

## MY HOME AND YOUR HOME

A chorus by Ralph Schurman

My Home and your home, God's home shall be.  
My Home and your home, His eternally.  
Someday in Heaven, From earth's cares set free  
We'll meet in God's Home, One Great Family.

## THE ROLE

It was a painful move for me, from Akron to Charleston, during my 5th year in school. My father, and therefore the family, had been called to pastor a new church. So once again, as happened every three to four years, I had to tell all my friends goodbye and move to a new city, a strange neighborhood, and a school where I knew no one. For weeks I cried myself to sleep every night, longing to be back in Akron, my home from first grade on.

In Charleston, my lone solace was a beautiful and caring 5th grade teacher with the shiniest auburn pageboy and the longest, reddest fingernails I had ever seen. Somehow this angel of mercy was able to see something in a lonely little preacher's daughter, with a shy smile, bashful eyes, and badly bitten fingernails, that had not been seen before.

Since my teacher had been stage-struck earlier in her life, she had now settled for producing several very minor productions each year at Horace Mann Elementary School, my new home. Time after time, Miss Skaff chose me for the starring role. In this world of make-believe, I was no longer just an appendage of something greater. I was a star. And

did I ever shine!

Toward the end of the school year, Miss Skaff came up with the most wonderful idea that I thought I'd ever heard. Calling me in after school one day, she explained that she'd like to sponsor me in Charleston's Junior Theatre Company. I couldn't believe my ears. I could envision myself acting on a real stage, with lights, curtains, and beautiful costumes. I could hear the audience's applause, and sense the feelings of achievement- of stardom.

Filled with anticipation and excitement like I had not known in all 10 years of my existence, I could hardly contain myself as I ran all the way home, thrilled and boosted by the confidence that my teacher had in me, to share the news with my parents and to get their permission for my participation.

The following day, I delivered a very polite note to my teacher, written by my father on church letter-head stationary. He thanked my mentor for her "kind interest in our Joycie," but added with a tone of finality that the theatre was a "questionable endeavor in the eyes of our church, and particularly so for a child of the parsonage."

I guess everyone experiences disappointments. Maybe it doesn't matter what has caused them. Someone else is chosen because he has greater talent or more impressive credentials; you aren't in the right place at the right time; or somehow just aren't included in the luck of the draw. My disappointments always seemed to stem from the same source. This time was no exception.

I know of no way to describe what I felt-- hurt, let-down, devastated, having my very spirit crushed-- all would be an

understatement. I didn't feel angry. That would not have been acceptable in the beliefs of my church or in my preacher's kid role-- the only role, it seemed, that I'd be allowed to play.

Two years later when I was in junior high, I had become friends with a group of girls who were considered "the cream of the crop" at our school. They, like I, had been inducted into the National Junior Honor Society. Their parents were professionals in the community and were members of respectable (if not totally enlightened) mainline churches. All of these girls belonged to the same Girl Scout troop, and had been waiting for an opening (when someone moved or dropped out), to invite me to be one of them. I had often heard their exciting stories of trips to camp, working on projects together, and weekly meetings. Even more important to me was just to be included in this group with my friends. When the opening finally occurred, I was more than ready.

But very soon after the invitation was officially extended, I discovered that being a Girl Scout would also be unacceptable, in my position as preacher's daughter, since it was known that the girls occasionally engaged in such worldly activities as folk-dancing. No doubt, in addition to this, the trips to camp--away from the safe environment of our church community-- felt threatening to my parents. Once more, the role that had been chosen for me was given more value than the needs and longings of the little girl who played that role.

Fifty years have passed now. I did not become a great stage actress, nor am I even a Girl Scout leader. Not having had the experiences I was denied has not noticeably affected my career. Those lost opportunities didn't keep me from

going to college, getting married, and having children of my own. It is rare that I even think of those incidences.

However, in much later years, I attended a John Bradshaw workshop which had as its theme: "The Inner Child." One of the exercises that we did, following a long, guided meditation entitled "Homecoming," in which we envisioned our childhood home and family in detail, while the haunting strains of "Coming Home", a part of Dvorak's "New World Symphony", played in the background, instructed us to write a letter to our parents. We were told to print it, using our less-dominant hand. We were asked to tell our parents what we had wanted from them, as children, that we had not received.

Had I been asked about my childhood memories, a month prior to this experience, I think I would have related mostly happy stories about myself as a creative, carefree child. Now, however, by entering into this meditation and following the directions given to us, I was overcome with the depth of emotion this exercise engendered. I have kept the letter, sloppily printed, much as it would appear if I were still a little girl.

DEAR MOM & DAD,  
HERE'S WHAT I NEEDED.  
I NEEDED TO BE AS IMPORTANT TO YOU  
AS THE CHURCH, I NEEDED TO KNOW  
THAT WHAT I THOUGHT AND WANTED  
MATTERED MORE THAN WHAT  
OTHERS MIGHT THINK. I NEEDED  
YOU TO CARE WHAT I FELT.  
I WISH THAT I COULD HAVE HEARD  
THAT I WAS PRETTY AND BRIGHT,  
NOT JUST GOOD. I NEEDED TO  
KNOW I WAS SPECIAL JUST FOR  
BEING ME, NOT FOR FILLING MY P.K. ROLE  
SO PERFECTLY FOR YOU.  
I LOVE YOU THOUGH, JOYCE

Even at this point, while writing my letter and sobbing from the deepest part of my heart, I hadn't forgotten to protect the feelings of those who had, in some unintentional way, failed to meet their little girl's needs-- thus in my closing line, giving assurances of my love for them.

This experience caused me to reflect back on my somewhat unique life, growing up in the parsonage... resulting in this collage of vivid memories-- some funny, some poignant, some akin to fiction, some better than fiction... all a part of what made this P.K. who she is today.

Though you, the reader, won't have shared any or all of these experiences, I believe the feelings will resonate as those that you, too, have known.

## **IN A GLASS HOUSE**

I grew up in the proverbial glass house. We were taught, early on, not to throw stones. And although we felt the pebbles pelting against our fragile parsonage at times, we knew that retaliating could never be an option. There was an image to maintain, an example to set, a role to play.

My Daddy was a preacher. This was back in the days when our sect had very strict rules for its members, all of which had to be followed, doubly so, if you were a child of the parsonage, better known as a P.K. A lot of injunctions that were never verbalized, were no less clearly understood. People on the outside--Daddy's parishoners, the neighbors, fellow-pastors, "lesser Christians" from other churches--were all watching us. Thus, the other aspect for my "glass house" image, with our parsonage usually located right next door to the church causing us to feel that our lives were always on display. Whatever we did, or failed to do, was apt to be a reflection on Daddy and his ministry. And that ministry was the most important focus of his and, therefore, our lives.

As the youngest child in the family, and "Daddy's girl", I was in a double-bind. I loved my Daddy enormously and expended great effort to please him and win his approval which equated, in my mind, to love. Daddy was the outgoing, fun-loving one of my parents. His laughter was spontaneous and contagious, his smiling face known throughout the community where he was dubbed, "The Smiling Parson." Most of my childhood hugs came from him

since Mom was more reserved, even a bit shy. If there was teasing, bringing home treats, and music-making in our house, the source was Daddy. He was the one who got up each morning, gazed out the window, and enthusiastically exclaimed, "Thank you, Lord, for this wonderful day!" How could I not adore this man?

At the same time, Daddy was the very reason for the strict rules, all the prohibitions that made my life more difficult, making me stand out as different just when I most wanted to blend in with my peers. It only took a look from him for me to understand, in my deepest heart, whether or not I was in his favor at that moment. And if he wasn't around, Mom was there to remind me, "Now how would that look for your Daddy?"

Subconsciously, I imagined what Daddy's ideal would be, and strived with all my chubby heart to grow up into just that ideal. If this need was somehow telegraphed to me from a man who knew his power to control and, therefore, decide just how I would best perform for him, or if it was simply generated from inside my needy little soul, I didn't really question--back then. The result was the same, either way.

When most adolescents and teens began asking, "Who am I?", "What do I want for my life?", "What would fulfill me most?", my questions centered around "What would Daddy want me to do?" and "What is God's Will for my life?" I was never quite sure there was any difference in the two.

## **CHUBBY**

"Can Chubby come out and play?" I don't know if I really remember this or just recall being told about the neighborhood kids coming to the door to see if I could come out and play. Around three years old, my pudgy little body

invited my nickname.

We lived in Sebring, Ohio during this time. One afternoon I came home with my sunsuit pockets full of pennies and nickels. When questioned by my mother, I told her I had been selling papers in the neighborhood. Further inquiry found that I had gathered outdated “Heralds of Holiness” (the Nazarene’s official church periodical, to which I sold several articles when I became an adult) from a basement stack, where they were waiting to be thrown away, and had begun my entrepreneur career, and rather successfully I might add.

“Look Henry, it’s that chubby little preacher’s daughter at the front door. Wonder what she’s selling today.”

Another day, when I returned home with a half-dollar tight in my fist, and questioning revealed that I’d sold one of Mom’s discarded, broken brooches to a tender-hearted little lady down the street, I was told I must return the money. I guess Mom thought I was into high finance by now, and it was time to stifle my ambition a bit.

It seemed a much longer walk returning to Mrs. Hagger’s house. The white shingled two-story was completely surrounded by hedges. Slowly, my shuffling feet avoided the cracks in the sidewalk as I came to the break in the dense hedge which allowed entrance to the house. Hesitating a moment, I lowered my head and quickly passed on by. Walking on for a ways while I reasoned with myself about the inevitability of my intended mission, I resolutely turned around and headed back, ever so slowly, toward the now dreaded house. Just as I again approached the entrance where the sidewalk led up to the front porch, I saw Mrs. Hagger sitting on a cushioned glider, knitting a colorful



afghan.

Maybe this wouldn't be so awful since she was on the porch, I thought. At least I wouldn't have to ring the bell and wait with my hands sweating and my heart thumping nearly out of my chest. Still, there must be an easier way! Without another thought, I crammed my pudgy fist into the hedge, let go of the doomed silver treasure, and ran home as fast as my chubby legs would carry me.

In the summer, we looked forward to hearing the clop-clop-clop of the horses pulling the ice-cream wagon down Marilyn Avenue, the brick street where the parsonage was located. Slamming the screen door as we raced to get our nickels for a treat, excitement ran high. While the horses swished their tails at the flies and left large mementos on our streets, the ice cream man dipped tall, pointed ice cream scoops- chocolate, strawberry, or vanilla- into cones, then into our anxiously reaching grubby hands.

In the fall of 1941, I started kindergarten which was held at Sebring High School where my big sister, Lois, attended. To get to school I passed my friend, Marsha Lee King's house. Marsha Lee's birthday fell too late in the year for her to be able to go to kindergarten with me, which was a big disappointment. If I could only have my little 4 1/2 year old, also timid and scared, friend accompany me, I would surely have felt safe and even brave. Often I stopped off at the King's about breakfast time, on my way to school. I was welcomed with a cup of hot chocolate, the top completely covered with melting marshmallows. (My first step toward chocolate addiction).

One day, I explained to Mrs. King that we were allowed to bring a guest to kindergarten with us, so she dressed my

little comrade and allowed her to accompany me. Since my understanding teacher allowed Marsha Lee to stay with me through that morning, I tried it again a few days later. Of course, my teacher called my parents, who weren't even aware of my overly-hospitable deeds, and that was the end of my kindergarten guests.

Another day, having tarried over the hot chocolate too long, I arrived at the high school a few minutes after kindergarten had started. The door to my kindergarten room was closed. Being scared to knock or to just open the door and enter, I did what any logical 5 year old would do - sat by the door in the hallway and cried. When the bell for changing classes rang and the high school kids filled the halls, Lois found her little sis, red faced, snuffling and sobbing, and delivered me safely to my teacher.

Mother would sometimes watch for me from the parsonage front walk when it was time for me to come home from school. Far in the distance she knew it was Joycie when she saw a red snowsuit bobbing up and down as I skipped (never just walked) home. To this day, I blame my bouncy gait on this early habit.

## **HERE COME THE EVANGELISTS**

Fall and Spring meant more than house-cleaning time at our house. It also meant getting ready for Revival meeting. Typically, Revivals lasted two weeks, with services every night and twice on Sundays. In the Nazarene parsonage, it often meant having the evangelists live with us for the duration.

I wondered a lot about how it must feel to always be living in someone else's house, moving on from one to

another, every two weeks. I couldn't see much more to the evangelists' lives than sleeping, eating, and preaching, when they weren't on the road traveling to the next waiting church.

But Revival time offered some pluses to both the evangelists and the parsonage family. We ate especially well for those two weeks. My mother prepared company dinners every night, with some help from parishoners who sent in cakes and pies and special breads to supplement the meals, sometimes several in one day. I couldn't figure out why all evangelists weren't obese. It was certainly **not** a life conducive to prayer and fasting.

We got to know the evangelists pretty well, living close together in our small parsonages. Some of them carved an indelible place in my memory!

I remember Samuel Cohen Israel, a short, stocky, converted Jew who, after downing large portions of carefully basted chicken served with oyster dressing, candied sweet potatoes, and all the trimmings, plus two slices of my father's favorite green-apple pie topped with cheddar cheese, pushed back his chair and thanked my very tired mother for the "nice little lunch."

And there was the Rev. Mortonsen, tall and dignified, whose seeming lack of a first name left me with visions of his mother, bending over his shiny white cradle, sweetly entreating him, "Come to Mommy, Rev. Mortonsen."

Unlike many evangelists' wives who were content to stay home and live normal lives while their husbands answered their calling throughout the country, Sister Mortonsen always accompanied her husband. It was for Sister Mortonsen that Rev. Mortonsen always requested

special dietary considerations due to “my dear wife’s rather fragile stomach.”

