darkest hour I suddenly heard Him speak to me. It was my

first time to hear Him during this whole episode. He said, “If you really believe what you have been reading and saying, then get up and act like it. Faith without works is dead.”

I was so shocked and amazed at what I heard, I sat straight up in bed. It was as if all the lights came on in one blaze of glory at one time. It felt like the blinders came off my eyes. I could see clearly for the first time within my heart the truth of the Word of the Lord. I knew that I knew that I knew. God had spoken and the work now was done, regardless of any symptoms in my body. Assurance and joy filled my heart, and I immediately got myself out of bed. I spoke out loudly that I am going to get up and get dressed and am going to cook a birthday dinner for my boy tonight. I began as weak as a kitten in my body, but stronger than a lion in my spirit. I talked to my clothes and told them that I was putting them on in Jesus’ Name. I then proceeded into the kitchen and opened the fridge door, when the Lord spoke again, saying, “When Arvin comes home tonight get him to curse those growths in your breasts and they will dry up by the roots as the fig tree I cursed in the Bible.” Wow, that was clear as crystal to me, and I knew I was already as good as healed.

Taking the chicken meat in hand, I told that chicken I was going to fry it in Jesus’ Name, and I did. I told the potatoes I would peel them in Jesus’ name, and so I continued till the table was fully set and the food cooked.

Meanwhile, Arvin had spent the day alone with God in his church office, where he also had experienced a mighty visitation of the glory of God. When he arrived home, his face was lit up to me like the face of Moses. I knew he must have seen the Lord or something like that. It was early afternoon when he first came home. I thought he would fall on the floor seeing how I was up and preparing supper. He just came and put his hand on my shoulder and said, “Honey, do you know the Lord is going to heal you?” I just said, “Of course. I already know that,” even though the growths were huge as ever. But I didn’t care if they were as big as pumpkins, I knew I was as good as healed. Then, it being Sheldon’s 16th birthday, Arvin went to take Sheldon to get his Learner’s temporary driver’s license.

The Healing Touch of the Master

When we sat down to eat, I cried through the meal with joy because I was actually able to eat real food with my family once again. I was no longer nauseated, but enjoyed every bit of it. The Poseins were eating with us, celebrating the birthday dinner with us. But I could hardly wait for them to leave so we could go and get these growths cursed as the Lord had told me to. They did leave quickly, and soon the two of us were on our knees in the living room, just reveling in the presence of the Lord. We were offering our high praises unto

Him, even forgetting to ask for my healing.

Suddenly, I stopped to tell Arvin to curse those growths, which he did. The river of praises continued on and on. I felt heat going through my abdomen, which I knew was the power of the Lord, and all the distress in the abdomen vanished. Then, I asked the Lord if He would mind if I were to check those growths again, even though I was so sick of checking those huge, ghastly, hard tumors. I was simply curious to see whether, by now, there might be a little change in their shape or whatever. So I gingerly put my hand into my bosom.

Shock waves ran through my whole being as I realized the growths were totally gone. My breasts were as soft and normal as any healthy breast could be. I was beside myself, and began to scream while ripping my clothes off to check everything that was checkable! They were all gone, in an instant. The Great Physician came on the scene and did in just one moment of time what nobody else in all the world could do. Talk about two people gone crazy with joy! I felt like one raised from the dead. We had just had a miracle and our joy knew no bounds.

Let me back up a bit. While I was still sick and alone in my bed, Arvin was in the church office by himself. He was not even able to pray, but just cried from his heart for a long time. He was at the very end of himself, not knowing what to do. All he could see was himself as a widower, raising two young boys alone. In the darkness of that hour, the Lord came down into his office and met him at the same time He was meeting me at home. There, before his eyes, the Lord gave him a revelation of the consequences of the fall of man. He saw a panoramic view of how sin was responsible for all the pain and suffering of mankind, including mine. Then the Lord showed him the cross and the power and glory of the finished work of Christ for us. Then He showed him the end times, which were rather hazy. But it was the CROSS that stood out to him like he had never seen it before.

That encounter was a life-changing experience for him. He could hardly eat or sleep for five days, being so full of the glory of God. That presence remained on him for the next 18 months, and it was like a foretaste of heaven that totally transformed his life and ministry forever. We began to see the Lord heal all kinds of people in the church at that time. We had such a glorious revival that came as a result of that encounter Arvin had with the Lord on that notable day of March 17, 1970.

We had experienced once again that Jesus is truly the Great Physician and can totally be trusted to fulfill His promises to us.

Refreshed at World MAP Campmeeting

The year following this personal refreshing, we had such a deep desire to go

somewhere to take in a “deeper Life” conference or campmeeting, as we hungered for more of God. One morning I called a friend in the church, Nick Thiessen, to see if he might know of anything going on like that. He referred us to some kind of tent meeting in Seattle. I was excited about it because Seattle was not that far from us (I am not one given to long car trips). When I told Arvin about it, he was not very enthused because the speaker was someone he was not comfortable with. But I could not shake it, so I went on my knees and asked the Lord if He wanted us to go, and asked him to give me a definite sign. I said I would open the Bible and put my finger on a page and if the verse I put my finger on has the word “go” in it, then we would know He wants us to go. So wouldn’t you know it, I did just that (we don’t recommend this as a practice) and my finger rested on this passage, “Arise and GO toward the south,” spoken to Phillip (Acts 8:26). How much clearer could it have been? (Seattle is south of Powell River.) So we packed up and went, taking along our parents. My Mother had been fighting cancer for some time and we wanted her to be healed.

When we got to the tent meeting in Seattle, it was not at all anything like we had expected, being very loud and lacking anointing. We were terribly disappointed, and since Thor Stebeck had told us about a Methodist Campmeeting at Warm Beach, we thought we would try that yet before returning home. Going to a Methodist Camp did not seem very inviting, but we thought we could at least try since we had come this far already. So the next day we drove to Warm Beach and coming upon the Camp Grounds we were greeted by people with, “Praise the Lord!” the way Pentecostals do. Then, going into a certain building, I took Mom down this corridor and saw through the windows a group of young people gathered around a piano, with upraised arms, singing praises to God. I said “Mom, this is the place, we’ve found it!” I was beside myself with joy.

The next day, we went to the morning service in the large camp auditorium. The meeting had already started, with hundreds of people singing Scripture songs and worshipping in the Spirit. It sounded like a heavenly chorus. The large banner over the platform read, “To Gain for the Lamb the Reward of His Sacrifice.” Arvin stood with his big handkerchief in hand, crying and saying, “I have found home.” (He had been worshipping the Lord in this manner alone in his church office since that glorious meeting he had with the Lord on March 17th.) All four of us were weeping as we drank from the wells of the Spirit that flowed like a river in that place.

