

**Turning
The Tide
For the
Next
Generation**

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This book is dedicated to my family. I think how blessed I have been in so many ways. As imperfect as we all are, I was privileged to be born into a family that loved and served Jesus. My father, James Bradberry, worked hard throughout the years to support his family. He never met a stranger, and never believed that anyone was too low down in sin that he would not minister to them about Jesus. It was a very difficult thing for me to hold my father's hand and watch him cross from this life into eternity, however, I know I have that blessed hope that I will see him again in heaven!

My mother has been as solid as a rock, and I could depend on her for her calm words of wisdom throughout life's changing circumstances. She told me she chose my name Deborah from the Old Testament book of Judges – Deborah who helped lead Israel.

My brother Steve. I have written about lessons he and I learned growing up. He has done well with his job at the Federal Reserve Bank. He started working nights as a check sorter for minimum wage over 25 years ago. He has flown all over the nation with his job at the Federal Reserve Bank in Kansas City, Missouri. He has worked hard and made us proud of his strong work ethic. He has a beautiful wife Jennifer and two beautiful daughters, Rachel and Krista, that now have families of their own, two beautiful step-daughters Elizabeth and Whitney and a handsome step-son Zach.

To Charissa and Eric II, my two beloved children. You have made me prouder than you may ever realize! The most important thing in life to me, as a mother, was that you would love and serve Jesus wholeheartedly and follow His plan. You have both chosen different paths, however, strive to follow His plan for your lives. It has been a privilege to be your mother!

And to all of the family, friends, clergy, professors, and teachers that have had a part in shaping me into the person I have become today, I thank each of you!

Contents

Part One

Chapter 1	The Encounter That Forever Changed Our Lives	Page	1
Chapter 2	More Political Involvement	Page	5
Chapter 3	Suspicious Deaths	Page	9

Part Two

Chapter 4	The Beginning of my Life – What Shaped my World Views	Page	16
Chapter 5	Lessons Learned in Elementary School	Page	19
Chapter 6	A Frightening Car Wreck	Page	22
Chapter 7	My Family Heritage	Page	24
Chapter 8	My Father – The Outdoorsman	Page	31
Chapter 9	Junior High and High School	Page	36
Chapter 10	More Teen Years	Page	41
Chapter 11	The Sorrow of Losing my Grandparents	Page	51
Chapter 12	The College Years	Page	54

Part Three

Chapter 13	The Trial with my Back Problems	Page	59
Chapter 14	Ministries	Page	62
Chapter 15	Living in St. Louis, Missouri	Page	65
Chapter 16	Life in Kansas City, Missouri	Page	68
Chapter 17	Across from the Stadiums	Page	69
Chapter 18	Dealing with People in the church with a past sex offense	Page	72
Chapter 19	Family Lessons Learned	Page	73

Part Four

Chapter 20	Working From Home and Raising Children	Page 74
Chapter 21	Learning from Reading	Page 78
Chapter 22	Volunteering	Page 81
Chapter 23	Speaking Out for Justice	Page 85
Chapter 24	Lessons Learned About Investments	Page 88

Part Five

Chapter 25	Members in Another Church	Page 91
Chapter 26	Family Vacations	Page 94
Chapter 27	My Children's School Years	Page 96
Chapter 28	Inspiring a Respect for God Given Human Life	Page 102
Chapter 29	Changing Roles with Aging Parents	Page 107
Chapter 30	Patriotism	Page 110
Chapter 31	Common Sense is a Good Rule of Thumb	Page 115
Chapter 32	Back to College and Another Suspicious Death	Page 124

Part Six

Chapter 33	My Travels with the Airlines and Another Suspicious Death	Page 129
Chapter 34	At a Crossroads	Page 133
Chapter 35	Dealing with Life's Major Changes	Page 139
Chapter 36	Turning the Tide for the Next Generation	Page 141

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Disclaimer: All of the stories in this book are true. I have left out some names, because my intent in writing this book was not to cause embarrassment or humiliation to anyone, but to help us learn from our own life experiences, the experiences of others, and the influence we have on other people's lives around us.

Chapter One

The Encounter That Forever Changed Our Lives

I have been an avid reader for many years, and have been writing editorials and letters to newspapers and other publications. I have written this book discussing what has shaped and influenced my views of the world. Perhaps you may relate to some of the stories I share. I am an optimist by nature and believe most people just need to be encouraged to bring out the best in them and we find that there are many heroic and honorable people living all around us. I have also been involved in helping people run for public office, as well as my self. I have always believed that this nation was a government of the people, by the people and for the people, and it is my desire to see fair investigations proceed into several suspicious deaths I will write about throughout this book and help return the nation to the honorable democracy I believe it has been.

It may seem naive, however, I began to realize that just because I was raised to be honest and patriotic toward the honorable democratic nation I believed I lived in doesn't mean everyone else involved with the political system is honest. Some of my family members and I found that out the hard way, and I will discuss this very issue throughout my book. I have tried to help political candidates with my time, and finances in the past. The kids and I have taken part in political campaigns by passing out flyers, putting up yard signs, making phone calls, and working at voting polls.

I got involved helping pass legislation regarding sex offenders when my daughter, Charissa, had a close encounter with a child molester, when she was ten years old in February, 1995. It was an encounter that forever changed our lives. After church on a

Sunday evening we went to Shoney's family restaurant. When Charissa went to the restroom a man tried to force his way into her bathroom stall. Very thankfully he didn't get in and she was not harmed. When he heard my voice in the other stall he turned and ran out of the restaurant to his car and got away, by the time we got out of the bathroom. However, I found the fact that my daughter had come so close to a child molester scarring her life so disturbing that I could not just forget the incident and get it out of my mind. I knew if this man was so bold as to try and break into my daughter's bathroom stall he had real mental problems and would be looking for other victims.

When I got home that evening I called several of the surrounding police departments and gave them the man's description and asked if they suspected a man with this description to have been a part of any similar crimes committed recently. At that time they had no suspects, however, in a matter of a few days the Kansas City, Missouri Police Department called me back saying a man fitting the description I had given them had broken into a public bathroom stall and molested a little girl on the toilet while he masturbated himself in front of her. He got away from the crime scene.

I was so distraught that this man was still out there targeting more victims, and he didn't seem to get caught. I decided to call the local news stations and I went on TV and gave the suspects description and described the type of crimes he committed and plead for anyone else that had information about this man to come forward. Another mother in Gladstone, Missouri saw me on the news that night and called the TV news channel to talk with me. I found out the man had also come after her young daughter in a public restroom. However, he had left a note on the bathroom door stating that the lock

was broken and not to lock the door. He mistakenly, or purposely, wrote the note on the back of a receipt with his name on it. His name was Blake Cerovich.

I immediately called Detective Dennis Green at the Independence Police Department and gave them his name. They put the information together with the Kansas City, Missouri and Gladstone, Missouri Police Departments and realized they were dealing with the same man that had just been released from prison two weeks prior to the incident with my daughter.

I was so distraught that the man had just been released from prison and came so close to my 10 year old daughter. I called Mrs. Cerovich, Blake Cerovich's mother, and she apologized to me for her son's behavior and told me "I asked them to stop turning him back out among the public." I began lobbying legislators for tougher sentencing and public notification when sex offenders move into a community. I went to Jefferson City, Missouri to the state capital and went to Governor Mel Carnahan's office, House Speaker Steve Gaw's office, and other legislators. I realize legislators are busy people, however, I was quite disappointed at the time, to not have the opportunity to talk with many people or make much progress on the issue. That is when I decided to take my case for change in the laws directly to the citizens by speaking over public radio. I stated that State Rep. Connie Cierpiot had written a bill regarding public notification of sex offenders in Missouri, however, her bill had been killed in committee. I gave my facts, information and story over the radio, and a letter arrived from House Speaker Steve Gaw in my mail box, two days later, thanking me for my interest and concern about the issue of public notification of sex offenders for the state of Missouri, and telling me the law would be

enacted. I also received a letter from Jackson County Prosecutor Claire McCaskill that same day, asking if she could be of further help to me regarding the issue. That is when I realized I had gotten the attention of the political leaders, had gotten on the radar screen of people in both political parties, and when I learned the power of communicating your message directly to the citizens.

I helped pass legislation for public notification when a sex offender moves into a community. This law was originally passed as Megan's law, because Megan Kanka was raped and murdered by a repeat sex offender that had been released from prison. Her parents, Richard and Maureen Kanka, worked to get public notification of sex offenders, and said if this law had already been enacted they believe Megan would still be alive today.

I also went over to a separate trial of Mr. Cerovich's, where he had attempted to molest a little girl in Kansas and had the opportunity to speak about Mr. Cerovich's incident and attempt to break into my daughter's bathroom stall and tell about statements his own mother had made to me. Kansas deemed him a sexual predator and he can be incarcerated for the rest of his life and not turned back out among the public. Society must realize the terrible scars that a sex abuse victim can carry for a lifetime, and take this crime and the penalty for it seriously.

Chapter Two

More Political Involvement

I wrote a letter to the Independence Examiner thanking State Representative Connie Cierpiot for her help in getting the legislation for public notification of sex offenders enacted for the state of Missouri. My next door neighbor Joy Wyckoff read the letter in the newspaper and talked with me about the issue.

Joy was a teacher in the Independence school district. We got to talking about the school district and board members. She mentioned that she knew some of the board members personally, and that one of the board members, Ron Finke, went to her church at Noland Road Baptist Church. She also mentioned that she believed Ron had served his two terms on the board and would be vacating the seat in the next election. I asked if she had heard of anyone else that might be running for that school board seat. She mentioned that she had not, and that if I would like she would discuss the issue with Ron when she saw him in church. She also encouraged me to attend a school board meeting and meet the board members personally.

I attended the next board meeting and had the opportunity to meet Ron Finke, Katy Peterson, Phil Parrino, Joe Gall, Paul Roberts, Barbara Allinder, and John Freytag. I mentioned to Ron Finke that Joy Wyckoff said his seat was going to be vacated in the upcoming election. He said "At that particular time that he was not aware of anyone else that had committed to run for the seat." He also very kindly brought some information regarding running a school board campaign by my house and dropped it off for me. Eric and I and Ron and his wife Karen, and Joy and her husband Mike then went to dinner

together to discuss the issue of the upcoming school board election. Ron encouraged me to become a member of the Independence Chamber of Commerce and announce my intention to run at the next chamber luncheon. Ron was out of town then, however, I followed his advice, became a member of the Chamber of Commerce, and announced my intention to run at the next Chamber of Commerce luncheon.

Unbeknown to me Ron had previously talked with Susan Jones, who had done a great deal of volunteer work in the school district, about running for his seat on the school board. She had not indicated to him at that time that she was going to run, however, she did decide to run with Barbara Allinder for the seat he was vacating. I had already committed publicly to run for the seat, and so it then made for somewhat of an awkward situation. As they say hindsight is always better than foresight, however, if I had to do over again I would have withdrawn my name and waited until I had been in the school district longer and my views were better known before I ran.

Regardless of the fact that I was naïve about political corruption I was soon to find out how it worked. The night we had a PTSA meeting scheduled to introduce the candidates at William Southern Elementary a neighbor let his two dogs out of their pen and they came into our yard and tore up and killed our little dog Bennie who was outside on a leash in the backyard. My kids and I were home that evening and it was very upsetting for all of us to hear! Shortly after that a friend I had helped run for office, that lived a couple of blocks from me State Rep. Connie Cierpiot had her house robbed, vandalized and ransacked. I believe both of these malicious acts were meant to

discourage me from running for the Independence School Board and to discourage Rep. Connie Cierpiot from helping me run.

Susan Jones children had attended William Southern Elementary, where my children were presently attending. She had worked with the elementary school and was well known there. Some of the leaders in the school supported her campaign, and after the election was over I was able to continue to build many dear friendships at William Southern Elementary. Lana Farnsworth was a fine principal and people like Linda Conley, Becky Rudd, Cindy Circo, Terri Kalbfleish, Trish Eichner, Joyce Frazon, and Brenda Ruckman were just a few of the fine people I had the opportunity to work with. I did have the opportunity to tour the schools and was impressed with many fine leaders and educators in the district. I had many volunteers that worked with me, and even though I was not very well known in the school district, I managed to get over 4,300 votes.

Even though I was not on the school board I stayed involved in the school district and tried to be an encouragement to the leaders and educators. There were also occasions when I raised my concerns to different leaders. I recall when my son was playing on the high school golf team. An assembly was called for all of the students involved with any sports. Blue Springs, Missouri is a neighboring community that has some winning sports teams. One of the sports coach leaders from my son's high school got up and shouted to all of the students "To get out there and kick all those Blue Springs kids' asses!" My son said some of the students were throwing their fists and hands in the air and shouting and screaming "Just wait, we're gonna kick all those Blue Springs kids asses!" I stressed to

the sports leader that I appreciated the fact that he was trying to inspire the students to win, however, I believe it is also important to inspire sportsman like conduct in the students.

Chapter Three

Suspicious Deaths

I continued writing letters and editorials to newspapers and publications throughout the years, as well as continuing to build relationships and friendships with people of different faiths – Protestants, Catholics et cetera, school leaders, and educators, PTSA as well as the business community in Independence. I recall after I wrote a particular letter to a newspaper in the Kansas City metro area, naming the names of Billie Graham and Mother Theresa in 2002, that almost immediately and before my letter was printed, seemingly out of nowhere, a statement made 30 years prior, by Rev. Billie Graham to Former President Richard Nixon regarding his concerns about the influence he believed Jewish people were having in this nation, was made public. Many people had a hard time figuring out why this statement would all of a sudden be brought out and discussed now, around the world, over 30 years after the statement had been made. I sincerely believe that some editor at the newspaper that intercepted my letter wanted that information to come out publicly about Rev. Graham, so that I would back away from using the names of Billie Graham and Mother Theresa together in my writing. Rev. Graham immediately apologized to the Jewish people for the publicized statement. I then contacted the newspaper and encouraged them to go ahead and print my letter as I had written it. I believe some in the media and politics were concerned about me trying to unify Catholics and Protestants on some of the moral issues, around the names and some of the past teachings of these two historical religious figures. It was actually after that particular letter was printed that I began seeing deaths with suspicious circumstances take

place.

I had begun discussing a political strategy that I believed had the potential to change the political landscape in the nation. I discussed how people could run as pro-life, pro-traditional family (encouraging families with a father and mother, although single parents and blended families certainly need encouragement as well), economic centrist and win in places like the fifth congressional district. I had years earlier helped Ron Freeman run for that seat that Alan Wheat had vacated. Ron ran as a Republican and lost. There is no one that is presently elected to a congressional seat like the fifth, with this particular strategy anywhere in the nation. I believe a political conspiracy was beginning to discourage and shut me down from making my ideas public. Several “coincidental deaths” and vandalisms and break-ins started taking place.

Leslie Birch had been my campaign manager when I ran for the Independence Board of Education in Independence, Missouri. She had helped me organize much of my campaign. On Wednesday, October 30, 2002 she was brought the news at church where we attended at Central Assembly of God in Raytown, Missouri that her brother Jeffery Ireland who had been working on road construction had just been hit and killed by a young woman driving a speeding vehicle.

Dody England was a friend and fellow church member at Central Assembly of God in Raytown, Missouri. Her daughter Deana Dyer and grandson Dallas Dyer who had previously been members at Sheffield Family Life Center, a multi-cultural congregation of several thousand people had recently gone with Jim Meadows who was also from Sheffield Family Life Center to help grow the church my family had built –

Triumphant Church in Kansas City, Missouri, across from Arrowhead and Royals Stadium. They brought the news to Dody at church on Sunday morning March 2, 2003 at Central Assembly of God in Raytown, Missouri that her daughter Deana Dyer & grandson Dallas Dyer had been struck by a vehicle on their way to church at Triumphant Church. Deana died from the injuries and Dallas was in critical condition.

My mother and I had a friend living in Kansas City, KS Jean Byers. Jean was well known with various church groups and had worked with senior citizens for years in Kansas, Missouri and Arkansas. She was also getting ready to move back to Kansas City, Missouri. Jean was passionate about her beliefs. My mother said "I had just talked with Jean on the phone and she was planning on coming back over to the church and work with me again with what we called our "kid's safari." On the very next Sunday morning after their conversation, April 6, 2003, Jean as usual, attended the Baptist church in Argentine, Kansas. When she and another woman came out of the church and got in the car the gas pedal mysteriously stuck to the floor and the car accelerated, and she and the other woman driving hit a brick wall. Jean got out of the car and walked around and seemed to be fine. An ambulance came by and took her to KU Medical Center. She was pronounced Dead on Arrival at the hospital a few minutes later. I had my concerns about the strange circumstances of this death, however, didn't exactly know how to proceed with asking for further investigation.

Central Assembly of God in Raytown, MO had relocated and renamed itself "Crown Pointe Church" in Lee's Summit, MO. On a particular evening, in June of 2004, there was a funeral visitation at Crown Pointe Church. I was in the line next to a

gentleman I knew had been involved with politics and helping people get elected. I mentioned to him about the new political strategy and ideas I had been discussing with others. It had been determined that Karen McCarthy was not going to run again for the Fifth Congressional District. I told him I would like to run for that seat with my new political strategy. Possibly as an Independent or third party. I then went on to discuss that if I could get elected with this new political strategy, other people could also start getting elected with the same strategy, throughout the nation. He discussed it with me, and I knew he had ties with others in politics and he was discussing it with them as well. The very next night my former mother-in-law, Arlean Solomon, who lived in a retirement community in Crystal Lake, IL, was one of five homes that was broken into in the middle of the night when she was sleeping. She had never had a break in previously in over 25 years that she had lived there, and never even had to lock her doors. A person went through her house, though it didn't seem much was tampered with, however, she remembered the furnace thermostat was turned to precisely 90 degrees. I was quite concerned about the coincidental timing of the break in when I heard about it and I immediately went to Pastor Bill Newby's office and talked with him about my concerns about the break in and about the strange circumstances that had surrounded Jean Byers death back in 2003, and that I thought they might be linked to political corruption. He listened to me, however, I guess he nor I knew much about how to proceed with further investigation, and no resolution or plan of investigation was agreed upon.

It was decided in the next election, November 2004, that former Kansas City, Missouri Mayor Emanuel Cleaver would run for the Fifth Congressional District as a

Democrat and Jean Patterson, whom she and her husband were the co-founders of the successful Cerner Corporation in the Kansas City Metro Area, would run as a Republican for the same seat. It is my understanding that Mrs. Patterson spent more than any other Republican in the nation vying for a similar seat to win the Fifth Congressional District. However, Emanuel Cleaver won the election by a substantial margin. This again upheld my theory and strategy about the fact that, at that point, no Republican was elected to represent a seat like the Fifth Congressional District anywhere in the nation.

I had the opportunity to attend a veteran's rally in Independence, Missouri at the Truman Memorial Building that was hosted by U.S. Rep. Ike Skelton and U.S. Rep. Emanuel Cleaver. The floor was opened up to anyone that wanted to ask a question or make a statement. Several of the veterans stepped to the microphone and voiced their opinions and concerns about differing issues. Near the end I stepped to the microphone and told U.S. Rep. Ike Skelton, from Lexington, Missouri, that I had been an avid reader for many years and I had followed his views and votes throughout the years. I went on to say "That I appreciated the fact that he had always been consistent on his views and that he was the kind of Democrat my Mother had raised me to be." Many of the veterans must have agreed with my appreciative words to him, because they were applauding loudly by the time my remarks were finished.

I began telling people that I was setting the groundwork to get known in the Fifth Congressional District and hoped to run for the seat. I began substitute teaching in several surrounding school districts. I attended Mrs. Skelton's funeral (the late wife of

Congressman Ike Skelton) on Sunday, August 28, 2005. Rev. Emanuel Cleaver officiated at the funeral.

I stopped by Pastor Bill Newby's office at Crown Pointe Church Assembly of God the very next day, on Monday, August 29, 2005 and told him of my plan to get known in many of the school districts and run for the Fifth Congressional Seat, and then if I could get elected with the new political strategy, I could then run for President. He discussed and prayed with me about this issue.

Pastor Newby had previously pastored Central Assembly of God in Raytown, Missouri for over 25 years, and been active in the Chamber of Commerce and his daughters had graduated from the Raytown School District, and he and his wife Eunice and their family were well known in that community. He was also the Assistant District Superintendent for the Southern Missouri District of the Assemblies of God, which meant he was second in overseeing more than 350 Assembly of God churches, in the state of Missouri, south of the Missouri River.