Every morning following breakfast and devotions, Sister Mortonsen (who apparently likewise had been deprived of a first name) would sit in our living room, dressed in her rose satin robe and matching high-heeled slippers, rocking in my grandmother’s floral platform-rocker, while reading a Grace Livingston Hill romance novel. As the evangelist’s dear wife rocked and turned pages with her carefully manicured nails, the Rev. Mortonsen slipped upstairs to the bathroom where he hand-washed Sister Mortonsen’s delicate underwear, along with her Playtex girdle. Then wrapping these treasures in a large turkish towel, he attempted to smuggle them two flights down to the basement to line-dry, without the parsonage family becoming aware of his secret mission.

Need I mention that Sister Mortonsen never offered to dry a dish or help clear the table during their 42-meal visit? I wondered if my mother found comfort in the scriptures’ promise that we are never given more than we can bear. She may have questioned if the one exception might be for parsonage-wives.

Sammy Flugan, a blind musician, always travelled with his wife also, but for more obvious reasons. Sammy sang and played the piano, the accordion, and the musical saw--not simultaneously. His musical skills did exceed his table decorum, however. My eight-year old eyes were glued in amazement as Sammy, holding his spoon in one hand, shoved mashed potatoes and gravy onto the spoon with his free hand, then missed his mouth as often as not, leaving greasy lumps to slide down his cheeks and chin. All the while, Sammy constantly smiled and talked with any who were not too transfixed by the scene to follow his train of

thought. He continued by licking off his fingers, one by one, while twice-mashed potatoes still filled his gaping mouth, often resulting in more food on the fingers after their “cleansing” than before.

Strange stirrings in my stomach forced even my curious eyes to look away lest my appetite be completely ruined. I tried to concentrate on the pastel painting above the buffet, of a beautiful guardian angel hovering over two small children as they stepped over missing planks in a rickety bridge. I wondered if I, too, had an angel guarding my carefully placed steps.

My other coping-mechanism-of-choice was reading and pondering the familiar wooden motto over the door which helped to divert my attention from Sammy's messy chin and gooey fingers. “Christ is the Head of this House--The Unseen Guest at every Meal-- The Silent Listener to every Conversation.” I wondered how **He** was enjoying being a guest at **this** meal!

Lottie Mailer was the only female evangelist who was very well known in our denomination. A blonde, statuesque woman, Lottie was known to walk boldly across the church platform when being introduced to the congregation, snapping the pastor's suspenders, presumably asserting her “place among the boys.” One time I heard my father and his fellow pastors engaging in some rather unministerial snickering around the subject of Lottie. Interestingly, she was never invited to hold a revival at our church, much less to stay in our parsonage. I always suspected that my otherwise unassertive Mother might have had something to do with that.

There were others of course. One was a chalk-artist

who drew pictures illustrating his sermons on a lighted blackboard, as he presented them to the congregation. Another male evangelist sang quartets with himself, having pre-recorded his voice three times, singing the various harmonizing parts of the gospel songs, then playing the recording as he sang the lead part and strummed his guitar during the church service. Still another preacher did magic tricks for the children, making a hard-boiled egg slide through the neck of a milk-bottle at just the proper time, when it had previously refused to fit through the small opening. I forget the gospel lesson this illustrated. I do remember the egg.

One evangelist, who was a “local boy”, so had no need to stay at our house or to be aware of its furnishings, one night preached fervently against the “devil’s latest tool”-- television. Later, he sheepishly apologized to my father, his host pastor, who had just purchased a T-V.

Most were excellent story-tellers. They could have the congregation bursting with laughter one moment, then with their defenses down, lead them into a chilling tale of a young man who said, “No,” to God for his last time and, leaving the Revival meeting, drove his new sports-car into a telephone pole just two blocks away. “Blood and brains were found splattered less than a 100 yards from the church door through which he had stubbornly walked, refusing to answer the gentle pleading call to repent and turn from his sinful ways.”

In the book of Ephesians, St. Paul, probably the most successful evangelist ever, said that some were “called” to this particular profession. It does appear to be a breed of its own. America has known several “great” evangelists in her short history-- Jonathon Edwards, Billy Sunday, Billy

Graham, Oral Roberts-- some revered, some found wanting-- but all remembered. Those who lived in my house for two weeks of their lives, and mine, were less famous than these. But they are not less well remembered by this preacher's kid. Each year when wafts of warm breezes and sweet scents herald the approach of spring, or crisp cool winds stir the fall air-- just fleetingly-- I begin to question, "I wonder what the evangelist will be like this time?"

## **THE FOUNDATION**

The grunts and muffled utterances of the moving men as they strained to carry the piano from their truck into the church parsonage, were always tempered and cleaned-up a bit by the presence of the preacher to whom the monstrous cargo belonged. The piano was always the first piece of furniture to be placed when we moved from one parsonage to another. Unlike the more modern models that are smaller, narrower, and lighter weight, allowing them to fit into corners or to share a wall with an arm-chair or loveseat, our piano was massive.

It had been a "player piano", one in which you could insert paper rolls of music and then, by pumping the foot pedals heartily, could produce songs as though you were playing them yourself. Since it no longer functioned in this capacity, we simply were the owners of a very large, solid, dark mahogany, upright piano which was next to impossible to move. It would not be replaced until years after the kids had scattered to the Episcopalians and the Methodists, when Daddy would finally bring himself to buy a smaller model that Mom could move, to dust behind, on cleaning days.

Our piano was always placed on the largest and most solid wall in the living-room. The front of it was graced with

“Praise & Worship” and other standard hymnals, a few paperback gospel song books, and Daddy’s composition book which consisted of pages of empty music staves awaiting the moment when he would awaken in the night and rapidly pen in musical notes representing his latest inspiration. There were also several red and yellow John T. Thompson’s music-lesson books, grade one through whatever level the most advanced of us had reached by that time. We were never asked whether we wanted to take music lessons or not. Like so many things, it was a given.

The long spanse of piano-top was covered with a hand-crocheted doily which had been heavily starched and then stretched over a wooden frame with extended pins to hold the doily’s shape while it dried. The piano’s solid mahogany platform, covered with its stiff, perfectly formed doily, quite appropriately served as a foundation for our family portrait gallery. (One of the Biblical injunctions that the Nazarene’s often quoted was “Be ye perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect.”)

The picture of Grandma and Grandpa Schurman at the far left, reminded me of the “American Gothic.” Although lacking pitchforks, the austere expressions and plainness of dress certainly matched. Daddy had told us that Grandpa had worked in a foundry all his life, in addition to being a lay-minister who filled the pulpits for sick or vacationing pastors in the community. Since Grandpa was paid weekly at the foundry, he kept little jars lined up on the dresser, into which he put the needed amount each week to accumulate for monthly bills. He labeled the jars “Rent”, “Utilities”, “Insurance”, “Car”, and on down the line. Each Saturday night when he arrived home with his pay envelope, exhausted from a hard day at the foundry, he reached for the jar marked “God” first of all. God received the first 10% of



his pay. As I looked at Grandpa's deeply lined face, I envisioned Daddy in a few more years. Somehow even the sternness reminded me of him, although I knew that Daddy's countenance would usually show a broad smile, that of "The Smiling Parson."

At the other end of the piano-top, peering out of a yellowish-brown background, sat Grandma and Grandpa Sundell. My mother's tall, stocky, Swedish "Pa" looked like a giant next to "Ma", my little grandmother. Grandma was small of stature, appearing rather fragile, with thinning hair pulled back into a bun, her gentle face surrounded by a lace collar centered with a cameo pin. Raising seven children without much help, due to Grandpa's bent to drinking, Grandma was known to take her home-made soup and Swedish rye bread to sick or needy neighbors whether she knew them personally or not. Her religious faith was paramount in her life. Once during an outbreak of cholera when the milkman and delivery-boys refused to make deliveries at the homes of the quarantined, Grandma made trips to the grocery and pharmacy, carrying supplies to those who were ill. At the end of a tiring day, I can still hear her sighs of "Yoi Yoi Yoi" (rhyming with "Joy") as she sat in her rocking chair.

In the very center of the stiffened-to-perfection doily, was my Dad and Mom's wedding picture. In a pastel blue, draped dress, and carrying yellow roses, my mother looked beautiful. Just barely 19, she couldn't have known the enormity of the challenges that awaited her, as she took on the roles of wife to a 34-year old widower, mother to two small children, and daughter-in-law to an elderly Englishwoman who would be reluctant to turn over her acquired role, as "Mother" to the youngsters (since their mother had died), to this new bride. Add to this the myriad

expectations that accompanied being a Minister's wife. My mother's sweet smile, as she sat close to her new husband, showed no inkling of any fear for the future.

Pictures of us four kids-- Roy and Lois (who came with the marriage) and Paul and I (who arrived a few years later) appeared on both sides of the bride and groom.

Roy, who left home to join the Navy the day after his graduation from high school, looked handsome in his sailor suit. I remember thinking that my big brother, 12 years my senior, must be every girl's heart's desire. From stories I heard later, I may not have been far wrong. Roy would leave home after each furlough, with a New Testament in his shirt-pocket, which was replaced once away from home, with a pack of Lucky Strikes. Many tears and prayers were offered for this wandering boy during those war years. Once while he was out at sea, he sent a letter home that gladdened his parents' hearts, enclosing the words of a chorus he had written out on the deck of his Destroyer Escort one night. It said:

"I've found that Jesus you talked so much  
about,  
I never knew how real He could be.  
I've found that Jesus the Bible tells about,  
Now He means everything to me!"

Someday, years later, furloughs from the Mission Field would replace those from the Navy, but that could not be foreseen during those worrisome war days.

Lois' high school picture emphasized the disadvantages of being a girl in our particular religious denomination. Absence of a stylish hair-cut and lack of makeup and jewelry,

along with always modest, rather outdated hand-me-downs, made a Nazarene girl stand out in those days. Lois' musical talents and outgoing personality encouraged Daddy to envision her as perfect preacher's wife material. The only problem was that Lois saw herself as a nurse. Since fears of a worldly nursing school caused parental support to be withheld, Lois ran away to Hattiesburg, Mississippi to enter her beloved Nurses' Training. The folks' tears and hand-wringing, phone calls and prayers, over the next few years, would result in even some unwise choices on Lois' part, that sadly resulted in her never completing her dream. Years later, when she would become organist for her church, Editor of its newsletter, and a published composer and poet, Lois too would bring pride to her parents.... but who could have known that then?

Paul's and my pictures were on either side of our smiling parents. My brother and I had taken silent vows while growing up and seeing the traumas caused by our older siblings, that we would never do that to our parents. And we didn't....at least while we were young and at home.

Paul graduated with highest honors from every school he attended, which were not a few, considering undergraduate, seminary, and graduate degrees. He would become a minister, the Director of Counseling for the pastors of the Methodist Conference in East Ohio, and then professor of Religion and Pastoral Counseling in a California seminary. But in spite of his many accomplishments, it was not until he had physically moved clear across the country that he could bring himself to tell Daddy that he had decided to change denominations.

My picture was on the other side of my parents, probably on my daddy's side. With a very bashful smile as

my chin rested on a chubby fist, I was obviously posed for a relaxed effect, a state never quite reached in reality. Unlike many of the pictures in our family album, I didn't have my head buried in my daddy's chest to avoid the camera.. Nor did I have my eyes closed in the belief that if I couldn't see them, they couldn't see me. (Clearly, I was not destined to become the one with all the graduate degrees). It might be noted that Paul wasn't the only one for whom it would be difficult to confront or disappoint Daddy. Years later, as an adult and a mother myself, it seems hardly a coincidence that I filed for divorce just months **after** my father's death.

Daddy was a trained musician. While in Seminary in Boston, he had studied at Boston Conservatory of Music. But more important, Daddy had music in him. Sometimes he would hear a song on the radio that he wanted to remember, so he'd grab an envelope as he listened to the melody, and would scribble as fast as he could: E A F F A, etc. Then he'd go to the piano and play the song beautifully, adding all the accompanying notes. From that he could draw the musical notes on a page of blank music staves, adding all the harmonizing chords, so that anyone else would now have the music to play the song. When accompanying a soloist, Daddy could transpose the song from one key to another, and then to another, finding the best key for the singer's range, without a moment's hesitation. Yet with all this natural skill and training, Daddy played almost nothing but religious music. In fact, with the exception of practicing our piano lessons, it might appear that religious music was all that we and our now defunct "player piano" were programmed to play.

On one memorable occasion, however, I recall bringing home a girl-friend from school. As we entered the parsonage, we found Daddy playing the piano. My friend,

less shy than I, asked my father if he knew “Too Young”, Nat King Cole’s current hit? Daddy said that he was sorry but he wasn’t familiar with that one. Then with only a brief hesitation, he smiled broadly and launched into a lively John Phillips Sousa march, playing with a grand flourish and obvious enjoyment. I was understandably shocked-- and very proud. It felt like my Daddy had given me a gift. “Stars and Stripes Forever” was so much more respectable than “Rescue the Perishing.”

Our family sang together, around the piano at home and at church. We were known as “the Singing Schurmans.” One of my less loyal friends used to say that the LSMFT from the cigarette commercials (Lucky Strikes Means Fine Tobacco) really stood for “Let Schurmans Make Funny Tunes.” On any given Sunday, Daddy would march down from the platform, seat himself at the piano, and nod toward the family. This meant it was time for us to join him for a family presentation. Sometimes we’d sing “When the Saints Go Marching In” or “I’m on the Battlefield for my Lord.” I stood on a small chair so the congregation could get a good view. Occasionally when the signal was given, I remained steadfastly seated in the pew, face downcast, heart thumping, shaking my head “no.” This sometimes worked when I was very little. Later, as a teenager, embarrassed to take part in the family show, I found no such ploy on which to rely. The family’s duty was to support the program-- God, the Church, and Daddy. And as previously noted, it was never all that clear whether there was any difference in the three.

## **GREYHOUND BUS**

I awoke with a start as the big Greyhound bus hit a rough spot in the highway. Sitting next to me I saw a grey-haired woman, head reclining and hands clutching a large

black leather purse close to her rounded belly. I recalled that a man had been sitting there before I had fallen sleep. Where was he now? Who was she? Where was I?