We found out that the camp meeting was conducted by World Missionary Assistance Plan (World MAP), an interdenominational missionary movement led by Ralph Mahoney, with offices in Burbank, California. The congregation

consisted of Spirit-filled people from every denomination who were part of the Charismatic renewal that was sweeping the nation at that time. We had heard about this renewal, but this was our first exposure to it. It felt like a piece of heaven come down. We spent the next few days getting soaked in the Spirit, hearing the richly anointed preaching of the Word, and especially enjoying the singing of Scripture choruses that transformed our private and church worship from then on. To this day Arvin and I enjoy sitting down and singing those precious choruses we learned that week, as they never grow old, being the living Word of God. There is nothing that compares to that as far as we are concerned. There was no doubt whatsoever that we had heard from God to arise and go south, for we received far more than we ever dared to hope.

We returned to attend the same campmeeting the following year, and it was there that Costa Deir prophesied over us and told us that he was getting only one word for us, and it was, "East." He didn't know if it meant East across the city or street or nation. We hid this word in our hearts and in time its meaning became plain.

Sheldon attended one of the World MAP campmeetings in California, and while there he met Paul Johansson, the academic dean of Elim Bible Institute. Sheldon began inquiring about the possibility of going there. A lot of things had to work out first for him to go there, but he definitely knew in his heart that the Lord was leading him to that place. This seemed quite strange to us, because we had our own denomination's Bible Schools close by. Why would he have to go so far from home? But we began to feel God was in it, and after dealing with all kinds of immigration hassles, etc., he was accepted even though he had a late start. So our older son, only 18 years old, was on his own in a foreign land about 3,000 miles from home.

My Parents Pass to Glory

Meanwhile, my dear Mother was failing so badly that we brought her to stay with us in Powell River so we could take care of her. Daddy also came with her, and he stayed at Poseins' while Mom stayed with us in the boy's bedroom. We all believed the Lord would heal her, but six months later the Lord called her home to Himself where He healed her totally and forever. This was difficult for all of us to deal with, but the Lord brought us through.

My Daddy was left alone in the house in Kelowna. Missing Mom badly, he was not able to handle living alone, so he started looking around at other widows. Even though he was 70, he wanted to remarry to fill that terrible void in his heart. He was looking for Mother's place to be filled by someone like herself, but even though he did remarry, he always felt like she could never be replaced by anyone. So he continued to grieve for her. But he did try to make this new

marriage work, and they lived together for 15 years before the Lord called Daddy home.

It happened on his 85th birthday in his home in Kelowna. He finished eating his birthday dinner, then stepped out to the restroom where he collapsed. His three daughters—myself, Emma, and Elfrieda—just happened to be there to celebrate his birthday, and we ran in to see him leave this world and go to be with Jesus. His last words to us were, "Children, keep praying," and he was gone. It was such a sudden passing, but also without suffering from any kind of sickness, for which we give thanks to God.

The Transition to New York State (1973)

After Mother's passing in Powell River, Arvin was asked to come to Elim Bible Institute in Lima, New York, as a guest to their annual conference, since Sheldon was a student there. While there, he met Tommy Reid, the pastor of a large Assemblies of God church in Buffalo. Later, Tommy contacted Arvin to see if he would consider coming to take over a charismatic gathering in Allegany, New York. We had been feeling like the Lord was loosing us from Powell River and that a change was underway, but never thought it would be New York. This "Christian Center" was made up of denominational people who had come into the charismatic renewal and they needed a pastor. After much prayer, we felt this was God's leading and we accepted the call to leave Canada and move to the great USA. The hardest aspect on us was to part with the Poseins (my sister Elfrieda and her family), and especially her two little girls who were like our own children to us. My heart was just torn, but still I knew that this was God's will for us.

With a U-Haul trailer hitched behind our car, we headed across the great plains of America, a distance of about 3,000 miles. Bob, 16, sat in the front with his Dad while I sat in the back seat, taking in the sights and handing food over the front seat to my two men, which really made the trip special. I kept referring to ourselves as Abraham striking out into a land he knew nothing about, feeling like Sarah with her Abraham and Isaac in the front seat. We had the peace of God all the way, and when we finally got to New York we were so pleasantly surprised to see what a beautiful State it is. We beheld the lakes and hills, and enjoyed the miles of vineyards where you could smell the aroma of grape juice permeating the air.

Our Four Months in Allegany, NY

When we finally came to a stop in Allegany, it felt like the rubber met the road. Here we were, standing in an old, stately house that was supposed to be our new home. It was anything but "homey" to me, and meeting the elderly Mr. and Mrs. Bump who lived there didn't help. He hardly spoke, and she had a

neverending stream gushing out of her that made up for whatever he lacked, and then some. My hopeful dreams crashed before my feet, and I wondered what in the world had we come to? The only consolation at that time was that I had Arvin and my precious boy, Bob, with me. I felt the Lord would help us somehow to cope with this situation. The Bumps gave us the run of their house. They moved into a new apartment they had built in a section of their garage, but being on the same yard it was much too close to the house for me. We would need to live together on the same property.

They took us over to see the Center. At one time it had been a large grocery store they owned, but they remodeled it into a meeting place with seating for 300 people. It was nicely carpeted, equipped with an organ and a piano, and really was quite attractive. Being wealthy, the Bumps wanted to use what they had for the work of the Lord.

After moving into the house, the first thing I did was to scrub and strip down and redo the kitchen and some of the other rooms, even though some of it was actually very rich-looking in an old Victorian style. I have never liked antique furniture or decor, so it did not appeal to me at all. I felt like I was taken out of modern progressive housing to the "old world" culture, a context that did not feel homey to me. With time, I began to learn how to appreciate older homes, awakening to a certain charm that you don't find in modern homes.

Arvin put his best into the services and I played piano or organ. People came to the meetings, eager and open to hear the Word and experience the moving of the Holy Spirit. We saw some great miracles during the time we spent there and the Lord blessed. But Arvin found it increasingly difficult to work under the control of Mrs. Bump, as she called all the shots and expected Arvin to comply with her directions. We began to realize why others who had tried to lead this work were also unable to stay there.

One night Arvin had a heavenly messenger come to him and say, "You are not in Allegany for long." Wow, that was music to my ears! I knew it was from God. Within a short time we had gotten a call to consider pastoring an Assembly of God church in Depew, a suburb of Buffalo, NY. Pastor Tommy Reid had arranged this connection because he knew that we were not happily situated in Allegany and felt responsible for his role in bringing us from so far away to that place.

We Move To Depew (1974)

As it turned out, we accepted the call to Depew with exploding joy. The church was very small, having come through a difficult past also. But it was a properly organized church with a board of deacons and not run by a woman, so anything was better than what we had in Allegany. While Arvin met with the

deacons in the church office to discuss our coming, I went into the church and tried out the organ. It was a Gulbransen Theater Organ, with a sound like nothing I had ever laid my hands on. I broke down and cried with longing to move there, if for no other reason than to be able to express everything I had inside of me on that console. I was lifted into the heavenlies all alone in that auditorium. There has never been another organ I have ever played that compared with that one.

The congregation was down to around 40 people, but that didn't matter, we were in our glory to be there. From the very start, people began to fill the place more and more each week and soon we were packed out with standing room only at Easter. There was such an air of expectancy in the place, and with Bob on the piano and me on the organ we about lifted the rafters off that place. What singing and praises to the Lord filled the temple.