Two days later on Wednesday, August 31, 2005, as I was sitting in the central office at the Raytown School District filling out my application to substitute teach in their schools, just as I said I would, at close to the same time, a man in an asphalt truck, Mr. Stacey Stromire, of Sneed's Trucking in Kansas City, MO drove directly into the driver's door and killed Bill Newby's brother-in-law, John Teuber, in Kansas City, MO. The man in the asphalt truck was unharmed. The Police Officers called to the scene were Officer Petree and Office Masterson. That same evening when they announced John Teuber's death at church, I immediately thought it seemed like the death was very coincidental and

suspicious considering the timing of the subject Bill Newby and I had just discussed. Bill Newby said the most ironic thing about the fatal crash was that John Teuber was known to be the most careful driver in the family. I went to Pastor Newby's office shortly after John Teuber's death and discussed my concerns with him, about the suspicious circumstances and timing surrounding John's death. At that time, no further investigation regarding the possibility of political connection was pursued. As they say hindsight is always better than foresight, and if I had to do over again I would have pressed the issue of investigation into possible political connection further, realizing it might have shed light on political corruption and possibly stopped other deaths from taking place, that I believe could have also been politically motivated.

I believe there is a possibility that John Teuber's death was meant to send a message to Bill Newby and his family, and myself not to get any further involved helping me or others get elected with this new political strategy. John's death left an enormous hole in his wife Helen and son Christopher's lives, and in the lives of other family members as well.

I was raised to be honest and to also believe that other people were honest. At this point I am going to go back to the beginning of my life story and share with you my past and background so you might better understand how I was raised, and why it was so difficult for me to accept and realize that this type of political corruption goes on, even in this nation.

Chapter Four

The Beginning of my Life – What Shaped My World Views?

My life began in Evansville, Indiana on March 24, 1961. Indiana was my very first home state. My father still tells me to this day that I have part Hoosier blood flowing through my veins. I was born to James and Margie Bradberry. My mother tells the story of how I was born 32 minutes after she got to the hospital. She has always told me that I was slow learning to talk, but when I finally started talking she had a hard time getting me to ever be quiet. That has been the case for most of my life. I felt like I had so much I wanted to say and so little time to say it.

I have a few memories from my early childhood. One of my earliest memories is vague, but it happened at the time of President John F. Kennedy's assassination. My parents were pastoring in Vulcan, Missouri at that time. We did not have a television so I remember going over to the home of church members, Jim and Fay Breeding to watch their TV. I was too young to understand the details of what was going on at the time, but I remember all of the adults were very upset, and were gathered around the TV watching the news, and they were not watching me. I stood on the edge of Fay's kitchen cabinet and held onto the handles. It came tumbling over on top of me and everyone jumped up and ran to the kitchen to make sure I was alright. I was too young to understand the severity of the situation with President Kennedy and his family, but I never forgot that happenstance at the Breeding's house. So those are some of my earliest childhood memories.

Another event that I vaguely remember took place when I was three years old and my brother Steve was five. My parents were still pastoring in Vulcan, Missouri, and my family and I had gone to Flat River, Missouri to do some shopping. My mother and I had gone into a store to purchase materials for the quilts that she and the church ladies were making. My Dad and my brother Steve had gone to a hardware store to purchase some paint. Steve took his hand out of my Dad's hand and darted across the street to where our car was parked. He was hit by a car. It broke his leg and I remember him wearing a cast for quite some time. After that incident my Dad and Steve always watched carefully when crossing the street.

The other memory I also have when we lived in Mercer, Missouri was my mother telling me she was going to get a switch (a small twig) off of the tree. I knew this meant I was going to get my legs or behind switched for bad behavior. This was a method of discipline she learned from her mother. When discipline came from my mother it only stung a little, but I remember running out of the house and my mother chasing after me. I did get switched when she finally caught me.

The next memories I have are of living in Independence, Missouri, President Harry Truman's hometown. We stayed with my Uncle Jim and Aunt Opal Ahls and their daughter Ruth, for a short time, while my parents looked for a place of our own. We temporarily lived in a duplex and then my parents bought a basement house at 18703 E. Salisbury Rd. My brother Steve, who was two years older than me, started school at Clermont Elementary. When it was time for me to start school I remember my mother taking me up to be enrolled. She told me she thought I had all of the immunizations I was going

to need. When we got to the school the nurse told my mother I was going to need another immunization. I remember I took off running as fast as I could go and a couple of the ladies had to help catch me and hold me down so I could receive that immunization shot. My mother was very embarrassed and I have never forgotten that ordeal.

Chapter Five

Lessons Learned In Elementary School

I did not attend Kindergarten, because it was optional back then and my mother was working at a daycare and brought all of the school papers home and taught me herself. My first grade teacher was dear Mrs. Grossman. She had quite a time getting me to sit down and be quiet. I remember she would draw a circle on the chalkboard and make me stand with my nose in the ring if she caught me talking out of place or acting up. I stood with my nose in the ring quite a few times that year. My father came to pick me up on certain days. One day I was unaware he had already talked to Mrs. Grossman and new I had been in trouble, so when he asked me if I had been good that day, I said “Yes Daddy I didn’t get into any trouble today.” I remember he picked me up and spanked my behind right then and there. I learned not to lie to my father that day.

I remember just about all of my elementary school teachers were my favorites every year. Miss Kucifer was my second grade teacher. I remember at the end of the school year she was going to get married and move away. I cried so hard, and I remember us writing each other letters after she moved. Mrs. Spindel was my third grade teacher. Mrs. Hill was my fourth grade teacher.

My fifth grade teacher was Miss Winfrey and my sixth grade teacher was Mr. Bauman. He was the first man teacher I ever had. In the sixth grade we also switched classes to prepare us for changing to several different classes in Junior High. I remember there was also Miss. Shroust and Mrs. Wier. Mr. Meyers was another sixth grade teacher

and I have seen him throughout the years in the Independence School District. He was always well liked by the kids.

I realize different discipline strategies are used now, however, I remember a particular day one of my teachers was teaching and the class had been overly talkative that day. The teacher said I am going to pick the next student up, I catch talking, and I am going to spank you right in front of the class. I would have heard it too, if I had not been so busy talking to the little girl beside me. True to the teacher's word I got picked up and given a few swats right then and there. I never forgot that. My mother heard me repeat that story after I was an adult. She said "You never told us about that." I said "Of course I never told you about that. I didn't want to get another spanking when I got home." My parents wouldn't have rushed up to get the teacher fired or sue the school district. They would have spanked me again at home, and apologized to the teacher for having to discipline me at school. My has the culture, and have times ever changed.

When I was in the sixth grade I remember a friend started telling some of the girls that her father was having sexual relations with her. A teacher confronted her father, and her mother was informed. The parents divorced and her father was turned into the authorities. I remember the terrible and painful devastation that was brought on her family from this incestuous relationship. Sexual abuse against a child should never be taken lightly. A child should never be afraid to keep talking until someone listens and the abuse stops. There is help for sexual abusers or molesters if they are willing to admit they have a problem, and will seek help.

The culture has changed since I was a child. There were many days I walked to and from school by myself. My mother taught me about not talking to strangers or ever getting in anybody's car, but she never worried much about me being abducted. I don't ever remember a time when anyone tried to abduct me in all the years and the many times I walked alone.

Chapter Six

A Frightening Car Wreck

My father worked evenings and made the night differential in pay at the Ford Motor Company, this always helped out with the family bills. He also pioneered a small church in Buckner, Missouri, they named "Echoes of Calvary." I realize how much my parents sacrificed for Steve and I to have the opportunities that we did.

My father was gone at work most of the time when I was younger. My brother Steve and I spent a lot of time with my mother. Steve also spent quite a bit of time with a friend that was the neighborhood paper boy, and my parents knew him, however, they did not know what was going on in his home when my brother was there and did not find out until many years later, however, I believe this was the beginning of some of the problems Steve dealt with throughout his adolescence and teen years, and I have learned from this the importance of knowing who your kids are spending time with and what they are doing.

My mother's sister Opal and her family also lived in Independence. She and my Uncle Jim only had one daughter at that time. Ruth Ann Ahls, who we affectionately called Ruthie through our growing up years. Ruthie spent quite a bit of time at our house and I spent quite a bit of time at her house when we were younger. Our fathers both worked evenings so most Friday nights my Mother, Aunt Opal, Ruthie, Steve and I went shopping.

I will never forget one Friday evening when we were out on our weekly shopping excursion. A car hit us from behind when my Aunt Opal was driving down the road. It

was a very frightening ordeal. She got out to find out what happened. Two men got out of the car that hit us, and told us they were going for help. They collected their empty beer cans and walked off and left the scene and never sent help for us. The man's name that hit us was Mr. Charles Tally. He had other judgments against him for driving under the influence of alcohol. He had no insurance. Very thankfully another man did stop to help us that night. Mr. Tally didn't receive a very strong judgment against him. We read in the newspaper a few months later that the next woman he hit, he killed her. I am not a sympathetic person toward drunken drivers. Mother's Against Drunk Drivers, Students Against Drunk Drivers, and the World Against Drunk Drivers, are just a few organizations that have both done a lot to make people aware of the importance of this issue.

Chapter Seven

My Family Heritage

When I was growing up my father would till up the ground for a vegetable garden and my mother and I spent quite a bit of time working in the garden. My mother's other hobbies were crocheting, and she had a green thumb and grew many beautiful flowers and plants, and she loves to collect antiques. My parent's home is full of antiques.

Mother's very favorite hobby was reading. She spent a lot of time reading about local, national and world news and events. She and I spent a lot of time watching movies and news programs about the civil rights issues that were going on in the nation. She believed God raised up Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to help the African-American people gain their civil rights. She still talks about how I was so passionate and I would get so upset whenever I saw what I perceived to be injustice.

I remember a record Steve and I had. It played portions of speeches of Former President John F. Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. They talked about hatred, prejudice and bigotry. You could then hear the shots from the assassin's bullets. That record was a sobering reminder of some of the turmoil the nation was going through. I believe that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. awakened the moral conscience of our nation.

My mother raised me a Democrat. I remember when I campaigned so hard for Hubert Humphrey for President. I still remember the little chant I used to tell the kids at school. I also remember running all the way home on election day to find out the results. She believed, at that time, that the Democratic party cared most about the disabled, and

fair wages for the working poor, and middle class in this nation, and in the nations around the world. Because of my mother's influence on me I have always had a concern about the moral and social issues affecting the nation and the world.

My mother learned her love for reading from her father, George Cordry. My grandfather was a minister. He had heart trouble, and was not able to do much in the way of strenuous work or exercise. I remember the times when my mother and I would go to Columbia, Missouri and visit with my grandparents. My grandmother Ethel loved to have her family home again so that she could cook for them. She would make us fried hash brown potatoes and potato pancakes for breakfast, and she would serve us her own homemade fruit jellies and jams. She was a little short lady, just like my mother and I. She never learned to drive, and I can still remember when she was sitting in the back seat of the car all you could see was the little knot where she had braided her long hair and put it on top of her head.

My mother told me the story of how my great grandfather stopped to get a drink of water from a stream on his way home from work one particular day. He didn't realize a sewer emptied out into the stream. He died of typhoid fever. My grandfather had to quit school and work to help his mother support the family. My grandfather George did not ever earn a high school diploma, and his formal education only went to the seventh grade, however he later tested out at the level of a college graduate. He was an intelligent man because he had been an avid reader for most of his life.

There was a public radio station in Columbia, and he would write out his three minute sermons, and call the station and preach them over the air. I remember watching

him preach them when we were visiting. The DJ's at the radio station referred to him as the "Pastor of Party Line." He also wrote columns for both of the major newspapers in Columbia. Once when we were visiting, I remember him talking with my mother about the fact that so many people were being influenced by his sermons and writing that some of the Professors from Missouri University had given him an invitation to debate them publicly at the university. My mother and his heart doctor issued a strong rebuke to him that his weak heart would not be able to take that type of stress. His doctor told him that his heart was not strong and he would drop him as a patient if he accepted the invitation. So my mother and his doctor won out, and he did not debate, but he continued his radio and newspaper ministry for many years.

When my mother was growing up her mother was a strict disciplinarian, and her father was lenient. She was very close to her father. To hear her talk you would think he was almost perfect. Both of my grandparents were very humble Christian people. My mother was the middle child between her older brother Darol, and her younger sister Opal. My grandfather played the guitar and violin. Darol played the guitar, and mother and Opal played the piano, accordion, and organ. They also enjoyed singing together.

My mother was the valedictorian of her small graduating class in Sturgeon, Missouri, in spite of the fact that she had suffered with a great deal of illness throughout her adolescent and teen years. She suffered with bouts of pneumonia when she was a child, and the Doctors diagnosed her with Leukemia, when she was eighteen years old. The Doctors prepared my grandparents for what they believed would be her imminent death. A woman came by to pray for my mother one day in her hospital room. She asked

my mother “Margie do you believe that Jesus still has a work for you to do with your life?” My mother replied yes, that she believed He still did. She laid hands on my mother and prayed for her. My mother began to gradually regain her strength, became healthier than she had ever been in her lifetime, and she will soon be 80 years old and has outlived all of the Doctors that predicted her death.

My mother’s brother, my Uncle Darol, had four sons, Richard Jr., Stephen, John and Tim. He and the boys mother Irene divorced when the boys were younger. The boys lived with their mother for much of their lives. They each came and stayed with us from time to time throughout the years. Uncle Darol later remarried a southern belle named Ann who was good to help when Darol’s sons had health problems. I remember a time when she rented an apartment in Independence, MO with Rick Jr. so she could drive him back and forth to St. Luke’s hospital for dialysis, while he was waiting for a kidney transplant. My mother, Aunt Opal, Ruthie, Steve and I also spent a lot of time traveling to Columbia to visit with Rick in the hospitals. He eventually had a kidney transplant, and he went through several years of dialysis. It was a serious time for my mother and Aunt Opal, but Ruthie, Steve and I were just kids and didn’t always understand the severity of this illness. We were so silly. I remember when we had spent many hours in the hospital, and our mothers weren’t watching us, we kids would go out and race the elevators up and down the floors to entertain ourselves. We could be such ornery kids.

My cousin Rick lived until 1981. My cousin John David was diagnosed with cancer and his stepmother Ann was very helpful to try and take care of John when he was ill as well. John passed away in 1980. They have both been sorely missed by the family.

My Uncle Darol's son Stephen Ray Cordry has an encouraging testimony of redemption. When Stephen Ray was a teenager he got involved with drugs and alcohol and his life took a downward turn and he went through some difficult places. However, I'm very proud to tell you that was not the end of the story for Stephen Ray. He made up his mind to go through rehabilitation and got free of substance abuse in his life. He later met a lovely lady named Linda that had two children. They married and Stephen Ray helped her successfully raise the children. They have all been respected members of their church and community in Lebanon, Missouri for over twenty-five years.

When my mother first attended Central Bible College in Springfield, MO she met a young man named Bill Whitlock from the state of Kentucky. Bill previously had cancer, however, believed he had been healed. He and my mother became engaged to be married, however, the cancer returned and Bill passed away before he and my mother could marry. I don't pretend to understand why some people are healed and others don't receive their healing until they get to heaven. There are not always easy answers, but one day we will know these answers when we see Jesus face to face.

My parents met at Central Bible College, in Springfield, Missouri. Prior to attending CBC, my father had enlisted in the Navy along with his younger brother Dale, however, the Navy examined his feet and ankles and realized the abnormalities and did not allow him to enlist, though he proudly served in the Missouri National Guard. My father was not fully aware at that time, but soon became aware of the severe problems he would have to deal with throughout his lifetime because of the abnormalities or deformities in his feet and ankles. He has struggled with feet, back and headache

problems throughout his life. He even had treatments regarding mental health issues when he was attending CBC because it was thought his migraine headaches might be associated with his nerves. My father was plagued with migraine headaches ever since I can remember, however, they were greatly minimized several years ago when he had surgery for a brain aneurysm. I have wondered if that, along with his broken down feet and ankles, might not have been much of the headache problem that seemed to plague him throughout his life.

My father was the middle child between his older brother Keith, and his older sister Rita. He also had a younger brother Dale, and a younger sister Mary. My father's family was different than my mother's family in that they did not become Christians and start attending church regularly until my father was almost grown.

My Aunt Rita was born with a serious speech impediment and my father told us stories about how he and his siblings used to defend and encourage her before some of the school children. Aunt Rita always had a lot of fun playing games and tag with her nieces and nephews when we were younger. My Aunt Rita didn't marry until later in life, when she met and married Darold Lassen.

My Uncle Keith was a Baptist minister. He passed away with cancer several years ago. He and his wife Edna lived in Horton, Kansas for many years. I remember spending some of the holidays with them and my cousins, Doug, Glenda, and Cindy. My cousin Doug had kidney problems throughout his life, and spent years on dialysis and has been waiting for some time to be matched to a kidney donor.

My Aunt Mary and my Dad attended Central Bible College, and that is where they both met their spouses. My Uncle Ken Thee is a retired Assembly of God minister. They have three sons Mark, Greg who is also an Assembly of God minister, and Jason. My Dad's younger brother is Dale. He and his wife Barbara settled in Orange County (near Los Angeles), California after he had been stationed there when he was serving in the Navy. They have three children, Diane, Cheryl, and Rob.

Both of my paternal grandparents Joe and Susan Bradberry came to be devout Christians when their children were almost grown. They lived on Kickapoo St. in Hiawatha, Kansas when I was growing up. My grandpa Joe used to like to cut-up with the grandkids. We have a home movie of him dancing with a barbershop quartet hat and cane with the grandkids. My Grandma Sue used to tell him to slow down before he had a heart attack. He smoked cigarettes for many years, before he started back to church, and later in life he developed lung cancer. I have seen first hand the devastation that comes from years of smoking cigarettes or using tobacco.

Chapter Eight

My Father – The Outdoorsman

When Steve and I were growing up our father's two favorite hobbies were hunting and fishing. Steve and I both went fishing with Dad many times. My father had hunting or sporting guns that he kept put away in a safe place in our home and taught us not to ever play with them. I remember begging my father to take me hunting with him one particular day so he finally relented and took me along. He was a very accurate shot and usually killed the squirrels with one shot. My father would clean the squirrels and my mother would fry them and make mashed potatoes and gravy to go with the squirrel. I guess that is part of the country in me. When my father went fishing it was for sport, however, we ate what he caught. Usually in a fish fry, although baked fish is healthy and tasty as well. I remember my mother gently reminding my father, when he was going to clean the fish, that her father always knocked the fish in the head, to render them unconscious, before he cleaned them. Another hobby was when my Uncle Jim and Aunt Opal Ahls got a boat and we thought what fun it was when we were invited out to the lake for boat rides. I always wore a life jacket.

Dad bought Steve and I a Shetland pony we named Lucky. I remember that if we had not ridden Lucky for a while he would try and buck us off. My father in his limited knowledge of horses tried to whip Lucky into submission and to stop bucking, however, I realize there are more professional ways they have to train ponies and horses now. Dad later bought Steve and I horses and we named them Golden and Lady.

Most of the time Lady and Golden were fun to ride, however, there was one particular day that Golden hadn't been ridden in awhile. A neighbor boy and I got on Golden to ride her, and Steve was riding Lady. We were a few blocks from the house, when all of a sudden, Golden turned back toward home and took off running. I kept shouting for the neighbor boy, who was not an experienced rider, to pull back on the reigns. He just kept hollering whoa horse! Thankfully there were no vehicles coming down Salisbury Rd. in front of our house, because Golden ran across the road, jumped the ditch, stopped right in the front yard, and the boy and I both fell off on the ground. Fortunately nobody was hurt. It took me a little while to get up enough courage to get back on a horse, although I eventually did, however, that was the last time I ever got on the back of a horse with him.

Two of my favorite toys when I was a child were my Easy Bake Oven, and a tape recorder that I got for Christmas. I would bake little cakes for my brother and mother to taste, and I would sit and read newspaper articles into the tape recorder while pretending I was a news anchor.