My uncertainty overcame my shyness as I scooted a little closer, and looking up into her wrinkled face, hesitantly asked, "Do you know if we're very close to Akron yet?"

"Well, Honey, we've already passed Akron. That's where I got on," she said, leaning her head back again, unaware of my trauma.

Tears rushed to my eyes as I strained to see outside the window, looking for something-- anything that might look familiar. The landscape had become dim as evening had fallen. I saw the outline of a tall grey building with narrow windows, near the highway, and wondered if it might be an orphanage where they would be sending me to live since I was quite sure I was never going to see my parents again.

Having spent an exciting weekend with my big sister in her college dorm in Cleveland, I had been very exhausted when she put me on the bus to return to my home in Akron. Staying up late each night, with the big girls, was far different from my regular 8:00 p.m. bedtime at home. I had loved being introduced to all Lody's friends. "This is my very special little sister, Joycie," she had said, as she stood with her arm hugging me close. And meeting her handsome boyfriend, Carrol, whom I vowed I'd marry myself if Lody ever broke up with him as she had so many before him. Popcorn and Pepsi while sprawling on the dorm bunks, eating at long tables in the dining-hall, sitting in the music room while Lody practiced with her ladies' trio and then listen to her accompany a men's quartet, all of them laughing and joking with Lody and smiling and winking at me. I had

felt so very special.

Now here it was all ending on my 35 mile journey, supposedly back home to Akron where Mom and Dad were waiting to pick me up at the Greyhound Station. But somehow I had slept and missed my stop, and now was lost forever and ever, and would have to live in a convent or orphan's home with dark brown tile floors and rows of narrow cots and a stern headmaster, along with other sad, lost children. Tears rolled down my cheeks as I wondered how such a wonderful weekend could end in such tragedy.

Coughing a bit, my seatmate reached into her black bag and taking out a small jar of Vick's, she rubbed some onto her wrinkled-up neck, then pulled her collar up over it, to warm and soothe her throat. The aroma of the Vicks transported my thoughts to many winter nights in my yellow steel bed with fresh ironed sheets, plump pillows, and my daddy lovingly rubbing my neck and chest with the pungent mentholatum, covering it with a piece of warm, soft flannel, then pinning it to my pajamas securely. I fought back the sobs, believing I'd never experience such comfort again.

Slowly I got up and scooted past the knees of my then nodding seatmate. Holding on to the back of each seat along the aisle, I carefully walked up the very long path to the front of the bus. By now softly crying and rubbing tears from my cheeks, I haltingly approached the driver. "I was. . I was supposed to get off in Akron... My parents....My... I fell asleep...." and then sobs overtook me.

The bus-driver tried to comfort me with assurances that we'd soon be in Canton where he'd make a call back to Akron to let my folks know what had happened. Then he'd see that I got on the next bus back. "Everything will be just fine now,

“ he said. “You know, big people do this sort of thing every day. Don’t you worry about it. We’ll take care of you.”

Soon, “Paging Rev. Ralph Schurman” would blare over the loudspeaker in the Akron depot, and my folks would be assured that little Joycie had been delayed but would soon be home.

Walking back up the aisle, hands reached out and patted me along the way. Snuffling, I wiped my cheeks as I felt hope restored. I slid past the protruding knees, into my seat by the window. Peering out, I saw the twinkling lights of a town ahead and buildings that looked more friendly now, a white steepled church, and smoke from the chimneys of nearby homes.

## **GRANDMAS HOUSE**

Grandma’s house was our destination at least once or twice a year, always for Memorial Day weekend. Grandma and Grandpa Sundell lived in Jamestown, NY, a swedish town which suited them to a tea. Jamestown was also Lucille Ball’s hometown, but Grandma probably didn’t even know who she was. Grandma’s house always had a wonderful aroma to it. Swedish rye bread baking in the oven, after it had been kneaded to just the right elasticity and formed in oval loaves. I didn’t care whether we had anything else to eat, or not, when at Grandma’s. I could make a whole meal of swedish rye bread, if I was allowed. i also loved the hot water cocoa that she served us kids. A mug with lots of cocoa and sugar mixed with evaporated milk, then filled to the top with hot water. What they now offer at Capaccino shops for \$3.00, in no way compares with Grandma’s hot water cocoa.



My Aunt Betty and her son, Kenny, lived at Grandma's house, too. Betty had been divorced since Kenny was a baby. She worked, and Grandma took care of Kenny during the daytime. I always called her Aunt Liddy (Lizzy) since her name was really Elizabeth. Aunt Liddy's "fud" (fudge) was my request every time we visited. You can see that early on, I got much of my pleasure from the food arena. Some things just don't change.

By the time I was in junior high, Aunt Liddy had a boyfriend who came over in the evening to spend time with her. Hank was a rather stocky, friendly Italian who smoked cigars. He learned early to park his cadillac at the curb and his cigar on the porch bannister before coming into the house. Hank and Aunt Liddy always seemed so "worldly wise" to me, no doubt a comparative thing with such an old fashioned Grandma.

Sleeping on, or in, a feather mattress was one of the highs at Grandma's house. I loved the comforting way it curled up around my body and kept me warm. Kenny, a few years younger than I, and Paul and I played together during our visits. We climbed to the top of a slanting concrete wall that ran up the driveway beside the house, feeling brave and unconquerable. Jamestown's brick streets seemed to all form steep hills. There were lots of new places to explore.

Aunt Hilma, my Mom's oldest sister, came to eat every night while we were there visiting. She had her own apartment, having also divorced her husband, Stanley, when I was still pretty small. He was a traveling salesman who matched all the typical stereotypes. Hilma received a Mothers' Day card from one of Stanley's "women friends", one year, which was sorta the "coup de grau", I think. What was most impressive about Hilma was her burping.

Often as she entered the house, her nervous digestive system sounded out with an extensive and melodious burping sound, which always brought gales of laughter from us kids. “Hilma burped,” we’d yell out simultaneously while doubling over laughing. Aunt Hilma spent untold time reciting her ailments and daily health concerns and habits to anyone within ear-shot. Everyone knew about her personal toilet habits, as she described her state of constipation at any given moment. She, also, was a career woman since Stanley’s riddance, although she was left fairly well off.

Both of my aunts loved nice clothes, and could afford them, although it was said that Hilma never ever bought anything until it went on sale. My Mom, the preacher’s wife, got all her hand-me-downs. Mom liked that, actually, since they were better quality clothes than she would have been able to buy for herself. If the styles were a bit passe, so what? Nazarene preachers’ wives weren’t supposed to be overly concerned with outward appearances anyway.

My Grandma’s brother, Uncle Verner, also came to dinner every night when we were there, and no doubt, many times when we weren’t. He had been divorced most of his adult life. (It only now dawns on me how many of my mother’s family were divorced. And this was prior to the time when divorce became acceptable, especially in this very religious family. Go figure! ) Uncle Verner loved what we called “kenneka bread”, a round rye-crisp cracker/bread which ran second only to Swedish rye for me. A lot of butter spread over “Uncle John’s” (his other name) kenneka bread made it pretty yummy. Uncle John was short and sorta small, with a perpetual grin on his face. Not much of one to worry about pretense, he was sometimes seen sitting on a curb, resting, in the middle of the downtown area. This was a bit distressing to my proud Aunt Hilma and Aunt Betty,

both of whom liked to dress up and put on the dog a bit. No doubt a humbling experience as they passed him while walking with their friends on their lunch hour.

Grandma had a very long, heavy, oval dining room table. It was completely filled when Daddy, Mom, Paul, both grandparents, Uncle John, Aunt Liz, Aunt Hilma, Kenny and I surrounded it each evening. There were always prayers before and after the meal, like at home. Little grandma would take small, speedy steps back and forth from the aroma filled kitchen to the dining room with plates and bowls of things wonderful enough to make prayers of thanksgiving appropriate. Just as we did at home, we either sang our “Father, we thank you for this food. Amen,” or said the Swedish “Gud valsigna moten Amen” before we ate.

In the earlier years, Uncle Donny was also still home, Don being the youngest of Mom’s siblings. On Memorial Day, he marched in the town’s parade, playing his horn and wearing some sort of uniform as I recall. Carrying small flags in each hand, we all went to the parade each year and cheered him on. Donny would later become a minister which made his Mother, my Grandma, very thankful. Maybe this helped to make up for his lipsticked, jewelry wearing, divorced sisters, who didn’t include my Mom, of course, who was married to a minister herself.

Grandma’s bread was known throughout the neighborhood. When she heard that anyone was “sick or afflicted”, Grandma quickly walked up or down the hills, carrying warm swedish rye loaves to comfort and help them get well. There was always plenty to go around. I’ve always pictured “The good Samaritan” as a Swedish Grandma. I don’t know how much, if any, religion was peddled along with these goods, but I suspect there was some. The

milkman often found a religious tract stuffed in the neck of the empty milk bottles when he picked them up from Grandma's porch. Clang, clang, "Have you been born again?" "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life." Little Grandma sincerely believed in letting her light shine so that men might see her good works and glorify her Father in heaven.

Years later, Aunt Hilma would die of emphysema, after years of smoking. She never remarried. Her tales of her digestive/bowel activities grew longer and more detailed, with likewise longer and louder burps as the years passed. Uncle Buster, who never really was around much as he was in the Navy, developed alcohol problems and was a heavy smoker, too, which didn't mix well with his diabetes, so he died before his time. Aunt Betty and Uncle Hank seemed to live happily, visiting Kenny (her only child) each year down in San Antonio where he lived with his male companion. Then Ken died in his 40's from cancer. Seeing her only child die was a terrible loss for Aunt Betty. She developed breast cancer soon after.

The two sibs, who seemed to live most healthily and happily, were Uncle Don and my Mom, both of whom were in the Christian ministry, thus serving others for a lifetime. Both had children who also followed their examples by entering the ministry. Since Don had been born so many years after his older siblings, my mom became a second mother to him, buying him clothes out of her work-money, and caring for him. Perhaps this bond had long-range repercussions as they shared a common mission in life and stayed close through the years. These two outlived all their siblings.

Fifty years later, Memorial Day parades and hot

chocolate, along with the smell of baking bread, take me back to “Yamestown” and my memories of Grandma, dressed in her flannel nightgown, her skinny long pigtail hanging down her back, walking around the house when she was tired, saying, “Yoi, Yoi, Yoi,” especially when she was tired. I haven’t the slightest idea what it meant. I do remember her calling me “Yoycie” as she hugged my chubby, squirming little body to her soft, small one. Now that I understood.

## VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

"COME TO VACATION BIBLE  
SCHOOL.....SCHURMAN'S GARAGE....  
MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY, 9:00 AM."

After sending notices all over the neighborhood, I set out to get ready for my anticipated students, as any good evangelist/teacher/organizer would do. It didn’t phase me that **this** teacher was only a 3rd grader. It never occurred to me that our neighborhood had a normal mix of Methodists, Baptists, Catholics, and non-religious, but as it turned out, no one seemed to keep their kids from coming. They either didn’t pay any attention to what we were doing; didn’t care as long as their kids were occupied; or felt secure that this snotty-nosed little preacher’s kid probably couldn’t impart any lasting theological harm.

Benches were formed by placing a tomato juice can under each end of long boards, several in a row forming a “church” of sorts. Up front I had a home-made easel on which I placed my flannel board. Cut-outs from magazines, catalogs, and old Sunday School literature, with a small piece of flannel glued on the back, made my stories visible and

therefore more interesting. Some were the standard Bible stories. Others I created, dependent on the pictures available and my vast imagination. There were always left-over Bible School supplies that I could pass out to everyone who came. Being the PK facilitated my getting this endless supply. I loved telling stories using my flannel board, teaching scriptures, and instructing on making crafts.

For music time, I made a booklet that had one black page, followed by red, white, then a gold one. I flipped the pages, one by one, for the other children to view as we sang, "My heart was **black** with sin, until the Savior came in. His precious **blood** I know, has washed it **white** as snow. And in his word we're told, we'll walk the streets of **gold**. Oh wonderful, wonderful day He washed my sins away!" We also sang "The B-I-B-L-E is just the book for me" ; "Jesus Gave Her Water that was not in the Well"; "Climb, Climb up Sunshine Mountain"; and "The Wise Man Built his House upon the Rock", and "One, Two, Three, the Devil's after Me", with lots of hand motions and even more enthusiasm.

I taught a Bible verse for every letter of the alphabet, all the way from "Ask and it shall be given..." to "Zealous of good works." I had to stretch it a bit for "x", using "Except a man be born again , he shall not enter the kingdom of God. " The shorter ones were the most popular: "Jesus Wept" and "Quench not the Spirit." (I still can recite a verse for each letter, so at least someone was learning.)

For Craft Time, we glued wooden tongue depressors together to make plaques, on which we wrote mottos and glued pictures. Pieces of ribbon glued to the back made it possible for proud Mothers to hang them up when they were carried home at week's end. Tin cans, covered with felt or old wallpaper, then filled with dirt from the preacher's

garden and a lovely marigold, created “a thing of beauty” in our beholding eyes.

On Thursday, I boldly sent notes home with each child, instructing their parents what to send for the picnic on Friday. A jug of kool-aid, 6 sandwiches, a dozen cookies, a bag of potato chips, paper cups.... with never even a doubt whether my instructions would be heeded. When our last lessons, songs, and craft projects were completed and noon approached on Friday, we all headed for the vacant lot on the corner, forming a parade up 19th Street. There we spread our feast on old blankets and quilts and celebrated our accomplishments, having completed a glorious week of Vacation Bible School in Schurman’s garage.

Years later, when as a YMCA Director, I organized, planned, and directed Summer Day Camps, I was confident that I was very well-credentialed, having had extensive experience in my much earlier years.

## **EASTER**

Holidays are always remembered with special fondness by “grown-up children”, no doubt with embellishments of all the fun and positive aspects while using selective memory to forget the belly-aches, disappointments, and just plain hassles that also accompanied them. But Easter was very special to the parsonage family.

