



moondani kyema

“Embrace the Dawn”

BAPTIST
CHURCH

Sunday School 10:15 AM
Morning Service 11 AM
Evening Service
4:30 Winter 7:30 Summer
Minister - Rev. A. R. Moore
27 Kennedy St.
Phone 4-32

Ray Moore

my story

MOORE'S
MOONDANI KYEMA

moondani kyema



welcome the new day

moondani kyema

Australian aboriginal words meaning

“Embrace The Dawn”

transliterated as:

"welcome the new day"

WELCOME THE NEW DAY.

I have left all my yesterdays behind.

But each yesterday, however painful or confused it may have been,

has entrusted to me for today, its treasure of wisdom.

I WILL EMBRACE THIS PRISTINE DAWN WITH ALL ITS POTENTIAL

© Ray Moore 2011. Unless stated otherwise, the Copyright © of this publication is held by Ray Moore. Reproduction or reuse of this material for commercial purposes is forbidden without written permission. (raym82@hotmail.com or see 'contact page on my site : <http://>)



Published by:

kyema publishing

Kyema publishing only publishes Ebooks online. For more information email:
support@kyema-publishing.com

ISBN 978-0-9871827-0-8

National Library of Australia Cataloguing-in-Publication entry

Author: Moore, Ray, 1935-

Title: Moondani kyema [electronic resource] : "embrace the dawn" / Ray Moore.

ISBN: 9780987182708 (ebook: pdf)

Subjects: Moore, Ray, 1935-
Men--Australia--Biography.

Dewey Number: 920.71

Preface

"It is singular how soon we lose the impression of what ceases to be constantly before us. A year impairs, a luster obliterates. There is little distinct left without an effort of memory, then indeed the lights are rekindled for a moment - but who can be sure that the Imagination is not the torch-bearer?" ~Lord Byron

This is the story of a child born into a strange culture and a family life of which he knew too little. Most of his childhood memories are of boarding school and the years of the Second World War interned by the Japanese. These were not unhappy experiences, but sometimes lonely ones. They obviously had an effect on his relationship with his family. This story outlines some of his family difficulties, but it should in no way reflect on the integrity of his parents or the esteem in which they were held by their missionary organization and the respect they received from their fellow workers.

But thankfully the story does not end there. He eventually became a respected member of a church group, got married and had a family. In his latter years, the confidence that all this instilled in him has been consummated in the contentment that fills his days.

Ralph Waldo Emerson said something that reflects this man's goals. Goals which he longed for, but has taken a lifetime to achieve in a small way.

"To laugh often and much; to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children; to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty; to find the best in others; to leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch, or a redeemed social condition; to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived."

Ray

CONTENT

1 MY ANCESTRAL HOME.....	6
2 MY ARRIVAL.....	10
3. MISSIONARIES FACING IMPRISONMENT AND DEATH.....	11
4 FLEEING DANGER.....	18
5 AUSTRALIA	22
6 BOARDING SCHOOL AT THE SEASIDE	24
7 PRISONER OF THE JAPANESE.....	27
8 WEIHSIEN CONCENTRATION CAMP	29
9 LIFE AS A PRISONER.....	32
11 LONG WAY HOME	42
12 FREE RANGE ELEVEN YEAR OLD	44
13 SHANGHAI BOARDING SCHOOL	47
14 KULING BOARDING SCHOOL.....	50
15 THE MEANING OF 'LIBERATION'.....	57
16 HONG KONG - CEYLON - AUSTRALIA	59
17 CULTURE SHOCK.....	63
18 AS THE MULBERRY TREE IS BENT	66
19 UNFORGETTABLE NEW YEAR.....	71
20 THE SEARCH FOR DIRECTION	73

21 HOW I DEFENDED AUSTRALIA	80
22 HOLIDAY AT AIREYS INLET	84
23 WHEELS	86
24 ODD JOB MAN	90
25 TESTING THE WATERS	95
26 FAMILY MAN	98
27 PASTOR.....	104
28 FUNERALS AND WEDDINGS	110
30 SEPARATED.....	116
31 COUNTRY LIVING.....	121
32 FAMILY COUNSELOR - CHAPLAIN - PROBATION OFFICER - PRISON MONITOR	125
33 THESE THINGS HAVE I LEARNT	129
APPENDIX 1: HOW THE PIN YIN SPELLING IS PRONOUNCED	132
APPENDIX 2: THE FAMILY TREE.....	133
APPENDIX 3: MAP OF CHINA	134
APPENDIX 5 RAY'S TIMELINE	136
ENDNOTES	139

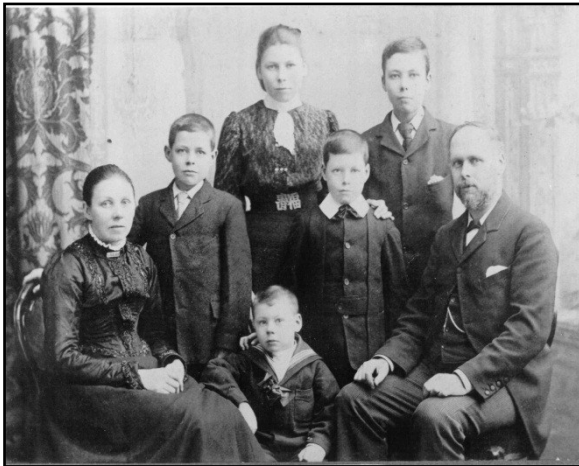
1 My Ancestral Home

In 2000 I visited China and visited Chefoo in the north eastern province of Shandong. I had already discovered the Chefoo Prep School where I had started my education as a boarder. And now I was looking for the place where my great grandfather George Andrew and great grandmother Jessie were buried, for they had both retired to this place and this is where they had finished their days. I found that the former foreign cemetery was now a park in the center of Yantai as Chefoo is now known. All the gravestones had been moved to a huge new cemetery built on either side of the main road to the airport, and I was unable to find where they had been stored. The attendant in the cemetery office refused to give us any information.

Back in Yantai in the park, some old Chinese men confirmed that this was indeed the site of the foreign cemetery and indicated its exact location within the park, even pointing out a row of trees that had been planted by children from the Chefoo School. And so here I was in the city to which my great-grandparents had retired and standing on the very spot where their bodies had been laid to rest. I was deeply moved and couldn't escape the feeling that this country was indeed my 'ancestral home'.

George Andrew left his home in Manchester and set sail from London for China. He landed in Shanghai in 1881. He was met by the founder of the China Inland Mission, James Hudson Taylor and served with that mission for the next 49 years. He was something of a pioneer and served in a number of places in the far west of China, much of which had only recently been opened to foreigners.

George met Jessie Findlay in Manchester where they had both grown up, and they were engaged before he left for China. Jessie arrived in China a year after George and they were married in the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in Shanghai in October 1883. A year or so later their only girl out of five children was born. This was my grandmother Esther.



Jessie died in 1927 and George in 1930. They were buried in the foreign cemetery in Chefoo. As I stood in that park, my mind turned to the significance of this coastal resort to our family. I was the third generation of our family to attend the Chefoo School. Over the years various members of our family had holidayed here, and one of the cottages in the school grounds was unofficially named "Moore's Fort" because our family had used it so much. Other members of the family had had significant roles as teachers, nurses and advisers.

Chefoo was the preferred place for missionaries of the China Inland Mission to holiday and recuperate from illness. It was also there that the Mission started the boarding school for missionaries' children, simply known as "The Chefoo School". My grandmother Esther was an early resident and completed her education there.

At 17 Esther went with her family to England for George and Jessie's regular furlough, and stayed in England after her parents returned to China. She also decided to serve as a

missionary to China and arrived there in October 1906. She was sent to the same area as her parents, and it was there she met Arthur Moore who had been a policeman in Shanghai.

As a policeman Arthur had met some missionaries who were impressed with the strength and skill he demonstrated when he was playing rugby football. A friendship developed between Arthur and some of the missionaries, and he was converted and later went back to China to serve with the CIM. He was also deployed to the far northwest of China. Arthur and Esther were married in December 1908 in Shanghai. They had to have the official papers filled out and signed by the British Consul.



Their eldest son, my father George Percival (Percy) was born in October 1909. Percy also attended the Chefoo School and then went to Canada at the completion of his studies. He also felt the call to return to China where he had been born and felt at home. He arrived back in China in 1931 and was sent to work with his parents in Hanzhong. Arthur was by now the Superintendent of the work in the province of Shaanxi and Hanzhong was his HQ.

Meanwhile Amy Weir who was born and brought up in Western Australia, had concluded her studies in Melbourne and was accepted by the CIM to go to China, She arrived in 1931, and was sent to Shaanxi to work under the supervision of Arthur Moore in Hanzhong.

Percy and Amy soon met, fell in love and were married in Shanghai in January 1934. I was born in January 1935 in Hanzhong.



**The CIM compound in Hanzhong.
The white star indicates the room where I was born.**

[Return to Index](#)

2 My Arrival



150 kilometres east of Hanzhong is a small country town called Xixiang. After my parents were married and placed under the supervision of my grandfather, it was here that they were assigned. This was their first home (picture). Much to the astonishment of some of the older spinster lady missionaries, within three months of their wedding, they were expecting their first child. Not only that, but they had decided to have the birth in Hanzhong where they would ask Dr. Xiao to deliver it. This was pushing the boundaries even further because it was accepted custom that lady missionaries acted as midwives and Chinese male doctors

were definitely out.

For my mother, the trip from Xixiang where they were stationed, to the regional HQ of the CIM at Hanzhong, took three days by sedan chair, while my father walked alongside.

Once my mother was settled in Hanzhong my father found himself restless. He had rushed off from Xixiang in order to get his wife to the security of Hanzhong, and now there was nothing to do but wait. However, back in Xixiang he had left a good deal of unfinished business. God's work had to be attended to, so he returned to Xixiang by bicycle.

The Sunday after he left, my mother's labour started, and by Monday evening, Dr. Xiao felt that she needed some help and decided to use instruments to assist the birth. I entered the world at the weight of eight pounds on 6th January 1935. It was a difficult birth and it is very likely that my mother and I would have died if one of the female missionaries had been the midwife and the birth had been in Xixiang. My father was notified and rode his bicycle from Xixiang to Hanzhong in a day, arriving late at night.

My father enjoyed the time with his newly expanded family. After a couple of weeks, taking into account the fact that my mother and I were in the capable hands of his parents, he headed back to Xixiang.

I was named Arthur Raymond, Arthur after my paternal grandfather and Raymond, possibly after a fellow missionary, Raymond Joyce. As a mark of appreciation to Dr. Xiao who would not accept a personal gift, my parents donated a communion table to the church on the front of which they had two texts carved:

"Yong yao Gwei Zhu" (Glory to the Lord)

"Zen mei Zhu en" (Praise the Grace of God)

The first and last Chinese words became my Chinese name, 'Yong En'.

So my journey started along a slightly bumpy road. There were plenty of bumps and potholes yet ahead of me. And it wasn't long before we were caught up in the events surrounding the historic Long March of the Chinese Communist Party.

[Return to Index](#)

3. Missionaries Facing Imprisonment and Death

Stories had been coming in of foreigners being held for ransom, or even being killed by the Communists. I am including three of those stories to illustrate the very real dangers we faced in my first year:

- i. The news of John and Betty Stam's death at the hands of the Communists came through to Hanzhong towards the end of January 1935 when I was just a few months old. In 1934, John and Betty Stam were comparatively new missionaries to China, with a 3-month-old daughter, working in the small town of Jingde. One day the town's magistrate came to the Stams and warned them that the Communists were coming for them. After John confirmed this, the Stams prepared to leave.



However, the Communists caught up with them and demanded all the money the Stams had; and it was handed over. The Communists then arrested John and took him to their headquarters. They left Betty, their baby, Helen, the maid and the cook in the Stams' house. The soldiers later came back and took Betty and Helen. The maid and cook begged to go along, but they were threatened to be shot if they did. Betty and Helen were taken to be with John.

That night, John Stam wrote a letter to CIM authorities, but it was never delivered. The letter was found later bundled up in some of Helen's clothes. It stated that the Stams were being held by the Communists for a ransom of \$20,000. John Stam also wrote to the mission authorities of how he and his wife had been captured, then wrote, "Philippians 1:20: 'May Christ be glorified whether by life or death.'"

John, Betty and Helen were then taken to the local prison where some of the prisoners were released to make room for the Stams. In the midst of hustle and bustle, Helen started crying, and a soldier suggested that they kill her, since she was only "in their way". Then one of the prisoners who had just been released asked why they should kill the innocent baby. The soldiers turned to him asked if he was willing to die for the foreign baby. The man was then hacked to pieces in front of the Stams' eyes. Thus, Helen was allowed to live.

The next morning, the Stams were forced to march 12 miles with the soldiers, to the town of Miaosheo. The group stopped for a night, and Betty was allowed to tend to Helen; but in fact, Betty instead hid her daughter in the room inside a sleeping bag. The very next morning, 8 December 1934, John and Betty were

marched down the streets of Miaosheo to meet their deaths. Curious onlookers lined both sides of the streets. A Chinese shopkeeper stepped out of the crowd and talked to the Communists, trying to persuade them not to kill the Stams. The soldiers ordered the man back into the crowd, but he wouldn't step back. The soldiers then invaded his house where they found a Chinese copy of the *Holy Bible* and a hymnbook. He was then led alongside the Stams to be killed as well, for being a Christian. After marching for a short while longer, John was ordered to kneel, and he was beheaded. Betty and the shopkeeper were killed moments later. Betty and my mother Amy had shared their time in Language School when they first went out to China.

The baby, Helen, was found two days later by a Chinese pastor who took her home and took care of her. Reverend Lo Ke-chou and his wife then took the baby girl to her maternal grandparents, Reverend Charles Ernest Scott and his wife, Clara, who were also missionaries in China. The Stams' daughter Helen later went to the United States and was raised by her aunt and uncle, George and Helen Mahy. As for Helen's parents, a small group of Christians found their bodies and buried them on a hillside.

- ii. Then there was the ongoing situation of Rudolf Bosshardt. The full details of this story were not known to the other missionaries until 1936, but at the time of my birth they were aware that he and fellow missionary Arnolis Hayman, were being held for ransom by the Communists on their Long March somewhere to the south of Hanzhong.

On October 1 1934, exactly 12 years after Bosshardt had left for China, while returning from a prayer conference with his wife Rose and several other missionaries they were captured by soldiers of the Red Army led by general Xiao Ke. Rose was later released but he and his fellow missionary Hayman were forced to join the Red Army on the weary trek which became known as the Long March. He trudged 2500 miles during the 18 months of captivity. He was released on Easter morning 1936 after 560 days of captivity.

- iii. Bringing the danger even closer to home was the capture of the Frenchams who lived in the southwest of Shaanxi Province near the corner of Shaanxi, Gansu and Zechuan Ptovinces. Here's how Charles Frencham tells their story. I am including it in full as it helps to paint the picture of how the missionaries in Hanzhong (and myself) were in real danger:

The city of Ningkiang (Ningqiang) is situated in the mountains of south-west Shensi Province, not far from Hanzhong. ([See map](#)) For many months we knew that the Communists were active in Szechwan to the south. It was not however until within a few days of the Chinese New Year that we heard definitely of their drive north towards the Shensi border.

On the morning of the Chinese New Year, Monday February 4th 1935, before daylight, the bigger guns outside the city began to sound and towards dawn the rattle of machine guns was supplemented by rifle fire. The city gates were quickly closed and the rumour spread on the streets that Nationalist reinforcements were expected at mid-day. Late in the morning one of the Nationalist guns was captured by the Communists and trained on the city. Soon shells began to burst all around our compound

just inside the south gate and the people began to flee toward the north hoping to escape when the gates were finally opened.

We had packed a few things and hastened to get into the north-east corner of the city out of the range of the shell-fire. I directed my wife into the neighbouring compound with the servants so that they might take shelter from the rifle fire as they made their way along under the shelter of the city wall. I was delayed for a short while locking up the property but then I climbed the back wall of the compound and followed them, making my way to the appointed meeting place only to find that they were nowhere in sight. A long line of Nationalist troops and their animals were rushing between the east and the north gates whilst some of the Communist soldiers were almost at the city gates on three sides of the city, only the north side remaining clear at that time. The Nationalist soldiers fighting on the east section of the wall had ceased to resist, some throwing themselves over the wall whilst others opened the east gate hoping thus to escape before they were caught. It was at this time that my wife had managed to slip through the gate but when I arrived it was closed again.

As she made her escape, bullets were flying on all sides. She made her way around outside the walls to the north suburb and there, with a serving woman and her husband, she took refuge whilst the hordes of Communists passed through on their way into the city. Though the people tried at first to disguise her they were very unwilling to have her in their house, but it was not until the following morning that Communist searchers found her and took the group back into the city to our compound, and then later to another place where other prisoners were being kept.

As the Chinese assign an inferior position to their womenfolk it did not surprise me to learn later that she was treated poorly, being bullied, spat upon, punched and kicked and she was much in fear for her life at this time. She was kept for two days and nights in a room full of Chinese prisoners where there was only enough room to sit. During the day the prisoners were given a bowl of dry rice but little water was provided.

I was captured in the city by the bodyguard of one of the Communist officers and I had to follow them around as they made their tour of inspection. I estimated that between six and eight thousand men were engaged in the taking of the city and they seemed to be well commanded. I was eventually taken to the headquarters of the Communists and later that day back to the mission compound to help them classify the medicines that we had.

Our home was in a mess as some of the soldiers had already been looting. They demanded money from me but were satisfied when I told them that it had been taken from me when I had been captured. The general attitude of the Communists was one of suspicion and many of them seemed to think that we had stores of wealth hidden around the compound. I was searched thoroughly and often by the different groups of men that I came into contact with but was told not to fear as long as I kept clear of their affairs, behaved myself, and could eat their food.

In the evening of the second day of captivity I was taken before the Communist leaders to explain my presence in China, and was told by them

that the Christian Gospel was a deception. After this I was charged with the crime of drinking tinned milk while the poor people were unable to do so. We had a large stock of tinned milk at the compound as my wife was pregnant with our first child. A ransom of \$500,000 (Chinese currency at this time was based on a silver standard and most sought after were minted (Mexican) silver dollars due to their intrinsic value, although banknotes were also in circulation.) was then demanded and I was asked to write the request out in Chinese and to find a reliable person who could carry the letter off to Hanchung. I persuaded them to write the letter themselves and told them that I knew of no person who could take the letter and that they would have to send it themselves. At this time I had heard no news about my wife and prayed that she might have got away with the Chinese preacher to safety.

On February 7th I was reunited with my wife in captivity and we were sent under escort, together with what they apparently considered choice items of loot from our compound, and taken along the main Szechwan road towards the provincial border. The following day it was beginning to snow and after travelling about fifteen kilometres we met another incoming party, and five men were chosen from this party to take us onwards. These men were not very pleased at being turned back from the prospect of good food and the comforts of the city to have to climb back over a mountain range in the slush and snow.

