

A Testimony of God's Grace

TO: My VISTOSO Church friends. I leave an abbreviated version of my Christian testimony.



I'm more than ninety years old, born on December 5, 1917. I leave this shortened biography for all to read.

This is a personal history. It embraces a period of two Great World Wars, the Great Depression of the thirties, and the years of enormous changes during the late twentieth Century. Many of you may have experienced those changes in our culture during this period.

I believe we live in the era during which we may yet experience the 'Rapture' or the snatching away of the saints of this present two thousand year period into the very presence of Jesus Christ. Right now, read: 1st Thess. 4:13-18, God's 'Dispensation of Grace'.

My "Testimony" includes stories of the many opportunities God gave me to be a witness of his eternal grace and love. I often ponder the opportunities I missed to be a faithful witness for my Lord Jesus Christ and his love for all mankind. Still I am humbled by many experiences HE

gave me. Allow me to share a few with you.

..... Praise His Holy name.

Charles Wood

Charles (Chuck) Wood, L/Col. USAF Ret. (Written 10/16/1965)

My Testimony

My mother, my younger brother Bob, and I all accepted Christ publicly as our Savior during an early summer, 1925, evangelistic meeting. Paul Rader, a Chicago evangelist, held services in City Park near downtown Champaign, Illinois. Later we were immersed in a special baptism on our parent's tenth wedding anniversary, Jan. 28, 1926. I was nine years old and my brother was seven.

My parents married in Washington, DC only a few weeks after they met. Shortly after WWI dad opened his own auto repair and machine shop in Champaign, Illinois. My brothers-- Robert, Jack, Wesley, Morris Rex, Thomas, and our only sister Priscilla--were born there.

Rev. Lance Latham visited Champaign every summer in the mid-twenties holding great evangelistic meetings. He later formed AWANA, a Christian youth and Bible memory verse program. AWANA is taken from II Timothy 2:15, 'Approved Workman Are Not Ashamed'. Thousands of young boys and girls learned to memorize Bible verses in AWANA.

I had a special Bible teacher, Mrs. Alta Von Holten, who taught me new ways to study the Bible. She introduced me to Bible truths or 'doctrine'. She insisted I remember these special truths, holding them in my heart and mind forever.

Our fundamental church and its Bible based pulpit messages attracted a number of new business and professional men. Soon many prominent families joined the new church. A group of these Christian business men stepped forward and formed the Evangelical Free Gospel Church. I remember several men: Mr. Shade, Dr. Newlin Morgan who was an Architectural professor in the Engineering College at the University of Illinois, Dr. Frank James was a physician, Mr. Art Singbusch was a local home builder, and the school superintendent Mr. Webber. All of these had been Christian men of position in former churches. They considered themselves to have been 'called out' from their former church relationships and were cheerfully backed by my dad, Byron Wood, and a dozen or so stalwart Christian men, their wives and families.

A new vision penetrated our church community. The Gospel needed to reach a growing body of University of Illinois students. A large campus student home, owned by Mr. Singbusch, was converted to a campus church. We soon outgrew this facility and needed to find another place of worship. The First Christian Church had built a new church. Since they could find no buyer for the old church which was located just across the street from University North Campus, they agreed to our Bible Church rental proposal. Later they sold this building to our growing congregation. This was during 'The Great Depression.' I remember the first business meeting very well. I had graduated from high school and entered the College of Mechanical Engineering at the University of Illinois. The entire church body enthusiastically agreed to change the church name to Twin City Bible Church.

Dr. Newlin Morgan was my College Bible Class teacher for four years. He was an fine leader and a great teacher. It wasn't long before we had a considerable influx of University of Illinois students. Dr. Morgan soon had a regular Sunday morning class with more than 70 students. This was unusual in those days.

Although I left for Air Corps flight training and never came back to the church, Dr. Morgan remained my favorite Christian mentor. I still retain a copy of his chart for teaching "A Walk Thru the Bible." My brother Jack combined Dr. Morgan's many worksheets into a single illustrated four foot wide *Bible History and Doctrine* chart. I still have it.

This chart presented a panorama of Biblical history overlaid with prophetic Bible verses which had been used over the years by Dr. Morgan. I kept and used this chart as a dispensational teaching tool for more than forty years.

Professor Morgan kept in close contact with many of his students during the war years. He wrote to more than twenty students. Before WW2 was over he became the primary instigator of what became known as, "The Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship." This organization became a nationwide missionary force for

calling young college-age students to serve the Lord. Dr. Morgan had a vision of developing Christian leaders. He saw these leaders coming from among returning servicemen veterans of WW2. Many streamed back to the University to finish college on the G. I. Bill. Few folks back home realized that thousands of servicemen had accepted Jesus as Savior during their wartime tours.

Our Service men and later women served in remote spots. Many were in places where the Gospel had never been introduced by missionaries. The people there had little knowledge of what the soldiers from America believed. However I observed during my own travels that many local citizens came to think that most American GI's, were "Christians".

During the war locals watched as our Chaplains prayed with soldiers anytime, anyplace. I saw that most American soldiers were really adored by our allies as well as the thousands of displaced persons we encountered. This was particularly true with the Army Air Corps stationed on remote fields scattered across England and Scotland, and later in Italy, the Middle-east, the islands of the Pacific, and the CBI (China, Burma India) theaters of war. Our God and our Lord Jesus Christ certainly had reasons for watching over a generally unrecognized national Christian heritage during all those wartime years.