A bright yellow organdy dress, trimmed in white lace and pearl buttons; a straw bonnets with turned up rim; shiniest ever black patent leather shoes with a purse to match; the smell of carnations tied with matching bows; lily-white gloves; all deliver my thoughts directly to childhood Easters. Everything new from panties on out!

Laid out beside the bed, the night before, ready for wearing to Sunday School.

Daddy even looking especially dapper in a dark suit and tie, white shirt, and a spray of lilies of the valley as a boutonniere. Even if she had bought a new dress or hat for spring, Mom would never wear it on Easter. She said that there may be other women who didn't have new clothes to wear, and she didn't want them to feel bad about it. Obviously, this consideration was not passed on genetically, since I gloried in my new Easter outfit and figured it was one of the main reasons for the day!

Getting up in time to search for the hidden Easter basket, extending the suspense by waiting until last to look in the oven which had also been last year's hiding place. Avoiding the favorite licorice jelly beans until after church when black teeth wouldn't matter.

Slow strains of "Lo, in the Grave He Lay", crescendoing at the chorus into a hearty "Up from the Grave He Arose." Daddy's too long sermon during which Norma Jean and I sat, softly tickling each other's arms and hands, to make the time pass more quickly. Ending the service with a joyful "I Serve a Risen Savior, He's in the world today, I know that He is living, Whatever men may say.....He lives! He Lives! He Lives Within My Heart." Then home to the smell of ham with cloves baking in the oven and a special Easter bunny cake.

Usually, some of the children were asked to recite "pieces" at the Easter Sunday service. Hardly Keats or Wordsworth, one of my four-liners said:

"Rejoice! Rejoice! It's Easter Day.



No longer death will have its sway.  
Eternal Life to us He gave,  
When God raised Jesus from the grave.”

I recall having some trouble remembering the word “sway”, as it wasn’t a word I used often in my daily conversation. “Mommy, Is it okay if I sway over to Annie’s house to play?” or “If I do well enough in Reading this week, I may get to sway over to the “Red Birds” table.” I just had no idea what it meant. ( I’m not sure that it’s much clearer now.)

In our denomination, Sunday School attendance was greatly emphasized. Holidays often brought the largest number. Sometimes on Sunday afternoon, the phone would ring and one of Daddy’s fellow-pastors would be calling to ask how many we had at Sunday School. Especially if he himself had had a record attendance and wanted everyone to know about it. Gimmicks, incentives, prizes, guilt-- everything was legitimate to get regular attenders to invite their neighbors and work-mates to come to Sunday School. “As Christians, if we don’t care about our unchurched friends, who will be responsible if they are, in the end, lost?!”

Sometimes there were contests, over several weeks, with charts showing how many were brought by various individuals over that time period. On Easter, colored chicks were sometimes the prize. The one bringing the most new people on Easter Sunday, won a colored chick. Sometimes they were bright pink, Robins’ egg blue, or grass green. They made up in color for what they lacked in long life-span.

But Easter was Daddy’s favorite Sunday of the year for other reasons. I’m sure he enjoyed seeing the church shining and aglow with Easter lilies on the altar, the choir’s

specialty prepared music, and all of our sparkling smiles under pastel, ribboned bonnets. But Easter was a landmark memory day for Daddy. He liked to tell the story of an Easter night, after having attended the special services of the day, back home alone in his room, when he accepted the Call of God to become a minister and his acceptance of the call. This decision forever after steered his course and changed his life..... and ours.

## **OTHER HOLIDAYS**

Halloween was a favorite time of year with Beggars' Night celebrated the night prior to Halloween itself. I loved to plan my outfit! I never dressed like an animal or anyone in uniform or like a boy. Fairy princesses, Gypsies, Snow White, Cinderella, all sorts of beautiful woman--these were among my favorites-- as long as it called for make-up and jewelry which, of course, were "no nos" at other times of the year.

We kids walked up and down the streets of our neighborhood and as far beyond as we dared go, often running from one house to another to increase our coverage in our allotted time, picking up all the loot we could garner. When we got home, we spread out all the "treats" on the carpet, lining up rows of Milky Way bars, suckers, bubblegum, apples, peanut-butter kisses, like-things together. Some generous people even had prepared small sacks with several pieces of candy in each, and others made popcorn balls and wrapped them in colorful cellophane. Paul and I competed to see who could bring home more. We always got a lot, and it was well worth the evening's work. There were church and school Halloween parties too, with apple cider and donuts served from a broom-stick, but nothing compared to Beggars' Night!

Thanksgiving was sometimes spent with our family friends, the Marshes. We traveled to their house some years; others, they came to ours. Daddy and Ernest Marsh had been friends from way back, each being “only children” and fellow-pastors. They were surrogate brothers, enjoying the same things, often singing duets together in church. Mrs. Marsh was a preacher, too, and some said she was better than her husband. They had only one child, a daughter named Leah Jane, who was a little bit sickly, always having a kleenex box nearby, it seemed. On one Maine vacation, that our families took together, my ego-enhancing brother, Paul, dubbed Leah Jane “Lobster Pot” for the week’s duration.

One year, just as the Marshes were about to leave our Charleston, W.Va. parsonage, a huge snowstorm hit. They started off, in spite of it, after Leah Jane and I had reluctantly bid each other goodbye. But soon after leaving, their car pulled up in our driveway again, ready to spend a few more days until the roads cleared. We kids were delighted. It meant a few more evenings of “hide and seek” and fun games together.

## **A SPECIAL CHRISTMAS**

The Christmas when I was ten stands out in my memory although more than fifty years have passed since then. We lived in a small town snuggled in a valley, surrounded by the West Virginia hills. The week before Christmas, my father heard of a family who lived back in the hills and “up a holler” who were in need of help. Our family talked about it and decided to find a way that even with our limited means, we could bring Christmas to this family who

otherwise wouldn't have one.

We spent one afternoon in the woods sawing branches from a fallen white birch into foot-long lengths, and gathering small pinecones, then stopped on our way home at the five-and-ten-cent store for inexpensive red ribbon and candles. Daddy drilled three holes in the small white logs while we sprayed the pinecones and tied bows in the ribbons. Then we secured the candles in each hole and attached the pinecones and ribbons on the front of the logs, making beautiful table or window-sill decorations.

Since we didn't have the money to buy new ones, we decided to give up some of our toys. It was hard for me to decide which one of my dearly loved dolls I would give up. I finally chose Sally. Mother helped me paint a cradle which my Grandpa Sundell had made for me some years earlier, and we washed and ironed doll-clothes, while my brother found some cars and trucks which he cleaned and polished. We assembled puzzles to make sure all the pieces were there, and my sister finished knitting some mittens she had started earlier.

We filled a box with oranges and nuts, Christmas candy, canned goods, and homemade fruitcake. Daily we found something else to add to the food box, or another toy or piece of clothing we could do without, and added perishables, like chicken at the last minute.

Our anticipation and excitement grew until Christmas eve finally came, and we climbed into the packed car and headed toward the hills and up the hollow as far as we could drive. Getting out of the car, we trudged through the snow, arms filled with boxes, and climbed the hill to where a fairly isolated small cabin stood, surrounded by the lovely winter

wonderland.

We knocked, and upon entering found the family huddled around a wood stove in the middle of a rather bare room. There was no sign of Christmas except for a tree which they had cut and brought into the house. It had no lights but was decorated sparsely with homemade items. How our lovely decorations brightened the room!

I will never forget the look in the mother's eyes when she saw our box of food for her family, nor the excitement on the children's faces as we placed our cherished presents under the tree. I particularly remember studying the little dark-eyed girl who I knew would become the new "Mother" of my Sally.

We talked awhile and sang a carol. My father said a prayer, and then we said, "Goodbye," before leaving to trudge back down the mountain-- now with empty arms, but with eyes filled with tears and hearts bursting with joy! We had experienced Christmas!

## **THE FAMILY VACATION**

How can such a little girl have such a big bladder? The question was posed every year when the family drove from Ohio to a lake in Canada or Northern Michigan for our two-week summer vacation. I never acknowledged the question with an answer, and simply denied the need to use the "strange" restrooms at the gas stations where we stopped along the way. It was only from pure necessity that I succumbed to the outhouse that, more often than not, accompanied the cabin awaiting us at journey's end. After

all, what choice did I have? We were going to be there for two weeks.

It was at one such spot, after meticulously lining the wooden area surrounding the bottomless hole, so that my tender skin wouldn't touch the wood, that I was caught rigidly perched on its very edge. My sister, who had been talking to me through the slightly cracked door, had suddenly flung open the door, Brownie camera in hand. The image was captured for posterity, to be placed among other treasured memories in the family album.

We always left for vacation immediately after Sunday evening's evangelistic service. Daddy knew that we four kids would sleep most of the night, making it easier for him to avoid frazzled nerves, maintaining his peace and state of sanctification. Before any trip, before the car left the garage, we'd all bow our heads while Daddy prayed for "journeying mercies."

Being the baby, I stretched across my parents' laps in the front seat. Paul claimed the rear floor. Lois and Roy slumped, bottom to bottom, their heads resting on opposite doors in the back-seat. The car's motion and the darkness facilitated my father's goal, although we sometimes were roused when we stopped for gasoline or by the voices of the Customs people as we crossed the border into Canada. The smell of gasoline still takes me back to starlit nights and views of the heavens that can best be enjoyed from a horizontal position, especially if one's head is resting securely in her mother's soft lap.

Even for Daddy it was impossible to keep us asleep for the nearly two-day trip, so games of counting horses (2

points) and cows (1 point each) were created, with red barns appearing on your side of the car adding 10 points and graveyards costing you 10. When arguments arose over whether it was a horse or a cow, or games of "I got you last" gained momentum with little voices getting louder and louder as the miles got longer and longer, Daddy would calm the waters with his equivalent of Jesus' "Peace be still" during the Galilean storm. He simply slowed down the car, as if he were going to stop by the roadside to administer some "Godly discipline." We became intensely sensitive to the merest deceleration of the engine.

Daddy planned for vacation all year long. Whoever coined, "Half the fun is in the anticipation", knew Daddy. He sent for brochures, then stretched out maps across the living room rug as he searched for secluded lakes in the North Country. To Daddy, getting away from it all meant leaving civilization and parishoners' problems far behind. It meant not having to prepare sermons and preach, make hospital visits, answer a constantly ringing phone, or attend multiple weekly meetings. So the farther away and the more remote, the better.

To Mom, it meant leaving behind an electric stove, a refrigerator, washer and dryer, comfortable home, and convenient super market. These were exchanged for an icebox and a wood-burning stove, sleeping under several quilts to stay warm, and planning clothes and groceries enough for the whole family, to last for the duration.

For us kids, it meant playing in the woods, rowing the slightly squeaking rowboat out to an island where we filled tin buckets with plump blueberries. It included daring each other to jump into the frigid water while tightly clinging to fat black innertubes, picking blackberries along the rutted

dirt road, and fishing from the dock with cane-poles, wondering who would catch the first perch or blue-gill with our wiggling earthworms.

For all of us, it meant evenings around an old wooden table in the log cabin, playing Monopoly and Parchesi. It included eating warm blueberry pie, made with improvised crust from pancake mix, rolled out with a milk-bottle, and baked in a wood-stove. (Mother had said, “But I don’t have any Crisco, or a rolling-pin, or a real oven.” To which Daddy had replied, “But there must be a way.”) It also meant freshly picked juicy blackberries turning the milk purple as it covered our bowls of hot oatmeal, and each of us trying to choose the very fish that we had caught for our dinner, from the platter stacked with pickeral, bass, and sunfish.

Each year seemed a replay of those past, with Daddy driving our black Chevy over the bumpy, dirt roads, dodging pot-holes and watching for signs to “Mud Lake”, “Long Lake”, or “Crooked Lake.” The rest of us kept our eyes peeled for deer in the woods, and silently competed for the honor of being the first to see the lake or smoke from one of the log cabins. When we rounded the last corner through the heavy forest of pine, Daddy’s whole face would light up as he’d announce, “There it is...that must be it,” with all the excitement of Mary Magdalene discovering the empty tomb.

As we pulled up into the yard where the weeds and bushes had partly covered the path between the cabin and the outhouse, there was usually a pile of wood stacked alongside a sloping porch, and an ax stuck in a large stump nearby. At one end of the porch, there was often a wobbly-legged table of sorts. Its wood surface was well covered with fish-scales and faded red stains. A chipped, white-enamel dishpan graced its surface. From my place in the backseat, I



thought I saw my Mother's shoulders slump slightly forward. She said nothing. My Mother's silence could say a lot more than Daddy's most eloquent sermons.

Paul and I liked playing in the rowboat, but we preferred fishing from the dock. Rowing out with Daddy to fish required sitting quietly for longer than God meant for little people to sit quietly. One evening, as often before, Daddy had gone out after supper to enjoy the solitude and to fish until dark. But as the sun dipped behind the horizon, leaving only its golden streaks stretching across the ripples on the lake, I sat on the sloping porch awaiting my Daddy's return.

After awhile when he still hadn't appeared, I moved down to the end of the dock, legs rapidly swinging over its edge, as I anxiously watched for the sight of the boat. The rising wind caused the water to clunk as it hit against the dock's pilings. My heart jumped as I mistook the sound for oars, and I strained in the darkness to see some hopeful sign.

Now the water looked dark and treacherous as the sun's reflection completely disappeared and the wind whipped the ripples into waves. My fear produced scenes of an overturned wooden boat with Daddy's straw-hat riding the waves nearby. Eyes brimming with tears, I made bargains with God about my willingness to go to Africa as a missionary and even to be nicer to my brother in the future....if only He'd bring my Daddy home safely. I hugged myself tightly, trying to feel warmer and safer as the cool winds added their chill.

Then after what seemed like hours, out of the darkness, I thought I heard-- yes, I was sure I heard the rhythmic creak of rusty oarlocks and then a familiar tenor voice, singing, the song carried gently across the water:

“My home and your home, God’s home shall be.  
My home and your home, His eternally. . . ”

As we kids grew older and had families of our own, we all repeated the annual family vacation tradition. Some with tents and campers did the “roughing it” variety of vacationing, at a beach, a state park, or on a lake. Some took cruises or rented luxury condos in Hawaii or Florida.