We commenced to climb the foothills right away but in our Chinese leather-soled shoes it was almost an impossible task. The men became very abusive but on reminding them that we were worth a large amount of money to them in ransom and pleading for help for my wife they relented a little. I sometimes used the ransom question to help at difficult times. I never gave them to understand that one would be paid. When I was asked directly about it by the leaders, I told them that I thought the best thing would be for them to try and see what they could get. (This was a sensitive issue as kidnapping for ransom was common in China at the time and missionary societies in an attempt to protect their members from kidnapping generally made it known that they would not pay ransoms.) It was exceedingly cold and the guards did not have very warm clothing so they wanted to press on as quickly as possible. The higher we got the heavier the snowfall became. To make matters worse the guards took a wrong turning and we had to struggle as best we could up a narrow rocky trail that led straight up the mountainside. At last I could help my wife no longer although we still had some distance to go. One of the guards lost his temper and became abusive. But in answer to my silent prayers, another guard agreed to take my wife's hand whilst I followed behind helping out as best I could under the circumstances. Thus we eventually reached the peak and then dropped down by easier stages on to a small plateau where we had a drink of ice cold water to refresh us. We struggled into our resting place at dusk that evening and were rewarded by a bowl or two of steaming hot food, a fire all night, and thin linen covering that helped to keep out the cold.

The next day, though not so trying, was difficult due to the thick yellow mud that clogged our shoes and slowed us down, but at last we arrived at the Army's Headquarters and were able to rest around a fire drinking tea. We were given a meal and then allowed to rest and wash our tired feet as well

as attempt to dry our wet clothes. The Communist Headquarters had just been established in this mountain village and things were not very organised.

My wife was kept with two women who had joined the Communists who helped by making socks and the cloth-soled shoes that so many of them liked to wear. I was quartered with a section of men with whom I gradually got very well acquainted as the days went on, and who proved to be generally decent to me. There was great hatred shown toward England and America especially but they did not seem to have very much against Australians, perhaps because they did not know much about Australia.

I had a bed consisting of bamboo rods and maize stalks, but the guards had a habit of rousing the fire every morning with these so that the stock had to be continually replenished. It was bitterly cold and snowing and a fire was kept going day and night. Soon the small Chinese body lice appeared. We had woollen underwear so that the lice had an excellent opportunity to breed and soon it was almost impossible to sleep for more than an hour at a time. The long weary nights were spent on the hard beds breathing in the smoke and dust from the green pine-wood fire and trying to cope with the lice. With the coming of daylight a bowl of water with a dirty rag was provided for us to wash our face and hands. True to Communist principles the bowl was shared by everyone. Our staple diet was maize and rice with occasionally a few vegetables. The days were then spent crouched around the smoky fire.

On the second day after our arrival at the Headquarters I received a Chinese letter from the senior officer who lived next door to us in a big compound. In it he asked me to reply in my own Chinese writing to some fifteen questions at my convenience. I said that I could not do this in Chinese characters but offered to answer the questions in romanised script so that someone could translate it. This I did answering such questions as, "What is the relation of your Government to the Kuomintang?", "What is the reason for your coming to China?", and, "How do the people receive your message and how many believers have you?"

Several days later we met the officer himself and he impressed me as a man of great ability, but although he was very civil to us he firmly believed in the doctrines of Communism. He told us that we were their guests and that there was nothing for us to fear. He also mentioned that I might write a letter asking for our mission staff at Hanchung to send a variety of medicines. (Was this man possibly Chang Kuo-t'ao who later challenged Mao unsuccessfully for the communist leadership and eventually "deserted" to the Nationalists?) From this time on I was asked to write a series of letters, asking for medicines, torches, printing machines, etc. We were told when we were released that none of these letters had ever been sent out of the place.

On several occasions I came into contact with professing Christians, one an English-trained doctor, and also some officials who had held positions in different churches in times past, but owing to the prevailing circumstances these people had thrown in their lot with the Communists.

The Communists brought quite a lot of watches and clocks for me to fix up. (Mr. Frencham had had some training as a watchmaker before he went to China.)

They were also very keen on theatricals and often used gramophones (record players) in their propaganda work so that I was also asked to fix up one of these machines. The last Saturday in captivity was uneventful but on the following Sunday we were taken out to a special meeting in the market square which was followed up by the usual theatricals. The presentation, though hitting directly at foreigners, was rather humorous and so I joined in the general laughter. Soon I found the senior officer beside me and in the interval of time that followed I was given the opportunity to present our case to him and also to plead that because of my wife's coming childbirth she should be set free. He smiled and said, "you have no need to fear, you have not opposed our Communistic principles nor have you broken our laws, you are our guest. Do not fear, I will see what can be done."

On the following Thursday morning he sent around news to the effect that we were to be released, however as a similar promise had been made two weeks before and not honoured we didn't at first hold out much hope. However soon both my wife and I were sitting before him whilst he explained that we could not have been sent back whilst the Communists were advancing in their attempt to capture the cities on the Hanchung plain, but now that the line of battle was settled they were taking the opportunity of "...inviting us to return home...", and that he would supply a suitable escort to take us into territory occupied by the Nationalist army. We did not know that at this particular time the Communists were on the eve of retreating back into Szechwan to the south, nor were we taken through any of the important strongholds on the way.

The officers gave me fifty silver dollars for our expenses on the road, and clean outside garments, and told us not to be afraid. At the same time he warned us not to mention to the Nationalist officials the positions of the Communist ammunition dumps and the strength of the units defending the various places that we would pass through.

We were then sent back to our compound next door and fed earlier than usual with very good food, the best that we had seen since our capture. A cook was also sent with us with sufficient food to prepare for us along the way. Then we were ushered out into the street followed by a drum and fife band before a large crowd of onlookers consisting of local people and the Communists. A rough improvised mountain chair on poles had been provided and also a wadded quilt for my wife. Last farewells were said and we finally left the village.

That day we travelled about thirty kilometres until after dark. That evening food and drink was provided for us and we talked for some time with the leading Communist officials of that village who reechoed the sentiments previously expressed by the officer. The following day most of the time was spent travelling up and down two lofty mountains and after about forty five kilometres we stayed for the night in a farmhouse on the hill-side. The following morning at about 2am we were aroused and then travelled by the light of the moon over hills and along unfrequented tracks until dawn. The men then took us down into a valley and told us we had fifty kilometres to travel to get to Ta An where there were no troops of either side. They left

us at a farmhouse where we could get bearers for the chair and then vanished; and we were at last on 23rd March, free!

The country people were very good to us and after sharing some food with them, two men carried us into the village of Laian which had just been entered by Nationalist soldiers. Though they thought that I was a spy with my long whiskers and dirty torn Chinese clothes, when the facts were established they gave us both food and medicine and on the following day helped us on our way.

Two days later we walked into the C.I.M. station at Hanchung where we were met by fellow missionary and Chinese workers who gave us an excellent welcome. We were filthy and lice-ridden as we had not had a bath or change of clothes right throughout our captivity. What a relief when water had been heated for us in a copper to have a hot bath and throw away those old clothes to be burned. One month later, thankfully, we welcomed our little miracle baby daughter. We named her "Grace Joy" because of the significance of those names. Truly it was only God's grace that had kept her alive, and our joy at her safe arrival was very great.

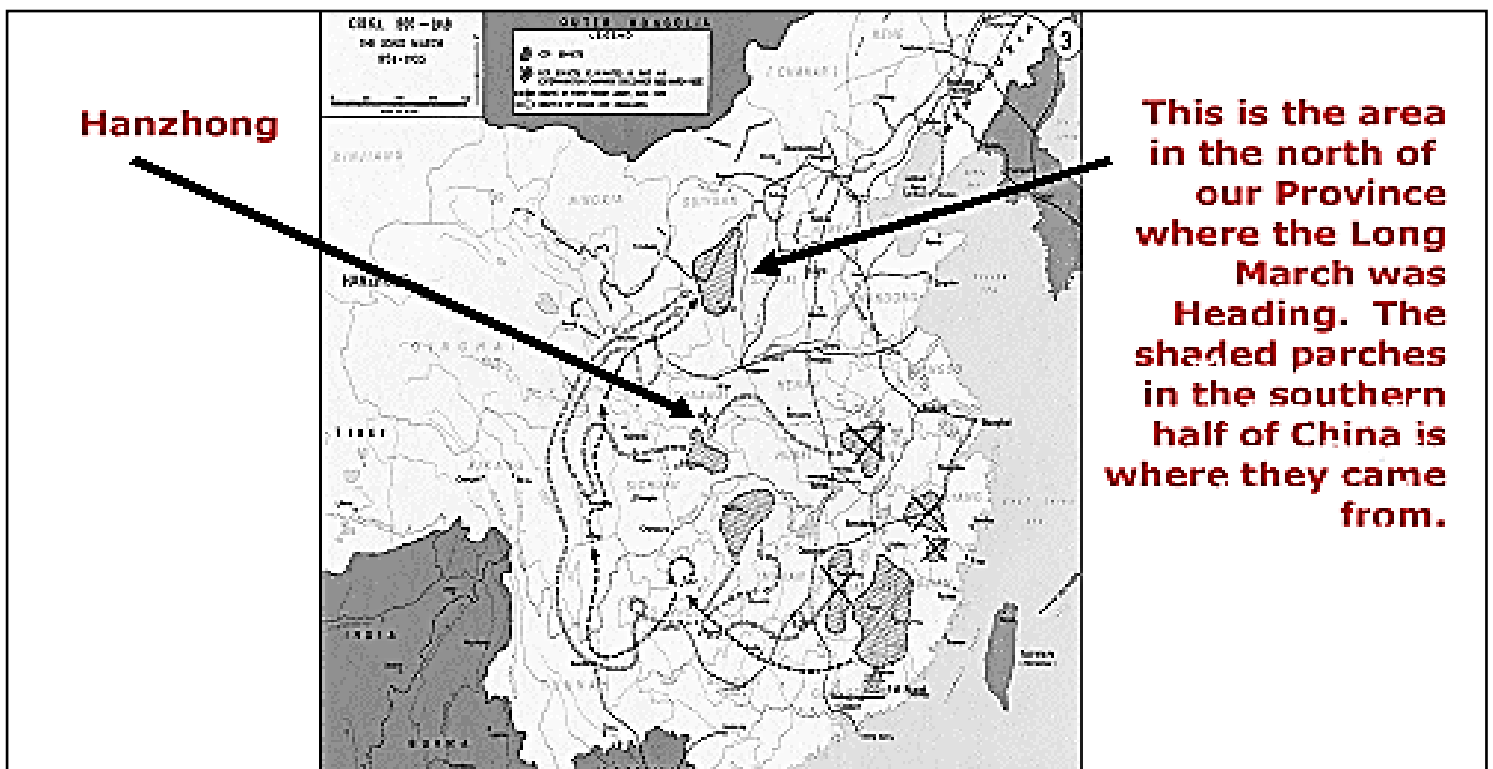
(The true reason for their sudden release will never be known after graphic reports had appeared in the English tabloid press suggesting that they had both been brutally murdered. With hindsight one wonders if the murders of C.I.M. missionaries John and Betty Stam several months earlier had helped their cause. The murders of this young American couple allegedly by communists had caused an international outcry and perhaps the communist leaders had decided that they did not want any more bad international publicity.

Sadly this incident had serious repercussions for Charles. Although he and Ruth served for many years after it in the city of Paoki (Baoji) on the main railway line between Sian and Gansu province he eventually had a major breakdown and resigned from the Mission early in 1944. He turned away from Christianity and although he worked and supported his family economically he was unable to show them much parental love. Ruth continued faithfully and actively with her Christian work throughout her life and nurtured her five children: Grace Joy, Clarence John, Margaret Ruth, Mark Dexter and Robert Charles. I am now convinced that our father suffered from what we now know as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder arising from this incident, as his later behaviour was certainly symptomatic of this.) This last comment was added by their son Rob.

The missionaries in Hanzhong were aware of these events and knew the Stams and Hayman and Bosshardt. So when they heard that the Long March had reached a town only three days travel south of Hanzhong, they decided that it was time to leave.

[Return to Index](#)

4 Fleeing Danger



Rumours about the Communists whereabouts and progress abounded in Hanzhong. The missionaries heard that the Communists were coming to the north of Sichuan Province not far from Hanzhong, (See the Frencham's story in the previous chapter) and the hierarchy of the China Inland Mission had advised women and children to leave for safer territory. So we were on the move and occasionally, from the comfort of my specially designed basket (picture), I would get a glimpse of my mother or the smiling face of the Chinese porter, intrigued by this foreign infant he was carrying. The porter had a bamboo carrying pole across his shoulder with me and my basket swinging on one end and some luggage at the other. My mother had designed the basket to keep me comfortable as we traveled, much of the way by foot, while also making it easier for a Chinese porter to carry me on his carrying pole.

I was not even a year old and we were on the run, escaping from a potentially dangerous situation. The famous Long March was underway and heading in our general direction. The year before, 1934, the Chinese Communist armies had left their various bastions, mainly in the southern parts of China, (see map - shaded areas in the southern half of China) where until

now, they had been safe from Government troops, and were heading for a new safe haven in the north. Although Hanzhong was not directly in the danger zone, it was certainly very much in the area of influence

I know I felt comfortable in my special basket because 11 years later, when I returned to Hanzhong after the War, I discovered this very basket in the attic, and was immediately overwhelmed with a sense of coziness and comfort. I guess, in a way, that is my earliest memory!

At the time of our flight, Hanzhong was a walled city situated on the banks of the Han River.¹ The group of missionaries, including myself just a month old, set off through the East Gate of the city and headed for Xixiang. From there we followed the Han River downstream until we got to Ankang. Many other kinds of transport were used as well as my basket.



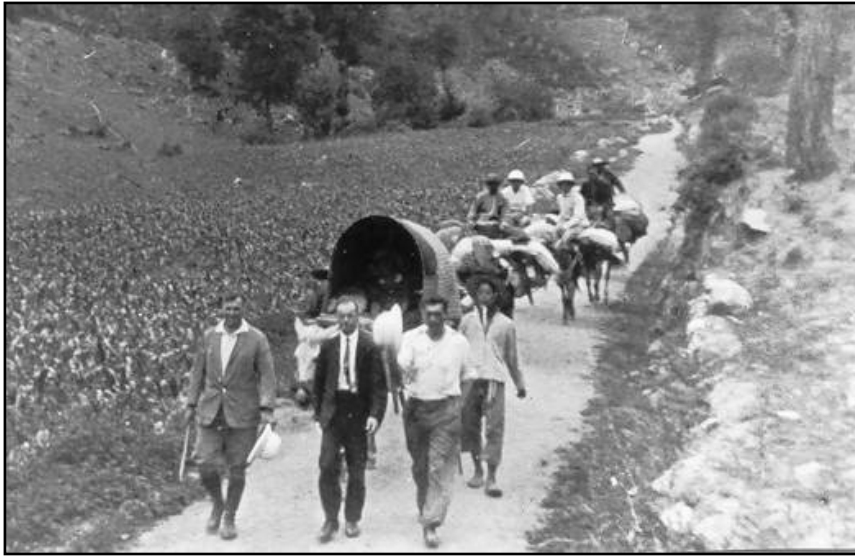
At Ankang we hired three boats, and eventually made our way to Wuhan (Hankou) which is where the Han River joins the Yangzi River. It had taken six weeks to get there. During this time, floating on the Han River, my mother wrote home to her mother in Australia:

"Raymond . . . is not eight weeks old yet, but has had a pretty eventful life already. He was just five weeks old the Sunday we left Hanzhong, and since then has slept in dirty Chinese inns, traveled for a week at a time without a bath or change of clothes, and yet he flourishes and looks so well."

As it was still deemed unsafe to return to Hanzhong, it was decided that the children and their mothers should go to the well known mountain resort of JiGongShan as it was becoming unbearably hot where we were staying at Hankou (Wuhan) in the Yangze valle

It was November before word came through that it was OK to return to South Shaanxi. We traveled by train to Xi'an and then sedan chair and walking for the rest of the trip over the

Qinling Mountains back to Hanzhong. I was safely and happily swinging in my specially made basket on one end of the porter's carrying pole. Although this picture is not of our



group, it is of my grandfather returning on the same road on which we traveled back home.

It took six days to make the trip from Xi'an to Hanzhong. I was eleven months old and would spend my first Christmas in Hanzhong. Twelve days after Christmas I celebrated my first birthday after a pretty adventurous first year.

The little home in Xixiang became the hub of activities for the new Moore family. My father was away a lot of the time, riding his bicycle around to the small villages, evangelizing and teaching. My mother tried to keep up the women's work in Xixiang, balancing her time between the church work and caring for me. In those years, the services of an amah (housemaid or nurse) cost very little so even cash strapped missionaries were able to afford one. With the help of an amah to look after me, my mother could get on with her work and still spend some time with me, sometimes walking down to the river shallows (picture) and enjoying a day out.

In the year after my first birthday, the Han Valley experienced a serious famine, and many people died of starvation. Although this didn't directly affect the family, I actually saw beside the road, the body of a child who had starved to death. Money was in short supply for the missionaries and they often lived from day to day, not sure if they would have enough for the next day's meals. Possibly because of the famine and the widespread poverty, there were numerous stories of bandits holding people up along the roads, and for the missionaries who needed to travel a lot, the rumours of bandit movement in the countryside was of serious concern.



Before I was three years old, I again came close to losing my life. I developed dysentery and was in a very poor state. The nearest doctor was 150 kilometres away in Hanzhong. My father was concerned enough to ride his bicycle to Hanzhong to ask Dr. Xiao what treatment to give. I was too weak to travel. Soon after he left, my condition deteriorated, so my mother decided to start out on the trip to Hanzhong to get me to Dr Xiao as soon as possible.

Before we reached Hanzhong, we met my father returning on his bicycle. He told us that a Communist band was approaching Hanzhong and we would have to flee again. Fortunately

he had brought some medicine with him from Dr. Xiao, and in a couple of days my health improved dramatically.

But we still had to pack up our things and leave Xixiang. It was only about twenty months since we had fled to Hankou when I was five weeks old. This time we were only away for a month before it was safe to return home.

When I was two years old my brother Alan was born, and my mother likes to tell the story of the wall calendar which on the day he was born, had the text "Trouble is near" from Psalm 22:11. It seemed funny at the time, but 1937 was also when trouble started that would eventuate in the whole world at war.

It started even earlier than 1937 when the Japanese invaded Manchuria in 1931 and created the nominally independent state of Manchukuo with Puyi, the last monarch of the Qing Dynasty, as its emperor. Once they were successful in this venture they started to spread their influence southwards into China, until they were virtually in control of all the country on three sides of Beijing. At this point, in 1937, they tried to take control of the Marco Polo Bridge which was to the south of Beijing and would have cut the city off from the rest of China. The Chinese defended their position and this marked the beginning of the 2nd Sino-Japanese War which, in 1941, became part of the Second World War.

In late 1938 my parents were getting ready for a trip to Australia for their furlough and a chance for my father to meet the in-laws.

We left Hanzhong towards the end of May 1939 and arrived in Perth in August. My mother was pregnant again and my younger brother Frank was born in October.

Earlier on 3 September Neville Chamberlain announced that Britain was at war with Germany. That meant Australia was also officially at war, but only in Europe. Little did we know the dramatic events that were to happen two years later that would have a deep impact on the whole family.