My lifetime college friend, Dr. Morgan, envisioned a worldwide postwar evangelistic outreach growing from thousands of "born-again" Christian servicemen. He was enthused about the government sponsored GI Bill of Rights which gave all servicemen the right to get a college education. He confided with me while visiting my postwar assignment in Albuquerque, "*Chuck, I believe and pray every day that thousands of servicemen will be converted to Christ, commit to teach the Gospel, prepared with college educations, taught the Bible, and return to those lands and people where they have served during the war. Remember they are no longer strangers to these foreign environments. God prepared them during their wartime experience to become Missionaries.*"

Dr. Morgan was attentive to my stories of working with the American Forces Sunday School and Youth for Christ, while we were stationed in Germany and later in Guam during the Korean war years. I know many servicemen who took advantage of their experiences. Many did return to the countries they knew during the War but perhaps not the thousands that Dr. Morgan envisioned.

One outstanding example of a serviceman committed to mission work is Jake De Shazer¹, "a Doolittle raider", who survived the horrors of his Japanese prison camp experience. He was captured after that historic Doolittle aircraft bombing raid. During imprisonment Jake was lead to accept Christ as his savior by a Christian companion. Soon after accepting Christ as savior, he read the entire Bible. After he had been released from the Japanese prison, Jake attended seminary and returned to Japan with his wife. He preached the Gospel for over thirty years. Captain Mitsuo Fuchida, leader of the Japanese squadron which bombed Pearl Harbor, received Christ as Savior under the influence of Jake's message of forgiveness through the grace of Jesus Christ. Jake had been a student of mine while I taught air mechanics in the early pre-war years at Chanute Field, Illinois.

Inter-Varsity began holding missions conferences for college students during Christmas breaks every three years. "Urbana," as it became known, was held at the University of Illinois Campus. Over 20,000 students came, challenged to get involved in full-time Christian service. It became a primary source for educating and calling young Christians to give their lives to missionary work throughout the world. Many Christian organizations are represented at the "Urbana" outreach successfully recruiting new missionaries.

¹ Read Jake Deshazer: The Doolittle Raider Who Turned Missionary by C. Hoyt Watson. This is the thrilling full story of Jake's WWII experiences, his Christian conversion and his calling to be a missionary to his former Japanese captors. Also read The Doolittle Raid by Colonel Carroll V. Glines.

My Life Changing Experiences-Post World War Two.

I left the military service in early 1946. We moved to Denver, Colorado, where I had a new job working for Buick Motors as a 'Service Representative'. I also joined a new Air Force Reserve unit at Lowry field.

Doris bore us two children during WWII. Valerie is our only daughter and Gregory is our eldest son. We became part of a new Westwood Bible Church located in southwest Denver. We purchased our first home in a new neighborhood where Rev. Joe Gooden (a WW2 sailor in US Navy) became our first family pastor. Joe and his wife Freda were later called to be missionaries to Japan.

His was another example of a serviceman called out to return to as missionary to Japan where he had served during WWII. Several years of learning from Joe Gooden's teaching changed our young married life. Joe had an extra job teaching Bible at the Denver Bible College located in downtown Denver. The school was only a block from where I worked at Downtown Buick. Joe persuaded me to attend one of his night classes at Denver Bible College. I found I could leave work and go immediately to Joe's class. I soon got caught up in Joe's teaching and took a number of "Thru-the-Bible" classes over next two-years. I became more aware of the systematic or classical dispensation outline and the doctrinal teaching contained in God's Word. This was a revelation to me. Jesus was changing my life.

Years later I recognized the silent careful work of the Holy Spirit in our family's life. The Holy Spirit is always teaching if we are receptive. My younger learning days were beginning to mature. I became very careful of my choices and keenly aware of my spiritual growth. Joe helped me by lovingly explaining the Christian growth process.

I discovered new pathways to Christian growth while studying the new Testament books of Hebrews and James. The Holy Spirit never forces us until we learn to yield to His loving touch.

Suddenly it became a scholarly challenge to search out the various hidden mysteries contained in God's Word. I never quit teaching thereafter. Joe challenged all his class, "Tell others that *eternal salvation is only achieved through Jesus Christ.*"

"We must be convinced of the realities in that Bible story of Jesus' encounter with Nicodemus. Being 'born again' spiritually as new Christian is as real as physical birth and is an awakening experience....First we are babies, then children, then young men. We must strive to grow into maturity as gracious elderly men, but always in Christ's service."

Under Joe his students soon put their new learning into practice, frequently going to the local downtown Gospel Rescue Mission or passing out tracts on the corner of Colfax and Lincoln. We were like kids, enjoying a new capacity to compete and learn. Those were great years growing up as a young man in Christian service every day.

Before Joe and his wife Freda left for the mission field in Japan he convinced our church to call Rev. Carl Harwood, an evangelist, to preach a series of evangelistic messages for several weeks. We had great response. Young folks with new families became productive witnesses in those post war years.

Rev. Harwood had a trick horse, which he had trained to respond to Gospel stories. The horse would shake his head "Yes" or "No," stomp his hoofs and run around in circles, talking back 'horse-language' as it suited his Bible stories. Of course the horse neighed back at the proper to Joe's class. I soon got caught up in Joe's teaching and took a number of "Thru-the-Bible" classes over next two-years. I became more aware of the systematic or classical dispensation outline and the doctrinal teaching contained in God's Word. This was a revelation to me. Jesus was changing my life.

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I was told his sermons greatly improved. It didn't take long to recruit a number of mothers and young girls (WAC's) to be helpers and I started Bible teacher's training classes. Doris and I worked together doing this for over two and half years of my tour in Germany. We found several officers' wives and many enlisted men and women who were willing helpers and lifetime friends.