After all these years since Daddy left his earthly home, it matters little what body of water-- whether at the ocean waiting with camera in hand for the perfect sunset, sitting on a pier at a quiet lake, or walking by the river close to home-- at dusk when golden shafts of sunlight streak across the water’s surface, I am sure-- just for a moment-- that I hear the creaking of an oarlock and a clear tenor voice finishing his song:

“ . . . Someday in heaven, from earth's cares set  
free,  
We’ll meet in God’s home, One great family.”

## **THE HUB and THE LADY IN THE YELLOW HAT**

### **"The Hub"**

Tiptoeing past the study door, careful to maintain the quiet of the parsonage while Daddy was doing whatever Daddy did behind that sacred, closed door, I walked softly on through the kitchen and down the cellar stairs to go out to play. The spicy aroma of gingerbread baking in Mother’s oven reminded me that it was Saturday and baking day.

Later in the afternoon, so it would still be fresh and warm for supper, my father's favorite green-apple pie would take its turn in the oven, sending wafts of burnt sugar-juice from the bottomrack, where the "goodness and mercy" of this sumptuously plump work of love had "surely runneth over."

There were features that redeemed the Sabbath at our house. One was the extra baked goods, of course, usually requiring a pie for Saturday night (to give the preacher strength for the following day), and a cake for Sunday dinner, to go with the roast and carrots which, cooking while the family was at church, provided the welcoming Sunday smells, upon return.

The mood of the parsonage, before church, was serious and reverent so as not to divert Daddy from his sermon thoughts. Sunday afternoons were restricted since it was the Lord's Day, and Sunday evening meant going back to church for Young People's Meeting followed by the Evangelistic Service, and sometimes a trip to the radio station to help with the singing before my Dad's brief message to the radio-audience. Thus the best part of Sundays was coming back home late, to sit around the kitchen table. Having completed his "big day", our father was now relaxed, and joined us in conversation as we drank hot chocolate and finished up the Sunday cake, the mood of the whole family shifting and lightening as we mirrored that of our Daddy, the minister.

But the miraculous part about Sundays was seeing my mother in a whole different light than she appeared throughout the week's "six days of labor." Somehow "at dawn on the first day of the week," something transformed this rather shy housewife in a faded plaid dress, with tired

eyes, a weary expression, and drooping shoulders from scrubbing floors on her knees to make the parsonage shine as parsonages should. Overnight, my mother became a radiant woman with the look of sure purpose. This change left little doubt about miracles, and to me was puzzling but welcome, although I knew that the morrow would find her, donned again in a cotton housedress, with the predictable Monday morning headache.

Sometimes I saw my Mother as not having a persona of her own. I wondered if she had opinions or longings or drives. It seemed she was only an extension of Daddy, sharing his values, needs, and ambitions. Before the word was coined, much less had become the popular word for a popular addiction, my mother blazed the trail for codependence. And she modeled for me, in thought, word and deed, how to walk that path.

But on Sundays, there was: "The Lady in the Yellow Hat"

I can see it like it was yesterday...the bright sun shining through our church's stained-glass window, reflecting on the rows of polished walnut pews. On the second row from the front, sits a lady in a lemon-yellow suit with matching picture-hat. Her white gloved hands are folded over the Bible in her lap. Shining eyes seem intent on her husband as he stands behind the pulpit. The devotion she has for this man, the church, and her God are abundantly clear. (It seemed to my youthful eyes that the lines of distinction between the three were a bit fuzzy, but her commitment was certainly ample to cover them all).

I wonder how it must have been for her when, as a shy 19-year old Swedish girl, she came to love and marry a widower with two small children. Her instant transition was to wife, mother, and lady of the parsonage, all in one fell swoop. Her girlhood family had been large and poor. This fact, combined with her quiet nature, had not allowed for a college education, learning public speaking skills, formal music lessons, or even practice in the art of gracious hostessing. The money she had earned was needed to buy shoes for the younger children, and her older sister, Hilma, was the only one who was given piano lessons. Thus, observing the lessons carefully and then mimicking what she saw, had to be good enough.

The expectations to be encountered in her new role as preacher's wife would have to be met with on-the-job training. In those days, a minister's wife was expected to do many things... and she learned to do them all. This included playing the organ, teaching adult classes, entertaining evangelists for two weeks at a time, accompanying her husband on Pastoral Calls, teaching Christian Service Training, and singing with the family for services.

Is it surprising that many years later, she would volunteer her time in the Health Center in the retirement community where she lived? Here she would assist the older and less able residents. Sometimes they asked her to play the organ for them, and although they came from a wide range of denominational backgrounds, the old hymns of the church touched a common chord. Eyes, that no longer saw as well as they once did, glistened with tears.

And all through the years at Christmas time, Mom would receive cards and notes from former parishoners saying, "You were the best Sunday School teacher I ever had"

and “We always found you to be the ideal pastor’s wife.” As her children, we always knew her as a loving and ever-present mother and friend. We were assured by her prayers and unconditional love. She would, in later years, be gratified to see all four of the children she nurtured through the parsonage years, inspite of the demands of the church on their parents and themselves, continue to be actively involved in service to others. Church musicians, newsletter editors, writers, Moderators of their congregation, teachers, seminary professors, counselors, ministers, missionaries, directing programs for people with needs.

There must be truth in the verse in Proverbs: “Her children rise up and call her blessed.” The lady in the yellow hat is truly that.

## **VISITING LODY**

When my big sis, Lody, moved to Springfield, Ohio, to handle advertising for Wren’s Department Store, I was excited at the chance to go visit her for a few days. Being exactly ten years older than I (She always said I was her 10th birthday present, a day late), she was an idol to me. Just out of college, Lody must have been in her early 20's, making me 11 or 12. I was glad she hadn't fulfilled Daddy's dream for her to become a preacher's wife. For me to have visited her in those conditions would have been too much like staying home.

On the drive to Springfield, I reminisced about times spent with my big sister. Lody and I had always had a special relationship. One time, she had made us matching, gathered skirts of blue-floral print, that we could wear together. And she fixed my hair to look grown-up like hers. I sometimes

met her trolley-car down on Kenmore Boulevard in Akron, when she was coming home, just to walk home with her. And I'll never forget the little gold locket that she gave me with a rose-gold sailboat on the front of it. Although Lody was ten years older than I, we had different birth-mothers, and Lody was short and petite, while I was taller and larger boned. There were times when her 19 inch waist made me feel like an Amazon! But there was always an admiring big sister/little sister relationship between us that was to be cherished.

I always fell in love with Lody's boyfriends, and vowed that when she threw them off, I would be waiting in the wings. One Sunday when she had brought Walt home from college, for a visit, we were all enjoying Sunday dinner together when Mom and Lody went to the kitchen to cut the custard pie that Lody had insisted on making herself, hoping to impress Walt with her culinary skills. Soon we heard gales of stifled laughter, followed by the women returning to the dining room, carrying pieces of pie for each of us, still trying to overcome their embarrassed amusement. Apparently Lody had pricked a hole in the crust, while making the pie, which allowed custard to seep under the crust as well as on top where it belonged, hiding the fact that there was any crust at all, since it was sandwiched in the middle. You can imagine the surprise when they started cutting it and couldn't find the crust! She didn't marry Walt.

Reminiscing passed the time and soon we arrived in Springfield. When Daddy and Mom dropped me off at her small apartment, Lody met us at the door, smiling broadly through brightly painted scarlet lips. Mom would later remark, "If she has to wear it, why must she wear it **so** dark?" Daddy managed to keep his smile as he hugged her. Those lips looked wicked and wonderful to me! I could

hardly wait for my mom and dad to be on their way so we could get on with things-- whatever that might be!

Lody lived close enough to downtown that we were able to walk to there from Lody's apartment, so I could go to Wren's Department Store with her and watch her work, or stay in the apartment as I chose. I did some of each. But evenings were to be cherished. We had them all to ourselves, with no parental prohibitions, free to do anything we liked. Attempting to make my visit as good as possible, Lody asked if I had any ideas about what I'd like to do while there. It took me about two seconds to suggest going to the movies every night! Nazarenes, of course, weren't allowed to go to movies, so except for children's movies at school (this being before the advent of television), my movie education was sadly lacking. But I made up for it in enthusiastic curiosity.

On days when I didn't accompany my sis to work, I played make-believe, experimenting with all the various tubes of lipstick in the bathroom. Fire engine reds, shocking fuschias, and creamy pinks-- all looked foreign and very "adult" on my innocent lips. Large clamp-on earrings and rosy clown-cheeks completed the look. I wiled away the hours playing the part of a truly worldly woman, passing the mirror as often as possible to confirm just how wickedly wonderful I looked.

With cooperation from a friend of Lody's, who had a car, we went to drive-in theaters every night. My first real movies are vividly engraved on my memories. "Showboat" with gorgeous Ava Gardner and the big black man who sang "Ole Man River." "Tulsa" with its scenes of blazing red-orange fire matching the hair of lovely Susan Hayward, it's star. The drama, "Leave Her to Heaven", with Gene Tierney dramatically falling down the staircase; "Scaramouche" with



Stewart Granger and the movies' longest dueling scene ever; and a western starring Roy Rogers and Dale Evans singing "Happy Trails to You Until we Meet Again." Munching on popcorn and gulping cold orange slushes, I was sure I had died and gone to heaven. (even if I had a little fear that since I had now gone to the movies, I may not make it to heaven!) But I concluded that as surely as the streets of heaven are paved with gold, they must be lined with drive-in theatres! (And this was way before I learned about **the other** excitements to be experienced at drive- ins).

Definitely star-struck and bitten by the theatre bug, plus the tremendous appeal of feeling a bit naughty--doing something I wasn't allowed to do-- I would never fully recover. The week ended much too soon when I had to return to the parsonage and the good girl role that living in the glass house required.

## **CONTACT SPORTS**

One year at Christmas, Paul received two pairs of boxing gloves, junior size and weight. Since I was the most available punching bag, I was quickly chosen to help him try out his new toys. Two-and-a-half years older, a couple inches taller, and probably 15 lbs. heavier, since he was then in "Chubby Suits", Paul knew how to choose his competition wisely.

There was never a question of who would win the bout, only how long I would last. My own competitiveness and stubbornness got me in more trouble than if I had just acquiesced to my bigger opponent. Tears rolled down my cheeks, arms thrashed about wildly, mostly without connecting, until finally either Mom intervened or Paul felt

sorry for me, less often the latter.

Years before the Kennedys became known for the family sport, we often played touch football in our backyard. On days when we felt braver, we even played tackle. I don't recall any injuries except to the psyche, always my most vulnerable body part.

Much more often, there was baseball in the corner lot or "Hide and Seek" or "Kick the Can" in the street in front of our house until it became too dark to see what we were doing. Organized soccer and Little Leagues were unknowns to us.

In the winter in Akron, we played in the snow. As soon as we got home from school, changed our clothes, and donned our hooded snowsuits, gloves, and boots, we pulled our sleds about half a block up the street to "The Dump." Here we had hills to ride down, over bumps, attempting to miss trees along the sides and near the bottom. A favorite ride was to lie down on our stomachs on one sled, several layers high of shouting kids, the biggest kids on the bottom, then with everyone holding on for dear life, flying down the icy slopes, a few-- sometimes all-- falling off along the way, squealing and rolling in the snow out of the way of other sleds.

We'd play until supper-time, when we'd go home, spread our wet snowsuits and mittens on the linoleum, near the floor-registers, while we ate. Then as soon as the last "Amen" from family prayer was uttered, and we lifted our faces from the plastic-covered kitchen chair bottoms, we re-donned our armor, heading back to "The Dump" for more hollering and laughing, sliding and falling. On moonlit nights, everything seemed as bright as day, the snow

glistening all around us, and we hoped we could play forever, but too soon we heard those distant voices calling us home again.

A less fun “contact sport” involved Daddy’s belt.

We were having lunch in the breakfast nook, in Akron. Paul, doing his usual older brother taunting, had kept it up this time until I could stand it no more, and yelled something at him which I hoped would make him stop. Apparently, my outburst was judged to be worse than his taunting, as Daddy stood up without saying a word, loosened his belt, and pulled it out of the belt-loops. Standing up, I obediently took his hand as he reached for mine. Then as I hurriedly walked around him in a circle, he proceeded to hit me on my bottom with his belt. The more I cried, the more Paul laughed. Though I thought I saw some tears escaping his eyes, too.

Another time when Paul and I had been quarreling between ourselves, Daddy took us both up to his Study where the same belt-loosening maneuver occurred. This time, we took turns bending over the daybed, butts in the air, while we were spanked with the leather belt. Since these are the only two spankings I remember, I guess I can’t complain about child abuse.

Apparently, Daddy’s tolerance for arguing and angry outbursts was a bit limited. Usually, these were controlled with simply a look, not necessitating such extreme measures as belt-loosening. Mostly, at least for my part, I was controlled by even more subtle but overpowering influences- - the need to please my parents, the fear of falling short of their approval, especially my Daddy’s.

## **THAT FEELING**

Somewhere around sixth grade, four of us girls formed a club, and called ourselves “Campfire Girls” (no relation to the real one). Deciding that our colors should be red and yellow (like fire), we had our understanding mothers buy Indianhead material and make our gored red skirts. We already owned yellow sweaters, so red scarves around our necks along with yellow socks, completed our outfits. We were official. If there was any noble purpose for our club, it escapes my memory. But we were a group. We belonged. Form the club first, then find a purpose, I guess.

Next we found feedsacks, filled them with sawdust, and sewed the ends closed, making our beds for sleep-outs in the garage. These were occasions for no one telling us when we had to go to sleep, and enjoying all the Kool Aid and pop corn we could hold, making the sacrifice of comfortable mattresses in pretty bedrooms well worthwhile. One night when we were sleeping-out in the garage, we were exchanging back-scratches and soft tickles with the tips of our fingers, which was a regular custom at that age. This was prior to the years of popular massage therapy. Typically we tickled and scratched all legitimate skin-- face, neck, stomach, back, arms and legs, carefully avoiding breasts, buttocks and vaginal areas. (Little did we know what **really** felt good).