I was invited to speak at a Presbyterian church one evening, and don't know why I was asked. But I felt the Lord must be in it, so I went in faith, believing the Lord would help me give the message He purposed for the gathering. Before the meeting, the organist came to me and asked if, after my message, I would pray for her before praying for anyone else. Her only condition was that she did not want any of this falling-under-the-power business. So she told me to hold her tightly and pray for her, and then she would go and play background worship music while I prayed for the others. To my surprise, that was the first I heard that they expected me to pray for the people.

When I had finished speaking, I prayed for the organist and, wouldn't you know it, she suddenly fell to the floor with me on top of her! I couldn't believe what was happening. I had never fallen under the power before, and wasn't even sure I had now—it felt more like she pulled me down with her. Well, it struck me too funny. I picked myself up from the floor, and as she got up and went to the organ and began to play, I felt totally at loose ends, not knowing what to say or do. It seemed to me that this display on the platform of two women on the floor of a Presbyterian church was not appropriate behavior, to say the least. So I just looked over the congregation and, with a giggle in my voice, chirped, "Well, does anyone else want prayer too?' I just knew church was over and the people would be stomping out in disgust. But to my surprise, a long line of both men and women formed in front of me. Several of them fell under the power of the Spirit when I prayed for them. I had never had any such manifestations in any of my meetings before, so it left me amazed at how God will work in places you least expect. Let God be God.

For seven years I served actively as a counselor with the 700 Club at their Buffalo satellite location. At the time, that ministry was reaching mostly Catholic people who were coming into the charismatic movement. They were so

eager to know more of the Word of God and the moving of the Holy Spirit. They would call and ask if there were any Bible studies or women's meetings where they could get more of the Word and Spirit. I had just opened my home to a weekly Bible Study and prayer meeting, so my name was mentioned to inquirers. In a short time, our house was jammed with women coming from as far away as 35 miles, all by word of mouth. I never did get to know them all personally that much. I could not keep track of all the women that walked through our doors. They just loved the joyful singing. Women were saved, filled with the Holy Spirit, and healed on a regular basis. The group grew to as many as 50 ladies and our house could no longer accommodate so many. So we ended up moving the meeting to our church hall. Because of the Lord's blessing in those meetings, one family after another came to visit our regular church services, and many became part of our church. Attendance grew, and we had to go to two Sunday morning services. We began a property search, wanting to build a larger facility so others could come in. God wonderfully blessed in the church in Depew.

Prayer for The Barren

One Sunday morning, while people were praying at the altar after the message, I noticed a young woman kneeling right in front of the altar and weeping. I had never seen her before, but the Lord told me she was praying the prayer of Hannah. So I left the organ and tapped her shoulder and asked her if she was praying for a baby. Shocked, she looked at me with big eyes and said, "Yes. And how did you know?" I prayed for her, and then returned to the organ to continue playing softly during the prayer time.

Very soon after, we got a letter from Salamanca, NY. It was that lady, telling us that after many years of infertility, she became pregnant right after I prayed for her. As you can well imagine, she was thrilled with what the Lord had done for her. About 3 years later, we got another letter from her, telling us that she had 2 children by now. She asked me not to pray anymore for her to have children, as she had all she could handle with these two lively little ones. I actually had not continued to pray for that to happen, but the Lord just gave her a double portion.

Another lady came to my midweek ladies meeting whom I had never met before. She spoke up in the meeting and told the ladies of her heartache. She told how the doctors had done all they could, but finally told her she will never be able to have a child because her female organs were hopelessly deformed beyond repair. She gave us the scientific explanation, but all we knew is that there was no hope for her. I went and prayed over her and then continued with the meeting. That was the last I saw of her because she moved away.

About 12 years later, I was asked to speak at the Women's Ministries Spring

Rally in the NY Central Section of our denomination (Assemblies of God). I was seated at the head table. Before the meeting started, a lady came up to me and asked if I remembered her, which I did not. Then she told me that she was the woman I prayed for who was married eleven years and could not get pregnant. After I prayed for her, she got pregnant three times over. What joy we shared when she told me what the Lord had done.

As I was introduced to speak, I just had to share this testimony with all the ladies there. I asked her to stand up to confirm what I had just said. Well, all those ladies were excited for her and praised the Lord.

When I was about to close, somebody came up to the head table and handed me a note. It read, "There are a lot of ladies in this Rally who are not able to have children and they were passing this note around to indicate that they wanted prayer also."

Apologetically, I explained that I did not have time to pray for each one individually because my husband was waiting outside to take me to another commitment we had (related to a Billy Graham Crusade). So I told all the ladies who wanted prayer to come to the front and form a chain by holding hands, and I would pray for them all at the end of that chain. There was a long line of young women, and I just prayed a short prayer and then left, not knowing if I would ever see them again.

About a year later at the District Counsel, the Women's Ministries president of that section caught me and said how glad she was to see me. She was wanting to tell me that ever since I prayed for those young women, they had had a veritable baby explosion in that section with church nurseries full of them. What a blessing from God! Good news travels fast, of course, and before long I was asked to pray for many women who were barren, and many conceived. It seems like God does things in seasons, and for some reason He wanted me to pray for many barren wombs at that time.

Angels and More

One day a newcomer and her little five-year-old boy came to visit me in the parsonage in Depew, and the little guy said to me, "I see that you like German airplanes." I told him I didn't know I did. So he said, "Well, why do you have that one on the cup in your cupboard?" as he pointed to the open cupboard where I had coffee mugs. "See that cup with the airplane on it? Well, that one with the red circle is a German plane and the one on the other cup with the blue circle is an American plane." I was really impressed with the knowledge of this young child and I said, "Wow, you really are a smart little boy, you are much smarter than I am." To which he replied, "Yea I know it." Pausing for a moment, he continued, "All you know about is God." I was blown away, and still think that

had to be one of the biggest compliments anyone could ever give me, if only it were really true. No doubt the reason he said that is that the only time he ever saw me was in God's house, playing the organ. Cute!

As elsewhere, while in Depew I would get lost from time to time, and had earned the title, "the lost sister Sorge." On one occasion, I had wanted to check out the new Thruway Mall. It was only 5 miles from our house, involving only a couple turns in the road to get there. I thought I knew where it was and how to get there. But soon I realized, as I was speeding along in 4-lane traffic, that I must be many miles past the Mall. I became alarmed because I realized I had never been here before. I had no idea how to get out of this solid line of traffic. I couldn't see any off-ramps.

After driving seemingly endlessly, I suddenly came to a toll booth on which was written, "To Canada." That panicked me. I told the toll collector that I was lost and didn't know how to get back home. I told him I was from Depew and that I was going to shop at the Thruway Mall. He said, "But the Thruway Mall is in Depew." He just shook his head, wondering no doubt what this woman was even doing out on the streets in this huge city. Mercifully, he didn't charge me for going through the gate, but told me to take that side road and stay on it till I would see the sign pointing to Depew. Thanking him profusely for his kindness, I proceeded down that road but never did see a sign pointing to Depew. All I could do was keep on driving. I drove and drove endlessly, until I suddenly saw that same formidable toll booth with the words "To Canada."