A block away from the Eagle Club, a WAC non-com, (a wonderful Christian) named Virginia, became the principle organizer of a regular Saturday evening, "Youth for Christ" rally. It was attended mostly by enlisted personnel and a significant number of young German ladies wanting to meet American soldiers. This group was desperately hunting for a new officer sponsor before their group was allowed to use this facility rented by the military. We soon were able to establish this location as a regular pulpit for our visiting stateside evangelistic visitors. It was a solution for our command Chaplain.

One Saturday afternoon Virginia found several summer college students giving out tracts on the street in Wiesbaden. She soon found out they had volunteered to come to Germany in order to start what she had been doing. They came from Christian colleges all over the United States as summer volunteers and mission helpers.

One special Evangelist, Rheinhold (Rheine) Barth, came from Chicago with his wife Helen. They were known to some of us since they had a regular radio outreach, singing and preaching from Radio Station WMBI, Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. They had flown from Chicago into Frankfurt Germany. They had no specific plans. Theirs was a trip taken by faith trusting to reach out to what they had heard of thousands of displaced-persons flooding the American occupation zone of West Germany after Russia closed travel into Eastern Germany. I do not remember details, but they had been urged to seek my help after coming to Germany to preach the gospel. Rheine spoke German in his youth. His parents and grandparents had immigrated from the old country. He had forgotten much of the native language he had learned as a child, but his German soon returned. Every day spent in Germany Rheine became more comfortable speaking German. Soon he was able to embrace the street language. I went to the tent

meeting in Solingen Germany where he gave his first sermon in German. Thereafter he continued preaching regularly in German to many refugees he encountered. Rheine became great friend and for years we corresponded as he continued his evangelistic work in Germany. He later returned to Chicago. He and his wife Helen were soon joined with Anton Shulte, who had been interned in a Prisoner of War Camp near Gettysburg Penn.

An American Chaplain who spoke fluent German led Anton to declare Jesus as his Savior while he was in the POW Camp. He became a fervent Christian and evangelist preacher soon after returning to Germany. Anton attracted great German crowds with his stories about serving in an American Prisoner of War Camp. He attracted hundreds of displaced persons flooding the American occupation zone in Germany.

Many American volunteers congregated at our spacious home in Wiesbaden. Our quarters had been requisitioned from the German population. The owners simply had to relinquish and move into whatever space they might find. Shortly after Rheine Barth came to Germany, the Moody Bible church in Chicago provided a car.

The only car available in those early post war years was a new Kaiser. It was shipped to Germany in my name. It became a great help to everyone.



Rheine and Ellis Zehr stand in front of this new Kaiser vehicle with Doris, who was very pregnant at the time. It was just a couple of months before our youngest son, James Randolph Wood, was born in the Wiesbaden Army Hospital, Nov. 4, 1950. A long-time friend, Sgt. Milton Yolles, stationed in England, was able to buy me a new British built Ford. He drove it via the channel freighter and then into Germany.

Rev. Hutchinson, a pre-World War II missionary, represented Bible Memory Clubs in Europe. He showed up one Sunday at our Sunday School in the American Eagle Club. He and his family lived in Switzerland all during war years.

His arrival became a very special gift that God gave us

Rev. Hutchinson held regular Bible story classes for our German youth. We invited him to tell his stories to our American Sunday school kids meeting in the Eagle Club. We had never before seen such great results. The Army kids were eager to accept Christ. Many of their parents showed up to see what was going on and stayed to listen to Hutchinson's stories.

One day Rheine Barth brought Bob Le Tourneau, an American businessman who manufactured large commercial earthmoving equipment. They came to our quarters in Wiesbaden, Germany. Le Tourneau was interested in seeing if I might help him get a large circus-tent into Germany. The new German government had failed to clear his original request. I was able to ship the tent as a part of my household goods allowance. I even hired a German truck in Bremerhaven Port to haul the tent to Solingen Germany where it was first used.

Bob LeTourneau personally came to Germany in 1948 and again in 49. He sought me out inquiring if I might help the displaced refugees and the native French, Germans, and Hollanders to recover some stability and spiritual strength. Several American businessmen were determined to find a way to reach thousands of displaced persons with the Christian Gospel Message. I later heard that President

Eisenhower encouraged this project. LeTourneau was the director of the United States Christian Businessmen's Association. He was encouraged by our President to provide volunteer American support to aid in the recovery of wartime damages to German towns and communities. West Germany was being flooded with thousands of displaced persons held in random German refugee camps. American businessmen were encouraged by Christian Missionary leaders to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to these war-torn countries. Thousands of displaced persons were pleading for help. We soon found they came many miles to listen to an American evangelist preaching God's Word. I doubt if any of this ever reached the ears of most Americans. I was unable to find a single news reporter willing to write a story after investigating this American outreach effort. Christian businessmen in Chicago were especially supportive in providing postwar aid. Thousands of displaced persons were given American volunteer aid.

Bob LeTourneau was striving to set up a tent mission that could be used as an evangelistic preaching site and as a registration center to reunite thousands of displaced persons with their families. They would also use this as a distribution center for whatever donated equipment and aid they might get admitted to Germany from the United States. This practical aid was envisioned as being done while preaching the Christian Gospel in the native languages. Many sites were located in displaced persons camps in the US zone of occupation. These camps were often located in rural areas.

The traveling evangelistic group sponsored by LeTourneau and a number of American churches used the large tent to help establish a base for his evangelistic and recovery efforts in Germany. LeTourneau brought his company chaplain, Dan Demin, to Germany and added to the team Peter Deyneka, his daughter Ruth and youth pastor Dan Widlica. These all came from the Slavic Mission headquartered in Chicago. Everyone in this mission spoke one or more Russian and Slavic languages.