The culture was different when I was growing up. I remember our favorite television program was *The Carol Burnett Show* on Saturday nights. My mother loved to see all of the cast, but her very favorites were Carol Burnett and Tim Conway when they played the part of the elderly couple that would get each others rocking chairs started rocking before they would sit down and rock together. We would laugh and laugh. We were always sorry to see Carol Burnett pull on her ear lobe and sing her "so long" song when the program was over. *I Love Lucy* was another funny family program, with Lucy

and Ricky Ricardo. During my teen years we always enjoyed watching *The Donny and Marie Osmond show*. Television was different back then.

Although TV was different for the most part, back then, I can remember that some things started to change in the culture. When I was 11 years old there was a song that came out by the Raspberry's that I used to go around singing, called "Go All the Way." I had no idea what the meaning of the song was until my mother heard me singing it one day, and explained it to me. That was the last time I ever sang that song. I recently came across a good program for parents and grandparents to talk with their children about sex the way God intended it to be by Dr. Richard Dobbins called Parents First Program at – www.teachthetruthaboutsex.com

Dad and Steve watched a lot of games on TV and listened to them on the radio. They followed football, baseball, and basketball. I remember the family watching the Kansas City Chiefs football games. We were all excited when Len Dawson and Hank Stram lead the Chiefs to a Superbowl win in 1973. There was a lot of cheering going on at our house. From what I remember, Len Dawson was one of many professional sports team members that conducted himself honorably before the community and the nation. It speaks well of any sports team when their team members conduct themselves honorably on and off the playing field. My brother Steve was always a sports fan. He kept records and statistics on almost all of the sports teams. This was definitely his favorite hobby. I always did think Steve would have made a great sports coach. He studied and knew all the strategies of the different players and teams.

My father used to take Steve and me to see the Kansas City Royals play a few times each year. We always looked forward with anticipation to going to the Royals game. Most of the time we had fun along with the other fans, however, there were a few occasions when people would act obnoxious if they got too intoxicated. I remember some of the players were people like George Brett who spent his career in Kansas City, Frank White, John Mayberry, Cookie Rojas, Paul Splitorff, and Dan Quisenberry with his sinker ball pitch.

My mother was easy going, and my father was a strict disciplinarian. Whenever my father wasn't around my mother's answer to most disputes between Steve and I were whatever it takes, just keep the peace. Steve was the oldest and biggest and so that meant he usually got his way. Even to this day, I have tried to teach my own children to try to use tact and diplomacy when they talk to each other. Because of the way I was raised, I have tried to help them settle their disputes peacefully. I had to remind myself sometimes to let them work it out themselves.

My brother Steve and I received many spankings. Steve was the oldest, and probably received the most discipline. I believe some of the harsh discipline and my father's temper caused Steve to be rebellious against my parents, as he was growing up. I also believe it caused him to resent me, because of the severity of his discipline from my father. I guess many times we learn from our mistakes. My father has apologized many times to Steve and I for his temper, and for the severity of the discipline we received. We can't change the past, but we can hope to learn from it so that we don't repeat the same mistakes.

My brother and I had a lot of sibling rivalry, and I could say some very hurtful things whenever I thought he was antagonizing me. I was certainly no perfect child, but I was very close to my mother, even though at times I could be very sassy to her. I made mistakes, but I tried very hard not to hurt my mother. I always wanted her to be able to trust me.

Chapter Nine

Junior High and High School

After I finished elementary school my family moved to Buckner, Missouri. Steve and I both attended Fort Osage Junior High and High School. When I was in junior high school I recall an incident with a girl that I sat next to in music class. She and I usually got a long fine. We didn't have desks in music class but each sat close to each other on chairs. We were writing with pens and somehow I accidentally made a small pen mark on her dress. I apologized profusely, however, she decided to start harassing me from that day on. When we were leaving class out in the hallway she yelled something to the effect that she was going to beat me up. I was small for my age, however, getting beat up was not my greatest concern. My greatest concern was the fact that I always had to wear dresses. If she ever did fight me I was afraid everybody would see my underwear. Anyway, when I got home I talked with my parents about my concerns and my father calmly called her parents and talked with her mother. They worked it out because the next day the girl was friends with me again, and we never had anymore problems. If a person is being bullied it really is best to talk with trusted adults about it. I suppose another option might have also been for my parents to have put me in self-defense classes like karate.

I don't remember a lot of diversity of different racial groups at Fort Osage, but I do remember an African-American young lady by the name of Yolanda Humphrey. I really didn't think much about it at the time, but I now realize that she was very courageous to attend the school. I don't know how she may have perceived her time at

Fort Osage, but to her credit and the school administrations credit, I remember her being involved with many of the school activities and being well respected and well liked by her fellow students, and teachers.

When I was in High School I can remember some of the young people that were striving to live Christian lives, and that wasn't always an easy thing with the direction the culture was heading during my teenage years. I remember a couple of young men I liked through out Junior High and High School though I was quiet about it, and I'm not sure they ever even knew it. I used to see Terry Yancey at church camp though he went to an Assembly of God church in Independence, and I remember how I secretly liked a young man named Clay McQuerry that went to Fort Osage High School. He was on the track team, was a member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and attended First Baptist Church in Buckner. They were both good Christian young men.

I think back to some of the Sunday School Teachers and Leaders I had when I was growing up. Edna Edgmon had us memorize the 23rd Psalm. Barbara Blackmore lead our girls club called Missionettes. Lois Elliott and Janie Holt taught the youth class. Paul and Wanda Borden led the youth. These were just a few of the people that helped teach and instill Godly principles in my life. I believe that many times people may not realize just how much of an impact they have on others lives. I think back with genuine appreciation for all that these people, as well as others, did to help provide Christian guidance for my life.

One of the church families, the Long's, lived in Levasy, Missouri when the Missouri River flooded. Levasy also flooded and I remember when we went to Levasy to

check on them, seeing a boat carrying people down the flooded roads. I have never forgotten what a strange and devastating sight it was to see roads where cars could not drive on them, and people had to take the boat back to check on their homes. My mother still talks about how devastating it was to see Shirley Long come out of the neighborhood weeping talking about how they had lost their home in the flooding. I'm sure that anyone that has ever lived through a natural disaster could probably relate to the feelings of despair they felt at that time.

I had an appendicitis attack when I was 13, and had my appendix removed at the Medical Center of Independence. I remember my father taking me into the emergency room, and then my mother coming up later and questioning the doctor about how strongly he really believed the surgery was necessary. People also seek a second physician's opinion sometimes before a loved one has surgery. After that surgery I remember the only positive aspect that I was happy about is the Doctor told my parents not to let me vacuum the floors or do any strenuous work for a while, when I was recovering from the surgery. The only other time I was in the hospital, besides when my children were born later in my life, was when I was 14. I had sinus and allergy problems, and I developed a viral infection.

My parents would sometimes send me along with Steve so that I could be a tattletale about his activities. I can see their point in this, however, this also caused Steve to resent me. I remember when we were teenagers Steve would have the radio on to popular and rock music when I was with him. One of the popular songs that was played often, the lyrics went something like this "Tonight's the night. Don't say a word my

virgin child. There's nobody that's gonna stop us now." I believe it sent the message to young people in the culture that having sex is the right and desirable thing to do. Don't let anybody else stop you or influence you otherwise, regardless of your age. I remember a particular song that was played often on the radio that went something like this "Oh what a night. Late December back in 63. What a very special time for me. You know I didn't even know her name, but I will never be the same. Oh what a night." May God give us wisdom to "Turn the Tide" for the next generation!

I realize the importance of people being fully awake when they are driving. Many states have fixed the highways and interstates so that if a vehicle drives over the line and off onto the shoulder the vehicle tires make a loud roaring noise which is obviously intended to awaken or make alert the driver that may have been getting drowsy, or not paying adequate attention. My father used to work the evening and late shift at Ford Motor Company years ago. When we moved out in the country outside of Buckner he would drive from home to work and from Claycomo in the North Kansas city area to home. In the dark early morning hours, one particular morning, he drove off of the highway and into a ditch and totaled his car. Thankfully he survived, however, it awakened him to the need to make certain you are fully alert and awake before you drive and needlessly endanger your own life or someone else's.

After we moved to Buckner, Missouri my father purchased a water delivery business. He would deliver large tanks of water to people outside of the city limits that had wells. My father and I went through a difficult time during my teen years. He had quite a temper, and suffered with illness, and yet he was a good hearted person that would

give someone the shirt off of his back if he thought they needed it worse than he did. He never knew a stranger, and could talk to anyone. There were times he held the hand of dying people, or went to the prison to minister to drug addicted criminals, or was called to a parishioners home in the middle of the night to pray with their family member, and talk them out of committing suicide. I never knew my father to ever believe anyone was too low down in sin that he would not show them the love of Jesus and minister to them. I am thankful that my father and I learned a long time ago to forgive and reconcile and put the past behind because life is too short to hold grudges.

My Uncle Jim and Aunt Opal and their daughter Ruth, adopted two daughters from South Korea, when I was a teenager. They named them Christina Annette and Amy Renee. They have been a part of the family for many years. The girls are grown up now with families of their own. Tina and Ruth work in accounting and bookkeeping and have both always been exceptionally good at math. Tina has two children – Tamalyn and Ryan. Ruth's husband Rich Myer is a high school teacher and coach, and son Tyler Earring is a movie editor. Amy is a nurse and we have laughed about the fact that she didn't used to believe in Chiropractors, and then she married Dan Tangpricha who is a chiropractor. She decided after she married Dr. Dan - Chiropractors were alright after all. Amy and Dan have two sons Alex and Jacob.

Chapter Ten

More Teen Years

During the summer Steve and I would spend at least one week at church camp. Al Pulis was the children's church camp director, and when we were teenagers Mike Brown, Gary Denbow, and Russ Turney were some of the camp directors. We always looked forward to seeing our mother's cousins, Monte and Rachel Pack, their sister Angela was quite a bit younger and wasn't old enough to attend camp yet. Monte and I were good friends, and Steve and Rachel were good friends.

Each year at camp they had a contest to see who would be voted Mr. and Miss Christ's Ambassadors. The summer of 1978 I was nominated to be Miss C.A. I asked my brother Steve to be my campaign manager. I won that year, and have always believed it was because my brother Steve was my manager. So many girls at camp always liked Steve. To further prove this theory, the other people he was campaign manager for also won. He has reminded me of that fact from time to time.

Even though Steve and I grew up in a small town throughout our teenage years, we always attended youth rally's and camps with the Kansas City Section of the Assemblies of God. This allowed us to fellowship regularly with young people of different races. We also attended youth services at Sheffield Assembly of God in Kansas City, MO. My parents had attended Central Bible College with the Pastors of Sheffield Assembly, George and Jean Westlake. They had Linda and George III and later adopted Debbie and Tina. We were friends with several of the pastors families and there was another family that moved to Kansas City to pastor from Guyana, the Ramphael's.

I had to wear dresses most of the time so I wasn't very athletic when I was in school. I was usually one of the last kids picked for a sports team at recess, or for Physical Education. We did have a ping pong table in our basement. I was half way decent at playing ping pong, so I remember I was one of the first kids picked for a partner when we had a unit on ping pong in PE class. My father also took Steve and I bowling several times when we were growing up. I never have gotten very high scores, but I do enjoy to bowl.

During my teen years I would make a visit to Cuba, Missouri each summer. I would ride the Greyhound Bus from Independence to visit with my dear friends the Breedings and Glen and Debbie Tutterow, and Debbie's sister's family Steve and Shelia Walters. Debbie and her family were the church members I mentioned earlier, from when my parents pastored in Vulcan, Missouri. I always looked forward to that summer trip each year. Debbie's husband Glen was an outdoorsman, and owned his own taxidermy business. Debbie and Glen now have two grown children, their son Curtis, that works with the computer and technology aspect of their business, and their daughter Fawn. Debbie plays the piano and she and Fawn sing beautifully together. They were always very kind to me throughout the years I visited with them and they introduced me to boyfriends throughout the years. I met Mark Middleton and Barry Ivey through the Tutterow's.

From the time I was 13 I did babysitting and helped my mother out at the church day care for extra spending money. When I was 16 I had a part time job at the General Nutrition Center at the Independence Center in Independence, Missouri. I learned quite a

bit about nutrition, vitamins and minerals, and health foods while I was working at GNC. I worked at GNC during high school and the summertime in between my years in college, off and on for three years. They carried a lot of natural foods and had a peanut butter machine that ground fresh peanut butter. There are many GNC stores throughout the nation and they each have similar policies for all of the stores. For whatever reason, the peanut butter machine wasn't unplugged after it was used. I remember one particular day I was in the cash register area and I heard a frantic child and mother. I looked over and a little girl had put her finger in the peanut butter machine and her brother had turned it on. It severed a portion of her finger. My heart broke for the mother and the little girl. Immediately after that incident GNC issued a policy that each peanut butter machine was to remain unplugged except when in use by employees. I certainly wish I had thought about adopting that policy before it became necessary. No one foresaw the events that transpired. I was certainly sorry the policy wasn't in place earlier and I, as well as the other employees, hadn't already been keeping the machine unplugged. That was a very unfortunate event, but most of my employment with GNC was a positive experience.

When I was in High School I was in the girl's choir, and took part in the musical *The King and I*. I remember the theatre director was a good director and I felt like I learned quite a bit from her. It seems like a strange thing now when I think about it, however at that time I didn't think too much about it, that she occasionally smoked if she was sitting far away from the students in the vast auditorium. I am sure that type of thing would no longer happen now that the negative health effects of smoking and second hand smoke have been made public information. She directed Shakespeare's *Romeo & Juliet*.

I wanted to be cast as Juliet, but the part went to Debbie Smith. She was a more experienced actress than myself. I got the part of Romeo's mother. I have laughed about that many times, saying that wasn't even a close second to Juliet.

My freshman year in High School a girl committed suicide. I didn't know her well, but I remember how sobering it was to come into science class and her chair was now empty. I was just a teenager, but I couldn't help but wonder if there wasn't something someone could have done to reach her or help her in her desperation. There's not ever an easy answer why something like this happens. Perhaps it could have been substance abuse or lack of parental or community support. When something like this happens I believe it makes everyone in the community more aware of our need to offer support, encouragement and friendship to young people that may be at risk.

Mr. Silvey was my freshman science teacher. He knew my father was a minister and most Mondays when I came in class he would ask me if I went to church on Sunday? Of course my answer before the class was always yes and then I would sometimes ask him if he went to church as well. I used to sit at a table in the back of his science class with a friend of mine Jan Master's. I remember when Mr. Silvey was not looking I used to talk with Jan and invite her to church. Whenever she asked me questions about different issues I would show her the answer in my Bible. Jan and her family did eventually come to church and it became a regular part of her family's lives. In spite of the fact that I should have spent less time talking in class, I managed to remain on the Academic Honor Roll and National Honor Society throughout my high school years. Mr. Wayne Heath was a careers teacher that was an encouragement, and Mr. Tom Boyce

made State and Local Government an interesting class in high school. I remember Mrs. Theresa Bohon was a very intelligent English teacher and had standards for the students dress that some may not have liked, however, I respected her courage. She told the young ladies that if they showed up at school with halter tops or skimpy clothes on they wouldn't get in her class unless they put another shirt over it. These are just a few of the many fine and caring teachers I had at Fort Osage.

Some of my friends in High School were Brenda Elliott, who's mother Lois, and siblings attended our church. And Terri Brisbin and Teresa McKinney and I formed a singing trio. Teresa's mother sewed all of us outfits that matched, that were various colors. I remember when we were so excited that we got the chance to sing during the Youth for Christ service, in their auditorium. The very talented Mary Baker Buboltz helped prepare the singing groups for YFC. I believe they now call the organization Youth Front. The Raley family, who lived in Napoleon at that time, were quite involved with the Youth For Christ Organization, which Al and Vidy Metzker founded. We would catch the bus in Wellington or Napoleon and ride to the Youth for Christ services on Saturday evenings. We always looked forward to that time of the week. I also remember the Raley family had a young man named Miguel, who was a foreign exchange student come and live with them from the nation of Nicaragua. I remember Miguel talking about his concern about the political and civil unrest that was going on in his nation at the time he was living here.

A few of the vacations we took when I was growing up were to places like Nashville, Tennessee to see the sights and visit with my Uncle Darol and Aunt Ann. I

remember the first airplane ride I ever took was when my Uncle Darol owned a small plane and he and his pilot took Dad, Steve, my grandfather George and I for a short flight. Another memorable vacation was when we went to Pike's Peak Colorado. We viewed several beautiful sights. It was exciting to view God's creation from the top of Pike's peak.

We also made several fun trips to places like Silver Dollar City in Branson, Missouri, and Six Flags in St. Louis, Missouri. The only time we ever got my mother on a roller coaster was in Six Flags. She got so nervous and that was the last roller coaster we ever got her talked into riding. We used to tease her that her favorite ride at the theme park was the mild tram ride to and from the park. My Dad, and Steve, and I always loved to ride in the bumper cars.

When I was a teenager my mother was volunteering at the Teen Challenge Youth Center in Kansas City, Missouri. She would do typing and office work sometimes when Steve and I were in school. She met a Hispanic young man, named Sergio Hernandez. Sergio began coming to our home for weekend visits. He then moved in with our family and lived with us for a few years. He became close to the family, and even began to refer to my parents as his Dad and Mom. Sergio went on to acquire his master's degree and teaches in Texas. I have not seen him for several years now, but he has still stayed in contact with my parents, from time to time, throughout the years.

There were many fine and friendly people in Buckner, Missouri. Most were decent God fearing honorable people, however, like any community I remember there were some families I knew that their lives were plagued by a family member and the

abuse of alcohol. I knew of some devastating circumstances such as a father and husband that would chase the family through the house threatening to shoot them and they would literally run and hide to save their own lives, or some that would hold a loaded gun on family members and threaten their lives, wives and children included. I saw how some people could be decent hard working people that loved their families until they got drunk, and then sometimes their children were beaten or the wife got her teeth knocked out. My parents always prayed with anyone that had violent or alcoholic loved ones that God would change their hearts and minds with a miracle, however, they also counseled people that God does not expect any person to keep their children in an abusive situation where people fear for their own lives. I have heard Dr. Laura Schlessinger advise people that sometimes removing yourself and your children from an abusive situation until the person gets help can be the proper step. Perhaps temporarily moving in with a family member or finding a local shelter.

I knew some families personally where the parents loved their children dearly and yet their children went off into drugs and alcohol and/or got into crime. One particular family, the mother was a very sweet natured lady and was talking to me about what went wrong in her children's lives. I remember back to days of our youth, and being in their home and the father being so harsh and yelling at them and treating them so disrespectfully in front of others. I believe after years of that harsh demeaning treatment they just openly rebelled by the lives they lived.

I also remember a family that had two children that were several years apart. For some reason the oldest child was treated differently than the younger child. The oldest

child was expected to do many household chores and work and pay for all of their own personal needs by the age of 13 or 14. This child was also demeaned and treated disrespectfully in front of other people. However, the younger child did not receive the same type of harsh treatment. The oldest child grew up and had little to do with family members and rarely went to church in their adult life.

I remember a family that had several children. For some reason one of the parents played favorites with the youngest child. I saw the older children grow up with resentment toward the youngest sibling because that child was treated so much better than everyone else in the family. As parents we realize that each child has different personalities and needs, however, we have to strive to treat our children fairly and with mutual respect.

I believe there are many honorable people that presently serve and have served previously in the military, however, I knew of a family that had a teenager that graduated from high school and went into the Army. The teen that had never been introduced to homosexuality previously was coaxed into homosexuality in the military. I don't agree with people that state they are openly homosexual serving in the military where people are living and showering in close quarters, nor do I believe people send their family members into the military to be coaxed into homosexuality and immorality. I remember the days of Gomer Pyle on TV and how the military was portrayed in a wholesome way.

I was taught good morals, however, I had this perception in my mind that it was all right to park and French kiss with boys as long as there were no hands touching sexual areas below the neck. I realize now French kissing is a good way to spread

mononucleosis. I remember a young man once putting a hickie on my neck. I look back now and think how silly it was that I even parked with boys at all.