I was so ashamed as I faced that officer again. He stood in disbelief, beholding this hopeless woman. Patiently he explained things even more clearly. I was off again, and this time I saw a sign pointing to Depew and made my way home. I never did get to the Mall that day, and I was cured of the slightest desire to ever go to that stupid Mall ever again. Arvin tried to figure out how I could have missed the obvious exit to the Mall (the directional road signs were so big and clear, pointing right to the place). Furthermore, he tried to piece together how I could have gotten on the Interstate going to Canada, as that route was so complicated. It may have been beyond his understanding but trust me, I know how to do it!

Now I'd like to mention a couple angelic encounters. One day I got a call from one of our young women in the church, Betty Yaeger. She was almost hysterical, telling me that an angel was in her house. She said she was busy doing her ironing and had the 700 Club on TV, when the Lord spoke to her to call and tell her mother-in-law to watch the program. Knowing her mother-in-law was hooked on her soap operas, she argued with the Lord about making the call. But when the Lord persisted in urging her, she finally gave in and called to

ask her to watch this good, true-to-life show. Amazingly, she agreed to switch to that channel.

As Betty continued her ironing, the Lord impressed her to unplug the iron, kneel before the TV, and pray for her unsaved mother-in-law who was hearing the message of salvation. Obediently, Betty knelt in front of the TV and got so caught up in prayer she lost track of time. Suddenly aware of an imminent appointment, she rushed over to finish her ironing. As she came to the ironing board, there before her was her laundry, ironed, folded, and stacked in order for each family member. Knowing there was nobody else in the house besides herself, she realized God had sent an angel to do her ironing because of her obedience to pray for her mother-in-law. She was beside herself with unspeakable joy, and as she told it to me I also had goose bumps all over my body!

Here's another one. On Sundays, I would go to church around 7 a.m. to pray for the blessing of God on the services that day. By the time our second service was finished, it would be close to 1:00 p.m. by the time we got home. So I had come up with a system to aid food preparation for Sunday lunch. Before leaving the house I would pre-fry chicken in an electric frying pan, get it half-done, turn the heat dial to zero, go to church, and then finish cooking the meal when we got home from church. There were two ways to turn off the fry pan's heat: Either by turning the heat dial to zero, or by unplugging the cord from the wall outlet. It was never my practice to unplug the pan; I always turned the dial to off.

On this particular Sunday, as we returned from church and came home, I was surprised to be greeted by the smell of cooked chicken. Coming to the electric fry pan, I was amazed to see that the electric cord had been taken out of the handle of the frying pan and laid neatly on the counter beside it. I looked at the dial and it was set on 350 degrees. The chicken was not burned, but was browned and ready to eat. The fact that the dial was still set at 350 degrees and that the chicken was fully cooked meant that I had forgotten to turn off the fry pan before leaving the house. But the fact that the chicken was not burned, and that the cord was pulled from the wall, meant that someone had turned it off for me. But the house had been locked all morning. Who turned off the fry pan?? There could be only one explanation: an angel. If the pan had been left on all morning, not only would our dinner have been burned, but the house could have possibly caught fire! An angel must have been sent to turn off the fry pan, unplugging it in a manner such as I never did, in order to tip me off to his visit, that we might be romanced and wowed at the wonder of God's protection in our lives.

The Bible tells us that angels are ministering servants sent to minister to the

heirs of salvation. So we, too, had an angelic visitation in our home.

Our Children's Lives In the Depew Years

During our time there, Sheldon had met Sue Orred at Elim Bible Institute, and in May of 1975 they were married in Spicer, Minnesota. Upon graduating, Sheldon was asked to stay on the faculty to teach Bible and Music, which he did for the next 6 years. He also directed "Praise Song," a traveling choir comprised of Elim students. They toured the country for several weeks each year, giving exposure to Elim Bible Institute wherever they went. The group was greatly used of the Lord and touched many lives.

Both Sonya and Stephanie were born while Sheldon and Sue lived on campus. Those little girls were the joy of our hearts, and we were thankfully able to visit them often since we lived only about 60 miles apart.

Bob graduated from high school in 1974, and was not sure where the Lord was leading his life at the time. He completed a 9-month vocational training institute to become a TV technician, and followed that line of work for several months. Then he tried his hand at being a salesman for Cutco Knife Company. Then he worked for Wegmans grocery stores when that chain first expanded into the Buffalo market. He knew, however, that this was not all that the Lord had in mind for his life, and decided to go for a year to Evangel College in Springfield, Missouri. He majored in music and minored in biblical studies. The year stood him good, but still he did not feel it was the place for him to stay. He felt led to go to Elim, where Sheldon was now a teacher, to prepare himself for fulltime ministry. It was the right decision and we felt God was in it.

We had attended an Elim conference once, at a time when Bob was not with us. As I looked across the audience, I caught a glimpse of the most gorgeous young lady. My heart skipped and I said to myself, "That is the girl for our Bob." When I got home and told him, he brushed me off as though it meant nothing to him.

Later, when Bob arrived on the campus to begin his studies there, he and Sheldon were together in Sheldon's office on an evening before classes had begun, and they were sitting together at a piano, playing a duet, and goofing around (as they often do). It so happened that this beautiful young girl—Marci—and her Mom were walking nearby, heard the sound, and stopped by to check it out. It was the first time for Bob and Marci to meet. Immediately, Marci sensed a prompting in her heart regarding her destiny with Bob. Later that night she quietly confided in her Mom, "I'm going to marry that man." It must have been love at first sight for her! But really, she felt it was a signal from the Lord. But she never whispered a word of it to Bob.

As time went on, and they crossed paths on the campus, little by little sparks

began to fly between them. Sure enough, it ended up in marriage in July, 1981. (I still like to think it was all my idea.)

Our Transition to Syracuse, NY

By this time we had left Buffalo and were living in the Syracuse area. It was a central location for our involvement in a ministry called Lay Leadership Institute, which involved considerable travel.

Bob and Marci's wedding was in a nice church in Rochester, and what a joy it was to feel an unusually strong presence of the Holy Spirit in that church. The church was packed, with attendees including Marci's parents, Morris and Barby Smith, other Smith relatives, my sister Elfrieda and her husband Orville, Arvin's sister Alva and her husband Lou MacFarlane, the faculty members of Elim, plus many others. Both fathers of the wedding couple—Arvin and Morris—officiated at their children's wedding. Bob sang a song he had written to his bride, with tears running down his cheeks that just melted everyone there. Marci looked like a living doll and Bob was so handsome in his white tuxedo. What a wedding!

Sheldon resigned his teaching position at Elim Bible Institute that summer, and since he had just graduated, Bob was asked to replace Sheldon as director of music. He stayed there for three years, during which time Joel was born. How blessed we were to be able to visit back and forth during those years and see how happy our children were.

It was such a sad day for me when Bob and Marci packed up their belongings and headed west to join the staff of a church in San Diego, California. How hard it was to say "good bye," my heart was just torn out of me. But I had to let go and let God take them wherever. We knew He would lead them, and with time the pain did subside.