Several months later Moody Bible Institute, the Bible Institute of Kentucky, Wheaton College, Bob Jones University, and a number of unnamed missions located in California, Texas, Kentucky, Arkansas, and Oklahoma urged the new evangelist Billy Graham to engage in this Christian outreach. Prairie Bible Institute from Canada and numerous benevolent Christian organizations sent teams of volunteers to Germany.

Several Air Force Bases in America gathered donated equipment, medical supplies, wheel chairs, clothing, blankets, and even washing machines and school supplies. These were packaged, repaired, and shipped via Military Air (space available basis). Usually this effort was handled under the benevolent graces of the respective Base Commanders and their Air Transport Officers. Very few questioned the use of Government Aircraft and equipment since most Commanders had been encouraged to support any post war aid. They simply overlooked any regulations and allowed this all to happen. *In post war days few objected.* American soldiers were thanking God for their good fortune to win and survive WWII. Later I found out through many letters that similar benevolence occurred in the CBI (China Burma, India), Korea and Japan as well as islands of the Pacific Theater.

I and three of my younger brothers--Bob, Jack and Wesley--all served during those wartime years. Our Mom was the only "Four-Star Mother" in Campaign. Servicemen were spread around the world. I often received letters from concerned mothers, and later saw their tears of joy when their boys (some wounded) returned home.

The tent mission work went on for many years after I returned to the states, and I never found out when or how these benevolent efforts ended. I simply saw it work during my three-plus year post war assignment in Germany. We later acquired a discarded military loud speaker system which several GI specialists repaired. The evangelistic outreach soon could be heard outside the tent. The big tent moved from time to time. Many outlying German villages and displaced person camps received the Gospel of Christ for the first time.

Large mixed crowds of refugees, displaced persons from all over Europe, soon crowded around the tent services to hear German evangelist Anton Shulte, and Rheine Barth. Later Rev. Parshauer, Dan Widlica,

Pastor Hutchinson, the Steinhausers, and others preached sermons in German, Polish and numerous Slavic, Polish and Russian languages.

Soon strangers came from the States who were able to preach in a number of languages which I had never heard before. The gifts of languages seemed a miracle provision to many of us in the Service.

Thousands came to the varied-language Christian Services. Soon we were encouraging US style potlucks, furnished at first by families of our occupation forces. Most of the rural German population liked these new American Christian Services. Soon singing was introduced. Rallies were being held in smaller communities during the summer months. Hundreds of displaced persons accepted Christ as their personal savior. We had numerous GI's who came from homes that frequently spoke their native tongue in family circles. This proved to be a great new outreach for our troops. All had been drafted into our occupation forces and sent overseas to Germany and around the world. We had forty or fifty who volunteered to help during week-ends. These were especially welcomed to disabled German and Slavic refugees living in displaced persons camps.

The tent that Le Tourneau provided could hold only about 350 people. Volunteer American soldiers built long benches that could be easily moved and transported. Many who came out of curiosity soon became addicted to our American style evangelistic meetings and to the new Christian hymns. Germans were familiar with gypsy circuses traveling throughout Europe. Even during the war years small troops of traveling gypsy magicians used tents to perform. This entertainment was familiar to the mixed throngs of displaced persons that settled in Germany during and after WWI.



This cauldron of miserable, poorly feed and clothed refugees had long ago lost all hope. They simply survived. They were mostly Poles, Slovaks, White Russians and East Germans. I was able to find six or seven Christian GI's to ride with me to a large displaced person camp near Solingen on weekends. They used their own tools to built dozens of long wooden benches made from wooden planks furnished by the Germans. We brought the nails, and other bracing hardware we bought from local vendors. We strung wire and built outside lighting with a line to a nearby local home owner who supplied the electricity.

Ellis Zehr came with Rheine Bath to Germany His deep base voice became a favorite of the locals. Several German girls volunteered to play a portable field pump organ. They sang in German harmony teaching their German friends new American chorus songs they translated into German. The

crowds listened to our testimonies as the locals translated, and they cheered the GI's that were helping the local displaced war wanderers. A number shared war survival stories in their native tongues. Locals shared their bread, onions, cabbage, and potato soups from their meager rations while our GI's enjoyed telling of their home and war time experiences. Some were called and became lifetime missionaries.

Briefly I must name a few of the many American faces I got to know well. Every summer for three years Harold and Helen Steinhauser (pictured on the left with our daughter Valerie between them), teachers from Wheaton College, came. Rev. John Pashauer came with a group from Prairie Bible Institute, spending their summers teaching in German and American Bible Schools. They all spoke German and told bible stories illustrated by paper figures that stuck to a flannel covered frame. Many American servicemen's wives taught in our American Sunday school, but we called it Junior Church. Several college boys and a few women came from Bob Jones, Wheaton Bible College and other places, at their own expense, to join in this Christian teaching effort as 'Youth for Christ' representatives.

Many of these early visiting teachers joined our local YFC military group and members from Bob Jones University in holding evangelistic services in the Wiesbaden Opera House only for the German community. I went to the local German Government and got permission from the Wiesbaden Burgermeister. The team made advertising fliers and passed them out on the streets in Wiesbaden. All services were held in German except a few hymns we sang. I had the pleasure of introducing these services as a Major in the Air Force, which lent some assumed authority to the services. Luckily no one ever challenged my faux representation. I had to wear my uniform all the time anyway and most Americans had so many outside activities of their own they didn't worry about what we did for the Germans. This went on for a several summers. The team ran two weeks of services at each location.