[Return to Index](#)

5 Australia

My maternal grandmother, 'Grandma Weir', lived in the Perth suburb of Bayswater. This was the first time that I had been outside of China, and I was intrigued by the differences. I found it unusual for Europeans to be doing all the dirty work and not Chinese labourers. The architecture was quite different. My grandmother's house was a smallish weatherboard house with a corrugated iron roof. Rainwater was collected from the roof into a corrugated iron tank. In China the only water I had seen collected off the roof was into barrels about the size of a wine barrel.



In my mind I had envisaged that all the roads in Australia would be perfectly made - no potholes or wheel ruts. But when I went for a walk to the corner shop, my fantasy was shattered. The roads weren't even paved to the full width, and the soil was dark and sandy, nothing like the soil as I remembered it in China. Not only that, but there was rubbish and dog poo along the road. I thought that sort of rubbish only existed in China.

At the corner store (sadly now few and far between) my main memory is of the screen door which gave a wonderful squeak when I opened it. A bell tinkled as you entered, which seemed unnecessary when the door itself made so much noise. I have always loved screen doors that squeak.

Perth is on the west coast of Australia, facing the Indian Ocean with the next stop the Horn of Africa. It boasts some beautiful beaches and it was there that I had my first taste of the Australian beach culture. However this experience had a down side. My father and I dug a deep hole in the sand. We may have had Alan's help as well. The hole was deep enough so that when I was helped by father down into it, it was deep enough to block my view of the beach and the ocean. One of the things I had learned that day was that the tide moved the water up and down the beach, and I was shown the high tide mark where the water had come up to. My father called out urgently to me, "You had better get out of there, the tide's coming in!" I panicked as there was no way I could get out by myself, and, obviously not understanding the real fear that I was experiencing, he laughed at me stuck in the hole with the tide coming in.

Towards the end of 1940 it was time for my parents to return to China. We would cross the continent to Melbourne and then take a ship to Hong Kong and then to Shanghai. There I would be placed in the hands of a couple of the teachers from the Chefoo Boarding School who would take me by coastal steamer to Chefoo, while the rest of the family made their way overland back to Hanzhong.

The ship we traveled on was the SS Nellore, a ship of just under 7000 tons which had been built in Greenock on the south bank of the River Clyde in 1913. Originally owned by the P & O line, it was purchased in 1929 by the Eastern & Australasian Mail Steamship Co. About

four years after our trip, in 1944 it was torpedoed and sunk in the Indian Ocean with the loss of 77 lives.

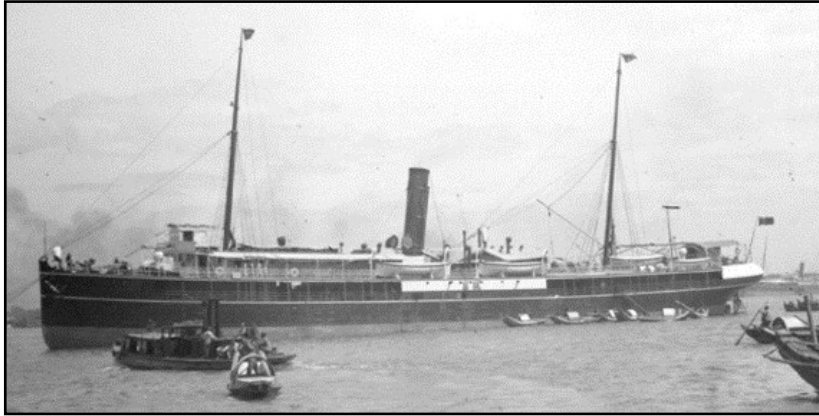
We had to stay in Hong Kong for a few extra days unexpectedly, and the shipping company paid for us to stay in the Peninsula Hotel, one of Hong Kong's finest. This was not hard to take, and Alan and I made the most of the endless supply of good food that was at our disposal. Then we were off to Shanghai and I was about to enter another stage in my life.



[Return to Index](#)

6 Boarding School At The Seaside

I waved goodbye to my parents and two younger brothers as I boarded the coastal steamer in Shanghai to go to Chefoo. The rest of the family would all be going back to our home in Hanzhong. I was five year old and would not see my family again for five years.



As I went on board with two teachers from the Chefoo School, Miss Carr and Miss Williams, I didn't show any signs of grief at parting from my family. Doris Williams wrote to my parents from the SS Chengking (pictured):

*"You will
be happy*

to know that he has quite adopted Miss Carr and she him. She thinks he's such a sensible little chap. It was lovely to see her washing him and getting him ready for bed last night and he was so good and so bright and not at all strained, so perfectly at ease with Miss Carr." (Oct 28 1940)

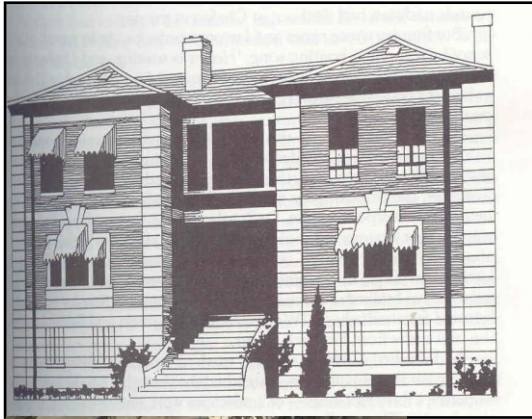
I was met in Chefoo by my father's younger sister, Jessie. She was a nurse at the Chefoo School. She writes:

"I went out to the boat and the first sight was Miss Carr standing with the wee figure in front of her. A real little man he looked. I just rushed up the gangway and picked him up in my arms, and we were pals! We did not wait for the Customs, but came home in a rickshaw together. He talked about everything all the way home, with his deep voice and Australian accent. (Oct 28 1940) . . . I guess I will have to let him go into school, as Jackie and Enid have to go too. But I shall have him out for weekends - but I am enjoying having so much of him now, and won't look forward to the less pleasant future. (Nov 11 1940)"

The Chefoo School had a reputation for being the "best school east of the Suez". It was run along the lines of an English public school and at times brought to mind aspects of "Tom Brown's Schooldays". It was divided into a Prep School, Girls' School and Boys' School. This picture of me was taken with Beryl and Kathleen Strange on the front steps of the Prep School. The Stranges were missionaries stationed not far from Hanzhong.

The Prep School was housed in a large two storey building just across the road from the beach. Because of its position on Chefoo Bay, boating and swimming were high on the agenda of school activities. Not in winter though. The Bay sometimes iced over. Winters were

cold, but I was not allowed to wear "longs" (i.e. long pants) until I was old enough to go to the Boys' School at about the age of twelve. Meanwhile I wore shorts in the summer and "plus fours" or knickerbockers in the winter. These buckled under the knee and knee length socks were pulled up to meet them.



There was keen competition, especially in the Boys School for honours in rowing. The climax of the competition came on Foundation Day when two crews were chosen to compete in the two racing boats called Hero and Leander. The crews consisted of a cox and four and there had been six weeks of eliminations to find the two best crews. Foundation Day was one of those special holidays that became weighed down with tradition. It was celebrated to remember the laying of the foundation stone for the first major building on 15 June 1896. The boat races were always on the afternoon before Foundation Day.

I accepted Boarding School life and the fact that my parents were 1600 kilometres away in the west of China. I slept in a dormitory with about a dozen other boys. There was a verandah just outside my window where I used to sneak out after lights out and savour the fear of being caught by the teachers. The boys shared a large shower and toilet block, and there were small dressing cubicles which were used when we were preparing for a shower. On a number of occasions, due to some misdemeanour, I was placed in one of these cubicles as a punishment, alone and in the dark until well after lights out.

The teachers really cared about us as I discovered one night after I had a nightmare and a teacher came in and sat on my bed and put her arm around me to comfort me and settle me down. It was a physical expression of warmth which I don't remember happening again. As with most places where children gather, there were rumours and stories which abounded about the teachers, that weren't so flattering. The day I entered the school I went up the stone steps to the front door. Inside, on the right, was Miss Carr's office. She was the headmistress and also one of the teachers that had accompanied me from Shanghai to Chefoo. I had to wait outside the office until she was ready to see me. Another student was there and he took me to a huge pillar that was situated in the middle of the entrance hall. It was rendered with some kind of very rough rendering, and the boy told me that when you misbehaved you were forced to hit your knuckles against the post until they bled. Even at that age I had something of the sceptic in me and I never heard of it actually happening.

The food was mainly western style, so Chinese meals were special. Because of the Chinese method of fertilizing their vegetables (human manure carried to their gardens in very smelly "honey buckets" – (picture) everything had to be well cooked. When the farmers delivered the milk, it had to be tested for water content, as it was common practice to water the milk down to make more profit. It also had to be boiled before it was served up for our morning tea break. I developed a huge dislike for the "scum" as I called it that formed on the top of the milk as it cooled off. However it was mandatory to drink it. On one memorable occasion, after one of the teachers had persuaded me to drink it, I threw up and spread my breakfast around the floor.



On a more positive note, it was here that I developed a love for peanut butter. Often at meals the peanut butter was pre-spread on the bread. Obviously the children could not be trusted to spread it themselves! I discovered that if I rolled the peanut butter off the bread into a ball and placed it in my pocket to be savoured later, the bread that was left behind still retained the taste of the peanut butter, and I was able to rescue the ball of peanut butter from my pocket at some later stage whenever I wanted to enjoy it.

Although I didn't show any signs of missing my home or family, I must have felt some sense of loss, because soon after I arrived in Chefoo, I learnt that I could cope with life better if I built a shell around myself. It was safer that way. I played with other children, but was just as happy by myself. I never confided in anyone or shared secrets. I often felt a twinge of envy when I saw other children with special friends. My shell shielded me from the storms and stresses of life. It may have been significant that I never made a close friend until I met Bev when I was nineteen. It is wonderful what love does to one's shell.

[Return to Index](#)

7 Prisoner of the Japanese

I used to play on the playing field behind the school. If I was on my own, I could stalk some unsuspecting 'victim' near the creek bed that ran from north to south next to the playing field. Then I would sneak as far along the creek as I could without being seen from the school buildings. The teachers had banned any playing in the creek bed, so this was more than just a game, it was breaking the rules.

Someone had placed a small rowing boat at the edge of the field. It was probably one of the school rowing boats that had been retired for some reason. An old ladder was placed against it to act as a gang plank and I often played there with another of the boys, or by myself. One day as I was playing there with someone, I lifted the ladder to 'cast off' and it came back with a terrible thunk on to the index and middle fingers of my left hand. The damage was quite severe and I still retain the scars on those two fingers almost 70 years later.

I was playing by myself on the school playing field in early December 1941, after having been at the school for about a year, when I saw a Japanese soldier come in a small gate situated in the wall that surrounded the school compound. He hammered a piece of paper on the gate then strode purposefully in to the school. This was the day after Pearl Harbour, and we soon discovered that the Japanese were in total command. We were now officially Japan's enemies, not just Germany's enemies and we were "confined to barracks". This was the beginning of our internment by the Japanese which would not end until August 1945.

The Headmaster and other leading business men were taken away by the Japanese, but were returned safely some days later - all except for one business man who died for unknown reasons while being questioned. Otherwise the school carried on as usual, apart from being confined to the school grounds.

And then over the next few months, other things changed also. Eleven months after the Japanese had taken control of our lives by putting us under house arrest, we had to vacate the Prep School building and move over to the Boys' School building. This arrangement was only for a short time, and then we were moved to an old Presbyterian Mission Compound at Temple Hill on the other side of Chefoo. We could not take much with us, and the Japanese did not supply any sort of transport, although we were able to hire some hand pulled carts and some rickshaws. The older teachers went by rickshaw and the rest of us walked, with Chinese porters pulling our trunks and other less manageable items on their carts.

Temple Hill was four or five miles away, and we had to walk up past "Moore's Fort", the house where my family had holidayed since my grandparents' day. We passed the foreign cemetery where my great grandparents were buried. The column of school children and teachers were taken along the main street of the town where we were objects of curiosity to the Chinese people as we walked along flanked by our Japanese guards.

Brought up with a strong belief that God was in control, even in the worst of circumstances, we were soon singing under the leadership of the teachers, a song asserting that "God is still on the throne", much to the incredulity of both our Japanese guards and the onlooking Chinese population.

Finally we made it up the hill to the compound in Temple Hill where we were allocated a building for the Prep School. Upstairs was the boy's bedroom. It was small with only enough

room to sleep with a narrow margin between each bed. The girls had a similar setup in another room. Our room looked out onto a verandah on which a lot of our boxes and cabin trunks were stored due to lack of space inside. We discovered that Chinese thieves could climb the compound wall at night, even though these walls were topped with broken glass set in cement. They could then climb up to our verandah from outside the building and rifle our possessions. The teachers tried to keep a more wary eye on our possessions with some success.

On our first morning at Temple Hill, I looked out at the surrounding walls and realized that I would not be able to step outside those walls for any reason at all. We were now prisoners. Our daily life and welfare was firmly in the hands of the Japanese.

Each morning we were called out to the front of the building where we had to learn to count in Japanese, so that we could respond clearly when we numbered off for Roll Call. "Ichi, nee, san, she, gwo, rocku, shichi, hachi, ku, ju." For the next three or four years this was the routine when we were called out for roll call every morning. The residents of each building would gather in a suitable spot outside their building in two rows and number off for a couple of Japanese guards. The guards would then consult their list to check that we were all present and accounted for. They would report their results to the camp commandant who had to compile an aggregate figure. Only when the camp commandant was satisfied were we able to go on with our day's activities.

One day a rabid dog came in the gate and ran wildly around the place. There was a fair bit of open space inside the walls, and so it was hard to capture the animal. The Japanese guards threw missiles such as half bricks at it, and at least one of them found its target, making the dog even more demented. Eventually it found the gate and ran outside into the town. I wondered how much damage it would cause out there.

Just inside one stretch of wall was a bamboo grove. It was about five or six metres wide and about sixty metres in length. One day while exploring this grove I discovered a small, hidden outdoor chapel. There was a log pulpit and log pews, enough to seat about fifteen people. As the property had belonged to a Presbyterian mission, it was not hard to imagine that one of the missionaries or Chinese Christians had built it. I was intrigued by it and in my imagination saw myself standing at the pulpit and sharing my pearls of wisdom with the assembled company. It was the first time I had thought about what I might be when I grew up, and it proved to be prophetic.

[Return to Index](#)

8 Weihsien Concentration Camp

We remained at Temple Hill in this make do concentration camp for almost a year. Towards the end of 1943, the Japanese decided to consolidate all their civilian prisoners in the north of China into a single Concentration Camp. We were told that we would be moving to a place called Weihsien. Before the War, the Chefoo School boasted about six or seven hundred students in the three sections, Prep, Boys' and Girls' Schools. Many of the parents of students had heeded the warnings or for other reasons had taken their children out of the school and returned to their homeland. So now there were less than three hundred students left altogether and only about a dozen in the Prep School. Three lady teachers were left to care for and educate these dozen children.

When I had gone to Chefoo in late 1940, my father's sister, Auntie Jessie was the school nurse. It was here that she met David Bentley Taylor. He had sailed for China in October 1938 with a party of 22 able young men nicknamed 'The Sons of the Prophets'. The group included Dr. Jim Broomhall, the China historian, and Dr. Chris Maddox, the highly decorated medical missionary in China, Thailand and Laos. B-T was sent initially for Mandarin language study and then to teach at the Chefoo. There he met and courted Jessie Moore. Subsequently he was posted to Lanchow in Gansu Province. During this period, together with a small group of CIM missionaries, he resigned in order to join the Little Flock of Watchman Nee. Subsequently, through the mediation of Leslie Lyall, he rejoined CIM, and married Jesse Moore in Shanghai in March 1941. It obviously crossed nobody's mind to take young Ray with her when she left Chefoo early in 1941. Or quite likely the thought that there would be a World War which included Japan and the likelihood of me being interned was not an issue at that stage. So here I was now, a prisoner of war.

In September amid much excitement, the time came to move. We packed and made our way down to the harbour where a small Japanese steamer was waiting. Once on board we were directed to our quarters in the hold. There was a raised platform on either side of a central walkway where we could place our blankets. There was just enough room to spread out blankets with almost no space between each 'bed'. A bucket was placed in the middle of the walkway for any necessary relief trips during the night. Some sort of makeshift curtain was placed half way along to give the girls and boys privacy from each other. Soon after we set off, but while still in the harbour, a small motor boat was seen chasing after us and when it



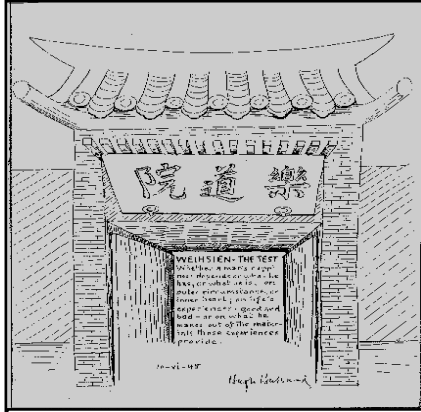
it caught up with the ship, it proved to be the baker, who had promised to give us a supply of bread for the trip and was running late. He had gone to a lot of trouble to deliver the loaves to us.

It wasn't a very pleasant trip. We were on board for two nights and glad to reach Qingdao the following morning. We were then placed on a train and by late afternoon arrived at the station of the walled city of Weihsien. Here we were put on "buses" and made our way

the few miles to, what was called at that time "the Weihsien Civil Assembly Centre". This was to be our new home until – we knew not when.

Soon the camp came into sight. It was surrounded by a fairly high wall with barbed wire on the top which later proved to be electrified. We could see rows of huts and some taller buildings including a church. Here and there were guard towers and as we approached the entrance we saw Japanese guards standing with their rifles and bayonets ready to welcome us.

The Chinese style of gateway had three Chinese characters written across the top of it and later I learned that they said, “Courtyard of the Happy Way”, for this had been another Presbyterian Mission Centre. It was about 200 metres by 150 metres in size and included a church, hospital, rows of small rooms to house the Bible School students, larger buildings for classrooms and staff houses for the American missionaries, teachers and doctors.



Artist's impression of the front gate of Weihsien Camp. The characters are "Le Dao Yuan", meaning "Courtyard of the Happy Way". The property had been an American Presbyterian mission compound. Sketched by Hugh Hubbard

We drove through the gate and up the incline with what seemed like hundreds of internees standing on either side of the road to witness our arrival. We were unloaded and gathered on the playing field next to the church, while a camp leader read out the instructions about the camp, and then we were assigned sleeping quarters. We were now a small part of the 2,000 or so people who had been interned in this Concentration Camp at Weihsien.

We were taken to one of the larger buildings, Block 24, and down into a very dank basement where we were given beds and bedding of a sort. My bed was a folding camp

stretcher which was constructed of a piece of canvas stretched between two rails attached to folding legs. The rails were held apart with a removable wooden crosspiece at each end which kept the whole thing rigid. However on my bed the two cross pieces had been lost and so to sleep in it meant that my weight caused the outside rails to partially close in over the top of me. I really loved this bed which was cozy and warm, and was disappointed when we were given 'improved' sleeping arrangements.