Sheldon and Sue and the girls left Elim in August, 1981, as Sheldon had purposed to further his education and to earn his doctorate at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina. We really felt the pain of that parting terribly. Then, when Bob and Marci and Joel moved to San Diego in 1984, we found ourselves alone in New York with our precious children scattered far and wide. But we still had years left to work for our Lord wherever He would lead us, so life went on.

We had bought our first house ever (having always lived previously in parsonages) in Liverpool (Syracuse, NY area). Arvin was asked to do traveling ministry for Lay Leadership Institute, which we did for about eight months. During that time, we visited Grace Assembly of God in Syracuse whenever we had a free Sunday. The church had just come through a huge split, and Arvin was asked to fill in while they were looking for a new Pastor. This was such a beautiful church, but hurting badly from the horrible 3-way split. The previous Pastor had a lot of charm and charisma and had really built the church up to

where they had up to 700 people at times. But at the split, some left with that pastor, a third remained in the church, and the other third scattered. Actually, there were only about 150 people left in the church. It was a sick situation.

Pastoring Grace Assembly of God

Various candidates were contacted, and after all had backed out, they were left with us as candidates. We had very mixed feelings, as we had an open invitation to come on staff with Pastor Bob Forsyth, a man we knew from bygone days in Canada, who was now pastoring a thriving church on Long Island. How we would have loved to go there, but Arvin had heard the voice of the Lord telling him, "You are the next pastor of Grace Assembly." He never told me this, but hid it in his heart. The way things were going in the natural, it sure didn't look like we would be asked to pastor the church.

To make a long story short, we were asked to become their pastors and we accepted, only because of the word the Lord had spoken earlier to Arvin. We were afraid not to accept the call. With fear and trembling, we assumed the position of senior Pastor of this hurting church.

We never did feel equal to the task, but with all of our faith in the Lord to help us, we stepped into this position and trusted Him all the way. We did a lot of praying, and soon we began to see how the Lord was bringing healing into the midst of this torn congregation. Little by little, people who had left returned, and others came in as well. In a little over 2 years there were 700 people in church, which was beyond anything we could ever have dreamed. We had a terrific brass band and all kinds of musical instruments, some very professional musicians, and we were known as the "Praising Church" in that city. What a joy it is to be in a place where God is moving by His Spirit. We saw many come to know the Lord, be baptized, filled with the Spirit, and healed. Truly it was our joy to be in that place.

We lived in the parsonage and so were able to rent out our Liverpool house. This enabled us to accrue a little equity, a blessing in light of the fact that we had next to nothing saved toward retirement at that point.

Arvin joined the Greater Syracuse Ministerial Association, even serving as President at one point. The monthly meetings were held in the fellowship hall of Sacred Melody Book Store, about 15 miles from where we lived. Lunch was brought in for the ministers from nearby restaurants, and when the meals were skimpy for what they had to pay, they asked the pastors to recruit women from each church to take a turn serving lunch at minimal cost. As it turned out, I was the only one who was willing to attempt it, so I was gladly accepted. Each month I would bake my own bread and make a full-course meal plus homemade dessert. Naturally, the ministers were thrilled.

Having to cook the food at home, however, then wrap it up and transport it across the city to the meeting place was no small chore. After 3 years I felt I had done my duty and wanted to opt out. They felt so badly about losing my cooking, expressing their disappointment. So I offered a simple lunch idea, limiting the menu to only soup and homemade bread and dessert, if they would settle for that. They were more than happy for that offer, and so I put in about 6 years making a soup luncheon each month. I never knew exactly how many would attend so always made enough to have plenty left over.

My Wonder Soup Story

Things went well as I got into the swing of making all kinds of soups. I always cooked the meat stock the night before and then finished the soup in the morning, in time for lunch.

One particular morning, I arose early to go into the kitchen to get the soup done. I lifted the lid of the huge pot, only to find the soup had spoiled overnight. It was alive with bubbles floating on top of the broth. I could not believe my eyes, as this had never happened before. I stood in shock, not knowing what to do. I said, “Lord, why did You let this happen to me?” And the only answer I got was, “This is only a test.”

Well, like it or not, the entire pot of chicken had to be taken outside and dumped behind the shed in our back yard. I watched as it lay on the grass, still bubbling from the bacterial action. I didn’t know what to do next. I knew I had to make soup for the luncheon but all my meat stock lay in my back yard. What do I do now? I had no other soup meat to work with; but I did remember I had bought a big chunk of corned beef on sale, and it was stored in the freezer. So I figured I could surely make *some* kind of soup out of that, although exactly what I really didn’t know.

Grabbing it from the freezer, I plunked the corned beef into my big pressure cooker (I had to speed up the cooking process because the clock was ticking away). Soon steam began to rise from the pressure cooker, indicating that the pressure had come up, enabling the meat to cook quickly at a high temperature. I was feverishly chopping up the vegetables when, like a bomb suddenly exploding, the pressure gauge of the pot shot into the air. In the rush, I had allowed the pressure cooker to get too hot. When the gauge came off, the food inside the pot came bursting through the pressure hole like an instant geyser. Within seconds, the whole kitchen was a fog of soup stock. Soup was running down the cupboards and stove and ceiling, and all over the floor—and over me. All I heard was, “This is only a test.”

I began to wash down the walls and cupboards and floor. I was in a daze—what was I to do next?? The soup stock was gone—again—and there in the pot

lay the big chunk of corned beef.

I decided to cut the meat in pieces, put water on it, and start all over, hoping there would still be some flavor in what was left. After boiling it a while, I sampled it; it tasted like a whole "nothing." Yuk!

"Oh, I know what I will do," I thought to myself. "I will put the meat into the blender, and then it will flavor the water better." I put some into the blender and turned it on—but in my rush I had forgotten to put the lid on the blender! Like a shot, it flew up into the air and there on the wall it hung. So I scooped it off the walls, hearing, "This is only a test."

After mincing the meat in the blender, the broth still had no taste to it. Oh my, what else could I do? It was then that I remembered I had three frozen containers of a homemade dish we call "Gritz Wurst." It's an ethnic dish from my German background, a meat and barley hash that we usually eat with bread. I had never heard of its being used in soup but, hey, at this point I was willing to try just about anything. So I rushed to get that out of the freezer, hurriedly trying to defrost it in the microwave.

After some moments, I thought it must be reasonably thawed by now, so I pulled it out of the microwave. I was in such a hurry that, as I spun around with the full platter, I realized only too late that it was still hard in the inside. The weight of the frozen center carried the whole pile of hash right off the platter. It flew headlong through the air, landing full length on the kitchen floor. Some of it was strewn even as far as the dining room carpet.

By this time I was numb in my head. Then I heard it again, "This is only a test." Almost without thinking, I dropped on my hands and knees to the floor and began to scoop up the Gritz Wurst. I flung it into the soup pot and said, "What they don't know won't hurt them." I reckoned, "This floor is twice clean: Clean from water, and clean from having been washed with soup. So there. This is what the preachers will get today."

No amount of seasoning seemed to help the flavor of the soup. But time was up. I was finished with doctoring it any further. I figured if the preachers and leaders can't eat it, so be it, I can't help it. I did my best.