Post war occupation forces seemed to come to our aid on every occasion. We had help from willing servicemen and women who had come as permanent parties to the many new military bases set up to establish the logistic infrastructure and to run the Berlin Airlift.

We had an extra attic apartment in our house where we were able to put about a dozen army cots obtained from our Air Force supply Sergeant's stock. Doris kept it all going. What blessings God showered on this effort to help all those displaced persons. The American Armed Forces are unique since they adapt to their environment and give hope to those with whom they come in contact. Rarely does this hidden work and message of hope, laughter, loving care seep into the public news.

During a Youth for Christ meeting on a summer evening Rev. Hutchinson appeared. He had heard of the services and came to look us over. This proved to be a providential appearance. He was Bible Memory Club representative for the entire occupied European area. He traveled throughout Germany, parts of France, Austria, and of course Switzerland. He spoke excellent German and some local dialects of Slavic languages.

He introduced me to Pastor Marten Niemoller, the anti-Nazi Lutheran pastor who opposed Hitler throughout the war and who agreed to be a featured speaker for several nights of our Wiesbaden Opera House evangelistic meetings. Hundred of Germans attending raised their hands, praying to accept Christ as Savior. Germans were not used to American style evangelistic meetings so it was difficult to gauge the real outcome. However it did get the attention of a local newspaper. Pastor Hutchinson, as he preferred being called, had so many stories of wartime rescues of Jewish and Gypsy refugees that he held all who heard entranced with his stories and adventures. He was the most fervent, "as Jesus would do, I will do" Christian, I have ever known. He must have taken lessons from the Apostle James, "Show me your faith and I'll show you my works". We had the privilege of taking Greg and Valerie to his summer camp in south Germany for a three-day weekend.

While in Germany I was selected to attend the Field Officer's Army Intelligence School held at Oberamagau, a city famous for the *Passion Play* held every 10 years. The Intelligence school was managed by the Army Office of Strategic Intelligence (OSI), which later to become the Counter Intelligence Agency (CIA). The school's instructors had selected German, Polish and White Russian officers and former secret intelligence agents. They concentrated on showing us the failures of dogmas promulgated by the Russian Secret Service (KGB), and the German Gestapo. It was here I first heard Henry Kissinger and several noted missile engineers tell stories of Hitler's rise to power and of German Gestapo tactics. I look back on these experiences with awe. God has been so gracious to me as he will be to you. I can only pray you accept the free gift and joy of knowing Jesus as your Saviour.

During that weekend I had the opportunity to visit L'Abri in Switzerland where I met Francis Schaeffer, a great Christian philosopher and Bible teacher. I have met him a number of times since then. He became intensely interested in and supported the formation of the American *Officers Christian Union* (OCU), as an outgrowth of the British organization by the same name. While at Wright Patterson AFB in the late 50's we met in Captain Ed Wade's home and later in San Bernardino in Col. Ferguson's home. He was an intense, vibrant teacher of God's Word, having a depth of feeling, knowledge, and love for the Bible that most never grasp. It was a privilege and learning experience when he spoke to our OCU meetings.

In summary, I have related a bit of history we need be reminded of and joy in if it has never been known before. The second Great War left hundreds of thousands of people in displaced persons camps. There were orphans, widows, young children, mothers, dads, unknown derelicts, and those who had lost their minds and were known only by God. I have seen these many hordes of unknown beggars on the streets, wondered how they spend their nights under a cardboard box and whether they have ever been told the message of hope that God has given to us all. It would be so easy to pass them without telling this story.

Few are called to devote their lives to tell others. I am proud to remind you of the many servicemen that ended up in American occupied post war zones of rehabilitation. American church and mission groups stepped up to help fill the gaps. American generosity spelled survival for possibly millions that would otherwise have died without Christ. Boatloads of foodstuffs came via empty Victory ships hired by men such as industrialist Bob LeTourneau. Retired missionaries went overseas after they had formally retired. Slavic missions in the mid-west and other teachers, students, Christian Bible schools, all sent hundreds of volunteers to these many post war out of the way occupation zones.

Bob Evans, an evangelist, who later established the European Bible Institute, came to Germany to examine our Youth For Christ evangelistic outreach. Many young foreign converts to Christ became part of an early Foreign Intelligence Outreach that later political leaders cancelled to avoid any liability. However hundreds of American missionaries subsequently preached the Good News throughout Slavic nations and later Austria and Switzerland. Some went to Africa. This is a great story for some reporter to research. But, perhaps God intended these stories to be left for the ages.

1951-Albuquerque: I returned to the United States in July, 1951 and was assigned to the Joint Nuclear Task Force (JNTF) at Sandia Base, Albuquerque, New Mexico. Shortly after we moved into Wherry Housing tract for military personnel, I met Capt. Don Sutterland of the Medical Corps. He and his family introduced us to Grace Church in Albuquerque. We also met Lt. Col. Frank and Afton Thomas who attended Grace Church. I had first met Frank at Rhine Main AFB in the middle of the Berlin Airlift. We were to meet again at Vistoso Church in Tucson 50 years later.

At Grace Church we met new missionaries, Dick and Betty Elkins, called to serve with Wycliffe Bible Translators. Sixteen years later, in 1969, my daughter and her husband, Valerie and George Hires, joined the Elkins as a literacy team to teach the Western Bukidnon Manobo people to read God's Word. Doris and I met the Elkins again at Nasuli, Mindanao, in the Philippine Islands when we visited George and Val in 1971.