One night, lying on the lumpy feedsacks in the bravery-inducing pitch dark of the parsonage cement garage, one of the campfire girls who was more physically developed than the rest of us, extended her tickling a bit, her soft fingers travelling down from my neck across my shoulders and on down very softly across my developing chest. Everything was silent. I didn't breathe. I didn't swallow. I didn't stop her.

And when it was my turn, I returned the favor, greatly aware of her fuller, heavier breasts and broad nipples. Although a daring and exciting experiment, as far as I remember (and I think I would), it was never repeated. (Perhaps once **is** enough!??)

At some point, we decided we wanted a sponsor for our club, an “older” lady to meet with us at our regular meetings at which we planned projects such as making greeting cards and selling them to soft-hearted neighbors. We chose Mary Frances , a recent second-wife of one of the men in our church. She was somewhat younger than most of the church ladies, pretty, wore a hint of light lipstick, and was very sweet natured, so we concluded she was our best bet. She agreed to be our sponsor.

One afternoon as we ate cookies that Mary Frances had baked for us (one of the perks of having a sponsor), I decided to broach a subject that I’d been mulling around for quite some time, but had never had the opportunity or courage to ask anyone about. On rare occasions, it seemed, at night when I was sleeping, I would suddenly awaken with sensations that were just too mysterious and wonderful to describe. They just came upon me, without warning, down between my legs, and for a few seconds (not nearly long enough) they took control. It didn’t happen often, but when it did, it was like nothing else I’d ever felt. I naturally wondered if any of my friends ever had that happen? Surely someone else had experienced what I referred to as “that feeling.” Did they even know what I was talking about? Had they also wondered what caused it and if they were alone in having it happen? I hoped for an explanation- a name for it- perhaps just some confirmation that it was normal and that someone besides me had experienced this phenomenon. Of course, it was impossible to describe the feeling accurately.

Think about it. Even as an adult with access to a much larger vocabulary, have you ever tried?

But after my fumbling tries at explaining, from the total silence that followed, it seemed clear that no one else in the whole world, or at least the world I knew, had ever experienced anything remotely like this. I saw nothing but blank faces, unblinking eyes, serious countenances, held breaths. Obviously, I was abnormal. Apparently even Mary Frances, in all her long years, had never had “that feeling.”

Of course, I had always suspected that our family was different. We called our bowel movements “ploppers” since that’s what they did when they hit the water. Maybe that makes as much sense as “number 2”, “doo doo”, or “squeezing a loaf”, when you think about it... if you do! And expelling gas, rather than the crude “fart” word, at our house was referred to as “shooting bears.” My Dad shot lots of bears and I found it disgusting, promising myself I’d never marry a man who did that. ( Needless to say, after two marriages, I would come to wonder if such a man exists. )

So with a family as strange and different as ours, I guess I shouldn’t have been surprised to find out that I was probably the only person in Charleston, or even America, or probably the whole world, who had ever experienced “that feeling.”

## **THE BUMS**

My Daddy was my hero. The fact that he made and enforced the rules we lived by, which often felt stern and demanding, didn’t alter his image in my adoring eyes.

I saw his tenderness first-hand. The tears that made his eyes glisten when he preached about the love of God or told a touching story, like the Biblical account of Hosea whose wife, Gomer, had betrayed him, becoming a harlot and breaking his heart; then years later when her beauty was gone and she had reached the very bottom, Hosea saw her being sold at auction as a slave, and bought her back himself. This was how my Daddy envisioned God's all forgiving, unconditional love.

I knew that when making his pastoral calls, he sometimes stopped by the grocery store, then took a small beef roast to an elderly retired minister who lived with his wife on a small pension. "How could I enjoy my Sunday dinner otherwise?" he'd ask. It was not uncommon for him to slip a few dollars into the hand of Mae, wife of an alcoholic, to help her put food on the table for her children. Daddy had a shepherd's heart, caring faithfully for his flock. One of the leading evangelists in our denomination who traveled extensively across the country and must have known scores of pastors, said from the pulpit, "Ralph Schurman is more like Jesus Christ than any man I've ever met."

There was a movement afloat during the 50's , called the Bible Missionary Union. Switching the letters a bit, we kids referred to them as the BUMS. Just as the Nazarenes had left the "worldly Methodists" years before, the BUMS found much to fear in the direction that the Nazarenes were heading. The emergence of television, which they called "the devil's box", was an impetus since it brought Hollywood into the home and robbed God's people of praying time.

A small number of our local church members were drawn to this new group, and consequently found Daddy sadly lacking. After seriously studying it, he had decided to

purchase a T-V, with at least some rationale that it would keep us kids at home where we could be monitored. But this, along with the fact that our family went “mixed bathing”, which meant swimming in public, while on vacation, brought stern judgment. Other “worldliness” included Mom’s wearing a wedding ring.

One Sunday while we choir members were walking up a flight of steps to the choir loft, one of these ladies who was walking behind me, ran her hand up my calf to determine if I was wearing hosiery or if, heaven forbid, I was bare-legged. I never could figure out how if the difference was that subtle that one had to feel my leg to tell, what difference it could possibly make. But then logic was not the forte of the BUMS.

Another day when I had worn a strand of fake pearls to church, this same lady approached me with a saintly smile and said, “Miss Schurman would look much nicer without those pearls around her neck.” This once (the devil made me do it) I replied, “That’s a lovely brooch you have on, Olivia,” and touched it gently with my clammy fingertips. Without missing a beat, she defended the brooch’s purpose of holding her collar together, not as an object of adornment like my pearls! Not to be beaten, I suggested that a small safety pin might do the trick just as well. It is the only time in my memory that I spoke up to one of my Daddy’s church members. Possibly the knowledge that she was fast becoming a BUM gave me courage. No doubt, I catapulted straight to the top of her Prayer List! Maybe I was already there.

In the Nazarene Church, when it was time to pray, many of the folk turned around and knelt at their own pew, their bodies thus facing the rear of the church. The truly devout among us always took this kneeling position.



Sometimes when we kids were sitting farther back, we'd watch for the rise of the knotted bun on top of the ladies' heads, then eyes appearing over the top of the bench as they checked up on us.

Pastors had to be voted on every 1-3 years, depending on how long they had been voted in, the prior time. I always managed to be sick on voting day, not being able to bear the thought of my Daddy getting any negative votes. This was especially true when the BUM movement became active, and criticisms of Daddy were rampantly passed around the congregation. I knew that these vocal few were working to get Daddy voted out. After all, who needs a worldly preacher who condones television, goes mixed-bathing with his family, and in general doesn't harp on the evils of lipstick, jewelry, and bobbed hair, and who failed to emphasize hell-fire and damnation. One could only stomach so many sermons on love. We had heard that this was a chief criticism-- "He preaches too much about love." To paraphrase the words of the popular song, they wished Daddy would "accentuate the negative."

I sometimes sat in my solid maple bed with the pine-tree insets on the headboard, given to me by a dying parishoner to whom Daddy had faithfully ministered, reading my little white New Testament, with my name in gold on the cover. As I read story after story about Jesus, not condemning the prostitute, forgiving the thief on the cross, eating with sinners, and asserting that love was the greatest commandment of all, I wondered just WHO the BUMS were following. I had empathy with Jesus' harsh words for the "saintly" church people of that day, likening them to "whitened sepulchres and dead men's bones."

It seemed so ludicrous to me that I was a part of a

church with such strict rules, already set apart from mainline Christian churches, yet this was not even severe enough for some. It wasn't enough that when my gym class included square dancing as part of the curriculum, I had to take a note to excuse me due to my religion. Or that when a Disney movie was playing at the Rialto, and all my friends were raving about it, I sat quietly by not having been allowed to go. Or that when Annie, my best friend's Mother, had given her a coral lipstick in a shiny silver tube, teaching her how to apply it evenly and lightly, thus experiencing a sort-of growing up ritual, I felt like a washed-out, Salvation Army lass, and sometimes dabbed methiolate on my lips before leaving for school, then tried not to lick my lips all day.

The BUMS gave me my first lesson in trying not to judge a group whose very credo was grounded in severely judging others.

## **OFF TO CAMPMEETING**

For me, a Nazarene preacher's kid, August meant Campmeeting time. It meant packing enough clothes for two-weeks, leaving our modern parsonage in Charleston, and travelling about 75-miles into the West Virginia hills, to live in a stark, cinderblock cabin in the woods. It could have been worse. If my Dad hadn't pastored one of the larger churches on the district, we would have slept in dormitories, men and boys in one, women and girls in another. In either case, it amounted to a room and a path. The outdoor toilets were 4-holers, which did their part in helping people, who had travelled from all parts of the state for this two-week revival, to become more intimately acquainted. They worked even better than the long dining-halls where we all shared homestyle meals and conversation three times a day.

The central building of the wooded campgrounds was the open-sided, wood-framed tabernacle, which seated a couple thousand people. At its front stood a 12-foot high platform. The pulpit was in the middle, with a bench for the dignitaries just behind it, extending to where the upright piano stood. At one end of the platform, rows of benches faced the pulpit, for the volunteer choir. Starting at the very rear of the tabernacle and extending all the way to the mourners' bench in the front, were long, hard, slatted benches that formed three sections separated by aisles. New meaning was given to the term, "ground floor," since ground was all that lay beneath the fresh, thick sawdust where little children played during the long sermons.

On one occasion when my father was the guest preacher, he had just launched into one of his favorite "preachers' stories", when my sister who had been playing at our mother's feet, seemingly unaware of what was going on, piped up in her most high-pitched, far-reaching voice, "Oh, we've heard that one before, huh, Mom?" The laughter that followed made it nearly impossible for Daddy to finish his sermon.

There was no shortage of church services to attend at Campmeeting. Devotional chats and prayer meetings came each morning, followed by Praise Services or missionary talks in the afternoon. There were Children's Meetings each day. The latter included crafts (Beatitude bookmarks and "Jesus Never Fails" mottos, made of taped-together tongue depressors); Bible Bees (races between teams to see who could find scripture verses more rapidly); and prizes of white New Testaments for memorizing the ABCs of the Bible (all the way from "A soft answer turneth away wrath" to "Zealous of good works.") Though I can't remember my

neighbor's last name, I can still recite all those verses today.

Never before or since have I seen it rain so hard as it did at Campmeeting. Maybe it was just more noticeable as it filled the rutted roads and left puddles in all the walking paths, to be jumped across or circumvented, depending on age and propriety. Perhaps it was the way it dripped from the tall pines or splatted on the flat-roofed buildings, or darkened the damp sawdust as rain blew into the sides of the tabernacle. Or was it the way it enhanced the scent from the out-door toilets as we stood, waiting our turn under shared umbrellas and rain-slicks?

One would wonder why Augusts were so looked forward to by families as far away as Morgantown or Hurricane, and as close as Belle and Donley Hollow. For us kids, perhaps it was the stolen hours when we would weave through the woods, down to the creek which ran into the Golly River, right past the campground area. It was here that we'd swim and splash and jump from a huge stump into the murky muddy water. Our shouts of glee and abandonment were only rivaled by the shouts of the saints during the evening evangelistic services.

The other thing that made the two-weeks hard to wait for, was the opportunity it offered to young teenagers, whose hormonal juices were flowing quite as freely as the swollen waters of the Golly. Campmeeting was a place to look at, long for, get crushes on, and get with (when lucky), those of the opposite sex who, like us, were sequestered on this holy acreage for 14 whole days and nights.

Notes were passed in the dining-hall. "May I take you to church tonight?, which meant walking together to the tabernacle, sitting as close as one dared through the service,

and walking to “The Stand” for corn-dogs afterwards. This was accompanied with all the anticipation and excitement of going to the Prom which Nazarene kids were never allowed to experience. Sitting recklessly close (“Is his sleeve really touching mine or am I imagining it?”), while joining hundreds of other voices singing, “When We All Get to Heaven”, we felt as though we had already taken the trip. It made lost Prom nights seem inconsequential.

The main focus of Campmeeting was, of course, the evening service, with lots of singing, both congregational and special numbers. As the songs of praise and jubilation picked up, emotions rose and “Grandma Holstein” would stand and slowly walk the sawdust aisles, handkerchief raised high above her knotted grey hair, her eyes wet and shining. She wore a most serene smile on her wrinkled face, nearly as rutted as the surrounding dirt roads. Everyone was aware that “Grandma” had been able to come to camp, thanks to some benefactors who knew she couldn’t afford to pay her own way, and who also knew that campmeeting wouldn’t be campmeeting without her.

One song followed another. By the time we got to “I heard an old, old story, how a Savior came from glory. . .” crescendoing into “Oh Victory in Jesus, my Savior forever” at the chorus, the saints were literally off and running. With traffic heading both ways at once, up and down the aisles, it was truly amazing that no one ever collided. The greatest miracle of all was when a robust fellow from Cabin Creek, amid shouts of “Glory to God,” actually ran across the backs of the benches, up and down the long tabernacle from the rear to the front and back again, never missing a step, never falling. It was nearly enough to convert a Unitarian.

Sammy Spitts was the most memorable of the

evangelists to me. Tall, handsome, charismatic brunette, with a sparkling white smile, tanned skin, and flashing brown eyes. Who could forget? His enthusiasm was never daunted by such incongruities as peaching against jewelry and lipstick (which he called “bedbug juice”), while he sported a flashy red necktie and drove a shiny Cadillac. His charm and funny stories produced howls of laughter, which were matched in intensity by the horror of his chilling death-bed tales, told just before the altar-calls. The latter were scary enough to make the purest saint indulge in heavy soul-searching, let alone the unrepentent, lipsticked, movie-goer who was surely headed for the flames of Hell. “Oh Why Not Tonight?” and “Almost Persuaded...almost, but lost,” droned on solemnly and pleadingly. Sometimes it took all four verses of “Tell Mother I’ll be There” to bring the most hardened, still resisting, bench-clutcher down to the altar, to kneel in the sawdust and repent.