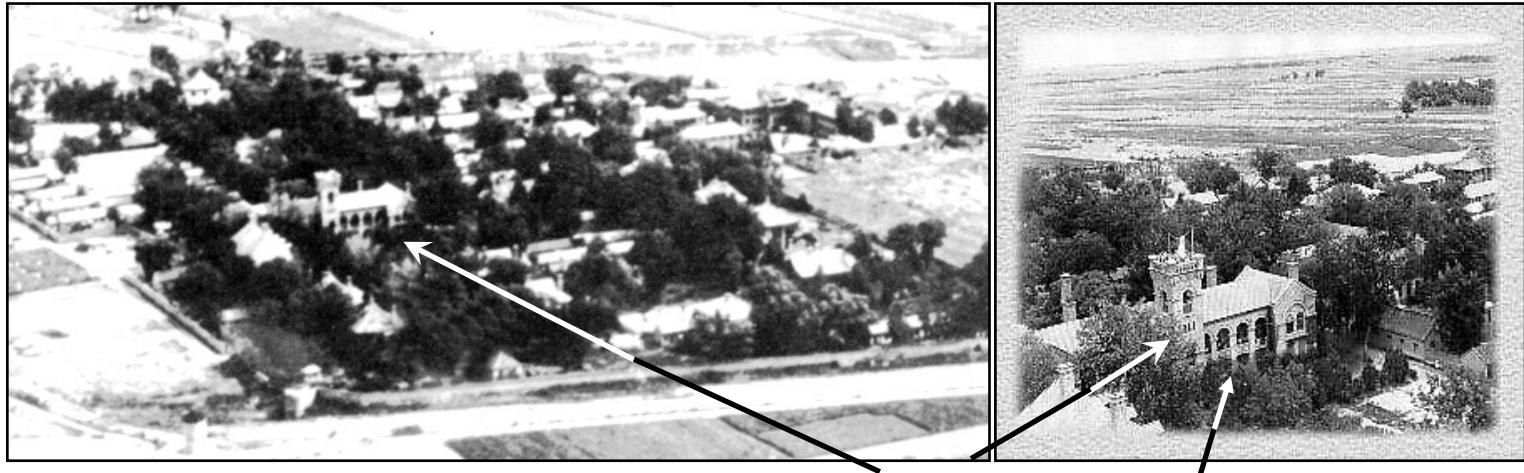
That room was our home for the first couple of weeks, and in that time two or three of the children got “jaundice” as it was then called. I succumbed and found that there was something appealing about being sick in a boarding school. I was away from my parents and the teachers were mostly spinster missionaries who, having been called by God to work amongst the heathen in China, found themselves, because of their training, living with a challenging bunch of missionaries’ children.

As I mentioned, I only remember the one time in all those years that I received physical affection from the teachers. So being sick was another way of getting some kind of personal attention. I was taken out of my fold up camp stretcher and placed in a large double bed that stood at one end of the room. My skin was yellow. I felt nauseated by anything that was or looked like it was greasy. I had no energy. I was quarantined from the other children – as far as that was possible in the confined quarters of a prison camp. But I had, from time to time, the undivided attention and care of some of the teachers.

Soon after this the small Prep School was allocated more permanent quarters where we stayed for the rest of the War.

[Return to Index](#)

9 Life As A Prisoner



Block 23

Prep School Quarters

Our new home was in Block 23 on the ground floor. It had probably been a teacher's flat in a former life. Block 23 was a large building with a bell tower in the centre. The front of the building had a long stone flagged verandah along its full length, and one end of this verandah led to a door which gave access to our quarters.

Inside the front door was a tiny hallway with a room straight ahead. This was the teachers' bedroom. By that stage in the school's evolution we were down to three female teachers, Miss Carr, Miss Stark, and Miss Woodward. They would not have had an easy task, and I seemed to be one of those who was constantly fronting up for 'the strap'. We knew the idiosyncrasies of each teacher, and when Miss Woodward gave the strap, she would keep her arm stiff. Consequently we saw that if we could maneuver her to a position just below a light bulb, there was a good likelihood that she would hit it, hopefully with entertaining results. We were rewarded a couple of times. If you turned left in the small hallway, there were two more rooms. The one on the left was the girls' room. There were five girls left in the Prep School, and in the last room there were nine boys.

The boys' room was a much larger room than the other two. We slept on mattresses on the floor. My bed was just inside the door on the right. Starting from the door and going around the room were: me, David Allen, Robert Clow, John Birch, and a fifth person whom I can't remember. On the other side were: Philip Paulson, Paul Grant, David Michell, John Taylor and Val Nichols. We were all about 10 - 11 years of age. In the room next to us were the girls of approximately the same age. I can't remember their names, but I think there were 8 of them

Every morning we made our beds and rolled up our mattresses against the wall to create more space for moving about. This was the class room and living room during the day. Our cabin trunks were placed in the centre of the room and used as seats for classes. In that sense life went on as normal, but supplies were few and we had to use whatever books we had been able to bring in with us. Apart from that the teachers were creative in trying to give us as normal an education as possible during those years.

We used slates and chalk for some subjects and activities such as maths, but also had a few notebooks which were used until we reached the end of the book, then it was turned upside down and we wrote between the lines. There was a pot belly stove in the middle of the room, but fuel was difficult to get. We were able to scrounge coal dust and, learning from others in the camp, mixed the dust with dirt and water, then formed them into briquettes. They didn't burn very well, but had to do.

One of the unforgettable, but necessary activities was the endless pursuit of bed bugs. These were pandemic and their total destruction was a constant fantasy. They seemed to hide in the cracks in the wall plaster during the day, and then when our warm bodies were comfortably settled in our beds on the floor, over would trot this army of bed bugs and proceed to graze all night on the ready supply of blood that was available. If they were squashed in the night, either deliberately or in our sleep, they left streaks of blood on the sheets and a strong and distinctive smell behind them. During the day we would use boiling water and pour it into any available crack, and use other means to block up cracks, but if we were at all successful, it was hard to see the results of our efforts.

Along one wall of our room was a long bench which held basins and other items for our ablutions. We were able to buy soap from the Japanese, but no toothpaste, so for years I got used to cleaning my teeth with soap. In the evenings, before going to bed, we would have a stand up wash, and teachers would come to check on our progress. We would be asked if we had washed our ankles, behind our ears and between our legs. One teacher seemed to find a need to inspect the appendages between these latter items to see that they were clean.

Access to medical supplies or vitamin supplements was limited. When the medical powers that be figured that we were deficient in calcium, we collected egg shells, which were dried and powdered. A teaspoonful of this dry, choking powder was swallowed each day for a period. At another stage I was deemed to be anemic and in need of iron. This was supplied by the simple means of collecting rust from old metal and grinding it into a powder and administering it in the same way.

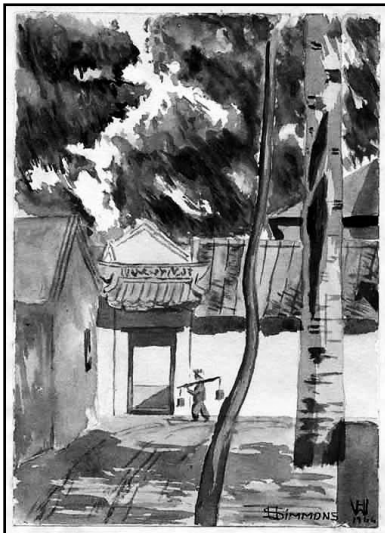
Day to day life inside a prison compound became normal after a while. We played marbles – “alleys” – in the dust outside, and also hopscotch. I would wander around the camp and collect labels off food cans that had been thrown away in people's rubbish bins. It was amazing how many people must have brought in canned food with them. We used some of the larger cans to make small ovens by lining them with mud and cooking minute scones, although ‘scones’ was a rather grand name for what actually resulted from this effort. But like a lot of things that children do, the fun experienced during the effort made it well worthwhile, regardless of the result.

There were four kitchen/dining room complexes scattered around the camp. One was in the basement of the hospital and was a diet kitchen. The other three were numbered one to three and we were allocated to one of these for our meals. The Prep School was assigned to Kitchen One. The meals were not very memorable. What was memorable was the Menu Board on which the cooks used their creative writing skills to describe the coming meal in the most exotic terms. You would think that you were in the grandest hotel in the land. What was actually served was bread porridge for breakfast, watery stew in the middle of the day, and whatever was left over for the evening meal.

There were some events that broke the monotony. A couple of times Red Cross parcels were distributed, and the main item of interest to me was the powdered milk. It was only a tablespoonful, but I loved the beautiful taste of that powder mixed with a little water and eaten a lick at a time from the spoon. There were also times when there were actually pieces of meat served at meal times. We later learned that the Japanese had deliberately delayed giving the horse carcass to the camp cooks until it was already starting to putrefy. The cooks were however able to salvage some parts that were still edible. I enjoyed the meat, but my fellow Prepites were unimpressed, and I benefited from their reluctance.

One day as I was walking around the camp aimlessly, I came to the little yard behind Kitchen One and found a man with a meat grinder, carefully grinding peanuts into peanut butter. I talked to him for a while, hoping that I might be lucky enough to get a lick, but it wasn't to be my lucky day.

After breakfast, the teachers felt that we needed to be taught how to be 'regular', so we were sent off to the communal toilets to empty our bowels. This practice was faithfully followed, with, in some case, lifelong benefits in 'regularity'. Every morning, when we returned to our rooms, we would be asked by the teacher on duty, "Did you go?" and if we replied in the negative, we were told to "Go and try again", which we did, usually with positive results.



The camp toilets were emptied into a cesspool which was accessed each day by some Chinese farmers who took the contents in wooden buckets carried on a pole across their shoulders – "honey buckets" - to their fields to fertilize the vegetable crops. This was an excellent and natural recycling process. One of the children in the camp fell in to one of these cesspools due to some tragic mischance. He survived, and the worst long term result of his accident was that he was from then on known as "Cesspool Kelly".

While walking up one of the main streets of the camp I was shown "the very spot" where a young man had fallen from a tree and been killed just the day before.

Bringing death closer to home, was the accident that killed one of the boys in the Chefoo Boys' School. He had been with the others for the morning roll call near the hospital where they lived, and had jumped up to touch a low electric wire that had been loosened in the wind – possibly as a dare. Unfortunately it was very much alive and he was electrocuted.

To an eight or nine year old death was fascinating, repelling and scary all at the same time. When one of the nuns died, she was laid out in the small building that served as a morgue not far from the hospital. My curiosity led me there one day, and as no one was around, I climbed in the broken window and stood and looked at her for quite a while. Later they had an official viewing of the body, and I queued up with the rest and had another look.

Eric Liddell the Olympic runner of "Chariots of Fire" fame was an internee in Weih sien. He spoke at one of Chefoo School church services and told us about the famous episode in 1924 when he would not run in an Olympic race because it was to be held on a Sunday. He was a

truly great man and in my mind was a true hero. Unfortunately he also died in the camp of a brain tumour, just months before the end of the War. In 2002, together with my brother Frank, I went to Weifang, as the town is now called. Today it is a city of some millions of people and is internationally famous as the world kite centre. We found the old camp site which is now the No. 2 Middle School and the only buildings still standing were a couple of the houses where the Japanese had been quartered, and the hospital. But in a position just behind where the church used to be, and next to the former front gate was an “Eric Liddell Memorial Garden”, which was locked up behind a wall with a moon gate. We were able to get access to it and take some pictures. One night we were woken up and called out to a roll call in the middle of the night as someone had rung the bell which graced the top of Block 23. We were kept outside until the Japanese were satisfied that no one had escaped. But on another occasion a couple of men did escape over the wall and joined with Government forces outside the camp until the end of the war. They were able to keep the Chinese Government in Chongqing up to date with information about the camp. At the end of the War they came back in with the American liberators and reported some of their adventures.

[Return to Index](#)

The following pages contain the only letters remaining of those I sent from concentration camp.

Notice reference
to Eric Liddell's
death

Feb. 25th 1945

COMMUNICATIONS

Approved by the Commandant.....

FROM (Name in full) ARTHUR RAYMOND MOORE
 (Nationality) BRITISH No. 3/25
 (Address) C.A.C. WEIHSIEN
SUNG

TO (Name in full) PERCY MOORE
 (Nationality) BRITISH
 (Address) NANCHENG, S.H.

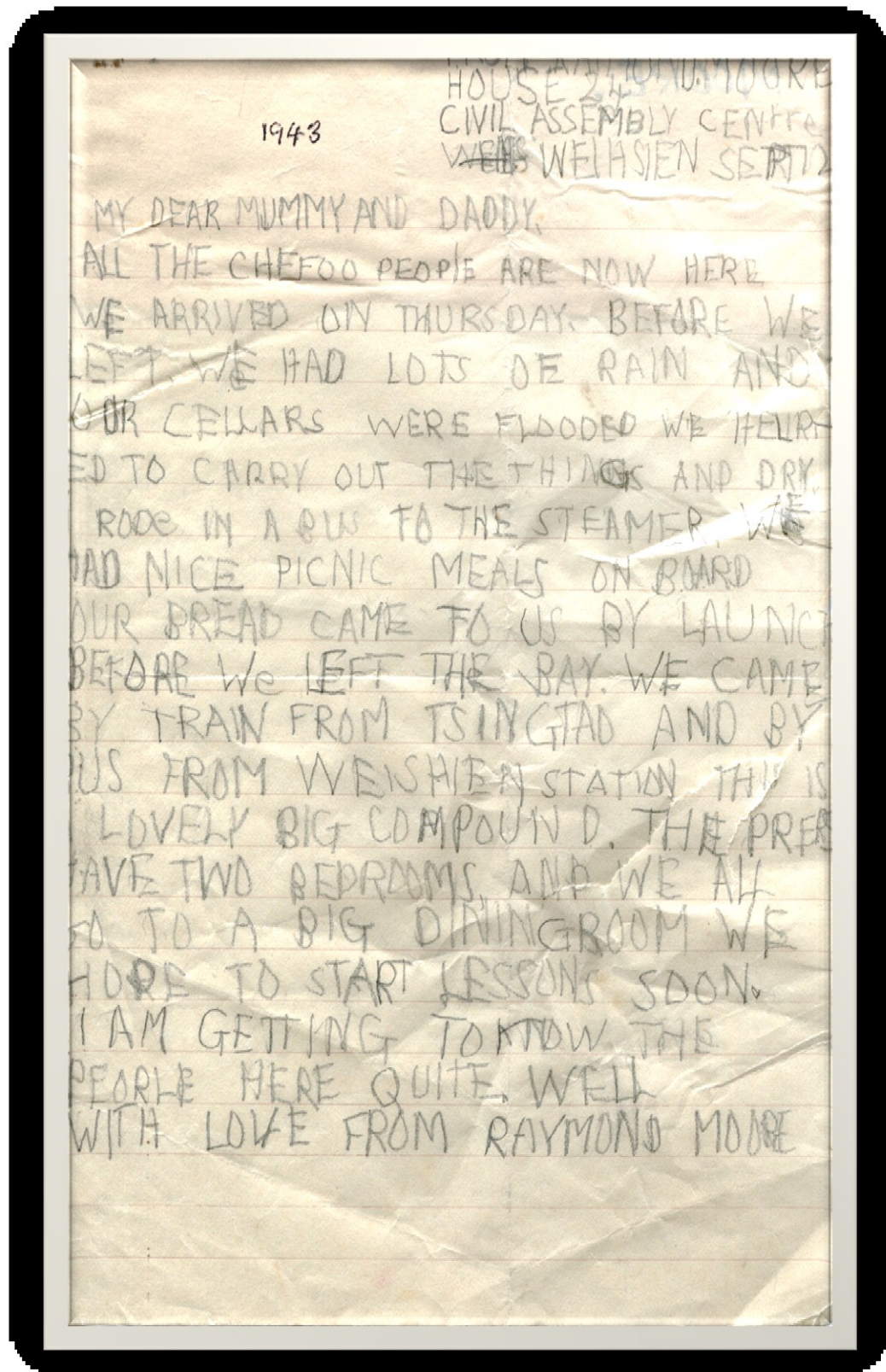
MESSAGE

DEAR MUMMY AND DADDY I HOPE
 YOU ARE ALL WELL WE ALL RECEIVED
 RED CROSS PARCELS IN THEM WE HAD
 DIFFERENT KINDS OF JAM AND CHEESE, BUTTER
 CHOCOLATE, MILK, SUGAR, COFFEE, RAISINS, ETC.
 FOR OURS WE HAVE TO HAVE COMPETITIONS
 AND FOR "THINKING DAY" WE HAD TO MAKE
 FLAGS SOME PEOPLE HAVE SHEPHERD
 PIPES AND CAN PLAY QUITE A LOT OF
 TUNES ON THEM. MR ERIC LIDDELL
 DIED ON WEDNESDAY NIGHT SO MR
 MARTIN IS TAKING OVER GAMES LOVE FAIR

Date Feb 25 1945 Signature Raymond

(Message must be typed or plainly written in block letters)

(If message is not legible, it may not be transmitted)



WEIHSIEN, CIVIL ASSEMBLY CENTRE, WEIH & IEN,

SHANGTUNG, NORTH CHINA. (山東省濰縣敵國人集團生活所)

1. SENDER.

NAME. Raymond Moore

ADDRESS. Block 24 Civil Assembly Centre Weihsien

2. MESSAGE.

I'm playing in a football match against the Weihsien
Cubs. I am a forward. I sometimes see Jessie and Johnnie

Andrew. Uncle lent me a lovely bed. One night we went
A
to a concert and saw Alice Through The Looking Glass.

The people were dressed up. I like the food here. We
have doughnuts, eggs every morning, cocoa every afternoon
Miss Young makes us Sunday cake. We buy peanuts and
fruit from the canteen. We have Sunday School and I am
in Adjutant Buist's class. We have a stove in our
dormitory. Lots of love to you all.

3. ADDRESSEE.

NAME. MR P. MOORE

STREET.

LOCALITY. CHENG KU.

COUNTY. SHE.

COUNTRY.

CIVIL ASSEMBLY CENTRE.

WEI HSIEN. OCT. 24

DEAR MUMMY AND DADDY,

I AM VERY WELL. WE HAVE JUST
HAD SUNDAY SCHOOL WITH OTHER CHILDREN. SOME OF OUR
TEACHERS HAVE BEEN VERY KIND AND MADE US DOUGHNUTS
AND PANCAKES ON A STOVE OUTSIDE. WE HAVE APPLES AND
PERSIMMONS. WE HAVE LOTS OF GAMES TO PLAY, CRICKET, FOOTBALL
AND RUGGER, AS WELL AS CUBS. WE DO DRILL EXERCISES TO
A GRAMOPHONE EVERY MORNING OUTSIDE OUR HOUSE, AS WE DID
IN CITEFOO. I AM IN LOWER I CLASS NOW.

WITH LOTS OF LOVE FROM

RAYMOND MOORE.

10 Freedom!

Inevitably the end of the War came. There had been gossip about the War being over, but no one knew for sure what was happening. At times planes had been seen flying very high overhead, and people speculated whether they might be American planes. Then on 17 August 1945, about 9:30 am, I heard a plane circle the camp. I rushed out to see what was happening and could see the front silhouette of a B24 bomber coming towards the camp at a low altitude. And then parachutes started blossoming out below the plane.