Our Pastor at Grace Church, Rev. Clarence Vanderveen, started a Sunday Radio Broadcast program. We had a great choir and good attendance with several revival services during the year. It was here that I first served as the Radio Program Announcer. It was a great opportunity to learn.

A few evangelists we heard preach at Grace Church were Dr. Herbert Lockyear, Merrill Unger, Porter Barrington, E.F. Harrison, David Hubbard, Dr. Donald J. Barnhouse, and Dr. Walvord from Dallas. All were great teachers and Bible expositors. I simply couldn't realize how God prepared me for the many subsequent years I continued to teach Sunday School and Bible classes, address Christian businessmen, and serve with the Gideons and other Christian churches and organizations.

1952 was the year that Rev. Billy Graham extended his ministry to major cities. He accepted the invitation of Albuquerque's churches as one of the early firsts in citywide evangelistic outreach. I was named by our church board along with Mr. Russell and Ted Brown² -to be the campaign representative

² Ted Brown was a remarkable Christian Business man. He seemingly volunteered for every Christian outreach. He was a major New Mexico road contractor by profession. In 1944 he built the new road into Alamogordo's nuclear bomb test range. The first Atomic test bomb was detonated on this New Mexico range in 1945 just one long month before the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima Japan. Later he built the first high speed test track used to simulate explosive charges used to eject pilots with their parachute to escape from fighter aircraft suffering a crash incident.

from Grace Church. Brown, a major road contractor and builder for the State, offered to provide a steel warehouse, including its erection, if we could find financial support and volunteers. Roofing, sheathing, and building construction help were needed. There was no structure in town large enough to meet the Billy Graham campaign's expected attendance. The funds were readily raised and many from Grace Church volunteered in the construction. I remember laying roof sheathing and lap siding and pounding nails for many weeks, several hours after work every day until sundown. I also attended choir practice in preparation for the evangelistic services that were held. The Billy Graham team and supporters were a unified volunteer group like none other I've experienced. They came together as one. I'll always remember those dedicated prayer groups.

Doris had a Child Evangelism class in our home during that military assignment. These experiences became pinnacles of successful combined Christian evangelistic outreach programs that Doris and I were part of. Doris often entertained evangelists for meals or assisted visiting missionaries to find their way around. This was part of our learning experience. We were introduced to Wycliffe Bible Translators, African Inland Missions and other foreign missions that our church covenanted to support. Dick and Betty Elkins, Wycliffe Bible translators, became dedicated missionaries and were sent to the Philippines to translate the Bible for the Manobo tribal people. They are still our close friends.

I also first met a new lifetime friend, Turner Blount, Wycliffe translator to the Navajo Indians. Often thereafter Turner came off the reservation late in the afternoon and would have supper with our family. Doris encouraged him to just drop in to have a time of rest and a bite to eat. He seemed to enjoy our young family. He rested for an hour or so sleeping comfortably on our living room sofa. Valerie and Greg pestered him to say words in Navajo. He would always oblige and quote some Bible verse, which made them laugh since it was so different. He told us about the Navajo language tonal qualities, which were very amusing to us.

Valerie and Greg had each accepted Christ as Savior in a class held at Grandma Christensen's home in Harristown, Illinois, just before I returned from my military assignment in Europe. Valerie committed her life to mission service at Grace Church and kept the commitment. We also enjoyed missionary friends Gene and Laura Snow and their kids along with a couple of adopted Indian children. We spent four plus years in Albuquerque. They were fruitful years in our continuous Christian growing experiences.

1955 Ohio: I was transferred to a new military assignment at Wright Patterson AFB headquarters for the Air Materiel Command. Doris and I found a little house in Enon, Ohio, just about seven miles from the base. This was the first assignment where I found a regular Officer's Christian Union organization. I had been first introduced to this group while in Germany, and we extended hospitality to them. I became fast friends with other Christian officers: Major Dick Chenot, Major Schaffer and Captain Ed Wade all assigned to Wright Air Force Base in engineering and research. The Base Chaplain was Lieutenant Dick Sprowl and new wife Evi. We had regular OCU meetings at the officers' club each Thursday noon. We attended the Base Chapel service for some time before we were invited to a local church where our growing children found new friends.

1956 Guam: As a Lt. Colonel, I was given an unusual opportunity by my boss Col. Marvel, to have a line command assignment in Guam, just 14 months after being assigned to the 3079th Special Weapons Wing Headquarters in Dayton, Ohio. We had another major change of station. During this thirty-two month assignment on Guam we attended a local General Baptist Missionary Church. Pastor Greene, a Baptist missionary, and I became fast friends. We helped Rev. Whether family and their four girls who came to the island to establish a Christian Servicemen's Center. I also taught adult Sunday School class at Anderson Air Force Base the last two years of this assignment. We would go to the base services early in the morning and then go to the Baptist Mission Church a few miles outside the base. On Wednesdays and sometimes Saturday we went to the Christian Servicemen's Center. They had Bible question and answer classes. Sometimes we had a cookout on Tarague Beach. A number of servicemen accepted Christ during those meetings. Those were good times. In June of 1958 we were reassigned leaving lots of memories of

being in Christ's service. My military experiences were historical and nerve-wracking at times, but this assignment became a memorable tropical paradise adventure for my family.

1958 Ohio, again: I was reassigned to the Office of the Director of Materiel at Headquarters, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. We were among old friends that we had known both overseas and at Dayton. We rejoined Christian friends who had formed a new church temporarily located in downtown Dayton. Rev. McCarthy was pastor of this new Dayton Central City Baptist Church. Jim surprised us all when he sought out the Rev. McCarthy for baptism. We stayed at Dayton during this second assignment for almost three years until I was transferred to San Bernardino, California in 1961.