I tried to live a good Christian life, but sometimes I think if I had to do over again I would have used more wisdom in different areas. I remember when a group of church teenagers were going bowling. I wasn't usually one for pushing ahead, and was the last to get on a crowded van of teenagers that a young man was driving. He said "There's no place left to sit. You will have to sit on his lap (a boy I had been dating that was sitting in the other front seat)." I had never sat on a boy's lap before, nor have I ever since, however, I sat on his lap, and on the way back he began to kiss me. That particular night was actually a turning point in my life for where I decided to draw my moral boundaries, when he realized he would not be successful getting his hand up my shirt. As imperfect as I am, and with some mistakes I made, I do thank God that I saved sexuality for my married life.

I remember another incident I regretted and learned from that happened one summer that my mother was away at church camp. A guy I had met from the church rallies had a friend and they would come by my house sometimes and we would go driving around to see who was playing a baseball game in Buckner or go look at their ferret to entertain ourselves. Later this young man's friend got married to a young lady that was pregnant. The married couple separated and the friend came by my house one particular evening without the young man. He said he was bored and wanted to know if I would like to go see a movie. I should have said no that would not be a wise decision, however, I made a very poor decision that evening and went with him to the local drive in

movie theatre. We watched *Harper Valley PTA*. I remember I kept telling him how angry my parents would be if they knew I was out with him. We watched the movie, he kissed me once, and took me home. I never went anywhere with him again and he and his wife divorced soon after that. But I have always felt that I owed his ex-wife an apology for my behavior.

Chapter Eleven

The Sorrow of Losing My Grandparents

I remember when Elvis Presley passed away, driving with my headlights on the day of his funeral, like many other people in the nation. Elvis Presley's mother had been a member of the Assembly of God church in Memphis, Tennessee. I have never forgotten that he and my grandfather George Cordry passed away within days of each other, in August, 1976.

After my grandfather's passing my maternal Grandmother Ethel lived alone. He had been her one and only love from her teen years. They had been married for 52 years. Each of us took turns going by my grandmother's house and helping her with her medicine. After I would set her medicine out in the appropriate containers when I went by in the morning, I would call her on my lunch break to remind her where I had placed the medicine and remind her it was now time to take it. The Meals on Wheels volunteers performed a wonderful service, and would bring my grandmother, as well as other senior citizens, some of her meals at a very reasonable cost.

My grandmother came to the place that she could no longer live alone, and she moved in with our family. She lived with us for several years. My mother, with reluctance, came to the place that she could no longer adequately care for her and for the last year of her life she went to a senior citizen home. When we would go to visit her she loved to hear us sing and play the piano. She and the other residents would gather to hear my cousin Amy sing. Even though my grandmother Ethel had a loss of memory, whenever she would hear a Gospel Hymn or Christian song she would clap her hands and

tap her feet on the floor to the beat of the music. She never lost her sense of rhythm. She passed away in 1984. I always loved and respected her a great deal, but I thought back to times when I wish I would have had more patience when we encountered issues related to her memory loss.

Right after my mother took me down to CBC and helped me set up my room, and she got back home, I remember getting the call from my Father that my Grandfather Joe had passed away. I didn't have a vehicle at school then and I asked my father how I could get home to travel to Kansas for his funeral, because I certainly didn't want to miss my grandfather's funeral. His reply was that he wanted me to stay in Springfield and not miss my classes that were just starting. I regret to this day not attending my Grandfather's funeral to say my goodbyes. I remember talking with the girls on my hall about what a sad day it was for me with my Grandpa Joe's passing. His lively personality was greatly missed.

My paternal Grandmother Sue took turns staying with her five children after my Grandpa Joe passed away. She developed Alzheimer's, and eventually went to live in a nursing home. When we went by to visit and play the piano and sing for her she still seemed to know who we were. She passed away in 1998. My father was close to his mother and gave a eulogy at her funeral. He spoke about the sacrifices she made when they were growing up. He said "I remember her fingers sometimes bleeding from scrubbing all of our clothes on a washboard," and mentioned several other sacrifices that she had made. With her passing I no longer had any living grandparents. Near Memorial Day, out of respect, I usually go with my parents to my grandparents and other family

members graves to put flowers on them. My maternal Grandparents are buried in Sedalia, Missouri. My paternal Grandparents are buried in Hiawatha, Kansas.

Chapter Twelve

The College Years

I had enough credits to graduate from Fort Osage High School in 1978, after my junior year. I started attending Central Bible College in the fall of 1978, when I was 17 years old. I had been raised in a very strict home. I didn't always use the most wisdom in the way I dressed.

My parents bought me some new clothes before I went back to CBC for my second year. One of the blouses was white, however, it was the kind of summer fabric that could almost be see through if you were in a place where there was bright light. Nobody else ever mentioned it; however, I realized the need to get a camisole, for that blouse after one particular student mentioned that fact to me.

I certainly made my share of mistakes but I did manage to get through high school and college free of tobacco, alcohol, and illegal drugs. I have said many times that I hope people will judge me for how I have lived my entire life and not just by my mistakes.

I met the young man I would marry at Central Bible College, Eric Solomon, who was from Crystal Lake, Illinois (a suburb of Chicago).

My parents both attended and met at Central Bible College many years prior to my attendance there. Eric's father had also attended CBC. I soon learned that college work was going to be more difficult than high school. I spent a fair amount of time studying and practicing my piano, although quite a bit of my time was spent socializing.

There were many people at CBC who influenced my life. President Philip and Hazel Crouch were such fine and humble leaders. Hazel Crouch was my speech teacher,

and she did a very good job teaching her students confidence in public speaking. There were also many wonderful and caring professors and leaders such as Dr. Opal Redden, Louise Harrison, Deborah Gil, and Professor Henderson just to name a few.

Rev. Nelson Sachs pastored in Bolivar, MO and also taught classes at CBC. I remember hearing him tell of the difficulties and grief he and his children went through during his wife's bout with cancer, and passing. He met, Dixie Cox, a southern belle from Alabama, at CBC. She was my dorm supervisor that we affectionately referred to as Aunt Dixie. I know that she had a great deal of patience to be able to keep a smile while trying to teach girls like me to be in the dorm on time, and not to spend too much of my time socializing. I can assure you she had her work cut out for her with me. My mother realized when I was living away from home, for the first time, that socializing too much can adversely affect your GPA.

"Aunt" Dixie lost her husband to cancer before she came to CBC. She and Nelson married. They were both an inspiration to others as they chose to go on with their lives and believed God had further plans for them in spite of the sorrow they had been through. They married in Alabama and Nelson told how he pushed Dixie around in a wheelbarrow as part of the southern chivalry. Nelson Sachs later served as the Southern Missouri District Superintendent for the Assemblies of God, and Dixie made a lovely first lady for the District.

A few of the students from Canada were Dave Heyward who married Lisa Washington from Alabama, Scott Doggard, Calvin Thompson, and Billy Richards. The thing that always distinguished the Canadian students, that we would tease them about, is

most of their remarks were followed by “Eh.” For instance one of them might say “So you think you will be going by the store today Eh? They were always good natured about the teasing. Another highlight of my time at CBC was a spring impact trip to Toronto, Ontario Canada. It was an exciting time of ministry as well as a chance to visit a beautiful, and interesting place. I remember at that time Toronto, Ontario boasted the world’s tallest standing structure, the CN Tower. I graduated from CBC with my Associate of Arts Degree in Bible in 1980. Eric also graduated in 1980 with his Bachelor of Arts Degree in Bible.

Some of the students at CBC had various part time jobs. A couple of friends from the St. Louis, Missouri area, Glen Harding and Orn Fry had part time jobs at a local funeral home in Springfield. Their job was to pick up the corpses to bring back to the funeral home. Once they decided to take a few of us students by the funeral home to show us where they worked. The silly guys decided to pull a prank on us and had one of their friends raise up off of a stretcher in the funeral home and just about scared us all senseless.

When I was attending CBC I can remember a few different musical groups that some of the students and I went to see. At that point in our lives we usually went where the cost for a concert was affordable or a free will offering. I remember the Imperials holding a concert at Evangel University for \$5.00 a person. The music and concert were enjoyable and the thing that made the greatest impression on my life, that I have never forgotten to this day, is when the lead singer Russ Taff had his new wife Tory stand and he introduced her to the college students something like this “I prayed that God would

give me a righteous fox, and He did.” It left the impression with me that his message was its OK to keep yourself attractive and desirable; however, it’s also cool to live a righteous and Godly life and save yourself for marriage.

I also remember Andrae and Sandra Crouch and the Disciples drew a big crowd of college students with their enormous talent and so many meaningful songs that Andrae Crouch has written throughout the years. The Second Chapter of Acts with manager Buck Herring and his wife Annie Herring and Annie’s younger siblings Matthew and Nellie Ward were very popular with the college crowd as well. They had such a unique and original sound as well as their passionate love for Jesus was evident.

I became friends with Miriam Addis who was from the state of Ohio. Miriam and I had a lot of similarities in our upbringing. We were both raised wearing dresses and skirts and not much in the way of make-up. I still chuckle to myself when I think about the time her mother came to visit at CBC and I was trying to stall her by visiting with her in the dorm visitor’s area, while Miriam ran downstairs to get her slacks off and her skirt on.

Before I went to college I had never roller skated. Some of the students would go roller skating on Saturday evenings. I decided to go along with them, but soon realized that roller skating was going to take quite a bit of coordination that I was going to have to learn. I could barely stand up on roller skates so Miriam Addis had the idea that I should go to the roller rink on Saturday afternoons when the little kids were having their birthday parties, so I wouldn’t be so embarrassed when I fell down in front of the kids. That’s what I did and I finally learned to stay up on roller skates. In college I took up

jogging and beginning tennis class. I enjoyed playing tennis, although I never really mastered the game.

Other roommates of mine at CBC were Colleen Hills from New York, and Michelle Cameron from Iowa. They were both sweet Christian girls. They spent quite a bit of time studying with their steady boyfriends. There were friends Mark Lehman and Dee Peterson, Peter Bosworth and Debbie Westlake, Randy Long and Patty Rutledge, Darla Jackson, Fel Bagunu, Rich Avila, Janice Reynolds, Steve Lummer, Brad Dashell, Brad Buck, the Ellis sisters, the Surratt brothers, the VonLanken brothers and Cheryl Yandell, Mark and Jeannette Tripplett, Mike Tice and Sherry Wright, Greg Hollis and Kris Kyllonen, Lee O'konski, Cathy Applegate and Rick Barnes, Rose Vilamill, and Carol Petty. As well as there were many other friends from various states and nations.

There is much discussion regarding whether women should take their husband's last name. Obviously there are many differing opinions on this issue. I personally have always thought it is nice when a family can have the same last name, therefore, I have never had a problem with a woman having her husband's last name. Some women have had professional careers established with their maiden name and choose to keep their established name and some place their maiden name in the space of their middle name. I have never had a problem being referred to as Miss when I was single and Mrs. When I was a married woman, however, some women prefer to be referred to as Ms. If I do not know if a woman is married or not or I do not know her preference I simply address her as Ms. Eric and I married in March of 1981.

Chapter Thirteen

The Trial With My Back Problems

I went through a difficult time with scoliosis and back trouble during my college years and during those first couple years that I was out of college. People may remember that there were many times that I stood in the back during the church services. I had gone through many chiropractic treatments with Dr. Gemmer in Springfield, Missouri, and later Dr. Batzold in Blue Springs, Missouri. I had a great deal of trouble sleeping at night and had some pretty ridiculous looking pillows I sat on in my chair at Sterling National. Dr. Batzold had directed me to wear a 1" or 1 1/2" heel lift in my right shoe and I also wore a special girdle with a 1/2" lift for my hip. I remember awakening Eric many times in the night from the back pain and discomfort. Dr. Batzold told me the only other thing that some people get desperate enough to do is have a metal rod surgically implanted in their back. I began to pray out of desperation for my healing. I was prayed for by a minister and my legs became the same length. I returned to Dr. Batzold's office the next morning and he verified that for the first time since he had been my doctor my legs were the same length. I removed the special girdle and heel lift from my shoe and never wore them again. I had maintained going to chiropractors every month or two for adjustments to keep my back aligned properly, but I have not experienced those same severe problems, and I never had a metal rod put in my back. I have presently not been to a chiropractor for the past one and one-half years.

Not long after we were married we were in an auto accident. We were sitting still waiting to turn off of the highway. A fellow's brakes failed in a truck behind us. He hit us

so hard it totaled his truck, did a lot of damage to our car and the impact was so great it even broke the front seats of our car completely down and they were laying in the back seat. My sister-in-law Sandy and niece Rachel were with us. The impact was so great that Sandy thought a bomb had gone off underneath the car. The man that hit us had no insurance. We didn't believe that our insurance was dealing with the situation fairly and we acquired an attorney that filed a lawsuit. We went for back and neck treatments to Dr. Williams. We settled out of court for a few thousand dollars. If I had to do over again, knowing now what I do, I'm not sure that we would have filed a lawsuit. I believe there are times when lawsuits are warranted when a person is seriously injured, and all other options have been exhausted to come to a fair resolution. We all had problems from that incident. Eric suffered problems with his neck throughout the years that he attributed to that accident. I have rarely ever gotten into a vehicle that I didn't wear my seatbelt since the time of that awful crash.

After college I got a job as a bank teller at Chrisman Sawyer Bank in Independence, Missouri and enjoyed the work, however, not long after that I was offered another job as secretary and receptionist at Sterling National Life Insurance company in Grain Valley, Missouri. I worked there for a couple of years, before I was laid off. The company closed down not long after that, but I still think back and realize many ways that I could have used better wisdom and people skills when I worked there. I was on unemployment for several months after that job though I did repeatedly look for work, however, I realize I should have gone ahead and found some job sooner. The next job I found was a part-time job as a sales clerk at Macy's Department Store, for lesser pay than

I had made previously as a secretary. However, I enjoyed working with Macy's until we moved to St. Louis, MO.

Chapter Fourteen

Ministries

My mother became involved with the East Kansas City Women's Aglow. After a short time she became the President of that chapter. There were fellow officers on that board that were members of various protestant churches and also a lady from St. John La Lande's Catholic Church that was part of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. When my mother traveled to Washington D.C. for the annual Women's Aglow Convention a dear Catholic family invited her to stay in their home and she considered it an honor to stay in their home as their guest.

I remember several times when my mother would minister in the Women's Aglow services and I would go with her. She shared a sermon entitled "Is it well with your soul?" I would then rise to sing the beautiful hymn by H.G. Spafford "It is well with my soul." H.G. Spafford wrote that hymn after he had been through a time of great tragedy in his own life. He and his family had lost most of what they owned in the great fire of 1912 in Chicago, Illinois, and then his daughters were on a ship out in the ocean that crashed with another ship and sank, and all of his daughters lives were lost. When he was standing over the place in the ocean where he was told the ship sank he penned the beautiful words of the beloved hymn "It is Well With My Soul."

One particular Women's Aglow Service that stands out in my mind was when a guest named Tona Hendren was speaking at the East KC Chapter. She had never met me and knew nothing about me, and I remember her precise words were "Will the little girl sitting beside her mother please stand? I have a word from the Lord for you today." I

recall her speaking about her belief that as Daniel was used with words of wisdom with leaders I would also be used to work with leaders. At the time, I wasn't exactly certain what the meaning of the prophetic words were, however, I have seen some of those very words come to pass in my life, and her words of encouragement have made more sense to me, as the years have gone by. I had never had anyone give a public personal prophecy over me before that time, nor have I ever since. We became friends with some precious Christian ladies through the Women's Aglow Organization.

My mother also, in later years, worked with a women's organization that they referred to as Greater Love Outreach that met monthly at the Fairmount Christian Church in Independence, Missouri. They held monthly meetings and shared ideas about ministry ideas to the community.

A Christian musician that I believe had an enormous impact was Keith Green. I remember regularly receiving Keith and Melody Green's Last Days Ministries Newsletter, and having most of Keith Green's albums. I will never forget the moment it came across the news that Keith Green and two of his children had perished in a plane crash. Keith Green had such passion about the Christian message he wrote about in his music. So many people in the Christian Community wondered who would replace his authentic message. It is a credit to his widow Melody that she was able to show the grace of God and continue on and raise their other daughters to faithfully serve Jesus.

I remember Carman's music ministry started coming to the forefront of the Christian Music Industry in the early 1980's. I believe his original lyrics and unique music style changed a lot about the genre of gospel or Christian music. One of the things

that always attracted me to Carman's ministry was the fact that if we wanted to invite other young people to attend that we knew didn't have a lot of financial means to be able to attend a music concert, his concerts were open to the public for a free will offering. I realized that every ministry has to have adequate resources to thrive and I believed in his music ministry and always bought his music and gave an offering. I remember that Carman came to places around the Kansas City area like Kemper Arena and College Church of the Nazarene. I was impressed by the fact that he was able to minister effectively to people of many different denominations that called themselves by the name of Jesus Christ, and that he maintained a disciplined life and testimony throughout the years.

Another music artist that had a lot of influence in the Christian music industry and also had some success with crossover music into pop culture is Michael W. Smith. His music and style have been in demand for over twenty-five years. I know that many public schools at their graduations played his song "Friends." There are many Christian artists that I believe have had a positive impact on the culture, obviously space in this book does not permit me to name them all.

Chapter Fifteen

Living in St. Louis, Missouri

We would sometimes travel to Springfield, Missouri for the annual Southern Missouri Assemblies of God District Council. There are many interesting ministers and missionaries that I have heard throughout the years, but one particular missionary couple that stands out in my mind is the Late Mark Buntain and his widow Huldah. They were such humble people. They founded an orphanage in Calcutta, India. I was very proud when he spoke about the fact that he and Huldah had worked side by side with Mother Teresa in Calcutta, India. People may not agree on every issue, however, they realized they were each striving to minister the love and compassion of Jesus. Each of these people are “Heroes of the Faith” to me.

We traveled and ministered some, and then accepted a pastorate at Riverview Assembly of God in St. Louis, Missouri in 1984. We lived in the church parsonage adjacent to the church. They were a friendly group of people, and treated their pastor’s family very kindly. They also had a Daycare adjacent to the church. There was a precious lady in the church, Mrs. Rogers, who also had several children and grandchildren that were active in the church. This was a testimony to the sweet Christian spirit that she always had.

When we were pastoring in St. Louis the church Eric to the Assemblies of God General Council in San Antonio, Texas. I was pregnant with Charissa, and went to spend a few days with my family. He came back talking about the many beautiful and interesting sights he was able to enjoy there such as the beautiful river walks.

I have been a Kansas City Royals fan for most of my life, since I have lived in the Kansas City area most of my life. What is the old saying about “Murphy’s Law” when things just don’t seem like they work out at the right times in life. I will never forget I was living in St. Louis, Missouri during the I-70 World Series that took place between the Kansas City Royals and the St. Louis Cardinals in 1985. Both teams were such good teams that year, and my mother has always cheered for the St. Louis Cardinals, because she was raised around the Columbia, Missouri area and her family followed the Cardinals baseball a great deal, when she was growing up. Well, it was not a World Series without its controversies; however, I have continued to be a fan of the Royals and Cardinals throughout the years.

I know there is discussion that goes on about the salaries the players in the different sports make. I realize that most athletes that make it to the pros have had a very strong work ethic, and have parents and/or coaches that have also worked very hard with them, or they wouldn’t be there, however, I know there is some discussion that goes on about salary caps. I also say if sports figures make millions of dollars a year through endorsements and otherwise, then I don’t mind saying they should pay their fair share of the taxes so that people like teachers, fire fighters, police officers, the military et cetera can also have a fair and decent standard of living.

There is also discussion about the fact of what some people refer to as “gold diggers.” Meaning people that can seek to falsely accuse or accuse a wealthy or well known public figure of something simply with the motive of extracting money from them. I guess this issue can be looked at two ways. Wealthy or famous people are no

more exempt than anyone else in life of the expectation of conducting yourself respectfully before others if you want people to view you as a person worthy of respect. However, people also don't respect people that go through life making it their highest goal to sue anybody for anything they can.

Our first child, Charissa Ann, was delivered by Dr. Barbara Walsh at St. John's Mercy Medical Center in St. Louis, Missouri on November 27, 1985. They had a very large maternity ward and baby nursery. My mother joked "That she had the best set of lungs in the nursery. The ladies at Riverview Assembly gave Charissa a very nice baby shower. She received beautiful hand made baby quilts and many other nice gifts.

Chapter Sixteen

Life in Kansas City, Missouri

The next church that we pastored was located in Kansas City, Missouri. Bennington Chapel, was a beautiful church that was built by Pastor W. B. Owen and his wife Geneva. There was probably about a 35 or 40 years age difference between the previous pastors the Owen and us.