Arvin came in the car to take me to the Luncheon. We put the precious soup in the trunk. I was not in the mood to talk during the car ride. I wasn't really angry or fretting; but I wasn't exactly shouting-happy either.

We arrived later than usual. A bunch of the younger pastors stood outside, wondering why we were late. They greeted us with such joy, almost as though they were worried the meal wouldn't be coming for some reason. They quickly offered to help carry things in to the dining area. One of them excitedly asked, "What kind of soup are we having today?" I really wasn't prepared for the

question, but instantly I had a response. “It is called Wonder Soup,” I retorted. Wow, they had never heard of that kind of soup before. Nor had I, actually!

I was imagining that nobody would be able to eat this soup. Embarrassed to show my face, I stayed in the restroom for the longest time. I could not bear to see their expressions once they tasted my concoction.

Finally, I had to go into the room to serve the dessert. I suspected all the soup would be sitting on the tables, uneaten. Upon entering the room, I could not believe my eyes. Men were still coming for refills and were scraping the bottom of the pots. They kept telling me how much they loved that soup. When they asked for my recipe, I stood speechless. All I could say is that I could not give out this recipe because it was a family secret. They accepted that, and I came out smelling like a rose. But the whole time I was thinking, “If they only knew they had eaten off my floor, they would never eat my soup again.”

In our church service the next Sunday night, Arvin was speaking on, “Passing the Test.” As I looked at him I thought to myself, “Who does he think he is, to speak on that subject? I am the one who passed the test this week, not he! What does he know about that, anyway?” So I raised my hand in the middle of his sermon and asked if I could say something. When he graciously allowed it, I told the congregation the whole story. As I was telling it, believe me, the house came down. One of the men in the meeting was also present at the Luncheon; he stood up and said, “Sister Sorge, do you mean to say I ate off your floor?” I replied with a great big smile, “Yes, you did!” And guess what? He is still alive today. Life can get pretty interesting, I must say.

I have been asked to tell my Wonder Soup story to many people, and some of you reading this may have even been among the guests who ate it.

Jesus Visits Our Choir

Each summer, Sheldon’s two girls would come to spend the holidays with us. They attended our Vacation Bible School where they met a lot of other girls that became their friends. We had so much fun together.

One year we took the girls on a road trip to Disney World (Orlando, FL). We enjoyed staying in a Timeshare condo, a gift to us for our 40th wedding anniversary. We were glad the girls could enjoy the condo with us. It was a way to take advantage of the gift and enjoy a week with our grandchildren at the same time. We had such a lot of fun and consider that a precious time to cherish. We weren’t able to do Disney with Bob’s children, but we did have a lot of fun times with them too during the years we lived together in NY State.

One December while we served at Grace Assembly in Syracuse, our church choir was practicing for a Christmas Cantata. Lori Moscato, our choir director, was working us real hard. She always strove for excellence to make the message

harmonious and meaningful. It was Saturday night, I was totally exhausted from a hard days' work, and I was finding the practice very grueling and tiring. Finally, we came to the last song, "Come Thou Long Expected Savior." Everything within me was just yearning for His coming, perhaps especially because I was sooooo weary in body. As I sang that song from the bottom of my heart, I suddenly knew that Jesus had, in fact, entered the building. I sensed that He had come through the back door of the church sanctuary, was walking down the aisle where we were practicing, and ended up standing next to me at the end of that row. I have never in my whole life experienced anything like what happened to me at that time.

I do not have words to describe the awesome presence and glory of Jesus that overcame me. I could not move or say anything, but froze in one position and just wept uncontrollably. O the glory I felt! It was like heaven had come down and I was wrapped in His arms. Unspeakable glory. Chuck Moscato, Lori's husband and our Assistant Pastor, was running the sound board for the choir. He came running down the other aisle, crying loudly, "Folks, I don't know what's going on, but I know that Jesus just walked into this church." I am sure there was not a dry eye in our choir, for how could it not be so? We tiptoed out of the building, knowing we had been with Jesus. That experience is one of the highlights of my whole life. I said, if heaven is going to be anything like this, I can hardly wait to go there! How I wish I had another one of those experiences! The glory of that encounter lingered with me for days.

The time came when we decided to move out of the parsonage and buy a house of our own again. We found a house on Kasson Road in Camillus in a very nice area of town. We really enjoyed living in that house. It was well-built and spacious enough to entertain. It had a nice back yard with a wooded area where we could cut our own wood for our wood-burning fireplace.

We really had no idea how long we would be living there, but not long after moving there, the Lord began to ruffle our nest to look at retiring. While Arvin was away, teaching in a Bible School in Russia, I was sitting in our church one Sunday morning and the Lord spoke clearly to me. He told me that our work here at Grace Assembly was finished. It shocked me, but I knew what I heard and began wondering how things were going to go. When Arvin came home, I told him about it, and he said if the Lord tells him the same thing he will listen. Shortly thereafter, although it happened to him in a different way, he felt the hand of the Lord was on him with an increasing urgency to resign and retire.

Our Retirement

The church put on a big farewell Banquet for us. Leaving our precious flock of nearly 12 years was a very emotional thing for us all. We had seen so much

blessing in that place but also went through some hard times such as every Pastor faces from time to time. We need both the rain and the sun; we need both storms and calm. It is all part of life on this earth, and is intended to draw us closer to our Lord.

The incoming pastor, Charlie Semple, ended up buying our house, so things were falling into place as they should. We decided to move to Canandaigua, NY, where Bob was pastor of a thriving church, so that we could live close to one of our sons. Sheldon was in transition at that time so we knew it was not wise to move close to him.

One of the first things we had to do was find a house of our own in Canandaigua. We hoped to land one within one week's time because we had planned a road trip across the continent to the west coast. But finding a house in just a few days was quite a challenge. We wanted a house with everything on one floor, if possible. The main thing was that the master bedroom be on the main floor instead of upstairs. We got a realtor from the church to show us around, and she insisted we take a look at a contemporary house on a hill. The view was spectacular, overlooking the city, Canandaigua Lake, and the surrounding rolling countryside. The house was practically new and very modern, with exceptionally high vaulted ceilings. It really was stunning but it was more than we felt we could afford. We kept looking at other houses, but nothing else seemed to register in our hearts.

When we got back to Bob and Marci's house, Marci asked whether we had found anything. I told her about a certain ranch-style house we had just looked at. At that moment the Lord suddenly spoke to me and said, "Not this one, but the first one." I was shocked, and ran out of the house to tell Arvin what God had just spoken to me. In his quiet manner he looked at me and said that the Lord told him the exact same words already half an hour earlier. Well, I was ecstatic, as I could hardly believe that the Lord even cared that much about giving us such a beautiful retirement home. The master bedroom was upstairs, but we had another nice one downstairs as a guest room that we could use very well. There was a two-sided fireplace in the great room downstairs and another single-sided one in the master bedroom upstairs. It was really a swanky house that we never dreamed we could own. The Lord must have enjoyed our excitement. We were overwhelmed at His provision, making it possible for us to buy. However, we did find out when winter came that the place was not well insulated, so we had to do some insulating ourselves—a mammoth task. But we knew the Lord told us this was the house, so we just worked at making it more comfortable, given the winter winds that hit a house built on a hill.