I am many years and many miles removed (geographically and theologically) from those Summerville, West Virginia days. It was eons ago. It was yesterday. It only takes the noon chimes from the large Methodist church near my office, playing, “I Love to Tell the Story,” -- the smell of corn-dogs at a Seahawks game-- rain falling through the pine trees in the forest where we camp-- damp sawdust clinging to the bottoms of my Nikes at the State Fair-- or an emergency stop along the highway where there is only a pit-toilet-- to take me back, over the miles, through the years, to August and to Campmeeting.

## **GONE WITH THE WIND**

“Gone with the Wind” came to town the summer I was 16, following weeks of enticing PR, which built up great

anticipation. Who hadn't heard Tara's theme or seen large cut-out billboards of Clark Gable gazing lustily at sassy Vivian Leigh? And those who dared, were taking every opportunity to utter Rhett's by-then-famous retort, "Frankly my dear, I don't give a damn."

Of course, Nazarenes weren't allowed to go to movies, much less to say, "damn," but that didn't stop my longing to do just that, probably making the desirability even more powerful.

That summer, we were all at Campmeeting for two weeks, just as we were every summer, 70 miles or so from Nashville. Rebecca, my best friend, co-conspirator, and also the District Superintendent's daughter, had obtained her driver's license and because her parents were busy with meetings but needed their mail picked up and their flowers watered at home in Nashville, they allowed Becca and me to drive into town mid-week. We had formed our own additional plans, however-- to sneak to see a "Gone with the Wind" matinee.

With our parents and many of their parishoners out of town, what better chance to avoid being caught. We didn't even have to use our regular excuse of going to a "ballgame." Our folks must have thought there were a very large number of sporting events occurring in our town. Many of the kids at East High, non-Nazarenes, knew of our subterfuge and thought it was all pretty funny, if not equally weird. The word, "ballgames," was frequently mentioned in our yearbook jottings as one of the shared things we'd always remember.

On this particular Wednesday, Becca and I excitedly drove into town, remembering to pick up the mail first and

water the plants before heading downtown Nashville to the Rialto. Becca parked the car on a side-street and then we walked busily toward High Street. Approaching the theatre, to our dismay, we saw a very long line, starting at the ticket-window and stretching all the way down the block and around the corner. We hadn't anticipated how many others were anxious to see this movie. I had never realized there were so many non-Nazarenes! Waiting for as long as that line would require, meant the chances of being seen were increased greatly.

Scanning the crowd for familiar faces, and checking up and down the street for shoppers who might be members of Daddy's church, we timidly trudged toward the end of the line. . . and waited. . . continuing our vigilant look-out. . . keeping our faces turned in toward the buildings and checking the reflections in the store windows of those passing by, as we inched our way along.

Then my ever-inventive mind came up with an idea. Since we hadn't taken time for lunch, I generously offered to duck into a drugstore along the way, to get us some snacks, leaving Becca in line with our ticket-money, and of course in the high-risk position. I hadn't known I was capable of such a self-sacrificial act. It was with some small shame that I dawdled a little while choosing our goodies, carefully examining and comparing all the possible options: Good 'n Plentys, two small boxes or one large?; M&Ms, plain or with peanuts?; Bit-a-Honeys, did Becca like those? I was being especially considerate of Becca's tastes while she stood unarmed and defenseless in my place in line. Then somehow just as she approached the ticket-window, I completed my purchases and hurried to join my co-conspirator as we entered the wicked theatre together. Such choreography! (Eat your heart out, Fred and Ginger).



I should have felt pretty ashamed of my cowardice, I suppose. But if I did, the shame was considerably outweighed by my fear of getting caught. Soon, all these feelings were dissolved as the images of beautiful Scarlet, handsome Rhett, and magnificent Tara filled the screen.

## **ORNERY HUMOR**

I've often wondered where I got my ornery, perverse, sometimes sacreligious, naughty humor. It's always come easy...too easy! Sometimes at very inopportune times when laughing was not in order, which made things seem outrageously funny. Maybe in an atmosphere in which sinful thoughts were only a tad less damning than sinful acts, such need for tight controls more easily led to inventiveness in seeking pleasure.

One game we played during long boring sermons was "Under the Bed." The only required game-piece was the hymnal, plus a little imagination. My friend, Norma, and I would share the hymnal, taking turns opening its pages and pointing to a hymn title. In our minds, we knew to read the title and add the phrase, "under the bed" to it. While continuing to sit quietly and appear semi-reverent, this activity kept us entertained for a long time. Some of those hymn titles follow:

How Long Has it Been? . .  
He Does It . . .

Thank You, Lord . . .  
All the Way . . .

Leaning on the Everlasting Arms . . .  
Sing . . .

I Don't Know How

I Surrender All . . .  
Ready . . .

How Can I Help but

Oh Why Not Tonight? . . .	Cleanse Me . . .
Almost Persuaded . . .	Oh, It is Wonderful
. . .	
Come Just as You Are. . .	Yielded . . .
Have Thine Own Way . . .	O For a Thousand
Tongues . . .	
Tell Mother I'll Be There . . .	A Little Bit of
Heaven . . .	
He'll Understand and Say Well Done . . .	Satisfied . . .
Softly and Tenderly . . .	What a Friend . . .
Where is My Wandering Boy Tonight? . . .	It's Real . . .
How Great Thou Art . . .	Just One Touch. . .
How Can I Help but Love Him? . . .	When He Reached
Down his Hand. . .	
Oh, What a Day . . .	Deeper, Deeper . . .
He Cannot Fail . . .	He's Coming Soon . . .
O Come All Ye Faithful. . .	Face to Face . . .
O Say But I'm Glad . . .	FEEL FREE TO
ADD YOUR OWN :)	

## **APPEARANCES AND "ACTING AS IF"**

"Man looketh upon outward appearances, but God looketh upon the heart." Since all scripture was sacred, this one was important too. BUT Daddy was unduly concerned with the "man" part since his congregation was comprised of such, making us ever vigilant about how we appeared. Of course, in addition, we knew that God saw our hearts so we must keep them pure, unadulterated, humble, focused not on worldly things, but on spiritual concerns.

However, since Daddy's church was full of men and women who seemed more adept at seeing our outward appearances, this required considerable emphasis. It went

without saying that women and girls should not dress “as the world” dresses. We were told to “come out from among them” and to “shun the very appearance of evil.” The scripture verse about “gold and silver and costly array” forbade us to wear jewelry, for the most part. Some very liberal Christians thought it permissible to wear a plain wedding band since it was symbolic of something holy. Pearls, necklaces, bracelets, other rings, and particularly earrings were not allowed! Women did wear pins or brooches. Go figure!

When we moved to Charleston, West Virginia, the District Superintendent mentioned to my parents that, as new pastors on his District, he would advise Mom to take off her wedding band.....just to avoid any problems that some may have with that. Mom was stunned, but in her submissive style, would probably have gone along with this admonition, had not Daddy spoken up at this point, saying that the wedding ring was not worn for adornment but for what it represented. Mom happily continued wearing her wedding band. Chalk one up for Daddy!

Lipstick, rouge, eye-makeup, nail polish--that whole nine-yards-- were also forbidden. As you can see, it was much more difficult being a Nazarene teenager if you were female. Boys, although they shared the prohibitions about movies, dances, circuses and skating-rinks, could still LOOK normal. Nazarene girls stood out for their plainness.

But where there's a will, there's a way. One parsonage we lived in, in Charleston, had a small bathroom just inside the back door. I made sure a jar of methiolate was kept in the cabinet over the sink, so that as I left home for Chamberlain Jr. High, I could stop in this bathroom, dab some orangey methiolate on my virgin lips, then head out the

door as quickly as possible. It took some determination, not to lick my lips all morning. Of course, the makeup job could be repeated when I came home at lunch-time.

It really did feel like we lived in a glass house with our appearances and actions being watched all the time. Looking appropriate and “being good” were especially important if your father was the revered pastor of the church right next door. We were set up as examples for others to follow. It figures that if the minister can’t control his own family, how can he tell his congregation how they should raise theirs?

The old cliché about “preachers’ kids being the worst or meanest” was mentioned, not rarely. We always retorted that it was due to having to play with the parishoners’ kids, but we knew there was some truth to the saying. (There is a reason for things becoming clichés, right?) I felt a strong desire not to be a “goody goody”, and looked for small ways to show to others that I wasn’t one. I even made a persuasive speech in Speech class on the subject, naming a large number of preachers’ kids who had become famous, many of them Presidents of the United States. (I was careful not to mention the ones who were sent to Sing Sing, became prostitutes, or were ax-murderers).

The problem, though, with always feeling “on camera”, “on stage”, “playing a role” is that as I grew up, I wasn’t always aware of what was really me-- who I really was. Playing a role for too long becomes a way of life and starts to feel normal. I doubt that I ever responded spontaneously to much of anything without consideration for how my response would be seen or heard or interpreted. I always struggled with that, desiring to be liked, to be admired by those around me, more interested in the image than the real person. I know where it came from. And it is well ingrained.

I was inducted into the National Forensic League (NFL) while in high school. Ms. Binkley, my Speech teacher, used me as a model of an excellent speaker, telling my classmates that they were lucky to be in my class since this gave them the opportunity to see “how it should be done.” I recall one of her valuable pieces of advice was to “fake it till you make it”. In other words, recognize that everyone is nervous when they are new at public speaking, but the more confident you ACT, you will find that the longer you speak, you will actually start feeling that way. I found that to be true in public speaking, and in many other life situations. Walking erectly with my head up-- an air of confidence-- got me by in various mileus. Sometimes I even fooled myself, not always sure if I was still play-acting or if I really did have some self-confidence.

In the NFL, we went to various high schools in town and participated in several different forms of competition. Though extra-curricular activities at school were never as highly valued as those at church (many of the former even being prohibited) this one was looked upon favorably by my parents. I think Daddy believed that as a future pastor’s wife, I could use these speaking skills very well. There were categories of Debate, Extemporaneous Speaking, Memorized Declamations, and Poetry, to name a few of the competitions.

Occasionally I was on a Debate team. Most often I was in Extemporaneous Speaking in which I drew a subject to speak on (usually some contemporary news item), was given 30 minutes to browse through News periodicals and gather some facts. Then I was called upon to present a 5 minute (or other set time) speech, either to inform the audience about the subject, or to persuade them for or against some aspect

of it. The judges looked for an attention-getting Introduction, a meaty, logical coverage convincingly given in the Body of the speech, and a good wrap-up for the Conclusion. In addition, good delivery, poise and confidence, good eye-contact, and rapport with the audience were all considered. Ribbons were given at a ceremony at the end of the evening, for 1st, 2nd, 3rd place winners. I often won 1st place in Extemporaneous Speaking. "Acting as if" I was confident and knowledgeable actually took me to that place!

Little could I have known that my kindergarten chubby-image would engrave itself on my psyche forever after, regardless of the slender form I would later achieve by sampling, and suffering through, every diet known to woman-kind. Grapefruit & eggs; High Protein, Low Fat; the Hollywood Diet; Liquid Diets; Fasting Diet (lasting 5 days once); Lecithin Diet; Vegetarian Diet; those with lots of exercises; those with none; Weight Watchers (one of the few that made sense); and the one my friend, Dee, and I invented. As working girls in Nashville, we ate lunch out every day. So we substituted our regular fare for a piece of pie and a cup of coffee (no cream of course). We knew the best pie at every restaurant in Nashville by the end of that one. I still remember a luscious butterscotch cream pie at a little restaurant near Printers' Alley. I don't recall if this diet worked or not, but it sure as heck was more fun than most.

At 5' 6 1/2" in high school, and not small boned, I weighed in the low 130's, was flat-stomached and very firm, yet regularly I sweated on a mat in the basement, exercising excessively, trying to be thin. Later on, before each pregnancy, I weighed 134, and always returned to that exact

weight soon after. Though there were some ups and downs inbetween, over the years, by the time I grew a bit older and wiser, quit worshipping the scales and settled to a comfortable weight, I remained in that range for years, and now even weigh less, with no special dieting. The emphasis switching to living as healthily as possible with walking, exercise, and healthy eating, no diets called for. Yet I'm amazed at the hours upon hours of frustration, depression, resolutions, strong efforts including starving, and general unhappiness and dissatisfaction with myself, that I endured over those early years..... longing to be perfectly thin. (If those efforts and that energy could have been redirected, I might have been a famous writer by now.)

To a shy little preacher's daughter, forever straining to attain the approval of Daddy and others, a tension was set early on that would, through the years, feel like a normal state of being, manifesting itself in achey shoulders and nails bitten painfully short. Feeling that we were measured and judged according to our roles in the preacher's family and how we looked, had its effect. Nail biting led to perfecting the placement of my hands in my lap, fingertips carefully turned under. No wedding pictures, in this girl's album, with hands displaying new wedding rings, placed on a Bible near a floral spray.

I had many boyfriends, always had lots of dates, and have received many and frequent comments and compliments on my attractiveness throughout my life, which makes me wonder how I equated all that with the contrary feelings inside.

Losing weight and growing nails at the top of every New Year's resolution list for many, many years. Hardly symbols of indepth values! The prevailing question: How do

I look to others? The answer: Never really good enough.

## **THE FEEL OF MONEY**

I don't recall much mention of money in our childhood home. Of course, there were the fund drives at church. Money to send to Missions, pledges to pay for Revivals, apportionments that had to be sent to the church headquarters to sustain their existence, and Building Fund Drives, in addition to sermons about tithing your income, which meant giving 10% to the church...for starters.

Often at our church, money was pledged aloud during the service. "How many will pledge \$100, \$50, down to \$5 until the goal was reached. The pastor, being a good example, of course, had to lead off with his own generous pledge, for all of these endeavors. Every so often Daddy was granted a raise by the Board of Trustees. I know that in one incident when our local church was undergoing some large financial needs, the Board voted to raise Daddy's salary, in spite of the pinch. But Daddy turned it down, saying he was getting along just fine.