Our first service was in January, 1986. Reverend Owen also oversaw the development of a baseball field on the church property. There were many different churches that had ball teams that played on that ball field. There are many positive memories from the time at Bennington Chapel.

Our son Eric II was delivered by Dr. Margaret Nickel at St. Luke's Hospital in Kansas City, Missouri, on January 13, 1989. He weighed almost nine pounds when he arrived, and he was ten days early. I was so thrilled that he finally made his entrance into the world!

There was a six month period where Adrian and Teresa Jones came to work with the music ministry at Bennington Chapel. Adrian was a graduate of Oral Roberts University. They were both very talented and worked very hard to direct a dynamic Christmas musical that many people, including myself, were privileged to be a part of.

Chapter Seventeen

Across From the Stadiums

A few years later I was appointed by the church board, which was comprised of the Kansas City, MO A/G Sectional officers, which we appreciated all of the time they volunteered. We marketed the Bennington Chapel church property, oversaw the purchase of land, and help work with the contractors to erect a church building. That was a very time consuming task. The church was located on Blue Ridge Cut-Off, across from Arrowhead Stadium. Many hours were put in overseeing and helping to build that church.

With the church being in such a highly visible location we tried to put up scriptures or clever sayings on the church sign to speak to peoples hearts. One time church members Wanda Patterson and her daughter Rhonda Baier put up hundreds of little white crosses on the front church lawn to represent the precious aborted babies, along with a large sign facing the stadiums that read “Jesus heals and forgives, let Him.”

I have always considered myself pro-life and would not ever encourage a woman to have an abortion, however, believe a girl or woman has that right under the following circumstances:

- 1) If the mother’s life is in danger.
- 2) Incest with a minor.
- 3) When a woman comes to the hospital or police station to report and be examined for forcible rape I believe she has the right to be offered a pill to prohibit conception or terminate the pregnancy.

- 4) I declined to be tested for birth defects with either of my children. I told the Doctor “The child has been conceived and I will carry the child to term regardless of the tests findings,” however, I believe if a woman if tested for birth defects it should be during the first trimester.
- 5) I believe other than to save the mother’s life that second and third trimester abortions are indefensible.

I believe it is between God and a married couple whether they use contraceptives or not or whether a man has a vasectomy or a woman a tubal ligation, which are both simple procedures that can now be performed in a simple Doctor’s office visit.

Other than the Chiefs Football games, which always draw large crowds, one of the largest events held across from the church, at Arrowhead Stadium, was when “Promise Keepers” came to Kansas City, Missouri. The Promise Keepers organization has done a great deal to help strengthen the traditional family. Dr. Tony Evans regularly spoke at many of their conferences. Billy Graham’s Evangelistic Organization also drew large crowds at the Stadium, several years later.

After the church was built we worked a lot of hours. I took extra hours calling for an insurance agent as well as the accountants. Eric worked part-time jobs at A T & T and the *Kansas City Star Newspaper* and drove a school bus.

When we were in Kansas City, Missouri, one particular day, I looked up and noticed a large painted portrait of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., with a tear coming out of the corner of his eye. I couldn’t help but wonder if that portrait might not be an accurate depiction of what Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. would do if he were still alive and walked

some of the streets in our nation today. I can't help but believe his heart would be troubled to see the break down that has taken place in the traditional family (a family with a father and mother.) I believe if there is going to be substantial change in this nation the public schools and universities are going to have to work to help strengthen a family with a father and mother or else allow parents to be given vouchers so that they can choose a private, religious, or charter school for their children.

Two friends of ours are Charolette Duckett and P.J. McGovern. These dear ladies have considered it a ministry for years, of taking foster children into their home, and keeping them for weeks at a time. They have heard some of the most heart breaking stories about the children's family situations. They have provided a safe and secure place for many foster children to stay in, throughout the years.

Chapter Eighteen

Dealing with People in the church with a past sex offense

Back in 1996 I attended special services at an Assembly of God church, was prayed for and experienced what I have heard some people term “The Glory of God.” When a person experiences this it can be difficult to stand or remain still. I realize not everyone that reads this book will understand or even necessarily agree with the supernatural experience I have described. Scripture teaches us that salvation comes through Jesus Christ and other than that I have always believed that people don’t have to fully agree on every issue to be able to have a productive ministry or life.

We pastored the church until 1997. We always believed it was very important to do a thorough background check on anyone that desired to be a church worker, teacher or leader. If there was ever a person that had a sexual offense in their past that person was never allowed to oversee or work with the infants, children or youth. We always believed that sexual abuse should never be taken lightly. If we truly believed that the person had changed their lifestyle, it had not been a repeated pattern, and had now become accountable for how they conduct their lives, by being a regular and faithful part of the church, he would find some task where the person could be helpful. Such as doing maintenance or church property up keep, and they would be working along with other adults. I know in some instances where a sex offender has fallen into repeated patterns, churches have had to use wisdom with each individual case as to whether to allow that person to be a part of the church or not since it is obviously an important concern for children to be protected from a sexual predator.

Chapter Nineteen

Family Lessons Learned

I love my children dearly and would not trade the experience of being a parent for anything, but there is obviously a lot of extra work and responsibility with infants and small children. As the kids got older we read *The Five Love Languages of Teenagers* by Dr. Gary Chapman.

We tried to be a Christian example to our children and to other people. We try to be careful with what we read and what movies we watch. I am very sorry to say that I do remember watching an R rated movie 29 years ago and an R rated movie 19 years ago that we regretted viewing. We had no prior plans to, however, turned on the movie *Pretty Woman*. I believe that Julia Roberts is a beautiful and talented actress, however, I was sorry I viewed the movie before it was even over. I don't believe it was an accurate portrayal of what a prostitute's life is really like. They have to deal with STD's and the feeling of being used and abused. I believe a lot of our success and maturation in life comes when we are humble enough to look at our past mistakes, apologize when necessary, and learn from them, so that we don't spend a lifetime repeating the same mistakes. This is just one of the major reasons that I believe it is so important to be active in a local church. I recently read about a ministry started for prostitutes by Annie Lobert, from Las Vegas, Nevada. She can be reached at www.myspace.com/annielobert

Chapter Twenty

Working From Home and Raising Children

Life was very full and exciting when we had two little ones full of energy. I worked a telemarketing business for CPA and accounting firms, from my home, for most of my children's growing up years. I would talk with business owners and presidents of small corporations. I trained myself in telemarketing and sales by reading library books. This allowed me to be at home when my children were home, and be available to drive them to sports, music lessons, swimming lessons, school, and church activities during their growing up years. Much of the extra money went to pay for these activities. The children and I also spent time playing down at the local park. Working from a home office is not always a viable option for a parent, however, when it is possible I think it can be an enormous blessing of being able to be more involved with your children's lives and activities.

We always tried to make the children's birthdays and Christmas a special time. We didn't have a lot of extra money, but we would allow the children to give us several gift ideas that we would choose from. We didn't talk a lot about Santa Claus when the kids were little. When I was growing up my parents didn't really talk about Santa Claus to Steve and I. Every family has their own personal thoughts about this issue. We were always taught that the celebration of Easter was first of all about Jesus resurrection. We also colored Easter eggs and took part in Easter egg hunts.

Charissa and Eric II both attended Mother's Day Out at Rockwood Baptist Church, and pre-school and elementary school at Englewood Christian Academy. My

children still laugh about how I would sing “It’s a happy day and I thank God for the weather” each morning as I drove them to school. I’m not sure who wrote that song, but I tried to instill a positive Christian attitude in them.

Both kids tried their hand at just about every sport imaginable. They both started playing T-ball at four years old at Kansas City Baptist Temple. I remember when Eric II and the team of four year olds were out in the field during one particular game. At that age the kids usually spent quite a bit of time playing in the dirt when they were in the outfield. The batter hit the ball and it went directly into Eric’s glove. Everybody jumped up and gave him a standing ovation, and I think he was surprised to see that the ball had accidentally found it’s way into his glove. Eric II also played baseball at Tri-City Baptist Church.

Both kids played basketball, and Eric II took Karate lessons and wrestled in school. Although Eric II chose not to wrestle in high school because he was told that he would either have to wrestle with girls or forfeit that particular match. I don’t mind saying I don’t believe it’s appropriate for the boys and girls to be wrestling each other.

My children are now both grown and I think most people anywhere that know my children will tell you they are both color blind and honestly not at all prejudice. Everybody has a life’s most embarrassing moment. I can assure you mine and my son’s happened when he was four years old. I was in a store walking a few steps ahead of my children and my seven year old daughter was pushing her four year old brother in the cart. All of a sudden from behind me I heard a voice say “You black ladies move out of the way.” Of course the ladies were offended at the rude remarks and said “Excuse me.”

My daughter was very surprised as well to hear her little brother say something so rude, and she immediately let go of the cart and backed away from it, as much as if to say “The rude boy is not with me.” I then heard the voice say again “You black ladies move out of the way.” I thought to myself “That could not possibly be my child saying something that rude to anyone.” Sure enough it was my son. The truth is my first thought was walk on and pretend you don’t know who the rude child belongs to. (Neither of my kids look like me anyway.) Then I listened to my better sense and turned around and apologized profusely to the ladies and told my son to do the same for his very rude behavior. God knows my children have never heard rude or prejudiced remarks like that from their parents. I tried hard to convince those dear ladies of that, and I am proud to say neither of my children have ever made such a remark to anyone ever again.

We had a fence installed in the backyard and we got a little rat terrier dog the kids named Chester. We were careful to always keep the gate closed when Chester was in the fenced in yard, however, Chester being a small thin dog, figured out how to squeeze underneath the gate and go walking out in the neighborhood. I was home alone with Chester on a particular day and when I went to the back door to look out in the backyard he was gone. I immediately started calling his name and got in my car and drove around the neighborhood looking for him. A lady told me she had seen a little dog wandering down the road some time ago. After some time that I was not able to find the dog I went back home and wondered what on earth I was ever going to tell my kids happened to Chester. They got home from school and we immediately started making signs to put up in the neighborhood regarding our missing dog.

When the kid's Dad got home they continued making signs. I had already previously been scheduled to go to a friend, Joyce Frazon's house, the PTSA Treasurer from the kid's elementary school, and help with the yearly annual audit that was routinely performed on the PTSA financial records. As I was driving to Joyce's house I turned onto 40 Highway, a few blocks away from our house. I could hardly believe my eyes when I saw a white spot of fur smashed flat on the busy highway. It was what was left of our little dog Chester. I went on to Joyce's house and she remembers how upset I was about Chester and I said "What on earth am I going to tell my kids?" When I got home later the kids were ready to put the signs up they had made about the lost dog. It was so difficult for me to explain to them what had happened to the little dog.

The next little dog we had we named Buster. He was a cute little dog and he got very attached to me and would lay by my feet just about anywhere I went in the house. We had him for several years and he finally got to the place that he could hardly walk anymore and we decided it was time to take him to the Veterinarian and have him put to sleep. That was a difficult day for everybody in the family but especially for me.

Chapter Twenty-One

Learning from Reading

My children and I spent a lot of time checking out books from the library, and reading throughout the years. This has been one of my favorite hobbies. I have made it a habit for many years to carry extra reading material with me wherever I go. This way if I ever have a delay or I am stuck sitting somewhere, I have something constructive to do with my time. This has been a major source of learning and maturing in my life. I read books by many different authors such as Dr. James Dobson and Dr. Kevin Leman on family relationships, and parenting.

It is obviously important the kind of influences that children and teens have in their lives during their formative years. I tried to keep magazines around the house that would be a positive influence on my children. We subscribed to Clubhouse and then Brio a teen girl's magazine and Breakaway a teen boy's magazine through Focus on the Family, as the kids got older. Susie Shellenberger, who was the editor of Brio magazine, has recently started a new teen girl's magazine called Susie Mag.

When my children were teenagers we also went through discussions regarding the type of music they listened to. I told my children that the lifestyle and lyrics of the musicians they listened to were more important to me than the style. My son wanted to listen to some bands that sounded to me like they had a lot of loud guitars and instruments playing at the same time. We came to the understanding that he could listen to those bands or musicians if they had lyrics and a lifestyle that was decent and would

play the music in his room or with headphones so everybody in the house didn't have to hear it.

The reason I sought out others opinions with family relationships is I realized I did not know it all or have all the answers. Therefore I was humble enough to try and learn from people that had already raised their children successfully et cetera. I tried to teach my son the balance between the fact that he could still be masculine and a gentleman. I would ask him to help me open a jar that I needed his muscles and strength with. I also tried to brag on him in a masculine way such as when he was all dressed up telling him how handsome he looked. I tried to differentiate with terms that denote femininity for my daughter and masculinity for my son. As imperfect as I was the idea was to raise a son that understood masculinity but that would grow up to treat women like ladies and have a mutually respectful family.

I also read books by many different authors that dealt with leadership and people skills from a Christian perspective, such as books by Dr. John Maxwell. It was during this time period in my life that I learned to not just automatically accept the status quo in any particular situation or organization. I learned to not to be afraid to ask questions about particular ideas or directions that may or may not have been achieving particular goals or desired results in the past.

I also read books by coaches of winning sports teams, many books about history, and biographies of people that helped shape history. One particular book that helped me a great deal with better people skills was Dale Carnegie's book *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. I tried to instill a love for learning and reading inspirational books in

my children. They also watched many fun and educational videos and programs like Sesame Street and Bill Nye the Science Guy.

Chapter Twenty-Two

Volunteering

We moved into the Independence School District and the children started attending William Southern Elementary. The school had a fine principal and many fine teachers, but it was quite a change for the kids to be in public schools. Charissa had a young man in her class. His father was in prison and his dear grandmother was doing the best she could to try and raise him. He was full of anger and had a very foul mouth. I have often said that I have a great deal of respect for educators who teach in the day and age, and culture, in which we now live. When writing this portion about educators and schools I came across some inspirational words by Andy Rooney “Most of us end up with no more than five or six people who remember us. Teachers have thousands of people who remember them for the rest of their lives.”

Parents and communities want strong academic standards and well balanced children. I believe it is best accomplished when everyone in the education system, and the community work together. When my children have been in the public schools, I have tried to stay active in the schools and the community. I have served as a room mother, helping out with class parties. I also helped out on the PTSA board, and on various school district committees. I had the privilege of working with many fine people in the PTSA such as Kathy Nevans, Angela Boyd, Lynnette Wages, Michelle Adams, Tammy Ferguson, Mary Patrick, Jana Waits, and Miriam Spencer just to name a few. I have helped prepare and serve the Teachers Annual Breakfast to show appreciation to the

principals and teachers for their hard work. I was also an active member of the Chamber of Commerce.

I volunteered reading as a Youth Friend with a first grade class once a week for several years. I was able to help the teacher reach her goal of having students that could all successfully read at the first grade level. It was a joy reading with and encouraging the students for the many years I worked with the classes. If a child can excel in reading it will obviously be much easier to excel in the other subjects. Laura Vernon, the Director of Youth Friends for the Independence School District did an excellent job recruiting and inspiring volunteers to work with children.

I have had the opportunity to be a volunteer with the Special Olympics several times, which was founded by Eunice Kennedy Shriver. It was a joy to get to be an encouragement to contestants with special needs and disabilities, as well as their family members. I had parents and contestants that expressed their appreciation for my participation and seeking to help build their special needs family members self-confidence and esteem. It also reminded me that all human beings are precious in God's sight.

I believe that volunteers work best together when they believe in the mission of the organization they are volunteering for. Anyone can find a cause or organization that you agree with their mission, and feel that you have some time or service that you could donate and be a blessing to them. You receive a sense of fulfillment when you help meet the needs of others. There is something elating about being part of a worthy cause. Many people long to be part of a cause that they believe is truly making a difference in the lives

of others. I believe each of the organizations or churches that I have volunteered time for are making a difference in the lives of people in the community, and the world.

The Salvation Army is another organization that I have volunteered my time and raised funds for. I had the opportunity to develop a friendship with Major Joseph Wheeler, who had also served as the President of the Independence Ministerial Alliance. I have also volunteered to solicit funds from my neighbors, for various organizations that I deemed to be a worthy cause. My life would have been much less fulfilled if I had not taken many of the volunteering opportunities that were offered to me.

There are many volunteer opportunities. People work in soup kitchens to feed the homeless, help build or refurbish houses for Habitat for Humanity, clean up neighborhoods and communities, help children who need encouragement or tutoring in school, visit the elderly in a nursing home, or an AIDS patient in the hospital, or join a church's prison ministry, help collect funds for an organization that helps the needy, or is working to find a cure for a disease. There are many opportunities for volunteering all around us. Volunteering makes you feel part of a community. There are many heroes all around us volunteering and meeting the needs of others. I have been privileged to volunteer and build relationships with many of those people in my own community. In the future I am sure that there will be more opportunities to continue to volunteer and be a blessing to others.

I have used many of the marketing skills that I have learned in my business in personal and volunteer settings as well. Whether a person is dealing with business people or volunteers in the community or church you have to have good marketing skills to sell

your ideas to other people. You encounter objections when dealing with people in every area of your life. You have to learn to deal courteously with people if you hope to accomplish any of your goals in your professional, volunteer, or private life. It takes marketing skills to get a child to see the need to have goals in school and work hard toward those goals, or to get the PTSA members to understand why you do or don't think a particular program would be beneficial for the school students.

I believe it is important that we are not afraid to listen to feedback from our family members or co-workers or friends in the community organizations where we may be a volunteer. Good marketing skills require us to put ourselves in the person's place that has an objection. Looking at an issue from another person's point of view is certainly part of any successful marketing strategy.

Chapter Twenty-Three

Speaking Out for Justice

I wrote about the incident with Blake Cerovich, the convicted child molester, and how he came close to my daughter when she was 10 years old, at the beginning of this book. After that incident took place I had the opportunity to talk with Gene and Peggy Schmidt about the organization they started called Speak Out For Stephanie, after their daughter Stephanie was tragically murdered.

Something else that took place shortly after Charissa's incident was a man that was a local city alderman and his wife were taking care of two little foster girls. The girls alleged that the man had raped them while they were in his home. At first the man denied the allegations and said it was just politics. However he later acknowledged that the rapes had taken place when he was drunk. A local mayor represented him and got him a plea bargain for a much lesser charge. The mayor stated that this man was a fine man and should not be sent to prison. I can remember how hurt I was when I read that. I certainly believe God forgives and restores, however, to deter others from the same behavior justice needs to be upheld. I wrote letters to the newspapers and spoke in the media about my belief that this was not an adequate sentence, and that these little foster girls were societies most vulnerable, and had no parents to defend or speak up for them. I believe the man only served 120 days of what they refer to as shock treatment and was then released on probation. I believe as a society we must act like we believe children's innocence is precious and should be protected.

I also appreciated having the opportunity to talk with Palle Rillinger of the organization MOCSA-Metropolitan Organization To Counter Sexual Assault. This organization works to educate the public about the seriousness of sexual assault. Another person and group that was helpful was Karen Johnson of the National Organization for Women. There were times I would call and leave a message when Karen was not in the office and when she returned my call she would apologize for being out of the office and say she had been down at the local women's shelter helping the abused women and children. I have learned to realize that people do not have to agree on every issue to be able to find common ground on which to work together for the good of families and communities.

Many adults that have same sex attraction were themselves victimized sexually or endured some other form of abuse during their childhood or teen years. This is an issue that is not often discussed, however, it is a reality. I have read that Ellen De Genres dealt with sexual abuse from her step-father when she was growing up. This is a very traumatic issue for any child to deal with. As a person that upholds Judeo-Christian values, I wanted to share with you some of the things that I taught to my own children throughout the years. There are many people in the world, and I am one of those people, that believe the moral absolutes that are taught in scripture do not change for me, for my children, or for anyone else, however, I also teach my children that everyone has the right to be respected as a person and a human being regardless of whether you agree with their lifestyle or not. I do not believe the words sexual orientation need to appear on any kind of paper work people fill out. People just need to teach their children how to treat other

people respectfully.