We lived in San Bernardino after I retired with over 24 years service with the Air Force. We became longtime members of Faith Bible Church and remained there for more than fifteen years until I took a job in Iran in 1973. Rev. Lester Wendt, the pastor at Faith Bible, was a great teacher and possibly the best pastor we ever had.

I taught Sunday School and later young adult Bible class. One of my first friends in San Bernardino, Russell (Russ) Wilson, introduced me to the local Christian Businessmen's Committee in San Bernardino. I became chairman of this local group of businessmen shortly after retiring from the military. For a few years we all worked together with our local Jewish missionary, Mike Pearl. We all strived to make our testimony count through our local early morning CBMC radio broadcasts, and it worked. Dr. Charles Engel and Ed Greenwood were the radio program announcers, I would substitute occasionally. Lt. Col. Irving Stoll, our program director, and others participated by giving their testimonies each week. These Christian businessmen worked tirelessly as volunteers at the jail, the young men's detention center and the local rescue mission. We had great outreach yearly retreats and annual businessmen's banquets. Whenever I return to San Bernardino, I still enjoy the thinning ranks of this truly praying men's group.

Consulting Abroad: I had numerous consulting tasks during the period 1969 through 1972 that took me to Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and finally the Philippines. I met old friends Rev. Joe Gooden, my first pastor in Denver, in Japan. I also visited the Rev. Bob Mueller and his lovely wife Ruth. Both were missionaries with TEAM and originally from San Bernardino. In all of these locations we were able to work with missionaries, meet hundreds of strangers and had unusual Christ-sharing experiences.

Once I was hiking high up in a new mountain location in Taiwan where I expected to harvest Araila wood that could be veneered in Taiwan. I found a chapel built in 1909, years before WW2. It had a sign in English and Chinese, "Mustard Seed Mission." I can still hear them singing a familiar tune but in their native tongue, "In My Heart there Rings a Melody." Many throughout the world remain true to the Word of God given by untold thousands of previous faithful missionaries.

One day in Hong Kong, New Territories, Kowloon China, I my Sunday wandering through the Pearl Island village near the old China border. I came upon a very small village. This lay on the extreme end of Kowloon Peninsula. I found a brass plaque fastened to the side of an old building written in both Chinese and English. "*Hudson Taylor, Christian missionary to the Chinese, lived here for a year in 1870. He returned to inland China after the Tientsin Massacre.*"

Have you read of Hudson Taylor's life? He became China's first missionary. He lived in China most of his life. He translated the Bible into written Chinese. He discovered that anywhere he went in China, even if he didn't speak the dialects of the local Chinese, all knew how to read the same written language. The Mandarins established this standardized written form two thousand years before the gospel came to China. It became Hudson Taylor's passion to translate the Bible for the Chinese. The written *WORD of GOD* was later distributed throughout China because of Hudson Taylor's written translations. They were easily distributed and sold by colporteurs preaching to crowds that gather on street corners wherever a stranger chose to speak. *God had prepared this for His day of Evangelism.*

I used to watch the Chinese and Arab merchants who were bargaining for goods on the street in Hong Kong and later in Taiwan, Tehran, Iran, Isfahan, and Kerman. If they didn't understand the dialect they

wrote symbols in the dirt with a stick or with their fingers. I later saw the same thing done in Kabul, Afghanistan, and in Saudi Arabia. Now I know why Jesus wrote in the dirt when facing all those men who had caught the woman in sin. When there is no chalkboard, write the message in the dirt. Think about it. The written word, even in the dirt on the ground, will remain long after you leave. Our God taught you and me to write. Can you say, "I love you Lord Thanks for teaching me to write."

1973-75 Iran: In subsequent years Doris and I spent time with missionaries while I worked on contract work. One overseas contract job in Iran proved an outstanding experience. The Baptist Mission in Tehran had a weekly service in the Iranian Armenian Christian Church which we borrowed on Saturday. Since the Iranians worshiped on Friday, they gladly rented their facility to us for our Saturday service. A new week in the mid-east environment always starts on the first day of the week, Sunday. Worship must be completed before, the Sabbath day of rest. After a few weeks of adjustments our days straightened out. We were able to help any number of missionaries either traveling through or entering Iran for long term service.

Missionary testimony and service remains in silent evidence wherever one goes in this world, even in that Shiite Muslim state. We found missionaries who had lived out their lives and were buried in Old Persia. One day visiting in Isfahan, Iran, we came upon an ancient Armenian Church with a cemetery. In that cemetery, we found the headstone of David Ironside, missionary, 1852- 1902; alongside were buried six members of his family. They had given the gospel to these people for fifty years. They gave out the Word of God ever so inconspicuously, and they all died over those years. They served as strangers in a far away land. It will be worth it all to hear their now silent story some day.

I end my story pondering the love of Christ. I often ask many questions. These witnesses confirm that missionaries are the loving apostles in today's world. I count it a privilege to report their works and to have rubbed shoulders with a few of these saints; a simple company of unassuming men and women. They (Acts 17:6) all had a purpose in life like none other. I am thankful to have known and perhaps helped encouraged them in some small way.

I must ask those who read this story," Isn't it a miracle that there continue to be those who would be missionaries taking the Gospel (*The Good News*) of Christ Jesus, who died for our sins, to every corner of the world?