There was a sense that we should be frugile, certainly not spendthrifts. And always, always the "first fruits" were given to the Lord. The 10% tithe was "a given", with other offerings and pledges bringing the total easily to 20% at our house. This was never given grudgingly. Afterall, "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver."

Although we always took the yearly family vacation, it was never to plush resort areas. The very point of our vacation was for Daddy to get away from it all, which meant people, phone-calls, problems, and most of life's



conveniences. The latter hardly made it a vacation for Mom, but then we all knew by whom the vacation was planned and orchestrated-- not to take away from the fact that we all have some lovely, warm memories of those times in the woods together. But these were not high expenditure trips. A log cabin, poorly heated, on an out-of-the-way lake, that came with a leaky row-boat, a rickety dock that squeaked and “gave” when we walked on it, a wood stove for cooking, and an outdoor “john” came fairly cheap.

Since Daddy always looked “dressed up”, and owned several suits to facilitate this, a portion of his salary must have been spent there. Mom starched and ironed his daily white shirts for many years. With the onset of “women’s liberation” coinciding with Daddy’s move up to larger, more prosperous congregation, Mom finally suggested that he take his shirts to the laundry.

Reluctant to buy clothes for herself, often it was Daddy who suggested that Mom buy a new dress or hat, sometimes accompanying her shopping, and urging her to buy two of those she had tried on for him to see, especially if they were blue. It was important for all of us to look nice-- clean, neatly attired, not ever down-at-the heels. There was some elusive, “just enough” place, not shabby and not showy, and Daddy had a clear idea of how that should look.

I got a lot of hand-me-downs. There were two sisters, just a few houses from us in Charleston, who when I was still in grade-school and junior high, were already in highschool. Quickly tiring of their old clothes, as highschool girls are apt to do, they gladly passed them on to the preacher’s daughter, who responded like it was Easter and Christmas all rolled into one. With hindsight, some of them looked a little too grown-up for me, but if they fit at all, I wore them,

pretending to be somewhere near the age they were made for. I can still see a rosey-pink creation with cap-sleeves covered buttons down to the belted waist, and parallel rows of lace intermittently around the skirt. Look out, Christian Dior! I loved my clothes and soon made it a major decision each morning, deciding what I'd wear that day. The discarded choices remained strewn on my bed, for Mom to pick up after I had sacheted out of the door, headed for school. (Daddy wasn't the only one who received 'support' from Mom).

Mostly we took our lunches to school when it was too far to walk home in the allotted time. There was always milk money in the bottom of the sack, and I recall vividly how much better the milk tasted at school! They must have bought it from different kinds of cows than those that supplied our milk at home. I didn't experience cafeteria lunches until high school days, and even then I mostly took my lunch.

Strangely, some scenes stay in one's memory forever, without really seeming to have been all that important. One of these for me was of an evening meal when Mom was sniffing a bit, as she set the table, and it clearly was caused by something that Daddy had said to her, no doubt a little too sternly, about her need (or lack of such) for a new bathing suit. I don't know the details beyond that, and suspect that the only reason this scenario stands out is at least partially due to its rarity. We didn't hear Daddy speak harshly to Mom, hardly ever, and even then not to the degree that would cause tears.

I know that we didn't get very much, compared to kids today, for birthdays or Christmas. Whether that was due to a shortage of money or to my folks' values concerning not

spoiling us and not wanting us to over-rate material possessions, I don't know. We didn't ever feel cheated, that I recall, and we were as excited as the next kid for Christmas morning, dumping our stockings filled with oranges, nuts (which we always had around for Christmas), and hard candy, topped with a candy cane. Gifts didn't go in stockings then. They went under the tree for later opening. We often received needed clothing along with our "big present" and a few smaller ones. My "big present" was often a doll and I could hardly wait to see what kind I'd get this year! Wrapping paper was never ripped off carelessly and thrown aside, while eyeing another yet to be opened box. We took turns, opening one gift at a time, and sharing the joy of each other's gift-openings as well as our own. Was this done because there were fewer gifts? I really don't know, but I still like that idea of savoring each other's enjoyment as well as our own.

We were taught to take care of our things, to make them last, not to abuse them. Thus we changed from school-clothes to play-clothes as soon as we came home. Paul always neatly hung his clothes in the closet before he proceeded to do his homework, while I put off both of these tasks as long as possible. Church clothes were always saved for church. Game pieces were kept together in their game-box, as were puzzles. Bikes weren't left out in the rain. Whether this had to do with watching the pennies, or simply forming responsible habits, could be debated. Money was never mentioned as the reason.

I don't know if my early going door to door, selling church papers and assorted other things, was due to not having much money, or whether it was just the normal steps of becoming the great business-woman that I would become? I like to think it was just a normal part of my early creativity.

Paul made a great hit by requesting his own box of church offering envelopes, while he was still pretty young. We each received a weekly allowance of \$1.00 at that time. Paul systematically put a dime in his envelope each Sunday, “bringing all his tithes and offerings into the storehouse.” If God forgot to bless him accordingly, the glow on his admiring parents’ faces ought to have sufficed. Being the always suspicious sister, I wondered about his motives. I should note, however, that I didn’t follow suit with my allowance. A whole book of new paper-dolls could be purchased with a dime! And hours and hours and days and days could be spent, making up wondrous stories with those new friends. A whole dime for church would be an enormous sacrifice, and after all, the Bible doesn’t push sacrifice all that much. Doesn’t it say that “to obey is better than sacrifice?” And God knows what a good obeyer I was!

## **NYPS**

Sunday evenings at 6:30 we all went to “young people’s”, officially NYPS (Nazarene Young People’s Society) meeting. Mostly we elected our own officers and planned our own programs. They always included gospel songs and choruses, prayers, and taking an offering. We would have been bored to death except that it was a time and place to be with other hormonally charged teenagers who, like us, were required to be there.

One thing that made our situation less painful was that in Nashville, Trevecca Nazarene College was just across town from our church, so we got our share of coeds scouting for potential dates. Mostly guys, since girls were less likely to go off campus at night by themselves. This made the ratio, for

us Grace Church girls, just great.

Sometimes, our programs were around the subject of relationships/dating and the peer pressure to act other than with prescribed Christian conduct. It was a bit of a farce since, being in church in this setting, we needed to say “the right things,” while our friends and former dates, sitting in the audience, knew what hypocrites some of us were.

One night in particular, I was on the panel when my Dad, who was the Pastor and Overseer of the Flock, decided to drop in and observe. This was not unlike a teacher’s “pop quiz” at school. Remember how you thought you knew all the answers until the damn test was handed out and your mind went blank? I was on the panel and someone (surely not I) brought up the subject of pressures that Christians sometimes feel to show affection in “unChristian ways” to our dates.

Don’t get me wrong, we weren’t talking about--not even getting close to pre-marital sex-- nor wandering hands, popping buttons, slippery zippers, or steaming up the car-windows. This was just the old fashion hand-holding and kissing sort of thing. But with Daddy in the audience, I was "on stage" and had to think fast.

“I believe that if we aspire to keep our standards high and save ourselves for the special person that we’ll someday marry, we won’t regret having maintained our own self-respect and that of our dates for us.”

I said it with a straight face and all the sincerity of a Bill Clinton. And with an audience spotted with several of my old “scrunchin” partners (what we called kissin’ & such, taken from a popular song, “I Wanna’ Go on a Scrunchin’

Spree") - even one guy with whom I had recently necked in a Sunday School class-room where we had decided to meet when the choir marched down through the basement on their way back up to the evening evangelistic service.

Having ducked into this private, hallowed space we had thought we'd test each other's scrunchin' expertise. Now he was hiding a huge grin on his wet full lips, partially covered with those very mobile hands, as he listened to me spouting highest virtuosity. I'm sure that prior to hearing my sanctimonious utterances, he had seen Daddy come in, so figured out what was going on. But still, he and others had to be laughing out loud on the **inside**.

But afterall, this was the Daddy who had once written in my autograph book:

"Little Joyce, my pride and joy.  
How glad I am you're not a boy.  
With curly tresses and eyes of blue,  
You keep your Daddy in a stew!"

How could I dissappoint this man? Yes, I felt like a lying, manipulative, ass-kissin', role-playing P.K. But then, what choice did I have? I needed my Daddy to be proud of me!

## **DATING RULES & BARB**

There were lots of unwritten and unspoken "rules" in our house. Things that we just knew we were to do, or not do, without ever having the luxury of asking why, or why not,

or knowing what the consequences would be should the rules be ignored. Since then, I've never been able to figure out HOW my parents got these clear messages across to us, but they did.

As I approached dating years, I knew my choices were limited to Nazarene boys. The guys I saw at school everyday, ate with, studied with, saw at ballgames, Student Council meetings, debated with and got crushes on-- were all off limits (being Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists or whatever else). Needless to say, I refrained from flirting with them. Who wanted to be asked out and then have to make up an excuse for not accepting?

The funny part of the situation is what my parents never knew. Some of the Nazarene guys that I eventually dated were about the orneriest, horniest, multi-handed, ambi-dextrous guys I had ever known, before or since. And heading the most dangerous list were the "preacher boys." (Sorry, Daddy).

After a few weeks of necking at Shelby Park on Sunday evenings after church, with one several-years-older-evangelist-to-be, and indulging in all that we dared while careful to at least keep a layer of thin nylon between us, this dedicated "Jr. Theolog" broke up with me in order to avoid what he'd concluded was a sinful temptation too great for him to continue to withstand. I think as an "older man", he felt responsible for me as well, and probably saw that I wasn't doing too much to discourage these new found "fun and games." Later, when I attended Trevecca, a very conservative church college, the students used to say, "Well, we couldn't go to movies, dances, roller rinks or circuses so, after all, we had to do **something** for entertainment!"

It was at Trevecca where our Deans of Men and Women, with appearances so prim and proper they'd fit a caricature, exhorted the students, "If you hold hands before marriage, you won't have anything to look forward to." Of course, we all had a ball with this, applying it whenever and wherever we could, soberly warning each other, "You aren't gonna have anything to look forward to." Since our Deans, married to each other, had a little girl of their own (bless her heart), the students concluded it **had** to have been an immaculate conception. We were positive they'd never "do it."

It was mandatory to wear skirts and hose on campus. Shorts were unheard of even for gym or sports events. It was rumored that some wanted the trophies in the lobby's trophy case removed since they were "immodestly clad."

It was in a corner room in the women's dormitory that Barb lived. I think as a small measure of rebellion, I gravitated toward and made friends with Barb. In this sanctimonious atmosphere where teachers and many students wore their hair in missionary-buns, faces pale with no makeup, no jewelry, high necked blouses with sleeves as long as their faces, Barb stood out! Just over 5 feet tall, she had a coal black poodle-cut, flashing dark eyes, puckery lips (way before the days of collagen implants), and wore slim, tight, skirts over a rounded bottom. (shades of Melbrey Dalton). With her 21" waist and boobs nearly twice that size, Barb did stand out. The Dorm Mother called her in one day for a talk. After skirting the issue as long as she was able, she advised Barb that she really shouldn't wear sweaters. Though arguable, she pronounced, "Sweaters just weren't made for people like you."

It was the 50's and Rythmn and Blues was in full swing.



Little Richard and others whom my Nazarene memory won't allow me to recall, sold their recordings on 45's like hot-cakes. Barb was one of their chief supporters. Any afternoon might find her locked in her corner dorm room, shades pulled, "nigger jazz" playing on the record player, while her dancing body wiggled and bounced to her heart's content all over the room. Since I had never learned to dance, I was spared from sharing this depravity with her. However, if you were terribly observing, on a few occasions, you might see two thin curls of smoke coming out of a crack in the dorm's corner window. Stashing a pack of Luckies for an occasional smoke taught me the thrill and excitement that only comes through sin and debachery.

Smart as a whip, Barb made straight A's, making it difficult to expel her without some major rule infraction. She was also smart enough to only get caught on minor offenses. However, she was "campused" most of the year, which meant she couldn't leave the campus for anything. Her friends were her embassaries to downtown Nashville, to purchase any new hot 45's she longed for.

I recall taking a bus downtown, staying seated while it passed Cain-Sloans and Harvey's Department Stores which was familiar territory for me. Getting off, instead, in a still segregated black area, I rounded the corner of a very narrow street, walked past loan shark offices and pawn shops with barred windows, and arrived, at last, at Ernie's Record Mart. Here I purchased "Annie Had a Baby- Can't work No More", Barb's currently most coveted record, and smuggled it back to the dorm for my grateful caged-in friend.

The irony was that I had wanted to go away to Boston for my freshman year in college, but Daddy had kept me home to attend Trevecca where he felt I would be in a safer,

purser environment and where it would be easier for him to keep me under his watchful protection.

## **EPILOGUE- NOSTOS ALGOS**

Recently I came across the term, “Nostos Algos”, the Greek words from which the word, “nostalgia”, was derived. It is described as “a wistful yearning for something past” or, more literally, “a painful returning home.” Both are true for me as I look back over my life as a P.K.

Living in a world devoid of movies and dances, lipstick and proms, circuses and rollerskating-rinks, Girl Scouts, Junior Theatre , and much else that was normal in the lives of my schoolmates, my life was full to the brim with church socials and Bible School, campmeetings and revivals, family sings and vacations, colorful evangelists and holiday traditions, the “Bums” and “ballgames.” Whatever the activity, always somewhat shadowed and kept in bounds by the constraints of the role I was elected to play... yet, never without the presence of love and caring.

As I review the vivid remembrances of my life, some humorous, some poignant, I am aware that as a child of the parsonage, I ultimately learned to look at the scenes of my life, alternately and often simultaneously, through lenses of comedy and pathos.

Whose life is without both? And who would want it so? Would it have been different had Daddy played piano for a dance band or even pastored in a more modern church? Of course. Would it have been better? Perhaps. Perhaps not. Look at all I would have missed!