Our trip across Canada was so enjoyable and relaxed. We had our first

Cadillac, and it felt like we were riding on a cloud. It was a second-hand car with low mileage that we got for $10,000.00, a real steal. We knew the Lord got it for us for sure. We saw many relatives along the way, and when we finally returned to NY we were ready to move into our new house. How blessed we were to be part of our children's church and spend time with them whenever we wanted to.

The Car Accident

A few months later, we were on our way to a leadership meeting at the church, and had our eight-year-old granddaughter, Katie, with us in the back seat. Fresh snow had fallen, so Arvin was driving carefully. Suddenly, without warning, our car caught the lip of the shoulder and slid out of control. We were hit broadside on the passenger side by an oncoming pickup truck. Not only was our beautiful car totaled, but I was seriously injured from the impact on the right side. The rescue crew worked hard to get my body out of the car, and I was air-lifted to Rochester General Hospital. I was drifting in and out of consciousness. Thank God that Katie had decided to sit behind Grandpa that night, instead of sitting behind me where she usually sat. Consequently, neither she nor Arvin were hurt.

I had multiple fractures down my entire right side, and had a very rough time going through that. I do not want to take time to describe it. All I know is that the Lord miraculously spared my life, and the journey back to normal mobility took a long time. Arvin had a full-time job looking after me. He had to do everything for me because I could not ever hold a glass of water to my mouth. I could not raise my head off the pillow or sit up alone. He was the perfect nurse, as he always has been. What a time I had of it, learning how to get out of bed. Then came the time when I needed to walk again. It was painful beyond my ability to express, but little by little I was gaining ground. The only place I could sit was on a commode where the hole in the seat provided relief for my broken pelvis and tailbone. So all of my guests visited me on the commode. Not much room for pride those days. My collar bone, shoulder blade, pelvis, and tail bone were all broken, along with five crushed ribs and a punctured lung. It all took some time to heal.

One of the most amazing things was how the people at Bob's church (Zion Fellowship) took it upon themselves to bring us a hot meal for 47 days. We were new in the church and yet these dear people just showered us with so much loving care, it blew us away. Often I would see the women park their cars on the street and walk up our lane with their arms loaded down with food, and it brought tears to my eyes because I felt that it was Jesus coming again to feed me. They brought such rich food. I was told later by the doctor that when you break bones you need high calorie food to heal. So without knowing this, the

Lord provided and my healing was considered supernatural by my doctor. I thought it took quite long, but not according to him. In it all we were so blessed, and I can say that I have no remaining disabling symptoms from the injuries. I recovered fully, and was once again able to resume my daily walks as I have done for years. God is SO good!

About Sheldon and His Family

One day, Sheldon called us from Marion, Virginia, and said, "Mom and Dad, are you sitting down?" We wondered what heavy news he was about to share with us. It was then that he told us that Sue no longer loved him and was leaving him. It seemed so unreal to us, we could hardly grasp it, but had to face the facts as Sheldon poured out his pain over the phone. Unbelievable! Whatever triggered this? A thousand questions went through our hearts as we tried to come to grips with the truth. Never had we noticed any problem in their marriage, although we always felt like Sue kept herself at some distance from us much of the time. Then again, at other times she could be very warm to us. We dearly loved her. She is the mother of our precious grandchildren, and now she was leaving both them and Sheldon to do the things she always wanted to do for herself. It made no sense to us, but the marriage was over suddenly regardless of all the tears and pleading from Sheldon.

Sheldon was suddenly facing life without a wife, but at least he had his girls.

They were devastated and understandably angry. He immediately submitted his resignation as pastor of his church. If he could not lead his own home in the right direction, he wondered, how could he lead the church? But the church refused to accept his resignation, and assured him of their faithful support. They knew how deeply he suffered, and they loved him and told him they would walk through this horrible situation with him. What an example of true love they showed for their Pastor in such a dark hour of his life. Sonya was 16 and Stephanie was 14, and they stuck together closer than ever with their Dad. In spite of their pain, they were able to make it through the most horrible time in their lives with the help of God.

Soon Sonya graduated from high school and continued on with her education to enter the medical profession. She began to date Andrew Parlier, a high-school friend living in Marion. Within a short time the two of them became engaged and before long wedding plans were underway.

Meanwhile, Sheldon was in touch with Tammy Wiens whom he had known from being involved in Blacknall Presbyterian Church in Durham. He learned from her that she also had been going through a similar situation with her husband. Sharing both hopes and woes on the phone, through email, and eventually in person, they were increasingly drawn together. They realized they

were falling in love with each other through it all. So after divorces and other things were taken care of, they planned a wedding date. We felt the Lord was sending His comfort to give them the opportunity to have a new lease on life together once again. A lot of prayer went into this new chapter in their lives and we were thanking God together that He was mending broken lives and broken hearts to redeem the past and give them a fresh start together. The wedding was modest but beautiful, and both Sonya and Stephanie were attendants in the wedding party, and sang a song Stephanie wrote for her Dad and his new wife. It was so good to see them happy for their Daddy whom they loved so dearly. Tammy has brought a lot of healing and joy into Sheldon's life and she has been very loving to the girls as well. There was a time of adjusting, of course, but we have seen the Lord do a great work to recreate a family from what was a heap of shattered lives. God is so good.

Shortly after this, Sonya and Andrew got engaged and wedding plans began to come together for this fine young couple. On Dec.19, 1998, Arvin had the great honor and privilege to tie the knot in the Marion (VA) Presbyterian Church. It was such a beautiful wedding. The gorgeous Bride walked down the aisle to a church full of guests to celebrate this sacred occasion. At that time Andrew worked hard in the Armed forces, then later pursued his vocation in HVAC engineering. Sonya continued her education and has been working full-time as a medical technologist. They now have two little boys,

Grant (born June 2003) and Justin (November 2005). What handsome little boys they are and so special to us all.

Stephanie had gotten a $100,000.00 grant for her education and graduated with honors. Then, in Massachusetts, she was heading up a program involving University students in giving voice to addressing the social needs of our country for governmental help. She loved the job, but after some years doing that, the Lord began to lay on her heart the greatest need of all, and that is the spiritual need of our world and society. So, feeling a call to give her life to ministry, she has now been a student in the Presbyterian Seminary right in Louisville, close to Sheldon and Tammy's home. In her final year of Seminary she became part of the program for seminarians that Sheldon had started for the Presbyterian Church a few years earlier, and in a meeting with program participants from other seminaries, she met a fine seminarian from another Presbyterian seminary, and they fell deeply in love. They became engaged in late 2007, with a wedding planned near their 2008 graduations from their respective seminaries. What joy this engagement has brought the whole family!

For over six years Sheldon and Tammy worked at the headquarters of the Presbyterian Church (USA) where Tammy was an editor of adult curriculum,

and Sheldon led a ministerial renewal program ministering mostly to younger ministers and seminarians.