I was proud to hear a teacher from the public high school where both of my children graduated make the statement that she had never heard or known of either of my children to treat or speak to anyone disrespectfully. Some people may have same sex attraction, however, homosexuality is a chosen lifestyle. It is not a characteristic for which a person has no control over such as the skin color or race they are born. So when there is a discussion or debate regarding this issue it helps people to remember everybody has a right to be a part of the debate and not have to fear political retaliation or intimidation from any particular political group. In my opinion, we come closer to resolving issues when we are not calling each other names and shouting past each other.

Chapter Twenty-Four

Lessons Learned About Investments

I opened stock accounts for my immediate family and I put in a great deal of time reading and learning about stocks. I tripled our money in one year's time frame.

However, I wish I had been wise enough to foresee the downturn near the beginning of 2000. There was a speech from an officer on the Federal Reserve Board about irrational exuberance and the market kept going down, and somehow my stock investments seemed to not recover.

We purchased a rental property at 8812 Thompson, Independence, Missouri in 1987. Charissa was a toddler then, and I would take her over with me. I would put her in her play pen while I would work cleaning and painting on the house. We put down new flooring and did some work on the roof. Finally we had it ready to rent. I made up a landlord – tenants contract. We screened each of the applicants. There were times we turned people away. There were also times we called applicants and told them we would give their deposit back to them. Their references did not check out and we could not rent the property to them. Renting property to people you do not know personally is not an easy endeavor. After we owned the property for several years we decided to sell it. We contracted with a realtor, however, it did not sell.

We decided to run an ad in the newspaper – For Sale By Owner. We were gone on vacation to Chicago, Illinois part of the time when the ad was running. My mother very kindly took the calls for us. She and my father had shown the house to a man named Al Peryda. He said he was buying up rental properties in the area. We had the original

loan on the property at B & L Bank in Lexington, Missouri. We advised him to go talk to them. We advised B & L Bank that we did not know the man personally. Al Peryda called and asked me if he could go ahead and have his remodeling men go over to the house and start working on it. I told him "Absolutely not. You will have no access to that house whatsoever, until B and L Bank in Lexington, Missouri has run your credit references and approves you for that loan." B and L Bank ran a credit check and said he checked out fine. We allowed the man to sign to take over our loan. He turned out to not be an ethical or honest person. A neighbor on Thompson Street called me some time after we sold the property to Mr. Peryda and stated that she was concerned there might be illegal drug activity going on at the house. I told her I was sorry to hear that, however, Mr. Peryda had bought the house, not rented it. I also told her if she honestly believed that could be the case she should call the police and have them check it out. I am not certain of all of the details that transpired, but eventually the City of Independence condemned the house for whatever illegal activity he had going on there. Eric and I repaid a portion of the loan to B & L Bank and B & L Bank forgave several thousand dollars of the debt. Our names were no longer on any contract with Mr. Peryda. It was a financial loss to us and B & L Bank. I still don't know to this day how he got by B & L Bank's credit check, and, I pray God convicts Mr. Peryda's heart of his fraudulent and deceptive ways wherever he may be. I am very thankful that Independence, Missouri is no longer the methamphetamine capital of the nation, as I later found out it once was. I have tried to figure out what on earth brought all those meth dealers to Independence? Why did they locate here? I hope they figure that question out so it never happens again,

because I have always been proud of Independence, Missouri, my hometown for most of my life.

We also owned a duplex at 607A & B Frandsen, Independence, Missouri. We sold the property several years ago. Some of the money was invested in mutual funds in the stock market just before the market took a steep downturn. The very hard work of myself and others on the stocks and real estate investments were supposed to help pay our children's college expenses.

Chapter Twenty-Five

Members in Another Church

We became members of Central Assembly of God in Raytown where Rev. Bill Newby was the pastor. He and his wife Eunice had graciously allowed our children to be a part of the church programs for the year prior to us becoming church members. Our children have been an active part of the children's church and church youth group. The Children's Pastors Gary and Rita Johnson, Youth Pastors Dale and Connie Hollingsworth, Wes and Danette Bell, and Kasey and Cassie Robinson as well as many of the children and youth sponsors, have had a great impact on their lives. They have taken part in many church camps, mission trips and fine arts trips to places like Mission, Texas, Padre Island, Texas, Reynosa, Mexico, Orlando, Florida, Denver, Colorado, Phoenix, Arizona, and Washington D.C. Mary Buboltz, Sheila Wilke, and Denise Ferguson as well as others, have worked very hard to prepare some first place winners at the National Fine Arts Festivals with the choir, ensembles, and Noah Buboltz solo. I am grateful for all of the time, effort and talent so many have sown into my children's lives.

After we had been members at the church for sometime and I had been regularly meeting with the music minister and his wife each week on the worship team and choir, I was astounded to hear the news that the music minister had some type of inappropriate behavior allegations against him from a child or children in his neighborhood, and had been arrested. His immediate resignation was accepted by the church. I had spent a great deal of time with these people at the church, for several years, and was shocked to hear of the allegations. I had grown to dearly love them. The reason it was so difficult for us to

understand at Central Assembly is that many of the children from families in the church had spent time around the music minister and even in his home. I never came across one family or person in the church with any kind of allegation of any inappropriate behavior on his part. However, I learned that after court proceedings the man did confess and apologize for his inappropriate behavior toward a couple of children in his neighborhood, and served his sentence handed down by the court. I am sorry that somehow I did not seem to for see the situation that transpired and I pray for healing and wholeness to come to those involved in this situation.

We have taught Sunday School classes at different times during our time at Central Assembly. Served as a quiz master when Eric II was in Junior Bible Quiz. We have also served as usher greeters. I regularly worked the church nursery and have been an active part of the choir and worship team in the past.

I remember one particular Sunday I was feeling a bit ill, but I didn't pay much attention to it, and took my sinus medication and went on to sing on the worship team and in the choir. After singing I went to sit in the congregation. I knew I hadn't eaten much and took my sinus medicine on an empty stomach. I learned that is not a wise thing to do. I started feeling faint, and the next thing I remember I was laying on the floor looking up into some peoples' faces. I didn't realize I had fainted and I said to them what are you guys doing up in the middle of church. They laughed at my silliness, got me up off of the floor and took me to the back to make certain I was alright. I had a knot on my forehead and a bruise on my knee from where I hit the floor. Other than that, and my pride, everything else was intact. I have never taken medicine on an empty stomach again, and I

have managed to keep from fainting. I'm sure no one will ever forget the day the silly lady fainted in the middle of church.

Chapter Twenty-Six

Family Vacations

We have had several memorable family vacations to places like The Lake of the Ozarks. We enjoyed the fishing, boating, riding the water raft, and getting in the water, though I don't know how to swim. My family still laughs when we view the home movies that were taken of me getting in the water with two or three life jacket.

At the Wisconsin Dells we enjoyed many fun activities. We have been to many of the great museums, sports and sights in Chicago, there's Navy Pier & Lake Michigan, Planetariums, Aquariums and Zoos. The Christmas lights at Branson are beautiful at Christmas time, and they have plenty of exciting shows and events year round. We visited the beautiful state of Florida.

We visited the states of Michigan and Oklahoma. My father and I flew out, and visited his brother's family in the Los Angeles, and Orange County, California area. We saw Disneyland, the beautiful Crystal Cathedral and it was quite interesting to see how many avid surfers there were out on the ocean even on a cool and rainy day. It was also exciting to see the Grand Canyon from an aerial view.

We took a family vacation along with Crown Pointe Church youth group to the Assemblies of God Fine Arts Festival in Orlando, Florida. It was held at the beautiful Orange County Convention Center with it's unique architecture. Eric II played the guitar in a worship band. It is always a joy to see and hear the tremendous talent from so many fine young people from across the nation. We got to take in some of the sights in Orlando. It was a beautiful and fun day at Cocoa Beach frolicking in the waves of the

ocean and enjoying the beautiful scenery. In my opinion it would have been an even more pleasant day if a lady had not placed herself directly in front of us in her thong bikini.

Some things are better left to the imagination.

Family members that know me closely know that I have been terrified to put my head under water all my life. I had never learned how to swim, however, I decided to challenge myself to overcome my greatest fear and learn how to swim. Here I was a 47 year old woman taking swimming lessons. I learned to swim in the deep end of the pool and even jump off of the diving board. My family was astonished that I had overcome my fear of water after all these years.

We had the opportunity to visit Cape Canaveral and go by the Kennedy Space Center, through we arrived to late to tour. I learned there are 16 nations that take part in working together at the International Space Center. We visited Millinia, Bay Mall, Universal Studios, and the youth visited Islands of Adventure while some of the adults enjoyed lunch at Bahama Breeze.

During Christmas and holidays it is a blessing to be with family and friends. We make it a practice to invite others to be a part that may not have families near by to celebrate or share dinner with. My brother Steve met a single bachelor friend named Mike Flippo that worked with him at the Federal Reserve Bank in Kansas City, MO. Mike had served in the armed forces and was originally from Arkansas. Both of his parents passed away years ago, and he has no family in the area. He has celebrated the holidays with us, like a member of the family, for many years.

Chapter Twenty-Seven

My Children's School Years

The older the children got, as would be expected, the more independent they became. They both worked part-time jobs for spending money throughout their teen years. Charissa's passion continues to be music, singing, and playing the piano. Eric II has played the guitar in the church youth group worship band. He took guitar lessons from various places and then was also blessed to take guitar lessons through the Fine Arts program at First Baptist Church in Raytown. He played the drums in the middle school band, and the guitar in the jazz band.

Eric II wrestled in junior high, however did not continue wrestling into high school. One of his greatest concerns when wrestling was that the boys were told if they were ever scheduled to wrestle a girl, they would have to wrestle her or forfeit the match. I personally have never understood why the girls would wrestle boys. It may seem old fashioned; however, I don't believe it's appropriate. Eric II enjoyed playing on the golf team in high school. Charissa and Eric II both considered it a privilege to be inducted into the National Honor Society in school.

Charissa and Eric II have always been involved in church activities throughout the years. There was one particular youth party held at one of the teenager's houses and as a gag that was part of a skit they had all the boys dress up with girls' clothes and make-up. I was not at the party, however, I saw the picture that was taken of the boys. It was all just in fun, however, Eric II, nor the other young men in the church youth group, would obviously not normally be dressed up like girls.

Eric II's most enjoyable interests in high school were architecture and drafting. Eric won several district and state level awards for his architecture and drafting work under the direction of his teacher, Mr. Larry Lasater. Eric attended Missouri State University 2007-2008 and had earned academic scholarships. He had the opportunity to play his guitar as a part of the weekly worship team with Chi Alpha Ministries and to attend some of the Campus Crusade for Christ services.

Eric II lived in the scholar's dorm at college, however, was put with a roommate that announced to him that he couldn't decide if he was bisexual, homosexual or heterosexual which made for somewhat of a tense year living in close quarters. Eric also didn't care to hear his suite mates continuous stories about his homosexual lover(s). We encouraged Eric II to finish a college degree, however, he spent one year at Missouri State and made the decision not to return to college but to go into business sales. He has been working with the Christian organization Amway Quixtar.

Charissa was involved in many music groups at Truman High School. She was a member of the Concert Choir, The Trutones Chamber Choir, and the acappella singing group The Patriots under Mr. Wheaton's direction. She had the opportunity to travel with the Chamber Choir in 2003 to perform in France and Italy under the direction of Mr. Dickerson. Charissa also had the opportunity to tour with the musical group Heartsong under the direction of Dr. Bonnie Jenkins at Central Bible College.

Charissa performed her senior recital for voice and classical music at CBC and sang four different songs in Italian, French, German and Latin. When Charissa was attending CBC in Springfield, Missouri she also had the opportunity to be a part of the

choir and worship team at James River Assembly of God and help lead worship at Praise Assembly of God.

Charissa and I also had the opportunity to travel to Nashville, Tennessee, and Charlotte, North Carolina when she was a semi-finalist in the Inspiration Networks Christian Artist Talent Search. Charissa has been greatly influenced throughout the years by the music of people like Nicole C. Mullen, Natalie Grant, and Whitney Houston. People that have never heard Charissa sing before are many times surprised that she actually fits in several different musical genres. She had taken formal voice lessons for many years from Lori Pinnell, so she sings classical music however, she also enjoys singing pop, country, and her favorite soul gospel. Many people that have never heard her sing before are quite bewildered when they hear this petite little blond haired, blue eyed girl sing soul gospel. Associate Pastor Barry Young at Crown Pointe Church used to tease her when introducing her to the congregation. To everyone's good natured laughter he would say "And now Shaniqua Solomon will come and sing a solo for us."

I went with Charissa when she was invited to record a special song Verl Mason had written for a youth conference. It was a challenging song with interesting lyrics. I remember questioning about the words of the chorus that spoke about "What cha gonna do when it hits the fan?" I suppose different people might have differing thoughts about the content of that song, however, I have oft times heard the phrase used as "What cha gonna do when the confetti hits the fan?" Obviously the confetti would be scattered when it hits the fan. The song has not been released, as far as I am aware, at this point, however it maybe in the future.

Charissa is very good at working and saving and spending her money wisely. She had saved several thousand dollars toward college. She usually tried to get us to pay for most things for her so she can save her money. Eric II saves some money. We provided older cars for them, that we could afford while they were in school, but they were expected to help pay their insurance and gas money.

Charissa graduated from High School, and attended Blue River Community College for the last year. She earned the A+ scholarship by doing community service, keeping good attendance, and keeping a certain grade point average. For the most part her experience at the community college seemed to be a positive experience for her. One of the things that we found quite troubling was an English and Psychology class she signed up for. The first day of class the professor told the students that one of the books they would be reading from would be rated X if it were to be made into a movie. Charissa promptly dropped the class, and I gave the book to Josef and Susan Walker who are on staff at St. Mark's Catholic Church in Independence, Missouri. Joe and I had previously been on a committee together in the school district. Joe had also been the former President of the Ministerial Alliance and was active and acquainted with many of the religious leaders in the community. I asked them to please make the other Priests and Ministers they were acquainted with aware that such vile material was being used in the public colleges and universities that are kept open at taxpayer expense.

I believe that many taxpaying citizens feel a sense of frustration about some of the information that is taught in the public universities, and the fact that there are sometimes a lack of moral standards. I personally have never understood why they have to have

co-ed dorms where the young men and young ladies can sleep and stay in each others rooms. These issues regarding the public universities are certainly issues that I believe are important and need to be dealt with and remedied.

I have always tried to remind the kids, that even though I'm not a perfect parent, and make mistakes, that I loved them both dearly and had their best interest in mind when making decisions and raising them. I also tried to always remain humble enough to apologize and ask their forgiveness when I believed that I had been wrong in how I handled a situation. There have been many times that I have had to do that. I tried to remember to treat my family members with the same respect I wanted them to treat me with. That included things as simple as knocking on someone's door before opening the door. I think that if your children really believe that you are trying to do your best they will accept your love and discipline, and even forgive your failures.

I also tried to look at other parents that had been successful in raising their children, as an example with my own children. A family that I have a great deal of respect for is the late Pop and Mom Winans from Detroit, Michigan. They successfully raised ten children to love and serve the Lord Jesus and follow successful paths for their lives. I believe that is no easy task in the day and age and culture in which we now live.

Charissa has a friend that obtained her GED and attended college. She has tried to be a spiritual encouragement to the young lady. After a previous boyfriend of her mother's moved out the young lady had to have a restraining order placed against him because he was threatening to burn their home down. This is just one of several men that her mother has married or lived with and had children by throughout the years. A former

boyfriend of her mother tried to molest her when she was a teenager. She has had a lot to deal with and overcome. She stays active in church and tries to be a good example to her younger siblings. I have a heart for young people like she and her siblings. I believe it is of utmost importance to develop a plan to help train young people like this so that this cycle of moral instability will not be continued in the next generation.

Chapter Twenty-Eight

Inspiring a Respect For God Given Human Life

I had the privilege of teaching a weekly Bible Study for the expectant young mothers at Highlands Child Placement Services. These are young ladies that have chosen to give life to the babies they are carrying. Some of the ladies will keep their baby and raise the child themselves. Others will make the choice to allow a married couple to adopt and raise their child. I believe this is a positive way pro-life people can make a difference.

Psalm 139:13-16 says this about the issue: For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

I have always believed that all God given human life is precious, and considered myself pro-life, but I must tell you that I find it abhorrent when I hear of people bombing abortion clinics or shooting Doctors that perform abortions, and then claiming that God told them to do such a barbaric act. There are positive and reasonable ways that pro-life people can get involved in the legislative process or volunteer time or money to agencies or churches that are helping young ladies by providing a place to live until the birth of their child. If I hear of a person that claims to be a Christian making threats of violence toward people that disagree with their views I am always quick to say "That person doesn't serve the same Jesus Christ I serve or live by the principles that Jesus taught."

I believe that it is important for people that consider themselves pro-life to realize that God also cares just as much about justice and fairness for people that may live in poverty in nations around the world. Christian people should continue to strive to influence the International Community and each nation around the world to provide their citizens the opportunity to be educated, and have fair job opportunities with fair wages. I also believe that it is between God and a married couple whether they choose to use contraceptives or a husband has a vasectomy or a wife a tubal ligation, which can both be performed in a simple doctor's visit now.

There has been much discussion and debate in the past several years regarding the issue of stem cell research. The reason that many people are concerned about embryonic stem cell research is that there are millions of people, such as myself, that believe life begins at conception. We struggle with the fact that some people believe it is necessary to fertilize an egg with sperm and then take that embryo that would develop into a human being and purposely destroy it for use in stem cell research. People such as myself are certainly not opposed to stem cell research to help find cures for diseases such as Parkinson's disease as well as others. The fact remains that adult stem cell research actually seems to hold more promise for helping to find cures, and that does not even have to involve an embryo. I believe adult stem cell research is a way to move this issue forward and help find cures that many people desperately need.

I believe the sexual exploitation of children should be illegal and this law should be enforced in every nation around the world. Sometimes it is difficult for me to imagine how anyone could believe that the sexual exploitation of children should ever be

acceptable in any civilized nation. A few years ago my children went on a summer missions trip to Mexico with their youth pastor, Wes Bell. They came back talking about the friendliness of many of the people and the children that were a part of their out reach ministries. My daughter also came back quite distraught about a place they went by called “Boy’s Town.” It was explained to the youth group that people go into “Boy’s Town” and pay to have sex with the young boys, and that the government even collects tax dollars from this business. I could hardly believe that something as horrendous as this could actually be legal, and right across the border from the USA. God give us wisdom to eradicate the sexual exploitation of children everywhere in the world.

I was told of an occurrence that took place several years ago when a mother overheard her teenage son make a statement about making sure his younger brother was not left alone with their father. The mother quickly asked “Why would you make a statement like that?” That is when her son unraveled a story of on going sexual abuse from his father that she had been totally unaware was ever going on. This situation ended up with a divorce, and the mother was so distraught about how this sexual abuse had gone on and she had not been aware. The young man went for counseling, however, went through a very difficult time in his life. I can’t help but wonder what role pornography may have played in influencing this father’s behavior.

The mother asked how she could have prevented this or known about and stopped the deviant behavior sooner. I know the schools regularly talk with students about good touch and bad touch and talking with trusted adults if anyone ever touches or acts inappropriately toward them. I believe as parents we can try and strive to use wisdom and

train our children in correct behavior by periodically discussing these type of issues and desired behaviors with them.

In a democratic nation we thank God that people have the right to have differing opinions and views. Our nation was founded on Judeo-Christian principles and these principles have provided and still continue to provide guidance throughout the years. But I am also grateful that we have freedom of religion in this nation. I thank God that we don't have to fear that a government agent will come in the night and take our family members or torture or kill us, because we don't belong to the church, parish, synagogue temple or mosque of which the government dictates we must belong. I would to God that every nation and every person around the world could experience this same freedom of religion, within reason of course. I certainly would not support sexual abuse, marrying humans to animals et cetera. I believe it is of utmost importance that Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Jews et cetera should speak out about the issue that no person anywhere in the world should ever be forced to convert to any religious beliefs with the threat of violence.

I believe it is the responsibility of all nations to work together to see that basic human rights for all people are protected. How heartbreaking and appalling it is when we hear of "ethnic cleansing" that the nations of the world have sometimes allowed to take place in years past. I pray that we will learn from these mistakes and strive to see that all nations treat their citizens fairly. All nations must strive to root out corruption in their Government, Military and Police Departments so that their citizens will not feel the need to flee their homeland. Even with all of the challenges that we face and improvements

that we need to make in the United States people are trying to get in this nation, not the other way around. I believe in every person's heart there is a yearning to be free.