There was no doubt, this was the most exciting day of my life. I was 10½ years old and for the first time since December 1941, a month before my 7th birthday, I was going to be free. Seven parachutes floated to the ground outside the camp. The whole camp, all 1500 internees, or so it seemed, rushed down the incline to the main entrance and through the gate, past the Japanese guards who were still standing there with their rifles and bayonets, but obviously unsure how to react. What did it matter? Out in the fields we found the 7 Americans, wary, with pistols drawn, sheltering behind the Chinese grave mounds. To us they were instant hero's. They were carried by some of the men on their shoulders into the camp. They walked past the Japanese guards and soon took charge and had things sorted out peacefully with the Japanese. From now on they were in charge, and we were prisoners no longer. We were free.

Here is how a report described the Duck Team's mission. It is interesting that the exact location of the camp was not actually known until the last few minutes before they parachuted down to free us.

17 AUGUST. The Duck team in a B-24 arrived over the target of Weihsien at approximately 0930 hours. Owing to the very scanty photographic and other information with which they had been provided, they could not immediately locate the Civilian Assembly Camp where the 1500 Allied civilians were interned. A sweep was made over the area at approximately 2000 feet and, as no fire was drawn, subsequent flights were made around the area at lower altitudes. Major Staiger, commanding the Duck team, knew only that the internees were held in a compound some way outside of Weihsien, but from the air several locations would have answered to this description. Finally when the B-24 was down to around 500 feet, a compound was located in which hundreds of people were collected, waving up at the plane. It could therefore be presumed that this was the objective sought.

In the course of the circling an air-strip had been noted below located not far from the internment camp. A conference now took place between Major Staiger and the pilot of the plans as to whether a landing should be attempted. Major Staiger finally decided against this course owing to the danger that the field might be mined. Also as the reception of the mission by the Japanese was far from sure, Major Staiger decided to go through with the original plan of jumping. Thus, if the worst came to the worst, the loss in men and equipment would be minimized. Accordingly the B-24 dropped down to about 450 feet and the Duck team bailed out.



By the end of the War, our caloric intake was very low, and so it was with great excitement that over the next few days tonnes of supplies were dropped by parachute just outside the camp. Because the loads were too heavy for the parachutes, many of the drums broke open and the canned peaches and chewing gum were scattered over the ground. At least those were the two items that I noticed and gorged myself on, with some dire results. There were other items such as army field rations issued to each of us and when we opened them we found that they contained not only chocolate and biscuits, but also cigarettes.

I had only ever seen cigarettes in the mouths of strangers as none of the missionaries smoked. So I couldn't resist this forbidden fruit and escaped to one of the guard towers, now unmanned, and climbed up the stairs and sat in a corner and tried my first cigarette. I knew nothing about drawback and wondered what was so attractive about them.

We children and some of the older people followed the Americans around wherever they went, and on one of these "hero sessions", while trailing along after one of the Americans, I was jumping over a bench and caught my arm between the back rails of the bench. "Ouch!" However, such was my excitement and awe at being in the orbit of this newly discovered star, that I ignored it for the rest of the day. In bed that night I began to feel the pain, and late that evening I was taken to the hospital, where they were ascertained that I had a greenstick fracture of the radius and my arm was placed in a plaster cast.



A few days later, six of us children whose parents lived in the west of China, were flown out in a bomber which was stacked full of parachutes which had been used in the supply drop. As there were no seats of any kind on board, we spent the trip lolling about on parachutes in comfort, I with my arm in plaster – a wounded warrior.

We were free at last.

[Return to Index](#)

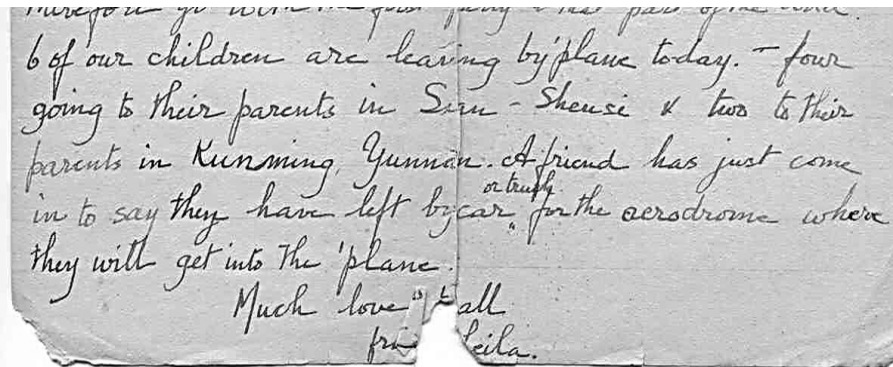
11 Long Way Home

We were going home.

Arrangements were being made. For the majority of them this meant getting on to a train to the coastal city of Qingdao, from where they would be catching ships back to their home countries. But for me and the four Taylor children and David Allen, "home" was in Western China where our parents had seen out the War in what had been "Free China". So, about three or four weeks after the end of the War, We six were bundled on to an American transport plane carrying used parachutes back to Xi'an. As there were no seats we found the parachutes an acceptable alternative.

Arriving in Xi'an we were taken to billets at the American barracks where we stayed for a couple of days. I had more new experiences here which generated tastes that stayed with me for the rest of my life. I was given a tube of toothpaste. Up to this time I had been using soap to brush my teeth. Many years later the process of brushing my teeth with real toothpaste remained an evocative experience. Coca Cola was on tap, and I had an immediate liking for it, which also remained for the rest of my life. In the evenings we were taken to the outdoor picture theatre, where we sat on canvas director's chairs and watched cartoons for the first time. This launched my lifelong love for cartoons, especially the simpler Mickey Mouse type.

The four Taylor children were picked up from Xi'an by their parents and taken to their mission station. David Allen and I were put on an American Air force plane and taken to Kunming in the south, where David's parents were stationed, but a long way from Hanzhong in South Shaanxi where my parents were. Hanzhong is about 220 kilometres south of Xi'an while Kunming is almost 2,000 kilometres further south again.



Why was I mistakenly taken so far out of the way when my family was waiting impatiently to hear that they could pick me up from Xi'an? There is a clue in this letter from Leila Williams, a wardrobe mistress with the

school, writing to her sisters in Australia:

Her mention of "two (being sent) to their parents in Kunming Yunnan" refers to David Allen and me. David's parents were certainly there, but my parents were a comparatively short distance from Xi'an and I should never have been sent so far to the south. So the mistake seems to have originated from someone in Weihsien having an inaccurate knowledge of our parents' locations.

At this stage, my parents heard from another missionary friend who wrote to them saying, "There was great excitement last night when the four Taylor children walked in. Your Raymond would have been with them, but he has been taken on to Kunming with a fractured wrist."

I was flown from Xi'an to Kunming in a bomber called "The Homesick Angel". Before getting on board, the navigator gave me a small block of chocolate, which I quickly devoured. The unfortunate consequence of this was that I became airsick on the trip and, because I was sitting on a pull down seat just behind the pilots and opposite the navigator, he ended up with that chocolate and more, decorating his uniform. He took it very well, and seemed to hold no grudges.

At Kunming I was taken to the local CIM mission home. Here I stayed the night, and slept in a seemingly deserted wing of the building.

Finally my parents received a telegram from the missionary in charge at Kunming saying, "Raymond here safe and well. Will send on to Hanzhong or Xi'an as soon as transport is available." Transport became available almost immediately, once more per kind favour of the American air force, and I was returned to Xi'an on another bomber, minus my cabin trunk of precious belongings, which I never saw again.

Back in Xi'an I was left at the airport and there seemed to be no one there to pick me up. Fortunately there happened to be a friend of my parents from another mission at the airport who saw me wandering around and asked me who I was. When he discovered that I was the son of his missionary friends, he took me to his home to stay until my father could come and pick me up.

A couple of days later, my father was able to make his way to Xi'an and catch up with the son whom he had not seen for five years. The reunion with my father was far from world shattering. I was in bed when he arrived and he came in to the room to meet me. My instinctive reaction was to duck under the bedclothes and hide from him.

With the help of a British army convoy, and in spite of landslides across the road, we eventually arrived in Hanzhong. I walked up the path to the mission home and was greeted with great rejoicing by my mother and youngest brother and a little sister who I had never seen. My other brother came home from a boarding school in India some weeks later.

So I was home and we were a family again. Or were we? Amy wrote home to Australia about this meeting, "There was Raymond, a big eleven year old walking up the path. What a reunion after five long years. But where was my little six year old whom I knew so well? I felt as if I had two boys, one whom I knew and understood, and one whom I hardly knew at all."

[Return to Index](#)

12 Free Range Eleven Year Old

When Alan came home soon after my peripatetic homecoming, it was the first time that the six members of the family had ever been together. Frank was a baby when I went to Chefoo, and Dorothy was born in 1942. Amy's cry of "I had two boys, one whom I knew and understood, and one whom I hardly knew at all" was the warning that this family was heading for a dysfunctional future.

My relationship with my parents was uneasy. My father did not seem to know what to do with this almost teenager. Mostly he did nothing and, although he was at home for a good deal of the time, he made little or no eye contact with his eldest son, nor did he make any effort to communicate with or understand me.

For example, I was very interested to watch my father shaving in the morning. After all, I had not seen anyone shave since I was six. As I tentatively approached him in the bathroom, there was no greeting at all, and no indication whether I was welcome or not. He continued shaving with no acknowledgement of this curious eleven year old. Back in the bedroom, my mother was still in bed as my father had risen much earlier and made them both a cup of tea over a small pressure stove. They had then both spent an hour or two separately studying their Bibles and praying. My father took copious notes in his fine, neat handwriting. My mother stayed in bed and, when we children came in we were able to climb into bed with her for a while. Frank would immediately snuggle up beside her, but I sat on the bed, unsure of whether I should show such intimacy to this mother whom I hardly knew. This same problem with intimacy and touch appeared in church on Sundays also. My father would be preaching while we sat in the pews with our mother and the rest of the Chinese congregation. Frank always sat beside our mother and she would stroke his arms or draw pictures on his back. I longed for this kind of attention, but I don't think my mother knew how to relate to me at the age of eleven - or any age.

My father was the Superintendent of the Mission's work in the area, and this involved preaching and keeping the books as well as oversight and development of the work. My efforts to get his attention were almost always met with disinterest, covered up by a seeming concentration on his work. I accompanied my father when he went to fix the generator which supplied their electricity; I tried to help mend punctures on the bicycle my father used, but could only watch; I sat in my father's study while he was working and I remained in the big chair without speaking or being spoken to.

My mother meanwhile was trying to take care of two very unsettled boys who had come back from boarding school and who had both had experience of the War in some way. The CIM Boarding School did not reopen until the end of 1946 so she had to shoulder this burden for almost a year. There were times when I saw my mother in tears of frustration when both Alan and I ignored her or rebelled against her discipline.

She knew she had to take on the task of schooling us for a few months, but this was almost impossible with all her other tasks as well. She did manage to get us into the dining room one day and sat us down with a Bible each, and said that we could not leave the room until we had learnt Psalm 90. Any other efforts at educating me while I was home for that free ranging year have been forgotten.

The cook produced very acceptable western style meals, and every now and then he would make a Chinese meal, usually mien (noodles). Mien was the staple diet in this area rather than rice, and he would make the mien himself. Rolling a large sheet of pastry out on the big kitchen table, he would then fold it over and over and slice it into strings of pasta, not unlike the Italian fettuccine. We loved this meal and the mien was always served up on a table at the side of the dining room in a large basin where we helped ourselves. Alan and I would compete for the record of number of bowls of mien consumed in one meal. We tied at six bowls each.

For me it was a year of wonderful freedom to roam where I wished. Most of my excursions were accomplished alone, in keeping with the practice I had built up in the boarding school. The Mission Compound was situated within the city wall that surrounded the older part of Hanzhong, but there was a significant population living outside the city wall. Many of my solo excursions took me to the wall itself which was wide enough at the top to drive a large truck along it. Inside the wall, between it and the Mission Compound there was in fact quite a lot of land that was not built on but used for farming. This allowed me to stop and watch the farmers at work with their centuries old implements.

Not far from the Mission Compound were the town common and the prison. Both of these places held a fascination for me. The prison for obvious reasons as I watched prisoners being taken in and out of the huge gates in the high surrounding wall. The common, because it was where a lot of the town celebrations were held and I was fascinated as I watched the jugglers, stilt men, acrobats and story tellers. There were lots of flags and red paper creations and always, firecrackers. Whetting my appetite were numerous stalls selling hot food and breads. I loved the Chinese people and being in this atmosphere with thousands of Chinese around me celebrating a special occasion was exciting.

Outside the Mission Compound and just across a small creek, was one of the American barracks for their airmen. I often went over to see the Americans and was befriended readily by them. I went into their quarters and was fascinated by the pinup girls that adorned their walls. I was uncertain whether I should show any interest in them or not, so I kept my glances until I thought the American wasn't watching.

The Americans had some pets. One was a monkey which resided mainly on top of a fence to which it was tied. Also tied to the same fence was a pet dog which spent most of its time making the monkey jump from side to side of the fence while it ran back and forth through a hole in the fence.

They also had a pet bear which was kept outside the Barracks area near the creek. Here the owner of the bear, one of the Americans, would wrestle with it. This was no mean feat because the bear towered over him as it wrestled the man on its hind legs.

There was a Chinese army hospital outside the city wall where I went and soon befriended one of the chief doctors there, Doctor Gao. My visits there were memorable for a number of reasons. First of all, Dr. Gao allowed me into the operating theatre to watch some operations. After watching various operations, I was invited in to watch a brain operation. But just before it was to start, they decided that there were too many people in the operating theatre and I was one of the first to be evicted, much to my disappointment.

The Chinese Army owned a stable of Tibetan ponies, and Dr. Gao took me riding a few times. He also took me out once on the back of a tray truck, some miles away to collect a prisoner. It was dark when we returned. The prisoner and I and one of the soldiers rode in the back, standing and holding on to a bar running across the back of the cabin. I found the prisoner intriguing and not at all frightening as we shared the spectacle of sheet lightning in the distance lighting up the darkness.

This was the first year since 1941 that I had been free of prison walls, and I made the most of my newfound freedom. But my personal walls remained intact.

It was almost exactly twelve months after I had arrived home from concentration camp, when I, together with Alan and Frank, set off to Shanghai where the Mission was reopening the boarding school. The family dynamics were still no better, and my wall which I had built around myself was as strong as ever.

[Return to Index](#)

13 Shanghai Boarding School

At the end of 1946, the Chefoo School reinvented itself in Shanghai. We were housed in the CIM headquarters which consisted of two large buildings separated from each other by lawn and gardens. One of the buildings was used as a storage room for missionaries' belongings and for accommodation for the staff, and for missionaries who were passing through to their stations or going home to their home countries.

The other building was used by the business department and also had a meeting hall on the ground floor which was usually called "The Prayer Room". It was in this building that the school was set up again as a boarding school.



The China Inland Mission was a "Faith Mission" and did not advertise for finances. Prayer and personal devotion were high on the agenda for both the missionaries and the residents of the boarding school. So the Prayer Room was an important part of the structure of the Mission Headquarters.

This Prayer Room, which Bev and I visited in 1999 (Picture shows me standing at the door to the Prayer Room) also played an important part in the lives of our family.

My parents were married there in 1934, and in 1947, after hearing an inspiring talk given to the children, I went to this place alone and gave my life to the Lord.

The school was given the top two floors of the building and it was soon set up as the new Chefoo School.

On our 1999 visit, the building was the main Children's Hospital for Shanghai. After we entered the property I was able very quickly to identify the Prayer Room. We managed to persuade a staff member to get a key to the Prayer Room and inside found that it was little changed from 1947. I took some footage with my video camera. Unfortunately it soon became apparent that we were not welcome there as music was turned up loud and the staff member who let us in was obviously in trouble. We left gracefully and went around to the outside of the Prayer Room and took some more pictures.

Once known as "The Paris of the East," Shanghai in the early 20th century laid claim to being the most glamorous, decadent and cultured city in China—and all of Asia. Unlike Beijing, Shanghai's history does not date far back. Until 1842 it was a sleepy fishing village. Shanghai, in Chinese, means on the sea. Its advantageous location, on the banks of the Yangtze (Chang Jiang) River delta, close to the silk and tea producing regions of China, soon propelled it to prominence.

The 1842 Opium Wars are central to Shanghai's origins as a cosmopolitan destination. To even out the trade imbalance between England and China, England began importing Indian opium to China, against the wishes of the Qing imperial court. Unable to stop the opium trade, which was quickly affecting every social class in China, the Qing declared war on opium traders. The English quickly won the war and as indemnity the Qing were required to open

MOONDANI KYEMA

Shanghai to foreign merchants. I think that this must be one of the most shameful incidents of British colonial history.

After the war, Britain declared Shanghai a treaty port, and the sleepy village was suddenly transformed into a cosmopolitan destination. The British, French and Americans took up autonomous concession zones in the city, each of which was independent of Chinese law.

Shanghai became an important industrial center and trading port in China. During these prosperous times, Shanghai gained a reputation for being one of the world's most cultured and sophisticated cities. The rich, foreign *tai pans* led self-indulgent lives in casinos, cabarets and brothels. Between 1931 and 1941 Shanghai became a haven for Jews fleeing Nazi terror. As other countries closed their doors to immigrants in the lead up to the Second World War, over 20,000 Jewish refugees found asylum in Shanghai. Its population after the War in 1947 was about 4½ million. (In 2003 it was over 20 million.)

This was the Shanghai that welcomed me back to school.

These pictures of the Bund and Nanjing Road show the British influence on the architecture. The top two pictures show Shanghai's famous waterfront embankment, the Bund, with its historic British colonial architecture, much of it preserved today.

The bottom two are of the main shopping street Nanking (Nanjing) Road in the 1940's (bottom right) and today (bottom left)



I settled in to the boarding school life easily. There were the usual classes during the day and homework sitting at our desks in silence, except for the sound of someone practicing the piano with monotonous repetition. There were also outings such as the time the school went by bus to a park in another part of the city, and my bladder did not comply with my expectations. I didn't use the public toilet when given the chance because I was afraid that I would be left behind. On the way home in the bus I felt the pressure building up and, forecasting what was about to happen, I stepped down on to the step by the closed exit door. It wasn't long before I felt the warm fluid trickling inside my shorts, down my leg and on to the floor. Although I did my utmost to appear as though I had nothing to do with the gathering pool on the floor of the bus, I was still taken aside by one of the teachers when we got home, who suggested to me that she would get me a clean pair of shorts. I think I was handled very delicately in an embarrassing situation.

One day the teachers gave each us a small sum of money and organized an excursion down Nanking (Nanjing) Road, the main shopping center. I was twelve and this was the first time that I had handled money for myself. The choices that confronted me in the glorious paradise of shops made any decision almost impossible, but I opted for a fountain pen which I treasured for a long time.

Another pleasant experience came about when I was invited by some friends of the school to stay with them for a weekend. (In retrospect I have often wondered whether this was our uncle George Findlay Andrew) They owned a very comfortable apartment in a block of apartments overlooking a park. The apartment boasted a bath, and the couple offered me the use of it, which I accepted with alacrity. After running the bath for a short while, I asked how much water I could use. They assured me I could use as much as I liked. So the bath was filled to its capacity and I enjoyed a long, indulgent, but rare soak.