It has been 2,000 years since Christ died upon the cross at Calvary. These who are today's apostles (*missionaries*) still carry the Good News to any outpost and corner of the world to tell a story They are often persecuted because they serve while bringing a message of God's love and hope for all mankind. They meet both those unwilling and those who choose to believe and receive this Good News. They often give their very lives while millions despise their message. I want to assure you who read my testimony that America, more than any nation, supplies the world with these living Christian volunteer apostles. Those who would, do as our soldiers and agree to live on far away shores, gladly sacrificing their lives while trying to deliver a clear message of salvation. It was first given to all by our Lord Jesus, the only Son of God, the only visible manifestation of God in flesh.

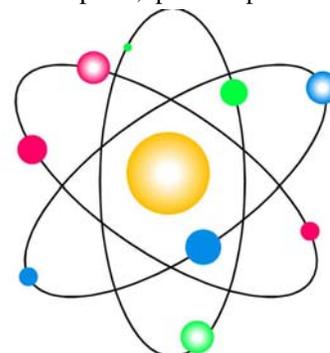
They tell of a new message of lively freedom and truth, one of hope, love, help, and compassion. They feed and tend to the needs of the helpless, poor, widowed, orphaned, sick and healthy alike; while overlooking intolerance. They freely tell a story which they only ask them who hear to *Believe*. It is a story of One Who offers eternal life for free!

The World still cries out, "*Away with them, crucify them.*" Even as the Thessalonians were shouting in Paul's day? "*These that have turned the world upside down have also come causing trouble everywhere.*"

DARKNESS MADE LIGHT –

My post war story of a nuclear tests from Camp Mercury, Nevada, 120 miles north of Las Vegas

I stood in the middle of the specially cleaned room, bare of objects except for the gleaming stainless table in front of us. The senior technician reached into a safe-like opening in the wall and withdrew two half-spherical objects, dull, steely, satin-grey. We were eerie creatures in the bright blue light, dressed in stark white paper coveralls, with paper boots over our feet. Our white cotton gloves were powdered with cadmium oxide talc dust. In front of us were several flat round initiator disks (squibs). On the table were several odd looking tools, a holding fixture, and two lead flasks. The perfectly machined half spheres of plutonium were placed on the white cloth in front of us. The assembly of the nuclear capsule proceeded quickly, preliminary to the final assembly of a new Special Weapons (*atomic*) device. Many practice hours had preceded this event using non-radioactive material. Time was precious so that we experienced minimum radiation exposure. Our dosimeters were being monitored. I could feel the natural warmth of the dense plutonium spheres through my cotton gloves. I put the heavy piece in place, picked up the other half and screwed them carefully together. Their weight was extraordinary. My partners carefully placed the spherical assembly into the lead flask's receptacle. Now we were ready for transport to the designated site. The dosimeter reading stopped and speakers blared, "Assembly complete."



LATER: A military bus had carried us to the flat observation shelf carved out of the cliff behind us high above the Camp Mercury, Nevada, test site laid out on the desert floor below. Cool, clean air surrounded us. A faint rose glow appeared in the east. Names were all called off and accounted for the fourth time. The shot director, a Navy Commander, had been through this test many times. He suggested we would have a new experience. "Face backwards from the blast zone, look intently at the face of the cliff and pull your dark glasses down, be sure not to move until the blast has occurred. Then look at your fellow officers." I turned around pulled the dark glasses down again. I could see nothing. I turned toward the cliff wall and stood very still. I had observed these tests shot before, but this was the first time I had also participated in actual test device assembly. It was one of our "Zucchini" series. Our capsule was now deep inside the device to be dropped from the B-36 from about thirty thousand feet. Now we could see the sun hitting the fine vapor trail from the B-36 bomber flying in from the east rapidly approaching the drop zone. This was to be a small detonation estimated at about 3 to 5 kilotons, about one sixth the power of the bomb dropped at Nagasaki Japan that ended WWII.

The final countdown was starting so I turned toward the cliff face for the last time as the loud speaker blared, "30 seconds to drop, four minutes until detonation, Radar's active, --- device away! - - now 30 seconds, now fifteen seconds, nine eight, seven, six, - - one, zero!" Suddenly I squeezed my eyes and squinted for a fractional second because of the brightness even through those dark glasses. The rock face I had been staring at melted into flowing glass that seemed to run down, the crevices stood out as floating deep blue lines, the crystal cliff seemed alive and jumped out at me, every rock had turned glassy with rainbow colors. I could see my fellow officers outlined as gray partial skeletons. I could see some bone structure, belt buckles and insignia were there, but other features were obliterated. I glanced at my arm. Yes, there were my bones and belt buckle but all else seemed missing, a bare outline of my bones. I was being x-rayed. A great horror took hold of me momentarily. We had underestimated the power of the device; we were all being evaporated. Suddenly the light changed to a deep orange, quickly to blue, then a starkly purple, deep red, sort of jumbled together in rapidly fading light. The brilliant light had faded. I quickly spun around. There on the desert floor was the gleaming orange fireball, a boiling multi-colored cloud mass, startling in its living beauty. All was very quiet. I was thoughtful but fully aware of what I had seen displayed. No matter how many times one observes it, each atomic detonation strikes awe in the beholders. The loud speaker blared, I jumped, "Blast wall approaching, you will feel the heat wave immediately following, then another air compression wave." A long pause—"All clear, safe to remove glasses." Another device had been tested.

I contemplated a Bible verse. Read, Isaiah 45:7, "I form the light, and create darkness. I make peace, and allow evil: I the Lord do all these things." I shiver each time I recall that small sphere of dense material so recently assembled and held in my hand, being dissolved instantly into pure light. What awesome power! As the Lord spoke to Jeremiah in 1:5, "Before I formed you in the belly I knew you: and before you came forth out of the womb I sanctified you." Someday a new resurrection will occur for all who believe. Just think about that.