Chapter Twenty-Nine

Changing Roles with Aging Parents

I looked for my parents a house closer to my families, for almost a year. I finally gave up when I realized my parents were not really serious about moving. They live about a 30 minute drive from me. I call them most days and eat out with them and visit them when I can. I try and go by and help with house or yard work they have difficulty with from time to time.

My parents being closer to me would have been a good thing when they have had health problems. My mother had a hysterectomy and came to my house to stay, for a couple of weeks, until she recuperated and felt well enough to return home. My father had a brain aneurysm, was diagnosed with congestive heart failure, diabetes, and had a serious staph infection all within a years time. That was a rough year for the entire family. My brother Steve has experienced the very painful experience of passing kidney stones several times throughout the years. He tries to watch his diet to help minimize their reoccurrence.

Another difficult time that my parents went through was when their house caught on fire. My father had put a pan with some cooking oil on the stove. He then received a phone call that he needed to be over at the church to unlock for a couple that was getting married. He jumped in his car and rushed over to the church without remembering to turn the pan off on the stove. When he came home a few minutes later the house was on fire. Thankfully the fire department was able to put the fire out, and my parents were able to salvage most of their belongings. We all have to be careful and strive to remember basic

rules of safety. It can be easy for anyone to get distracted and before you know it something like this can happen.

My father suffered from congestive heart failure for several years before he died, however, it is still never an easy thing to see your parent pass from this world into eternity. We all know that if Jesus tarries His coming we will all eventually experience death. Scripture tells us in I Corinthians 15:54b-57 “Then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory. Where, o death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” These passages of scripture give Christian people a great hope. That hope takes a great deal of the sting of death away, but as human beings on this earth it still hurts to lose a loved one. We don’t grieve as people that are without hope grieve, but we still deal with our human emotions and feel the sense of loss.

Some people may think it simple minded to believe in God, however, in my opinion it actually takes more faith to be an atheist than to believe that there is a God or Intelligent Designer or Creator that formed the universe. And when questioned about my belief in Christianity I have often times referred people to read the books of Josh McDowell – *Evidence That Demands A Verdict & More Evidence That Demands A Verdict*, as well as the book by Lee Strobel – *The Case For Christ*.

When my niece Rachel was playing basketball for Avila university my father enjoyed traveling with my brother Steve to all of her games. After he developed congestive heart failure he got to where he could no longer travel out of town with Steve

and the girls on Rachel's team talked about how they missed Rachel's grandpa being at their games.

Chapter Thirty

Patriotism

It was especially enjoyable to visit Washington D. C. and be able to see many historic landmarks, and museums that we had only read about and seen in movies, up to that point. It was especially touching to visit the veterans war memorials, and Arlington National Cemetery. I didn't know any of the courageous men and women personally, that were buried there, but that didn't stop me from sensing the grief that many families must have gone through with the loss of their loved ones.

I had the opportunity to visit the memorial for former President John F. Kennedy, Jacqueline Kennedy and their children that had passed away, as well as the memorial for Robert Kennedy. This reminded me of the political leaders that have even given their lives in pursuit of standing for the principles they believed in.

One of the most sobering experiences I have ever had was standing in front of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. I know how much a mother loves her children. I realized that not only did some mother lose her child, but some mother would never even know what happened to her child. I came away with a new appreciation and respect for all who have risked their lives to defend freedom and democracy around the world.

I also had the opportunity to visit the Korean Veterans War Memorial in Overland Park, Kansas. The war went on between 1950 – 1953. The United States Military has maintained a presence in South Korea to try and help maintain the peace throughout the years.

Visiting the Veterans War Memorials also made me think of many of my family members that have served courageously in the United States Armed Forces. My father James Bradberry served in the Kansas National Guard. His brother Dale Bradberry served in the United States Navy. My Uncle Darrell Lassen served in the armed forces during the Korean War. My mother's brother Darol Cordry served in the United States Navy during World War II. When I look back over this list of names it makes me grateful and appreciative of every person that has courageously worn the uniform, throughout the years, of the Armed Forces of the United States of America.

I have also heard the story shared by Evangelist Dave Roeber. He served in the Vietnam War. He had a grenade in his hand ready to throw it when sniper fire hit the grenade and it exploded in his hand. It burned part of his face off and he was severely disfigured. He tells the touching story of how his fiancée, Brenda came to see him in the hospital. He feared she might remove her engagement ring and give it back to him, however, he tells the story with chuckles that she said "Oh well you never were very good looking anyway." They have been married for many years and he has traveled the nation seeking to encourage others that have suffered with similar circumstances

I believe very strongly that it is the place of individual family members first to be responsible to teach their children good communication skills and basic manners. Then it is also the place of communities to see that these skills and manners are reinforced in our young people. It's important that the schools, families, and churches don't work against each other, but that they all work together to instill character in our young people.

I have asked my children at times if they realize how many wars, riots, and acts of violence go on around the world because of people's lazy or poor communication skills? I have said many times about the terrorists who pick up a bomb and blow up innocent people or behead innocent people, that they are the ultimate cowards. These terrorists act like uncivilized barbarians that don't even know how to live among civilized people. It takes a real man or woman to take a seat at the negotiating table and give intelligent and persuasive debate like civilized people.

I believe Democracy is the best form of government anywhere in the world. We have many issues and problems that we are struggling with and working to overcome in our nation, but I believe the vast majority of the citizens of the United States of America are good, decent, law abiding, God fearing people that care about their families and their communities. I have heard the anthem "God Bless America" and Lee Greenwood singing "I'm proud to be called an American" many times, and yet it never ceases to fill my heart with gratitude and patriotism for this great nation every time I hear it. I appreciate the many times that the United States has worked with the other nations of the world to help solve problems and make the world a better place for all people and all nations.

I remember hearing the Kansas City, Missouri Police Department make a plea for citizens to help recommend more people of minority races to be police officers in Kansas City. I was very glad to hear this. I believe that healthy relationships are developed in our communities between the police department and the citizens when they each look at the issues through the eyes of the other person. When citizens realize that many times police officers have a very dangerous job and don't make a large salary. And when the police

officers also strive to remember basic manners and courtesy with the citizens, even though many times they deal with very difficult and sometimes violent situations. It goes a long way toward fostering good relations between the police officers and the citizens. I also recently heard about Los Angeles, California having a full time staff of police officers and also having a staff of volunteers that have been trained to do police work. I thought it was an inspirational story about how these citizens are giving back to their community.

Communities rightly have expectations of prompt and courteous services from their police and fire departments, and communities should also show appreciation to the fire fighters and police officers for the dangerous job they many times perform. I believe these expectations also apply for city and government employees, and again the citizens should show their appreciation for a job when it is well done.

Charissa and I spent a day at the Missouri State Fair together, in Sedalia, Missouri. When we arrived at the fair we were glad to have the opportunity to meet and visit with some friends of ours at the Fair Entrance, Bruce and Robin Purtle and their son Brian and his wife Audrey, and their lovely children. Bruce and his sons Brian and Daniel are fire fighters on the Kansas City, Missouri fire department.

I watched a movie entitled "Ladder 49." I personally don't think all of the profanity was necessary to make the movie interesting, but none the less the movie left you with a new respect for fire fighters that risk their lives in many dangerous situations. I was talking with a firefighter that said he believed this was one of the most realistic movies about the work and dangers that fire fighters face that has been produced.

The events that occurred on September 11, 2001 in New York City, New York, and Washington D.C. showed us, once again, the selflessness and courage of the many fire fighters and police officers that ran into the burning buildings to save the lives of others, and in the process many of those courageous people lost their own lives. I believe these acts of courage will not be soon forgotten by the citizens of this nation.

While I am on the subject of fire fighters and police officers, I am also going to give an opinion about the military and armed forces as well. I believe if a woman can pass the strength test to be on a fire or police department or in the military then let her be part of the team. If the physical strength and endurance test has to be weakened so that women can join the department then they are needlessly putting other people's lives at risk.

Throughout history there have been many women that have had the intelligence and leadership ability to hold any government office. Women such as Margaret Thatcher, Indira Ghandi, and Golda Meier, sadly Benazir Bhutto's life was cut short with an assassination, these are just a few strong women leaders.

Chapter Thirty-One

Common Sense is a Good Rule of Thumb

I make it a rule of thumb that I only give money to organizations (churches, tv ministries, charities et cetera) that account for how they spend the money and have an annual audit. I look sometimes at the lives of women that have developed successful ministries and some have had normal lives, however, I sometimes find a common thread with some people that seem to achieve greatly for the Kingdom of God and they have had to overcome great obstacles. I think of people like Mother Angelica who had a very difficult childhood, Joyce Meyer, Beth Moore and Paula White that had to overcome sexual abuse in their pasts. These women's lives show me that no matter where a person comes from or what a person has been through God can still put dreams in your heart that He can help you to accomplish. Booker T. Washington said it this way "I have learned that success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome while trying to succeed." When Lisa Bevere was in Overland Park, KS for a women's conference I was blessed and challenged by the services. I have also enjoyed being a part of the Women of Faith Conference in Kansas City, Missouri.

I've spent the last few years substitute teaching in some of the surrounding public school districts, as well as continuing my part-time business out of my home. Much of my experience as a substitute teacher has been positive. A community should be able to agree on a reasonable dress code to be upheld in the schools. I believe it can be difficult

for young men to focus on their school work if young ladies or teachers are dressed sexy or seductively.

Many times a rule of thumb I try to remember is simply common sense. I realize that school districts have to take many legal precautions because of the risk of lawsuits, however, I think most people have enough common sense to realize that sometimes there can be overreaction to a student having something as simple as an aspirin, ibuprofen or midol.

I also believe that it is not the place of the public schools to be promoting the gambling casinos. I can recall one public high school that was sponsoring a casino night. I believe this is inappropriate for the public schools. There is a balance to this issue. When I have been sub teaching there have been some teachers that left plans for the class to play word bingo or a game with dice.

Another issue I have encountered when sub teaching is a teacher leaving handouts for the students to learn about their horoscopes and astrological signs. There is a big difference between learning about astronomy, which is the science of the celestial bodies and their motion. Astrology is the study of the supposed influences of the planets and stars and their movements and positions on human affairs. I don't believe it is appropriate for the public schools to educate the students in astrology.

I would like to encourage churches & non-profit organizations, that might have the ability, to consider to consider acquiring grants to start after school programs and/or summer day camps. Pastors Rich & Robyn Wilkerson at Trinity Church in Miami, FL as well as others, have a successful program. At Trinity Church they have a summer day

camp for 5-15 year olds for \$50.00 weekly. I also believe another possible alternative that might keep students from spending so much time unsupervised, when parents might be working etcetera, is some school districts have gone to having school year round with several three week vacation breaks throughout the school year.

I don't believe when people are sentenced to prison they should be subjected to sexual torture within the prison walls. I also don't believe they should be supplied with video games or pornographic literature in the prisons. I believe it's best when only women are guards at the women's prisons. This would cut down on possibilities of sexual harassment between the prisoners and guards. It is important to continue to try and encourage or inspire prisoners to further their knowledge or education by spending time reading. This would go along way toward them having a greater possibility of being successful when they leave the prison system.

There has been debate in the past several years regarding capital punishment or the death penalty. I believe there are some cases that can warrant capital punishment if they are pre-meditated and /or particularly heinous. I once read of a small business owner that had a thief come into his store. He said after the thief robbed him he put his gun to the store owners head to kill him. The store owner said I told him "You know they have the death penalty in the state of California, and if you kill me they will give you the death penalty." He said with that the thief turned and ran out of the business and did not shoot him. He fully believed in his case it was the thief's fear of the death penalty that saved his life. An important factor that would insure that innocent people are not being put to death

is making certain that everyone has access to DNA testing. DNA testing has many times helped convict guilty people and exonerate innocent people.

I believe a simple step that would help stop physical or sexual abuse to elderly or mentally handicapped people in homes or institutions, as well as keep people from being falsely accused is the use of video or security cameras. Many places where people go now from banks to stores et cetera it is standard procedure to have video or security cameras and many people have already gotten used to that being a normal aspect of security.

For any nation or community to be successful they must take time to assess any problems they are experiencing and discuss realistic and logical solutions. I believe the citizens that want the right to have conceal and carry gun laws and to own hunting guns don't have to be in conflict with the citizens that are concerned about guns finding their way into the hands of criminals or gang members. I believe the vast majority of National Rifle Association members are people like my father that had hunting and sporting guns kept away in a safe place in our home.

The USA gives Mexico millions of dollars to fight the drug cartels. Then I read that the Mexican drug cartels are better armed than the military or police because they have assault weapons a k a machine guns et cetera that are flowing in from the USA. This lacks all common sense. They need to enforce the assault weapons ban in both nations. One berzerk person with a machine gun could kill dozens of people before they could get the person stopped. It is a very important responsibility of the gun shop owners to make certain guns are not getting into the hands of criminals. I believe that when citizens show

respect by listening to each others views and not jump to premature conclusions and use hostile rhetoric it helps produce reasonable solutions for all parties involved.

Immigration Reform is an important topic. The Government should safeguard national borders, see the importance of family reunification, and have a fair process toward legal status for currently undocumented immigrants. Many of our own family members were immigrants to America. We should seek humane treatment realizing the process needs to be reasonable and could have requirements such as undocumented immigrants to pay their back taxes. English should be taught in all schools in the nation and offered to adults as well so that we have a common language that unites us all as Americans.

I believe Barak Obama's massive health care reform program has the potential to bankrupt the next generation. There are issues that need to be dealt with regarding health care and people need reasonable access, however, I believe the plan being promoted presently will not have adequate resources to pay for it leading the nation into further debt. Healthcare is also continuously changing, such as some pharmacies now have nurse practitioner's on staff that can treat a patient & write prescriptions. There are also community organizations that acquire grants and funding for community healthcare facilities, as well as churches and non-profit organizations that offer health screening and health fairs. Annual audits and common sense checks and balances are of utmost importance in any organization government or otherwise. This can save the taxpayers or contributors millions or even billions in fraud! Facilities like the Samuel U. Rodgers Community Health Center in Kansas City play a critical role in providing primary health

care services in Missouri and throughout the country. Services many of us take for granted – prenatal care, immunizations, check-ups, dental and mental health care – are available to many people who might otherwise go without.” With a community health center no one in need of care is turned away.” Community health centers provide a safety net to as many as 46 million people who do not have health insurance. Many without insurance rely on emergency rooms or seek no care at all. I agree with Senator Kit Bond and believe an answer in part, is increased investments in community health centers. Since the year 2000, Bond and a bipartisan group of Senators have worked to secure an additional \$1.2 billion for more than 3,000 new community health-care facilities across the country, including 50 new facilities in Missouri.

Many studies have proven the success of community health centers: these centers help patients make better use of preventative care, lower infant mortality rates, and remove barriers to racial and ethnic health disparities. Also, patients with asthma, diabetes, heart disease, cancer and AIDS are better able to manage their illnesses if they have access to a community health center. Bond pointed out that community health centers also help with spiraling health care costs – reducing health spending by 30 percent for patients. I believe that community health care centers will be an important part of the solution.

ANNUAL AUDITS & COMMON SENSE CHECKS & BALANCES ARE OF
UTMOST IMPORTANCE IN ANY ORGANIZATION GOVERNMENT OR
OTHERWISE. This can save the taxpayers millions or even billions in fraud!

I seek to find a balance between ending junk lawsuits which sue health care providers for

nonsensical things and drive some out of medical practice, this could save billions of dollars, and the fact that there are times when people have legitimate grievances and there needs to be reasonable recourse to the courts for justice.

AND I AGREE WITH SENATOR KIT BOND'S IDEAS FOR REFORMING HEALTH CARE BY:

- Encouraging competition by allowing Americans to buy insurance across state lines to lower costs
Allowing small businesses to pool together to offer their employees health insurance at lower cost.
- Giving individuals tax equity. Common sense insurance reforms that would increase access and lower costs.
- INVESTING IN PREVENTION & WELLNESS PROGRAMS, like the ones that have been so successful in holding costs down at major businesses like Safeway.

It is of utmost importance to build healthy friendships and relationships with nations throughout the world, and to work with the International Community. I also believe it is imperative for the United States to maintain a strong military. President Ronald Reagan referred to this as "Peace through strength." President Theodore Roosevelt said "Walk softly, but carry a big stick." If there is anything that we learn from history it is the fact that history repeats itself. Nations that love freedom and democracy must never become isolationists again, and they must never allow someone like Adolph Hitler to set out to take over and control the world. In my opinion, nations should have been conversing and working together to help resolve the poverty issues in Germany before Hitler came to power. There will always be tyrants or dictators that arise, and

those nations that are peace loving and are democratic have a responsibility to see that the opportunity for democracy thrives around the world.

I did not agree with all of Ronald Reagan's economic policies, however, from what I read about history, Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher and Pope John Paul II are regularly credited with helping to bring about the dismantling of communism. Much is credited to speeches made by Ronald Reagan such as the famous "Mr. Gorbachev tear down that wall" speech referring to the Berlin wall that was later brought down.

I heard a minister pray a prayer that I thought was very wise and I tried to remember the content. He closed the prayer something like this "In Jesus Christ's name we pray with respect for other religious beliefs represented here." As a Christian I tell people "I will always believe Acts 4:12 - There is no other name whereby we must be saved but the name of Jesus, however, I will also always believe that people have the right to have their own religious beliefs and they are not forced to agree with mine." I guess as people that uphold Judeo-Christian values we strive to find the right balance that allows us to stay true to our beliefs and also keep peace with others that may not agree with us. I also believe it is of utmost importance that Christians, Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists et cetera speak out about the importance of no person in any nation ever being forced to convert to any particular religion by means of violence.

I am always thankful when I learn about organizations that are helping to bring peace in the world. Shevet Achim helps to bring Arab children to Israeli hospitals for lifesaving heart surgeries, at no cost to their families. Shevet Achim has now brought more than 200 children to Israel for emergency surgeries from the Gaza Strip, the West

Bank, and Jordan. I believe this organization is doing a great work to help bring reconciliation and healing in the middle east. Their motto is “Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity.”

Chapter Thirty-Two

Back to College and Another Suspicious Death

Even though I had been an avid reader for many years, I decided to go back to college and acquire a Bachelor's Degree in Management and Human Relations at the Mid America Nazarene University in June, 2005. I worked full time and worked very hard to complete sixty-four credit hours, earn my degree, and maintain a 3.67 GPA, one year later, in June 2006. I appreciated the helpful professors that worked with me. I especially appreciated Professor Lois Perrigo. Lois had to take time off to deal with breast cancer surgery during that school year, however, she also found the time to encourage me and help edit ten enormous life learning papers that I wrote.

In the midst of all of my activity of working full time and acquiring my BA at MANU I talked with a friend of mine that had been involved in politics for years, Connie Cierpiot, and asked her opinion about me running for the Independence School Board. She mentioned that she hadn't heard if Joe Gall was going to run for the Board again, and suggested I call him and ask if he was going to run again and if he had considered running with another person as well. Sometimes people in the school district run their campaigns together. I contacted Joe and he mentioned he thought he would run again, however, he didn't think he would be running with another person. Joe ended up not running for the school board again, but accepting the position as legal counsel for the Independence School District. Regardless of my already very full schedule, I decided to run for the Independence School Board in 2006, however did not win.

June 2006, I had the opportunity to travel to an inspirational and challenging conference with Dave and Joyce Meyer at Reunion Arena in Dallas Texas. We enjoyed seeing several sights in Dallas, such as the JFK Memorial Museum in Dealey Plaza, Dallas Baptist University, and Christ for the Nations. We were blessed to have the opportunity to attend an inspirational service at the Potter's House Church with Bishop T.D. and Serita Jakes, and their anointed worship leaders. We also traveled to Houston, Texas. It was quite interesting to see the statue of Sam Houston, as tall as the trees, along I-45 between Dallas and Houston, Texas.

We had the opportunity to attend a service at Lakewood Church at Compact Center and hear the ministry of Joel and Victoria Osteen, Worship Leader Cindy Cruise-Ratliff, and the Lakewood Church Choir. I hope to have the opportunity to return to Houston, as well as many other cities again, when I have more time to see other sights as well. I believe Beth Moore's Living Proof Ministry is also based in Houston, TX. Deb and I also had the opportunity to visit the beautiful Galveston Island in Texas. When we walked out on Stewart Beach and put our feet in the Gulf of Mexico all I could think about was the beloved hymn "How Great Thou Art." It was truly a time of inspiration when we talked about the beauty and majesty of God's creation.