I liked Shanghai, as the large city provided an acceptable contrast to the beach town of Chefoo.

The school soon outgrew the premises as our numbers grew and the Mission Headquarters became busier as they recovered from the War, and many missionaries returned from their home countries.

Once it became known that a new school was needed, the American Church Mission offered to sell the Kuling American School at a nominal price - \$1 gold. It had remained empty from before the War and needed some repairs, but was situated in the center of China in Kuling (now spelt Guling, but I will stick to the old spelling for nostalgia's sake), a popular mountain holiday resort for foreigners and Chinese alike.

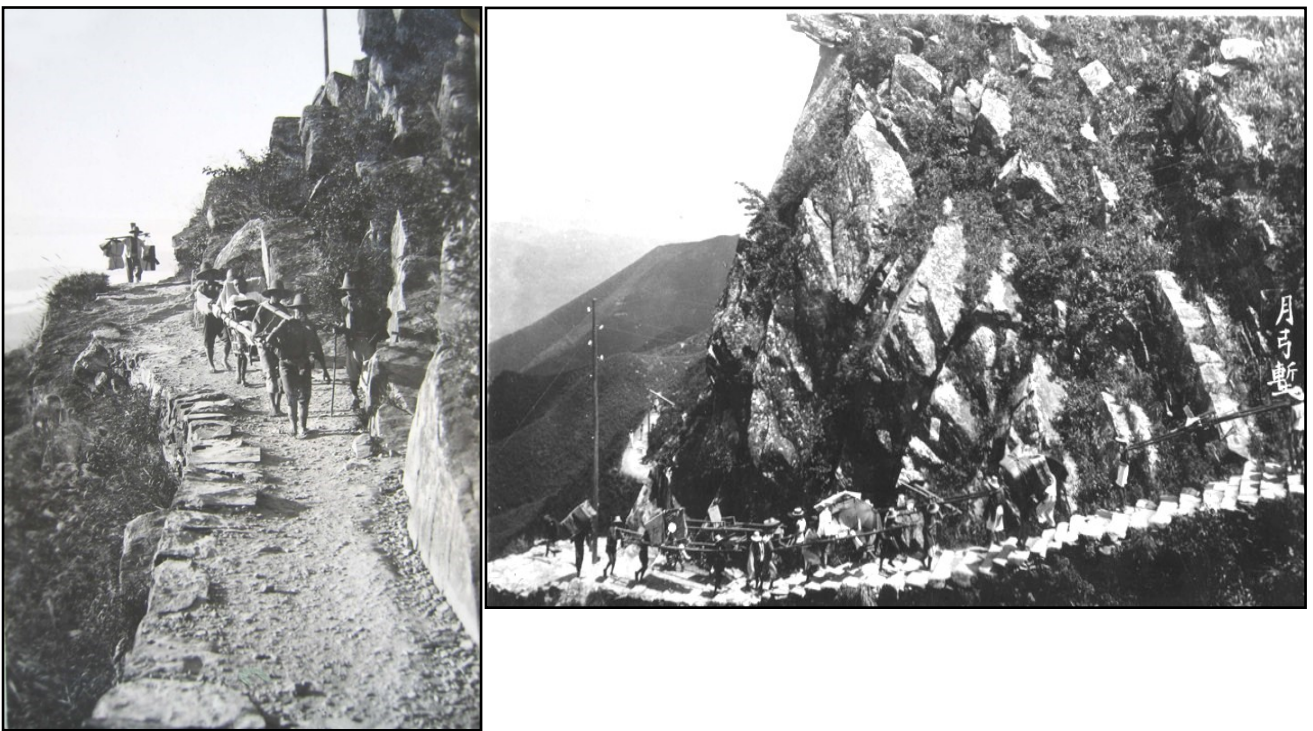
So in December 1947 the 119 children and staff made our way to Kuling. One lot flew to a place near the foot of the mountain but I and others traveled by a slower means of transport and cruised up the Yangzi River by ferry. On my visit in 1999 with Bev, I really wanted to have another trip on a Yangzi ferry. So after staying in Kuling for a couple of days we traveled by Yangzi ferry to Shanghai to replicate the journey in reverse.

[Return to Index](#)

14 Kuling Boarding School

After two or three days on the Yangzi river boat, I and my fellow travellers arrived at Jiujiang which is about 750 kilometres from Shanghai.

Getting off the ferry at Jiujiang, we boarded a "bus" which took us to the foot of Lushan Mountain where Kuling is situated. There was no motor road but only a foot track up the mountain, so Chinese porters were hired to carry our luggage on bamboo poles across their shoulders. Some of the older adults, who were unable to climb the mountain, travelled in sedan chairs carried by four porters. We walked, and the climb was certainly taxing, especially when we came to "the thousand steps".



Finally at the top of the mountain we arrived at the village of Kuling and after walking a couple of kilometres further, arrived at our new home. It was situated on the side of the mountain running down from the road, and a small stream could be seen at the bottom of the valley.

There were two large buildings and the Prep School had the top floor of one of the buildings. At this stage I was one of the "older boys", and we were located on the next floor down, and the one below which was the ground floor, was the class room and general purpose floor. In the basement there was the kitchen and dining room. The other building housed the older girls and the hospital. Because it was on a mountain, the only flat area was the playing field which had been flattened out below one of the main buildings and a couple of tennis courts just below that. The whole property was linked from top to bottom by Pennsylvania Avenue. This was an unmade road wide enough to take a cart up and down.

The magic of the place lay in two things. Firstly there was the magnificent scenery. The teachers gave the children the freedom to leave the school grounds so long as they reported to a teacher where they were going, and also that they went in threes. The idea behind this was that if one person was injured, one would stay with him and the other would go for help. We had great delight in exploring the hills and valleys in every direction. We climbed up to Monkey Ridge, and could see back over the school nestling in its idyllic position. Walking a little further over the ridge we were in Russian Valley, which had housed a lively population



of Russian holiday makers in times past. It was of special interest to me because the grand houses which had been built many years before were now in ruins and what more could an adventurous and imaginative boy want.

Further afield we could walk over Russian Bridge and down to the Three Trees, one of which had been there for 1500 years. The priests in the temple alongside kept an eye on the people coming and going. Down past the three trees we came to Emerald Grotto and the Three Graces, a triple waterfall on the lower reaches of the same creek that went past the school. If we had all day to explore, we could do the more strenuous walks to Lands End which looked down on the Yangzi valley and the river itself in the distance, or to Lion's Leap which looked down the other side of the mountain to Poyang Lake on the plain.

The second magical quality of the place was the winters. Every winter it snowed, and as winter in the northern hemisphere is over Christmas, I experienced white Christmases for the three years I was there. On cold winter nights, I would cuddle down into my bed which was

placed just below a window. Once in bed, I would move as little as possible, because the sheets were still freezing except where my body created a warm spot. Many mornings I would wake up and see the delicate paintings left by Jack Frost on the window above me. And when the snow fell in the night, I would wake up to see the snow banked against the lower part of the windowpane, and look further to see the whole landscape transformed magically into a white wonderland



As soon as possible I would race outside, bundled up in warm clothes, but still with tingling nose and cheeks, and wonder at the silent, white, uncharted world that had been created by the snow. Like some Arctic explorer I enjoyed being the first to walk in the virgin snow and leave my pioneering track for other less venturesome travellers to follow. I don't think I ever lost my sense of wonder at how silent the world was after it had snowed. Also before it snowed the weather was often biting cold, but after it had snowed it seemed to be much warmer.

Later I would join in the fun and games as the older children got the sleds and toboggans out and sped down Pennsylvania Avenue, past the main school buildings and off the five foot drop on to the playing field. This drop had been carefully ramped up with snow so that sleds and toboggans could travel safely on to the playing field. Because of the speed that was built up, a turning ramp had to be built on the far side of the playing field so that the sled or toboggan would turn safely and slow down without hitting the stone wall and do too much damage to the rider.

A white Christmas always cast its spell over me. As an avid reader I had built up a powerful picture in my mind of what a traditional Christmas should be like. We practiced all the well

known Christmas carols, and some of the older children would put on our heavy coats and scarves, and with our breath condensing in the cold, we would set out to visit half a dozen unsuspecting nearby houses where we would sing carols outside their front doors and usually receive a warm welcome and a season's greetings from the occupants.

There was excitement early on Christmas morning to find that Santa had left a stocking full of fruit, tennis balls and small toys, and then to walk through the snow to the old church where we had a Christmas service and didn't have to dream of a white Christmas because there it was all around us.

Even as a twelve to fourteen year old there was a stupendous sense of awe, not only at the formidable magic of this new world that had been created through a covering of snow, but also amazed and fascinated as I observed the winter dead trees which now had found new life with snow along the top of every branch and icicles hanging from below to form nature's Christmas trees - far more beautiful than any trees that had been taken indoors and decorated.



The Chefoo School always had a full program of leisure activities and sports. There were the annual athletics as well as a choice of a number of other sporting activities. The list included soccer, softball, hockey, tennis and cricket. There was also an active program for scouts and guides, and a lot of wonderful places to hike.

Jiang Kaishek had built a holiday residence for his wife in Kuling, and one day I met them. It happened like this. On one of our hikes three of us were wandering along a pathway just enjoying the freedom of being able to do something that was not under the watchful eye of our teachers. We saw a snake beside the road and with some excitement were able to kill it. We had just completed this gruesome task when along came a small group of Chinese people, who stopped to see what we were so excited about. It didn't take us long to realise that two of these people were Jiang and Madame Jiang. She spoke excellent English and talked to us for a while before both groups moved on in their own directions.

When the communists crossed the Yangzi and became our new government in 1948, There were a couple of nights when the Government forces under Jiang Kaishek fled south and the communist forces had not yet arrived, creating a hiatus when lawlessness could abound. Fortunately nothing happened to us in that time. However on both nights we heard the persistent clang of cymbals and the crash of drums, accompanied by bursts of firecrackers, as local people did what they always did to keep evil spirits away. Our new masters took over with little change to our routine except that we had Miss Mao come in and teach compulsory Chinese to all of us, and we were more restricted in our ability to roam around the mountain.

We did hear that the heads of some “brigands” had been displayed for a number of days in the main street of the village.

David Allen who now lives in the United States, was my contemporary, and kept a daily diary while he was in Kuling. I will quote a few entries from his diary to give you an idea of other activities in which I participated.

- *15 Feb 49: Raymond shoots arrow 100 yards on field.*
- *28 Mar 49: Monthly Holiday: Raymond Moore, James Muir, Christopher Rowe, Ridley Smith and I hike to Stone Bridge, Three Trees, Emerald Grotto and back to school.*
- *6 Apr 49: Paul Grant, Raymond Moore and Dave Allen hike to Russian Valley.*
- *10 Sep 49: This week at the concert we had two teams who were to compete against each other. There was the Walking Encyclopedias against the Perpetual Brainstorms. I was on the Perpetual Brainstorms. The Walking Encyclopedias had Elizabeth Edwards, Wanda Hazelton, Joy Simmonds, Esther Wilhelm, David Simpkin, Jimmy Muir, Paul Grant and Raymond Moore. The Perpetual Brainstorms Had Felicity Houghton, Marie Crapuchettes, Josephine houghton, Katie Weymeyer, John Pearce, Keith Butler, and Myself. We were given questions that required an answer. It was a test of the mental ability of both teams. The score was 35 - 30 our favor. Mr. Martin would ask a question like "What or who uses a theodolite" and "In what game does offside come" and "In what instrument does space-bar come?" "a space-bar comes not in a car or a bicycle but in a" We had a good time and so did those standing around. I learned quite a lot from that quiz program.*

When our birthdays came around we were seated at a separate table at the evening meal (supper) and there would be a birthday cake and presents. We could invite whoever we wished to sit at our special table for the occasion. This entry indicates that, because Miss Stark's birthday was on the same date as mine, we were treated to a special evening celebration. My birthday is on 6 January, so David is mistaken about my birthday being on 2 January. Perhaps Miss Stark's birthday was on the 2nd.

- *6 Jan 1950: After supper all of us went up stairs and showered and dressed in our Sunday best for a special occasion. If you figure the day correctly you will see it is the 12th day after Christmas or the Epiphany. It happens to be Jan 2 was Raymond Moore and Miss B.Stark's birthday, so we had a celebration of the event. Those that were invited were the upper and lower 4ths upwards who lived in Bruce House and McCarthy house. Those that lived in other houses and were invited, didn't come. The girls were dressed up for the occasion in evening dresses. Some of them looked quite nice in them. Some were dressed in Indian costume while others wore long dresses that nearly touched the floor. We played some games and at the end we had some light refreshment.*
- *17 April 1950: After dinner there was the cricket ball throw heats. I just got into it with John Martin 1st, Charles Crapuchettes 2nd and me 3rd. Then in the afternoon we had the long jump and I did 15' 3 1/2" for the heats coming in first place. Next came*

Raymond Moore and then Simo. After this I had some practice at high jump but the most that I could do was 4 ft 3 inches which isn't very good.

- *30 June 1950: It rained hard in the night and then in the daytime was misty. We had a generally wet day. Mr. Lumsden is going to live on our floor so that he can get acquainted with us. As there was no room Jim Muir and Raymond had to move house. Paul moved to the verandah of one of the rooms where David Simmonds used to sleep and Raymond sleeps with him on a double decker because of the space.*

A traumatic event for all of us was the death of our Principal, Stanley Houghton while playing tennis.

- *17 July 1950: We started our exams. We did our Scripture, French I and Biology. The marks for the exams were not put up because the teachers were afraid that we would get too worried over our exams to do well. After the game in the afternoon I went for a swim and then I changed and went over to Rosalind's birthday party. *** After supper at prayers we heard of the death of Mr. Houghton.*** He had died with out pain from a cerebral hemorrhage of the brain and died nearly immediately. It was quite a blow to the Houghton's but God through his grace has comforted them. It was quite a shock to the Lower, Middle and Senior School. That night three carpenters were brought and they made Mr. Houghton's coffin by midnight. The coffin was very well made. The outside of it was covered with black silk and studded with gold studs. It was a very nice looking coffin.*
- *19 July 1950: Today Wednesday I got up at 6:00 o'clock and went and helped Miss Elliot, Miss Dickson and Miss Powell fix up Mr. Houghton's grave. Raymond, John Martin and John Pearce fixed ferns and Cypress around the grave for decoration.*

I still have vivid memories of this occasion as I had the 'privilege' of actually jumping down into the grave to line the bottom of the grave with ferns.

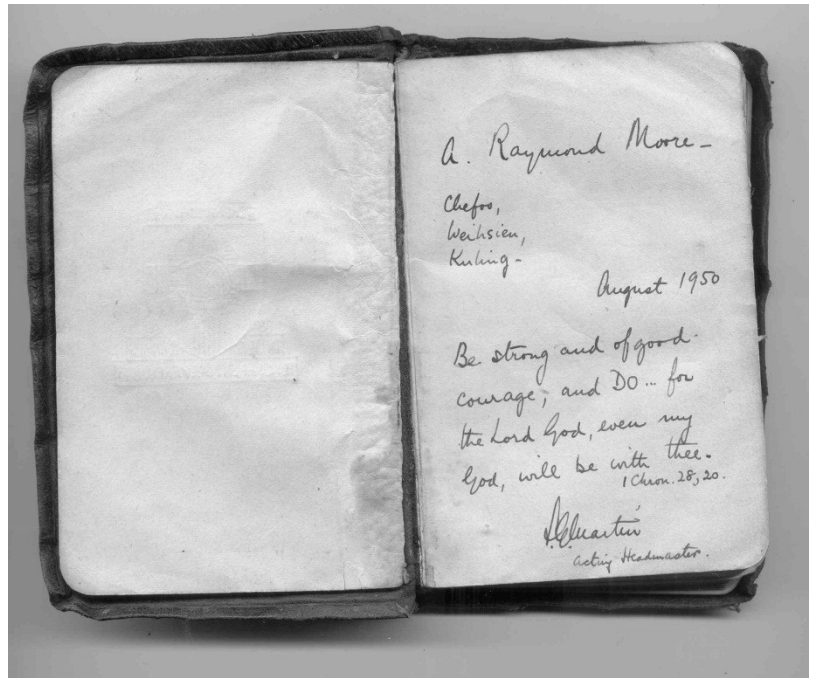
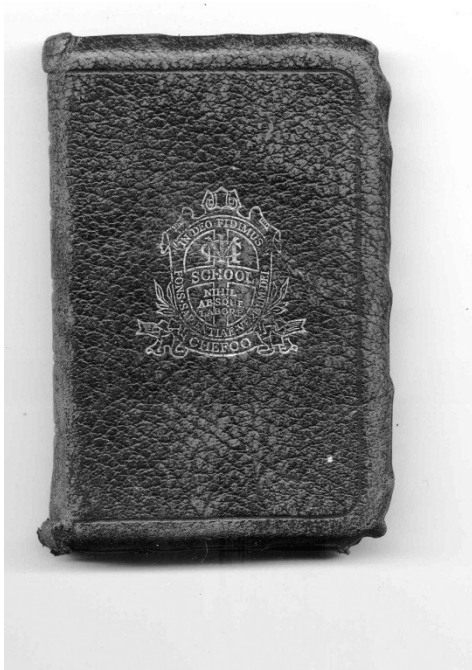
- *25 July 1950: In the evening those in the gym display went over to the gym. The girls had an ordinary gym lesson and then we gave our display on the horse and parallel bars. Those that were in the team were John Pearce and I; Raymond Moore and Paul Grant; David Simpkin and Bryan Taylor; Stanley Kane and Bruce Crapuchettes. We did things in pairs. After our display came the Third Form Girls with the Maypole. They maypoled and then the boys and girls in the upper part of the school had a try. We had a good time going around the pole.*

On 22 August 1950 I finally left Kuling, and in fact China. I would not come back again for 49 years.

- *22 August 1950: I got Raymond's autograph and then at 12:30 we had dinner. After dinner the school went to see Mr. and Mrs. Eaton, Paul and his two sisters and Raymond, Alan and Frank, go down the hill. We watched them go off from the tingtse at the Monument until they were out of sight and then we came home. Mr. Eaton said he would write to me sometime and that was encouraging. When I came back I went to the Library and read and then I helped Mrs Martin move some heavy objects into the*

room where Paul and Raymond used to sleep. After this I wrote up my diary and had some practice on the piano.

Before I left, I was given a very special gift. It had been the tradition in Chefoo to present school leavers with a small Bible with the school crest on the cover. This practice stopped when the school left Chefoo, but Mr. Martin had retained at least one of these presentation Bibles, and on my departure, as I was one of the few who had attended the original Chefoo, I was given this significant going away gift.



[Return to Index](#)

15 The Meaning of 'Liberation'

I listened to the monotonous clickety clack of the train wheels as they travelled along the twin rails of steel southward towards Hong Kong. Occasionally, when the wind was blowing the wrong way, specks of black soot flew through the window, some hitting my skin with surprising force. From time to time the haunting sound of the train whistle could be heard up front as we approached a crossing or to warn some villagers who were straying too close to the line. I had been nibbling on a piece of arrow root which we had been given by a friendly Chinese fellow traveller. My thoughts turned to what this trip really meant.