At the beginning of this year (2007) they both received new calls. Tammy is now in charge of spiritual formation programs for the Presbyterian Church. And Sheldon accepted an opportunity to head up a pastoral renewal program to help ministers who need a spiritual renewing, so that they can minister more effectively to the people in their congregations. This new field of ministry is called the Louisville Institute. He works out of an office located on the Presbyterian Seminary campus, and is actually a faculty member of the Seminary. The Louisville Institute is interdenominational in scope so that his field of ministry is considerably larger than before.

Bob's Vocal Injury

Bob and Marci began pastoring Zion Fellowship church in Canandaigua, NY, in 1986. They saw the Lord really blessing and the church growing bigger all the time. Bob traveled considerably in ministry, and also launched the construction of a beautiful new church sanctuary for the congregation on the outskirts of town. In 1992, just before going to Singapore on a preaching trip, he called to ask us to pray with him for his voice because it was really hurting. We had no idea how serious this was, but we prayed that the Lord would undertake. When he got home from the overseas trip, he felt he had to see a doctor as the problem had gotten worse. Surgery was scheduled and a granuloma, a benign ulcer-like profusion, was removed from his arytenoid. The vocal cords are attached to the arytenoid. We don't know exactly what happened in surgery, but we're guessing that the surgeon was too aggressive with the laser and went too deeply, damaging nerves. What was meant to help him turned out to be the worst nightmare of Bob's life, as he lost his voice. For a minister and worship leader, there could hardly be a more devastating blow, since everything he did involved his voice. To understand the depth of his trauma, you would need to read his books, especially the first one, "In His Face," in which he bared his soul's agony.

For 6 / years following the injury, he continued to persevere in his role as pastor of this thriving church. But eventually the burden became unbearable and he finally resigned in November, 1998. Not only did that send his family and church into a tailspin, but also hit Arvin and me with a thud because we had moved to Canandaigua to be with him and his family. We realized that with Bob leaving, we would have to do so too, but where would we go? When Bob decided to move to Kansas City, we knew we could not go there with him as there was no way anyone could know if that move would be permanent or short-lived. We were at the stage in life where we did not want to be moving time and again, and so with much prayer we felt the only wise thing for us was to move

back West to be near our siblings. Arvin's and my siblings were settled where they lived in British Columbia. This was a heart wrenching time of making decisions, but the Lord was with us and gave us the grace to do what we had to do.

We Move to Lynden, WA

It was close to Christmas and houses were not selling to speak of. But in two weeks our house sold. Perhaps that's why the Lord directed us to buy that house in the first place; He knew it would sell quickly when the time was right. We decided not to move back to Canada because of the tax structure there, so we came to look things over in Lynden, Washington. Lynden is only about five minutes from the Canadian border.

My sister Emma lived in Langley, BC, about 15 miles away, and my brother Egan lived in Abbotsford, BC, about 18 miles away. So Lynden seemed like a good place to settle.

Coming down the main part of Lynden, we could hardly believe our ears: Playing on the public loudspeakers across the business section of downtown was the song, "It Is Well with My Soul," played by Dino on the piano. We felt we had landed on heaven's borderland. We discovered that Lynden has the reputation of being the most "Christian" city in the USA. It has been a city with strong Dutch influence, often referred to as "Little Holland" with all of the windmills and tulips and Dutch decor everywhere you look. There are many Dutch reformed churches as well as other denominations, with Christian symbols and emphasis everywhere you look.

We continued our house search until we came to a house on Pine Place, and the moment we opened the doors we knew, "This is the one." It was our home for 8 years.

We loved our house and neighborhood. When we moved in, we expected to stay here for the rest of our lives. But even this was to change.

About Bob and His Family

Meanwhile, Bob and Marci settled in Lee's Summit, a suburb of Kansas City, and along with all of their children are involved with the International House of Prayer (IHOP-KC) headed up by Mike Bickle.

Joel married Anna Falkner on March 25, 2004, and they have two beautiful children, Audrey (February 2005) and Noah, and are expecting Alexander in 2008. That makes four (going on five) great-grandchildren all told for us, and we are thrilled to be able to get to see them from time to time. What a blessing of God!

This past year Katie was married to Ben Hebbert and both are happily engaged in the work at IHOP as well. We are so proud of them all and give God

all the glory for what He is doing in the lives of our offspring.

Michael graduated a year early from high school and went straight from there to attend the IHOP internship, and has stayed on, so that now he also is very active in the ministry there. He is such a fine young man with so many gifts, and we know the hand of God is on his life.

Our greatest joy is that all of our children are serving the Lord, for nothing else matters in the end.

A New Chapter Begins in Louisville, KY

While living in Lynden, we enjoyed the wonderful moderate climate with beautiful scenery and all the abundance of fruit in this area. We were also very involved in ministry especially to Senior Retirement Homes with our little Senior choir of about 17 people on a weekly basis. What a blessing it was for us to still be able to minister in our old age. Arvin turned 83 on February 22, 2007, and I turned 78 on March 4, 2007. We had spent eight years in Lynden, and how the time flew by so quickly!

In April 2007 I was suddenly hit with a bad case of a ruptured appendix, which is the first time I have ever had to have an operation. Had I been widowed and alone, this would have been very difficult to navigate. I needed someone to help me, and Arvin was here for me, thank God. What a wonderful, tender, caring nurse he has been to me. Daily he would pack the huge incision with gauze that had been soaked in saline solution, then remove it the next morning and repack it for the day again. The doctor was amazed at his expertise in the way he packed the wide opening, and said he had never seen any professional do a better job than he did. Because of the time between the rupture and the operation, there was the possibility of infection escaping into the abdomen, so a drain tube was installed. The incision had to be that huge so disinfectant could make its way inside and fight any potential infection. It could not be stitched up, but had to be given time to heal from the inside out. Recovery took several months, but the incision is all healed by now. I discovered that having an operation takes a lot out of a person, and it took months for my energy to be restored. I thank God for this time in which He spoke many words to me and led me to intercede for other people’s needs. So this time was not wasted.

Living in Lynden, we so enjoyed being able to see our siblings from time to time, but eventually came to realize that we are not getting younger and that we really need to be moving closer to our children in the event that we would need their help in looking after our needs if we get to where we need their help. The ruptured appendix episode really brought that home to us with fresh urgency. So in May 2007 we found a house in Louisville that is just perfect for us - a single floor patio home in a beautiful nearly-new condominium development, with no

outside maintenance, just a half-mile from Sheldon and Tammy's house! After waiting all summer for our Lynden house to sell, we were able to move to Louisville in October 2007. What a joy it is to be so close to Tammy and Sheldon, and just an eight hour drive or two hour plane ride from Bob and his family. We have found a wonderful new church home, and are making lots of new friends. It's a big stretch to make such a major move at our age, but we made it with the help of the Lord, and Bob driving us cross-country.

As I have been writing these Precious Memories, I realize I have only scratched the surface, but I must say we have had a most interesting and fulfilling life. Many mountains and many valleys, but it's been a wonderful life with Jesus from the beginning to the end. His Name be praised.

The Lord said that his plans are for good and not for evil, that we might have hope and a future (Jeremiah 29:11). The best is yet to come—Praise God!