I also had the opportunity to travel through Oklahoma City, Oklahoma on our way back to her home area in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and view the memorial from the 1995 bombing of the federal building. The 168 illuminated empty chairs with names of the victims lost in the tragedy, and the touching statue showing that "Jesus Wept," stood as a

reminder of precious lives lost and of the need to continue to strive to root out evil and terrorism in the world.

I continued to substitute teach and after my trip, I was finishing up classes at Mid America Nazarene University. I had prepared a year long thesis on an issue that I have been passionate about for many years, ideas different public schools had successfully implemented and also states and communities that had successfully implemented school voucher systems. The day before I was scheduled to deliver my class thesis, and present this information publicly, on June 21, 2006, I received a disturbing phone call.

Before I finish with the story about this disturbing phone call I would like to explain something that a person might wonder about the “suspicious deaths” for which I call for further investigation. Someone asked me the question “If you think there may be a political conspiracy and coincidental deaths, that are really not accidents, meant to intimidate you into silence, why would someone not just kill you instead of other people?” That is a valid question. I will say I believe I did once have an attempt on my own life. I was getting out of my vehicle to go in the grocery store, one particular night. I had not paid attention to the fact that the lights were out on the parking lot, and it was dark. All of a sudden a truck quickly started and the driver gunned the gas pedal and I literally ran off of the parking lot to keep from being run down by the man in the truck. It made me so upset that I came home and wrote a letter to the Kansas City Star regarding my views about issues to show the intimidator they would not win by trying to silence me.

I believe another reasonable answer could be because people know that if I or a member of my immediate family was killed there would certainly be a thorough investigation and perpetrators would be held responsible. I will use an example of what took place in the nation of Zimbabwe, on the continent of Africa recently. In the Presidential election Morgan Tsvangirai was running against Robert Mugabe. So much murder and corruption took place Mr. Tsvangirai became discouraged and dropped out of the running in hopes that it would stop the murder and corruption against his supporters. It was only after international pressure was put on Robert Mugabe that a power sharing arrangement was brokered and Morgan Tsvangirai is now the Prime Minister. I believe the very same type of murder and corruption goes on in this nation. Murder and corruption can only thrive when people do not expose it to the public and demand justice be upheld. It is imperative that the United States, as well as all nations, take allegations of murder and corruption seriously and see that justice is meted out and perpetrators are held responsible for their criminal acts.

Back to that disturbing phone call I received, I was told that my cousin Rhonda Bradbury's son, Pfc Brian Bradbury had been shot and injured in Afghanistan, but thankfully survived, however, the Medevac UH-60 helicopter that was evacuating him had the hoist "mysteriously" fail and Brian was dropped thirty feet to his death. (I've read on occasion of a helicopter or plane crashing, however, I don't ever recall reading about a soldier being dropped from the helicopter to his death. This would have to be very rare.) Brian was of Native American descent. The saddest part of this story is that Brian was heroically serving his country, as many others have, and helping his wife and young

daughter financially. I had my concerns about the coincidental timing and circumstances of this suspicious death, however, I did not know who to discuss my desire for further investigation into Brian's death with, so I kept my concerns to myself. When I attended Brian's funeral there was a long line of patriotic flags, held by veterans, along the street adjacent to Word of Life Church, in St. Joseph, MO, that Pastor Brian and Peri Zahnd founded. I so appreciated that the church had reached out to Brian and his family, and they had become a regular part of the congregation.

Chapter Thirty-Three

My Travels with the Airlines and Another Suspicious Death

I began working for Northwest Airlines in March, 2007. I started flying to different cities throughout the United States. Shortly after I began working there, on April 5, 2007, my in-laws left the Chicago area, to come to the KCMO area and visit, and on that very same morning their cousin Mark Selden, had a fork-lift dropped on his head at work in Chicago, Illinois that almost killed him. It seemed like very coincidental timing. He was then sent to 70 Witchwood Lane Lindenhurst, Illinois to live and take therapy. He is disfigured and handicapped now and will not be normal again. (Coincidentally Mark's father Ed Selden was the influential night time supervisor for the Chicago Tribune Newspaper for many years.)

Mark Selden's mother and Ed Selden's wife, Bertha Selden, was in a hospital in Chicago, IL and seemed to be no where near death when she suddenly and unexpectedly fell during therapy and died on TUESDAY, March 4, 2008. I had my concerns about both of these "accidents" as well, however, did not know who to ask to call for further investigations.

I traveled to Northwest Airlines headquarters in Detroit, Michigan for two weeks of training to be a customer service representative. It was interesting to get to see the sights of Detroit, the home of MoTown Music, and the world headquarters for several of the automobile manufacturers.

I flew into New Orleans, Louisiana. There had been a great deal of reconstruction since Hurricane Katrina, however, I could see there were still some boarded up buildings.

I guess some of those buildings were still boarded up because some of the residents of the city had chosen not to return after the devastation they had seen with Hurricane Katrina. I had the opportunity to go through the famous French Quarters and see the New Orleans Saints Stadium. It was also quite interesting seeing the aerial view of the city on my flight out. The citizens that chose to return to New Orleans had braved an enormous undertaking of clean up and re-building their city.

I had the opportunity to fly to several different cities. I flew to Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota. From an aerial view you can certainly see why this is called the Land of many Lakes. I had the opportunity to ride the light rail from the airport throughout the downtown area and also to the famous Mall of America. How interesting to see a mall with an indoor amusement park complete with a roller coaster and rides!

I also had the opportunity to fly into New York City, New York. I flew into JFK airport which remains busy with international passengers all night long, and flew out of LaGuardia airport. I had the opportunity to see the beautiful statue of liberty on Ellis Island, Ground Zero where the twin towers once stood, the Empire State Building, Rockefeller Center, Times Square and much more.

When I flew into Memphis, Tennessee I was able to go by St. Jude's cancer hospital for children, founded by Danny and Marlo Thomas, where children come from all over the nation to receive treatment. I also got to go by Elvis Presley's Graceland Mansion. This tourist attraction seems to still draw tourists from all over the world.

I flew into Des Moines, Iowa and spent the day touring their city. I visited the beautiful botanical gardens, and also had the opportunity to tour and take pictures of the state capital building with the beautiful golden dome.

I flew into Atlanta, Georgia and had the opportunity to tour their downtown area and get a picture of the huge “Georgia Peach” which the state is famously known for. I also toured their underground mall which was very interesting to enjoy all of the shops of a mall, except it was built below ground. I also got to take pictures of the Atlanta Braves Stadium. When I was later taking my daughter Charissa to Florida for her summer internship we had the opportunity to behold the beautiful sight of the city of Atlanta, Georgia illuminated at night.

I thoroughly enjoyed working with Northwest Airlines, however, when I took the job I thought I was going to be able to work a part time job of two eight hour days a week, and fly throughout the nation on some days off. After I took the job it ended up being a part time job where I had to work five days a week, and I was also driving up to the airport on a sixth day a week to try and catch four flights in one day and fly stand-by to various cities throughout the nation. On the day I was going to fly I would get up around 2:30 a.m. or 3:00 a.m., get ready and drive the 30 miles one way to the airport and catch the early flight out. If I was able to make all four connections I made it back to Kansas City by evening, however, there were a couple of times I ended up staying overnight in airport terminals and then had to work the next day. I had major expenses with my car, and had to have the car towed and was charged \$525.00 in car repairs, after driving the approximately 60 miles a day round trip, and so I decided the job had not

turned out to be what I thought it would and gave my two week notice that I was quitting.

Although I did enjoy having the opportunity to travel, and had planned where I would

travel to many more cities.

Chapter Thirty-Four

At a Crossroads

I have read recent statistics that say that one in nine houses is sitting vacant now in this nation. My family and I bought a home between Blue Springs and Lee's Summit in July, 2007. I contacted a very experienced Realtor friend of ours, Sally Groves, regarding purchasing a real estate investment the family could work on over the summer and sell for a profit that could help pay the kids college expenses. She advised us that this home purchase should be a good investment and should take no more than three months to sell. We put \$30,000 of equity from our primary residence into the purchase of the investment house. The timing certainly turned out to not be the best. The very next day after we purchased the home it seemed like everybody and his brother, as the old saying goes, started telling people not to buy real estate for the next two years. Anyway, we fixed the house up and are renting it out. We still own it almost three years later.

I have always believed that according to scripture marriage is meant to be a lifetime commitment. That was certainly what I intended it to be on my wedding day. There comes a time in everyone's life when they make major decisions about future direction. I found myself standing at that very crossroads after both of my children left for college. Eric and I were alone at home and there were unresolved issues that had festered from throughout the years. We had gone for in depth marriage counseling with several different counselors, however, there were unresolved issues that remained. Although I still kept most of my belongings at the house and maintained my residence there, I decided for my own spiritual and emotional well being that I should at least

temporarily stay across town with my aging parents. I attended church alone at Sheffield Family Life Center for several months.

I made a public New Year's Resolution in the Independence Examiner that I was going to acquire my Master's Degree in 2008 and was resolved to visit some of the National Parks that my son bought me a large picture book about for a Christmas gift. Little did I realize the events that would unfold in 2008.

I enrolled in Park University in Parkville, MO in January 2008, to acquire my Master's Degree in Communication and Leadership. I wasn't all that certain that I was really welcome into their Master's Program. However, I guess I should have taken the hint when after the first night of class we came out to the parking lot and my car was the only one with a parking ticket on it. (Even though I had my Park University student sticker clearly displayed.) After placing several phone calls I was finally told it must have been a mistake because the University doesn't even assess fines to students. I thought "Well thanks for sending out the welcoming committee!"

There was a paper which was assigned that included the Power Point. I was not familiar with working with this in my classes previously and would have done better on that particular paper if I had gained further details regarding successfully implementing the Power Point in my paper. Anyway, I continued on with the class and a week or two later we were assigned a paper we were supposed to write along with content from Ebsco Host that could be accessed online through Park University's website. I tried repeatedly to access that website, however it was to no avail. I found out that the same two or three days I was trying to access the website were the only two or three days out of the year

that the website had been unable to be accessed. What a coincidence. The professor also made the statement to the class that it was her dream job to write speeches for a Democratic President. I can only wonder if she meant that statement to put any political pressure on myself or any of the other students in the class.

So even though the weather was snowy and icy and day classes had been canceled at Park University, I decided to brave the drive to the Park University library, which I was told would be open, and there would be classes that evening. As I was driving to Park on the interstate I started to get off near the exit at Riverview. There was ice and my car began turning in circles. I cried out to God as my car rode up the guard rail and ended up hanging over it. Thankfully I did not collide with any other vehicles. A paramedic in an ambulance immediately ran across the interstate to my car and told me he saw me making the black circles in the interstate, and asked if he could take me to the hospital. I replied that I thought I would be alright and asked if he could help me get my car door open and get out of my car. I thanked him for his help, a tow truck was called, and when it got there the driver hooked my totaled car up and drove me to the Park University Library where I finished my paper and attended my evening class.

I continued on with that class although I felt like there was a desire on the part of the professor to control my political views, and I did not believe I was receiving the necessary help or a fair grade for my work in the class. On the next to last class the Professor instructed the students to exchange papers. When another student looked at my paper she inquired as to why my paper was single spaced and all of the other student's papers were double spaced. I replied to her that I had gone to the professor the first class

and she specified to me to single space my papers. The professor had purposely made me do twice the work of every other student in that class.

The next class I took I felt similarly about. I repeatedly e-mailed and asked the professor after class, throughout the eight week time frame of the class for feedback on the assignments I was turning in each week. The feedback I received was when he finally gave me the papers back with low grades the week before the eight week class ended. I had studied and prepared for the final paper to be written during the last class, however, I sincerely believe he and I both knew he was not going to give me a grade that would allow me to stay in the Master's program before he ever even looked at my final paper. Not because I had not prepared for the final and did not give correct answers, but because there was a desire for him to control my political views. To this day I have still never seen the final paper and the way it was graded, nor would the professor even contact me back for the longest time. There was one particular week that only myself and one other student even turned in the weekly assignment in that class. The rest of the students all said "We didn't even understand the assignment and didn't attempt it." I also overheard one particular student that had missed three of the eight classes make the statement that she was trying to maintain her 4.0 in that class. I couldn't imagine what criteria the professor must be assessing grades by. I had never missed a class or assignment even during bad weather. I will gladly take a polygraph test regarding any of the statements I have made regarding Park University and will ask that both of these professors take a polygraph test as well.

There was one class I felt positive about, that I took over the internet through Park University. The professor was Dr. Mark Noe. I don't know what his political views were, however, I will tell you I believe he was fair in assessing grades. There was one particular week when I did not realize it was my week to post commentary regarding a chapter in a book the class was reading, and I was late with the posting. I was docked 25 points and that dropped me from an A to an A-, however, I take full responsibility for that. It was my error. I believe Dr. Noe was a very fair professor and I also heard other students speak positively about him as well. I had also already sent him 80 pages of a 100 page thesis I was writing regarding the positive and negative aspects of Internet communication, even though I had not been allowed to take the thesis class yet. The negative aspects of the internet included information regarding pornography and child pornography.

I was coincidentally notified by Park University that I was being dropped from their Master's Program on the same morning I was leaving to take my daughter Charissa to Tampa Bay-St. Petersburg, Florida for her summer internship for Central Bible College at Suncoast Cathedral Assembly of God. I am willing to apologize and take responsibility when I believe I am at fault, however, I am also willing to speak up and say when I believe there were unfair circumstances at Park University due to the fact that they wanted to be in control of any political agenda or future I might have.

Eric and I still conversed and when our son returned home after his first year at Missouri State University Eric II informed us that he would not be returning to college and was going to move back home and try and succeed with sales. We discussed all of

the different angles and tried to encourage him to continue his education while he also worked the sales, however, he made his decision and all we could do was pray and try to encourage him. My daughter Charissa also came back home for a few weeks during that same summer, before she returned to Central Bible College for her last semester. It was during that time that I decided to move back home, however, I have since been living with my elderly mother and my marriage has ended.

Chapter Thirty-Five

Dealing with Life's Major Changes

Charissa returned to Central Bible College and had the privilege of making the acquaintance of a new Assistant Professor Scott Jett at Central Bible College that was also a graduate of Central Bible College and University of Missouri in Kansas City. Unfortunately for Scott and his family the next day September 12, 2008 he died in a crash with James & Robin Dilday outside of Morrisville, Missouri while riding his motorcycle. Scott was also a chaplain with the Springfield, MO police department and he tragically left a wife and five precious children.

Charissa was close friends with, Landen and Joyanna Reimer, and she had toured with them in a singing group while at CBC. Landen had been on staff at Hope Assembly of God, 148 Dove Drive in Albany, NY. A multi-cultural church. He had just been in Springfield at CBC visiting with Charissa and other friends before being found dead in his bed in Albany, NY on October 20, 2008. Charissa was quite distraught about his death and described his relationship with her like that of a big brother. Landen's mother is also the sister of my cousin Greg Thee's wife Debbie. I later sent word to his parents and sister Larissa that Charissa spoke so highly of Landen and they could certainly be proud of the Godly son of integrity they raised. Landen's life was tragically cut short and has left an enormous hole in the lives of his family members.

Charissa returned home, to Independence, Missouri, after graduating *Cum Laude* with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Applied Voice and a Bachelor of Arts Degree in

Contemporary Worship Leadership from Central Bible College, April 30, 2009. She co-lead the worship for several months with another young man Dustin McClellan, and helped launch a new church plant for. She is presently worship and music director at Praise Assembly in Shawnee, Oklahoma.

Chapter Thirty-Six

Turning the Tide for the Next Generation

If people do not realize the importance of repairing the moral foundation and stabilizing and helping to encourage families with a father and mother, although I know that single parents and blended families need encouragement as well, perhaps these statistics from Chuck Colson, founder of Prison Fellowship International, will be helpful:

- In the mid 70's – ¼ million people in the USA were in prisons.
- Today 2.3 million people are in USA prisons
- That is a 10 fold increase over the last 30 years in the prison population.
- 2/3 of inmates will be re-arrested within 3 years of their release.

I had the opportunity to serve on a Pregnancy Prevention Committee for the Independence School District. It gave me the opportunity to research information on various abstinence programs and speakers. I have learned to respectfully disagree with people if I don't agree with their views. There were several committee members that I appreciated their input and views, but I must admit I was always very glad to see Judy Thompson from the Catholic Charities at the meetings. She usually had some of the same information from Project Reality and other abstinence programs. The Catholic Charities were even offering the funding to implement these types of programs in the public schools. Being on this committee made me feel like I was able to share some of my personal beliefs, and to present facts and information supporting my beliefs.

I have read quite a bit about the role that Pastor Rick and Kay Warren from Saddleback Church, have played in striving to eradicate AIDS in the world and especially on the continent of Africa. This is an issue that affects every nation in the world. Just before the school season began this past fall I was so impressed with a program regarding AIDS and sexual information that was sponsored by the Catholic Charities, Youth Front, and several church groups. They had a young lady that spoke with the young people about how she acquired AIDS from the first person she had sexual relations with. She held up an entire cup of medicine that she takes every day just to stay alive. She then introduced her husband who was a 27 year old virgin when they married. She told the young people that he was a man of integrity. They were both very interesting in the way they presented the information to the young people and kept their attention. I sincerely believe if they could repeatedly get those type of programs into the public schools, or give parents the option of school vouchers, they could help "Turn the Tide" for the next generation.

I have known of several families that their children dated throughout high school and got married after they graduated from high school or went a year to college and then married and acquired their degrees or established their careers together. There are also others that maintained the self discipline to wait until after college to marry. I remember a friend of mine Betty Heavener used to work in a department store in the lingerie department. She used to tell me "I think to myself whenever I see men buying lingerie, I hope he's buying that for his wife." I believe many women would think it fine for their

husbands' to buy them lingerie, however, if they are like myself they don't appreciate the big posters and pictures some of the stores put up of the models wearing it.

You can have the best product or service in the world, but if you lack good sales or people skills people will never understand the reality of the great deal they may be missing. No matter what political persuasion you consider yourself or whether you agreed with his policies or not, and some of his policies I did not agree with, I have said for many years that the reason former President Ronald Reagan was so successful with getting many of his policies implemented were his great sales, marketing and people skills. He was a kind spirited and likable person that most people respected. There is a lot to be said for learning good people skills.

I have stated that for the most part, I agreed with President Bill Clinton's "centrist economics" of his second presidential term. I have stated repeatedly that I did not agree with Bill Clinton on all of the moral and social issues, however, I also believe that he did not break the backs of the middle class and working families, and he also balanced the nation's budget.

After a Sunday morning service at Sheffield Family Life Center, one particular day, we went to eat lunch at Culver's Restaurant in Lee's Summit, Missouri. We had the opportunity to meet Jacob Turk and his family when they came in the restaurant. (Mr. Turk had been the Republican nominee to run for the Fifth Congressional District in 2006 and lost by a substantial margin to Emanuel Cleaver and was also the Republican nominee to run for the same seat in 2008.) I introduced myself to Mr. Turk, thanked him for the stand he had taken on some of the issues, and told him how I had helped Ron

Freeman run for that same seat several years back. I then told him that I believed he had no realistic chance whatsoever of winning that seat in the upcoming election the way the economic policies of the Republican party presently stood. He pretty much knew himself that outside of a miracle he had no chance of winning. He did, once again in the 2008 elections, lose to Emanuel Cleaver by a substantial margin.

With God's help I have had the opportunity to build acquaintances and friendships with more than 15,000 people on Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter. A few thousand of those people are from the state of Missouri, however, the others are from all fifty states and even every nation around the world. After prayer and consultation I made the decision to run for the U S Senate from Missouri. I have entered the Republican primary running as a center right Lincoln Republican. I am grateful that my supporters are people of all races and all ages. I am working hard and traveling the state and fully intend to win unless investigations take place into some political corruption and suspicious deaths and justice is upheld before the elections. Whichever comes first!

I invite you to read more about my views by visiting my website at <http://www.deborahsolomon.net> TOGETHER WE'RE GOING TO TURN THE TIDE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION!

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