We were being expelled from China by the newly installed Communist regime and I was on my way to Australia. I looked out the window at the farmers working in the rice paddies, and the small villages with their rural family life continuing as normal in spite of the historical upheaval that had occurred in their country. Were those people now free? What did they feel about the communist "liberation"?

I loved China. This was my home. I loved these people who shared my home. The beautiful, lilting tones of the Mandarin dialect infiltrated gently into my subconscious. But I had been told by my teachers that these communist people were evil, and, as a 15 year old in a boarding school for missionaries' children, I had no other source of information. So we were on our way to Australia which I understood to be my "home country", but in my heart it was not so.

Five years previously at the end of the summer of 1945, I had been liberated from a Japanese Concentration camp, but then I had been overwhelmed with the excitement of the occasion and reveled in the feeling of being outside the camp walls that had enclosed us and restricted our movements for the past two or three years. There is that word 'liberated' again. What was I being liberated from this time? It felt more like I was being expelled rather than liberated.

As I thought about this I could see another 'liberation' that I was experiencing. Yes I had been liberated from the Japanese, and now I was being liberated from the Communists, but I was also being liberated from boarding school life. In Australia, I would be living with my parents and then in independent living when they went back to their missionary work. I would never be living in a boarding school again.

One of the reasons that I did not do my time in Concentration Camp very hard, was because it was really not a lot different to living in a boarding school. You got up when the bell went. You had meals at the same time every day. You listened for whistles and other means of telling you where you should be at various times of the day. Your movements were controlled. In boarding school you could not leave the compound without permission. In concentration camp you could not leave the compound at all. So my whole remembered life had been a kind of benevolent prison. And now I was on my way to freedom.

Freedom is a funny thing. It seems that when you are told you are free, you don't always feel free. And yet at other times when you don't seem to be free at all, you feel free. I had developed a means of finding freedom during those years of boarding school life when there was very little of my life that was private. I used to withdraw behind my wall. This was a place where I could be me, without the influence or expectations of the people around me. This was a good place – a safe place. It was a place where I felt good about myself. It was a place where I was isolated,

Later, when I got back to Australia, I became aware that, even in this free country, there were prisons of a different kind that I found myself in. They were prisons of circumstance, relationships or personal failure. Real freedom, when I found it, did not depend on what was happening outside, but came from within.

But right now, this train was taking me from Jiujiang to Guangzhou or Canton as we knew it then. Jiujiang was the town on the Yangzi River which was at the base of the Lushan Mountain where the village of Guling, and our school was situated. We three Moore boys were travelling with the three Grant children, in the care of Mr and Mrs Eaton, heading for Hong Kong.



The train eventually pulled in to the border crossing between China and Hong Kong.. Hong Kong was then British territory and we got off the train, lugging our few precious belongings behind us and walked to the bridge that spanned the river that separated China from Hong Kong. As we walked towards the bridge we were

watched by Communist guards with the red Chinese flag fluttering over them, with its five stars, representing China and its national minorities.

We walked across the old, unused railway bridge with our cases. This was a no man's land. Ahead of us was "freedom" and it was represented by some relaxed looking British soldiers smiling a welcome. Above them flew the Union Jack and I had an unexpected surge of emotion as I saw it stirring in the breeze. It represented freedom and friendliness and fair play. Over the bridge we were not wanted. Here we were wanted and welcomed.

[Return to Index](#)

16 Hong Kong - Ceylon - Australia

Coca Cola and movie cartoons had become embedded in my list of "Things I enjoy" at the end of the War, in Xi'an. In Hong Kong I was introduced to some more new experiences which were to form my preferences for future years.

As we stood just inside the border of the New Territories which belonged to Hong Kong on this hot summer day, and my emotions were unexpectedly stirred as I stood under the British flag, someone came with refreshments for us. These were in the form of cold bottles of orangeade with beads of water condensed on the outside. Refreshing? You could have offered me the most expensive drinks in the world and I would have refused them. This was heaven. This was Shangri la. This was ecstasy! To this day, fizzy orange and Coca Cola are my favourite refreshments.

Later when we had our first meal in the Lutheran Mission Home where we were to stay for the next month, I remember nothing of the menu for that meal, except that we had white bread and butter. White bread! And real butter! The Chinese do not make bread as we do and I have no memories of bread being anything very special in China, although I do remember having western style bread with peanut butter. But soft, fresh, white bread with a glorious crust that I could chew with sensuous delight. And that wonderfully smooth, yellow butter that just made the experience absolutely irresistible, was something that I would never forget, nor would I ever loose my pleasure in eating white bread and butter.

We were taken to the Lutheran Mission Home at 33 Granville Road, Kowloon where the Eastons left us and the parents of the three Grant children joined us. Our parents were in Sydney, looking after the mission's interests at the Stanmore home where missionaries stayed while they were passing through Sydney. Don and Naomi Grant had been missionaries in the same general area of China in which my parents had served. Naomi was a gracious, quietly spoken woman who exuded a gentleness in dealing with her own family of three and an extra three boys. Don had an ulcer, and this showed in a rather gruff manner which occasionally became more moody and was obviously not helped by the Moore boys. Naomi used to explain to us that he was a really nice man, but the ulcer was the cause of his unhappy manner. This explanation oiled the works and made the two months trip to Australia quite pleasant.



To get home to Australia was not a simple exercise in 1950. Universal air travel as we know it today did not exist at that stage. Most air travel was connected with the government and the armed services. We needed to find passage on a ship from Hong Kong to Australia, but this was not easy either because there were thousands of people like us who were leaving China because of the communist liberation of the country. So it was with some difficulty that the Grants were able eventually to find

tickets for us on a ship travelling to England. We discovered that if we took this ship as far as Ceylon (Sri Lanka today) and then disembarked and caught another ship which was travelling

from England to Australia, we would get to Australia faster than if we waited for a direct passage from Hong Kong to Australia. This took a month to organize.

So what did we do in Hong Kong for that month?

We rode on the Star Ferry to Hong Kong Island and soaked in the atmosphere of the Hong Kong harbour with its plethora of boats of all sizes, and especially the sampans and junks with the eyes painted on the front to see the evil spirits that were always lurking in the background to cause trouble.

We wandered around the shops looking at things we had never seen before and, because our pockets were empty, would never be able to purchase anyway.

We went down to the waterfront in Kowloon and talked to some of the British servicemen and women who were still manning this British outpost. If we were lucky they shouted us orangeade or an orange popsicle. I could never take to the bean popsicles!

I spent some time in rummaging through the cabin trunk which was under my bed. It belonged to a Lutheran missionary who was away somewhere while we Moore boys slept in his room and invaded his privacy.

I joined the missionaries in some of their regular prayer meetings and discovered a new experience of prayer and the presence of God.



I borrowed a bicycle from the missionaries and went riding, north towards the Kai Tak airport. Here I found a small flat topped hill about fifteen feet high that had been built to hold large guns and other equipment to protect the airport. From this mound I could see across the airport and wonder at the runway that extended out across the water. Due to lack of space and the need to build longer runways for the larger planes, they had filled in a long stretch of the

bay to extend one of the runways.

Here on my private plateau, I met an English major who was still stationed in this colony five years after the War had finished. We formed a friendship which, if it had been a few years later I would have been very cautious of, but I knew nothing of paedophiles or sexual predators then. As it turned out he was neither, and probably found this 15 year old helped to fill a void in his life that service in the colonies had forced upon him.

He explained to me the workings of an airport and much about their role in defending it. He asked me if I had ever been to the Peak on Hong Kong Island and as I hadn't, he offered to take me next Saturday in his groovy little open topped sports car.

He came to pick me up and when he discovered that I had a couple of brothers, he offered to take them too, much to my disgust. He was my friend and this was my special outing. But they came anyway and we crossed the bay on a vehicular ferry and then drove up to the Peak on Hong Kong Island. It was a wonderful experience and my only regret was that we had not had a ride on the famous cable car. Fifty years later when I revisited Hong Kong I insisted on riding up to the Peak on the cable car, much to the annoyance of my Chinese friend Vincent who was showing us around and said it was not worth it. He was right. It wasn't worth it. Any worthwhile view of the famous harbour was largely blocked by trees and shrubs, but at least I had achieved a long held ambition.

Our friend the major shouted us ice creams and popsicles and generally spoilt us, but I still held a small resentment that my younger siblings had muscled in on my fun.

Eventually we were able to catch a ship bound for England. Even though we travelled second class or was it steerage, we made the most of our teenage naivety and had full run of the ship. The smell of paint and oil, the feel of the deck quoits that were made of rope, the sensation of swimming in the small swimming pool like some spud in a saucepan, the feeling of relaxation as you reclined on one of the not too uncomfortable deck chairs that were available, the memory of the meals where you had, to my eyes, a huge menu to choose from, and the indulgence of eating whatever you wished, all these remain with me still.

And then there was the entertainment in the evening. Whatever else there was, there was dancing to the accompaniment of a dance band. I used to sit there for hours beside the band, watching and listening and soaking in the rhythms which I would later associate with jazz. The drummer would use his brushes to create an amazing swish, swish sound that was just right for the music. I loved the tones of the saxophones and clarinets and the sharp penetrating sound of the trumpet. The heart beat of the double bass and the angel voices from the violins. I was mesmerized.

After a stopover at Penang in Malaya, we headed across the northern parts of the Indian Ocean to Ceylon (today's Sri Lanka). Here we stayed in another mission home in Colombo for the next two weeks while we waited for a ship coming from England to take us to Australia.

We were taken to a place called Kandy in the middle of the island where we were offered rides on some very muddy elephants. Our minders decided against it. Back at Colombo I wandered off into a coconut plantation and succeeded in retrieving a coconut and trying to extract the milk from it. As I was concentrating on what I was doing, I wasn't aware of the approaching footsteps until a rather angry and certainly authoritative voice demanded to know what I thought I was doing. I was taken up to the house and a European man came out who was obviously the owner and told me to sit down. I told him what I had been doing and said that I didn't realise I had done anything wrong as there were no fences or anything else indicating that it was private land. He called out something to his lackey who presently came back with a huge glass of coconut milk. I was told to drink it, almost as if this was my punishment. Although it did not come up to a good glass of orangeade, it was still pretty good.

Finally we boarded our ship for Australia. I loved sea travel and remember only having a short time of seasickness even though some of the waves would have dwarfed our ship as we

made our way across the Indian Ocean. In Perth we were met by our mother's family and I found myself completely awestruck by four or five female cousins all about our age who were also there. They seemed to be extraordinarily pretty. I only remember feeling terribly awkward as we shared the back of a small bus with them.

In Perth I became aware that I was used to a different culture and was not comfortable in this culture. People talked too fast and had their mouths half closed when they talked. It took me a long time to get used to the Australian accent. One of the most obvious changes in culture intrigued me as we pulled up in Fremantle harbour. We had been used to all manual work being done by Chinese people and because of their huge numbers, everything was labour intensive. Here in Fremantle there were only a few wharfies lounging around doing very little and they were all European people. This would take a bit of getting used to.

So at last we made it to Sydney. For only the second year in our lives we were together as a family. Now our travels were taking us in an entirely new direction. Ahead was a new country, a new culture and the need to get used to living as a family again. For me this was going to be a long journey.

[Return to Index](#)

17 Culture Shock

In Sydney my journey led me into a jungle of culture shock where I got lost. It should have been the best of times with both my parents there to guide me. It was soon evident that, as in the year in Hanzhong after the war, I was largely unsupervised and unsupported in my battle to cope with this culture shock.

This was only the second time that all six members of our family had lived together. The only previous occasion we had been together as a family was in the year immediately after the War, I had been away from them in a boarding school and Japanese Concentration Camps for six years. My little brother was less than a year old when I left in 1940, and my sister was born during the War.

And now, by the end of 1950 we were together as a family for only the second time. You would think that it would be a time when we would enjoy “home life”. But it wasn’t. We were a completely dysfunctional family. My father was a rather distant and sometimes nonexistent member of the family. He had no idea how to relate to me, now a teenager and not coping very well with experiences which had ebbed and flowed around me for the last ten years. My mother was a stable influence, but unable to show affection in any warmly physical way, except to the two younger children. At one stage, I think that I was trying to get some sort of personal physical acknowledgement from my mother, so I told her that I had pimples on my bottom, and would she please rub some ointment on them. She did this, but of course it did not achieve what I so clumsily and to some extent subconsciously, sought.

My youngest brother was twelve and racing to catch up with the events that had rushed over his young life. He went faithfully to the State School down the end of our street and came home with exciting stories of Mr. Edwards his teacher who had been a “war hero”. My father whose communication with us, when it occurred, was to joke, used to say that Mr. Edwards’ heroism consisted of being “surrounded by one Jap!” My brother found his new Australian friends challenging and not always a good influence. My parents received a phone call one afternoon to say that he had been nabbed pinching things from Woolworths. My other brother escaped in a more healthy way by getting involved in boy’s clubs in our



Fort Street Boys High School early 1950s

church. He was 15 and went to Cleveland Street Boys’ High School. He coped with the situation by being aggressive and competitive. My little sister at eight was an innocent in this jungle of family confusion.

I had been attending Fort Street Boys’ High School in

Petersham. This was a school that was regarded as one of the better schools in Sydney and your IQ had to be above a certain figure to be able to attend. But high IQ does not allow for social and cultural confusion. Along the track from the missionary run boarding school in China to a secular Australian school, I got lost. Fort Street did not know what problems they were dealing with, and there was no effective help from home. So each morning I would walk down to Stanmore station to catch the train to Petersham, but instead I would walk to the

other side of Stanmore station and catch the train in to the city. There I would wander around and occasionally, with money stolen from my father's office desk, go to the pictures or other entertainment such as "Hour Shows" which showed news, cartoons and short feature films which lasted for an hour, but replayed non stop all day. You could stay as long as you liked or as short. In the afternoon, when I was ready, I would catch the train back to Stanmore and walk into the house as if I had been at school all day.

This eventually caught up with me and my parents had told me just the day before, that they had received a call from the school to say that I had not been attending. Of course I denied this, so an appointment was set up with the school. Fear tied knots in my stomach at the very thought of facing such an inquisition. There was only one solution. I would run away. And it would have to be tonight.

I waited until I saw the lights go out in the house and then crept in the back door and down the hallway to the office at the front. It was familiar territory as this was the house where our family lived for just over two years from 1950. My father was the Sydney representative for the China Inland Mission and this was his office. I knew where to go in the dark. His desk faced the window looking out to the street, and by getting on my hands and knees, I was able to get under the desk and reach into the back of a locked draw where he kept his money. Sure enough it was there as usual. I had done this before and was soon on my way to my room in the backyard cabin. I packed a few things in an old bag and walked out the front gate.

Stanmore Railway Station was just down the end of our street and before long I was in the huge Central Station in Sydney. Here I also knew just where I wanted to go, and I had soon bought a ticket to travel on "The Silver City Express" which would take me to Broken Hill. In my 16 year old mind, this seemed both adventurous and distant. I smiled to myself as I thought of my parents trying to find me. Broken Hill would be the last place on earth they would think of looking for me.

I had only been in Australia for about a year and, as I looked out of the train window, it was exciting to see this great country to which I had come, and soak in some of its moods. Sydney, the Blue Mountains, Lithgow, Bathurst, Orange, Dubbo and Cobar. Later we crossed the Darling River at Wilcannia and then across the outback country to Broken Hill. Today, the names resonate with romance in my mind and remind me of this great adventure.

When I got to Broken Hill, I carefully put enough money aside for a return fare to Sydney should I need it. This left me with very little money so finding a job became my priority. I found out where the airport was because I fancied working in and around aeroplanes. It was some distance out of town, so I started walking. There seemed to be very little traffic on the airport road, and sure enough, when I got there, no one was around.

As it was getting late in the day, and I did not have enough money to find a place to stay for the night, I walked a little way back towards Broken Hill and then turned off the road and into the spinifex and small shrubs that dotted the barren landscape. I lay down under a shrub and made myself as comfortable as possible. That is where I spent the night.

Next morning I walked back in to Broken Hill and decided to try for another job. In Stanmore I had had a part time job as a telegram delivery boy for the local Post Office. This involved delivering telegrams after school and at weekends. The weekend deliveries were mostly

weddings. So I went to the Broken Hill Post Office and asked for a job. They seemed to like the idea and presented me with some application forms to fill in. When it came to putting in my address, I said that I had only just arrived and had not found a place to stay yet. “OK” said my interviewer, “When you have found a place, come back and we will finish processing your application.” This threw me on to the horns of a dilemma, or the cat amongst the pigeons so to speak. I could get the job if I had an address, and I could only get an address when I had a job to earn some money.

I wandered around town giving this problem my total concentration. But for a naïve 16 year old without experience of the world, the problem was too big. As I strolled aimlessly around Broken Hill the next day, I spotted the postmaster who had interviewed me the day before. Embarrassed, I quickly disappeared from his line of vision.

I had the money in my pocket which I had set aside for a possible return trip, which could be enough to snare a bed for the night, but I was unable to throw away this life line back to civilization. My only solution seemed to be to go back to Sydney.

I arrived back in Sydney, and for the next week I lived on the streets. It is amazing how much food you can find around a big city in the form of discarded loaves of bread and other types of food generally regarded as rubbish. I slept on park benches and found that these paupers' sleeping places provided millionaires views across Sydney Harbour.

About a week later, on a Sunday, I was walking up George Street and decided that I would catch a tram to the Harbour Bridge. That was when Sydney still had their famous toast rack trams. Just as I hopped on to the outside running board, I heard my name being called and looked around to see my mother waving at me from the footpath. So I aborted my tram trip and went over to her. I am not sure how I felt. Was I relieved, disappointed, ashamed, guilty? I don't know. Maybe a bit of all of those. My mother's faith is very simple and straight forward. If you pray, God answers. She told me that she had prayed that morning that God would lead her to me. So she had skipped church at Stanmore and gone into the city, where she had then seen me getting on to one of the toast-rack trams.



We went home and the first thing they wanted me to do was to have a bath. As I had not washed in more than a week, I expect that this was necessary if they were going to sit close enough to me to talk with me. Once the bath was over, they gave me something to eat and we sat down to talk and they asked me one question, “Why?” I could not give them a simple answer. It was so much more than that. The “why?” was so big and its ramifications for my life so frightening that even at that early stage of my understanding, I felt too vulnerable to talk about it. And so much of the “why” they would not want to hear. So I determined that I would not try and explain to them the reasons for my little adventure.

[Return to Index](#)

18 As The Mulberry Tree Is Bent

"The growth of the mulberry tree corresponds with its early bent"
Chinese Proverb

Extract from "The Farmers' Register" September 1 1838:

THE FARMERS' REGISTER.		
VOL. VI.	SEPTEMBER 1, 1838.	No. 6.
354	FARMERS' REGISTER.	

In the work, entitled *Tchong-hoa-min*, it is read: There are two kinds of mulberry trees: one bears the fruit of which we sow the seed: it sprouts out in the first or second month, (February or March.)

The following is the manner the other kind is multiplied:

A pliant branch is bent to the ground, and maintained in that position by a clod of clay. Each bud produces a branch. When this mulberry tree has attained the height of two or three feet, its roots are then formed. The mother branch to which it belongs is then cut, and it is transplanted in another place. It soon becomes a tree. [Same work.]



The time came when my parents were itchy to get back into their missionary work again. But what to do with the children? Our ages were 16, 14, 12 and 9. Surely this was a pivotal point in our lives when most parents would have made the decision to take on the responsibility of seeing their children through some of the most hazardous years of their lives. But that was not to be their decision, and they discovered that the Mission was planning to set up a hostel in Melbourne for missionaries' kids. So the decision was made to move to Melbourne.

Apart from the first few years of my life I had only been with my parents for a year after the War and now for a couple of years in Sydney. There was absolutely no bonding during those times and a distance was to remain between them and me. I had learnt to isolate my feelings from the world around me. I was a 'loner' and had not developed many social skills. Inside I was naïve and confused. How did this happen? What sort of forces were working on this 'mulberry tree'?

The Influence of Separation Anxiety and Attachment Deprivation

Missionaries place themselves apart from rules the rest of the population function under by declaring their careers God-given. One consequence of this is that they are willing to institutionalize very young children for the sake of their career. In our western culture the church on the whole gives a clear message that family should come before career, but within the missionary community the opposite is not only tolerated, is sanctioned. It is justified because God called them to the career they are involved in. One missionary couple had sent five kids to a boarding school. They said that they would do it all over again, regardless of what their kids experiences were, because it was the will of God, and God was responsible for all their decisions.

And there is no doubt that separation anxiety is a common if not universal experience amongst MKs sent off to boarding school. John and Diane Larson describe the problem like this:

"For those who were sent away to a boarding school or a children's home, grief may be a lasting legacy. Rare is the adult MK who does not carry within himself or herself a significant measure of grief. . . . Some missionary sending organizations have taken notice of this problem and now provide professional assistance to parents and children facing separation. However, most adult MKs were left as children to deal with grief and loss alone -- as were their families. A biblically buttressed understanding that separation was necessary to advance the Lord's work was once thought sufficient to fortify children and parents alike. In most instances, pain was handled by stoic withholding to protect each other from further suffering."¹

Parents have a very difficult time addressing the issue of their kid's anxiety and attachment problems, because it means examining the call of God on their lives, etc. I think that therein lies a large part of the problem. The following is of interest because it gives my mother's explanation of this situation.

"Mummy, why does Daddy have to go?" The plaintive little voice brought me back with a start. My thoughts had been centred on the solitary figure standing on the deck of the great ocean liner which was now almost out of sight. The ship passed under the Sydney Harbour Bridge and turned towards the Heads on the first stage of the long journey to Singapore. Sensing Percy's loneliness, and trying to fight down my own dread of the year of separation that lay ahead of us, (this was 1952) I had almost forgotten the children and that they were feeling it too.

I glanced at the three boys, each in his own way, Frank at 12, Alan at 14 and Raymond at 16, trying to put on a show of carelessness and indifference to cover what lay deep in their hearts. Then I looked at Dorothy, who was not even trying to cover up – just to understand. How do I explain to a nine year old the "Why?" of the life of faith? I put my arm around her, trying to reassure my own heart too as I said, "Darling, I don't know why. I only know this is what God wants us to do, and because we love Him, we must."

¹ "Third culture kids: expatriate children" by John and Diane Larsen

In the year that followed I too asked “Why?” many times. I was trying to cope alone with bringing up of four children in Australia, while their father struggled with the responsibilities of beginning a new work in post war Malaya.

A letter from the General Director of the China Inland Mission, Mr JO Sanders, written at the close of a conference of CIM directors in England, gave us the answer we had been looking for. His invitation from the directors was for Percy to go to Malaya as the first Superintendent of a new work in a new field for the Mission. Sir Gerald Templar, the High Commissioner for Great Britain in Malaya, was opening the door wide for missionaries who spoke the Chinese language, to go and work in “New Villages” which were being created and were populated mainly by Chinese people, in an attempt by the Government to counteract communist guerrilla influence.

As we read the letter together, there was very little conflict in our reactions to it. It was almost as if we had been preparing for this all through the past two and a half years. It was clear to us both that Percy must go. But it was equally clear that I must stay, with both our elder boys facing important school exams at the end of the year. By the end of 1952 we hoped that there would be a Hostel for teenage children of missionaries and I could settle the children there before I too set out for Malaya.

Early in 1953 we completed our move from Sydney to Melbourne. Raymond was to live in the CIM home in Hawthorn while Alan, Frank and Dorothy would be cared for in the Hostel for Missionaries’ children set up by the Mission in Kew. Both Kew and Hawthorn were neighbouring suburbs in the east of Melbourne. Then I had the pain of parting from them. In my heart I agreed with those who said, “Your own children need you,” or “This is the time in their lives when parents should not be separated from their children,” or “You have given twenty years of your life to work in China, surely you should stay with your children now in their teenage years. Let somebody else go overseas.” Miserably, I knew how true it all was. And yet there was that strong inner conviction which I had learned to know as God’s voice to me. The pain in my heart deepened as I left them, standing on the platform of Melbourne’s Spencer Street Station, as I commenced the long overland journey from Melbourne to Perth.

At Perth I was met by my mother, sisters and many friends. On the surface I smiled and greeted them all and spoke at missionary meetings about God’s guidance, but underneath my heart was sore as I cried out continually to God, who alone could give me what I needed. “Oh Lord,” I prayed, “Comfort me and reassure me, please. I know I haven’t mistaken your voice, but I can’t bear to be so torn in two all the time over these separations from my children. Surely, you gave them to us. Surely it is right for families to be together and for children to be with their parents. Then why, why must I leave them again? How can this be right?”

It was on a Sunday night in Perth that His Word of comfort first came. I was in a church, listening to a preacher I had not often heard. He spoke of Abraham, whose obedience to God brought blessing, not only to his own life, but to that of his son and to future generations yet unborn. It was God's Word to me – the obedience of parents brings blessing to the children. The soreness in my heart eased a little as I prayed, "Oh Lord, bring blessing to our children, as you did for Abraham, because we obey you."

I left Fremantle, and in the rare luxury of a cabin to myself, spent time reading the Scriptures, trying to prepare for the new life which lay ahead of me. God gave me promise after promise from the Book of Isaiah of His blessing on the children of those who serve and obey Him. (See end note ²) It was God's Word to me and it brought comfort and assurance. In the years which lay ahead our children faced many problems and we were often anxious about them, but the word given me as I set out for Malaya remained as an anchor for my soul, and reassured me over and over again as we prayed for them.

So I found peace, and as we slowly moved in to Singapore harbour and I went up on deck to look for Percy's familiar face and figure, I knew that my Shepherd had led me into green pastures and into quiet waters, and had restored my soul.

This was written as part of an unpublished book written by my mother.

Bowlby's Theory of Attachment,¹ describes attachment as "behaviors which are done in an attempt to maintain proximity, displayed in the child's seemingly natural inclination to seek the parent when distressed. The goal is not the object, the goal is a state. Attachment behavior is adaptive and is not a drive, and not a sign of immaturity."

In 1949, the World Health Organisation became concerned about the number of homeless children, or children who were growing up in institutions as a result of the war years. They commissioned Bowlby to look into this matter, and to report to them whether these children were likely to be suffering from their experiences. Bowlby concluded that a warm intimate and continuing relationship with a mother figure is an essential precondition for mental health. Maternal deprivation or a disturbed emotional attachment between mother and child was said to cause irreparable damage, not only to the child but also to society as a whole. But the conclusions he came to were very controversial and caused arguments right from the very beginning. Contrary to behaviourists and Freudians, who thought that physical comfort was a caregiver's primary concern, Bowlby (1951) suggested, and I agree with him, that emotional care was at least equally important. He states that "maternal attachment is as essential for healthy psychological development as vitamins and minerals are for physical health".

¹ Bowlby's attachment theory was presented in 1969 in *Attachment* the first volume of the *Attachment and Loss* trilogy. The second and third volumes, *Separation: Anxiety and Anger* and *Loss: Sadness and Depression* followed in 1972 and 1980 respectively. Published in New York by Basic Books

In boarding school I think in some way we all yearned for that ‘maternal attachment’ which would have provided “proximity” and someone to turn to when distressed, but when we could not find it in any satisfying way, we found other ways to deal with it. Many people made close friends and walked around with their arms around each other. Some found some kind of tactile gratification in rough and tumble and contact sports. My method was to withdraw into myself and create an emotional shell in which I could stay and not be hurt.

[Return to Index](#)

19 Unforgettable New Year

In 1953 I started to attend the Kew Baptist Church and found a wonderful group of young people there who accepted me as one of them.. I attended the Christian Endeavour groups and enjoyed the experience of being part of a large group of young people who did a lot of social things together as well as growing in our faith together.

Kew Baptist purchased a block of land at Belgrave Heights and Harold Holt, a deacon of the church, built a house on that block and we started attending the Kew Baptist House Party at the Belgrave Heights Convention.

Being new to the Convention and just getting to know the young people from the church, I lapped up the experience and found myself deeply moved by the teaching at the Convention. I began to be deeply moved also by the vision of one of the teenage girls at the house party. She also seemed attracted to me. She was the younger daughter of Harold and Ada Holt, Bev.

We enjoyed each other's company and smiled a lot at each other. Well, we did smile a lot until New Year's Eve, when we made a pact that we would not smile at each other "until next year." All that day we made a valiant effort not to smile at each other, which was made especially difficult for me as my heart was smitten.

After the evening meeting at the Convention on New Year's Eve, we followed the normal practice and all gathered in the common room of the house for an evening of entertainment and spiritual preparation for the New Year. Bev and I were very aware of each other, but still maintained our "no smiling" pledge.

Finally the clock ticked over and we entered the countdown to midnight. Ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one – Happy New Year. I have to admit that I had not been concentrating on the spiritual lead up to the New Year. My mind was centred on the most attractive girl I knew. The "Happy New Year" had hardly finished when I made a beeline for Bev – and we kissed.

The significance of that kiss was enormous; its repercussions far reaching. From that moment we "became an item" and six years later, were married. Six years later we also started in the Baptist ministry at Rainbow.

Exactly 50 years from that occasion we once again attended the Belgrave Heights Convention. Christmas 2003 found Bev and I in our caravan at Belgrave Heights, parked in the caravan park organised by the Belgrave Heights Convention. Amazingly, we discovered over the next few days, while trying to identify landmarks and houses from fifty years before, that our caravan site was only about twenty five metres from the old Kew Baptist House, now a private residence.

On New Year's Eve we attended an entertainment program in the large meeting hall with about two thousand people there celebrate the passing of the old year. The young person who was leading the festivities happened to be the occupier of the tent next to our caravan. He announced that we were celebrating an important anniversary, and asked us to stand. We did and kissed each other like teenage lovers in front of them all. Later on we went back to the

caravan and on the dot of midnight, replicated that kiss which, fifty years before, and only twenty five metres away, had been the start of it all.

I was in love and back in Melbourne the whole world was beautiful.

Ode To Bev (New Year's Day 1954)

You were with me as the year closed its door.
We had just met, but caught each other's eye;
We smiled a lot and saw each other more
As day progressed, with both our feelings high.
The new year beckoned to us through the night.
The second it commenced we hoped to be
Surprised with joyful rapture that would fill
Our cups to overflowing. Teen delight.
It came. We kissed. My life was ecstasy.
The thrill of that one kiss is with me still.

My heart is full. My feet, above the ground,
Float on the air with unaccustomed thrill.
Benumbed, I sit astounded homeward bound
On Melbourne's rail-steered tram, doubting still
That you whose beauty far outshines the sun,
Whose smile when turned on me drives out all sense,
Whose touch, electric, agitates my soul,
That you should notice me as anyone
To love. A miracle that's so immense
I cannot of its meaning grasp the whole.

My eyes are tinted with a rosy hue
The city seems to shine with golden tone
The sky above reflects a deeper blue.
The grass is greener than I've ever known.
Because we kissed, the world has been transformed.
Where once routine and drabness filled the day
Now that same life by awesome masterstrokes
Is coloured in rich shades. My life is warmed
By love whose tested strength is here to stay,
And by beauty and the dreams it now evokes.

And then came another 'growing up' experience for me.

[Return to Index](#)

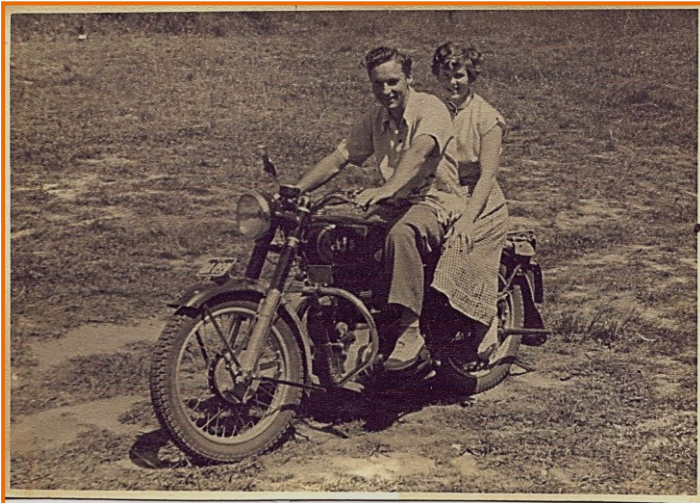
20 The Search for Direction

So I started living in the Mission Home at 22 Coppins Grove Hawthorn under the benevolent care of Miss Rowe. She was the hostess of the Home and, although I was actually living independently for the first time in my life, she kept a kindly eye on me. She made sure that my washing was done. She ignored my raids on her pantry when I came home late from some activity. In fact she was an angel!

Meanwhile I had started work at JW Faulkner's Baby Wear (the Nappy Factory we called it), a job which had been found for me by my parents who happened to know JW. As it turned out they also knew Geoff Malins, an ex missionary who also worked there. After my parents went back to the mission field, Geoff took it upon himself to stand in for them on my behalf. This was a one way process as I did not accept his advice and warnings. This was especially so when I bought my AJS 350 while I was working there. As I had the lofty position of 'despatch clerk' I learnt to wrap nappies and small smocks and tie them with a system which I still use when doing up parcels. This was not mentally challenging and the company I worked with was not my choice.

I was able to get myself a job at Rootes Australia Limited in Port Melbourne, makers of Humber and Hillman cars. Here I worked in the pay office as 2nd assistant to the paymaster, Mr Pilkington, preparing the pay and other financial matters for the 800 or so employees. This was a good job and I used to ride the AJS to work after dropping Bev off in the city where she was working.

This was also a significant step forward in my journey towards independence. I had spent most of my life in a boarding school and then under the direct 'care' of my parents while we were in Sydney. Coming to Melbourne, they were the ones that found me a job with the Nappy Factory. But my journey took me over a bit of bumpy ground in the process. When I started looking for my own job, I approached Ralph Davis who was a personal friend of my father's and who happened to be the owner and boss of the trucking firm Mayne Nickless. I



was so sure that he would help me, and the thought of working on trucks and maybe driving them eventually built up a huge anticipation in me. So when he said no, and explained that he thought my father would want something better for me, I sunk into a black hole of depression and seriously contemplated suicide. But my next attempt at job hunting, which was successful was with Rootes.

While I was there I started to think about my long term future. I knew that Bev was definitely a part of that. (See next chapter). But what about a career? Being a MK (missionaries' kid) I had been soaked in an atmosphere of fundamentalist Christianity and a value system that put the missionary at the top of God's favoured people. A close second were pastors, then Christian workers and they were

followed by Christians working in secular work. At the bottom of this heap was the rest of the world with the 'heathen' in Third World countries at the base of the pyramid.

To get started in some kind of Christian work I found a position with the Melbourne City Mission in its Men's Hostel. The City Mission had worked amongst "down and out" people for many years in the centre of Melbourne. It was looking for an assistant missionary and I applied and was accepted. The year was 1956, Olympic year in Melbourne. I really loved this job.

Founded by the **city** churches of **Melbourne** in **1854**, **Melbourne Citymission** initially employed six missionaries to work alongside people living in poverty and struggling to survive in the tents cities that sprung up along the Yarra River during the Victorian Gold Rush. Founded by the **city** churches of **Melbourne** in **1854**, the **Melbourne City Mission** initially employed six missionaries to work alongside people living in poverty and struggling to survive in the tents cities that sprung up along the Yarra River during the Victorian Gold Rush. By the early part of the twentieth century, Little Lonsdale Street, especially that part of it between Exhibition and Spring Street, was renowned as a red light area. And it was in the centre of this area that the Melbourne City Mission built a Men's Hostel. This news item appeared in the Age

The Age Date: 3 Mar 1937

*MELBOURNE CITY MISSION FOUNDATION STONE LAID
BY LORD MAYOR*

NEW HOME FOR DESTITUTE MEN

The foundation stone of the Melbourne City Mission's – new hostel for hungry and homeless men was laid yesterday afternoon by the Lord Mayor (Cr. A. G. Wales). The building is situated at the corner of McCormac Place and Merritt Place, a short distance from the Melbourne City Mission. In the new hostel provision will be made for the supply of meals, a hall for meetings and religious services, rooms for storage and distribution of clothing, restrooms, baths, showers and a laundry.

In 1956 there was little to remind anyone of the area's disreputable past, except for one woman who lived in a room in McCormac Place opposite the Men's Hostel. She was old and worn out, and used to wave to me from time to time when I saw her, and she still carried on her profession. But these days it was only with the same type of clients that we had visiting us.

If you walked up "Little Lon" as Little Lonsdale Street was called, from Exhibition Street, about half way along towards Spring Street was McCormac Place on your left. If you turned into this lane, you would see on the corner of yet another tiny lane running off to the right, a building with a sign, "Men's Hostel", above a corner entrance way, with steps up to a front door.

This is where I worked for 12 months and began to feel that at last I had found a work that came a little closer to being what I thought God might be calling me to.

Each morning of the week, the Hostel was opened for “breakfast” and homeless and “down and out” men would find their way in to the hall which was set up as a meeting hall with wooden pews. The pews were designed so that there was a shelf on the back of each pew which would hold a plate or a cup of tea or coffee. This could be used by the people sitting in the pew behind. Often there would be 60 or 70 men in each week day morning and up to 150 on weekends.



The breakfast was supplied by city food outlets and consisted of their left overs from the day before. Often it was cakes and other items that would not usually be connected with breakfast.

Jim Collett, the man in charge, was a quietly spoken, gentle man whose love and respect for these men was an inspiration to me. He knew many of the men by name and was able to tell me stories about their backgrounds or other items of interest about their character or problems which they were facing at present.

I used to hop on my AJS 350 motor cycle at 6:30 in the morning and drive from our home in Kew to the city. Because the City Mission building was in such an out of the way back lane, it was common to see numbers of men leaning against walls or sitting on the curb with their feet in the gutter, waiting for 7 o'clock when the doors would open for breakfast. They didn't like being in the public eye, but these little back lanes were OK. They were a motley crew, who were usually regarded by the public as “no hoppers” or “drunks”, and indeed many of them were, but as I got to know them, I also began to understand what influences had affected their lives to bring them to this point.

Fortunately there was a locked garage at the end of the building, so I would unlock the gate and put my bike safely away for the day. As I locked the garage door and then walked from there to the main door on the corner, I would say hullo to some of the men, but many of them wouldn't look at me or simply stared at me sullenly when I greeted them.

Inside, I met Jim Collett who had already arrived before me and with the help of three or four men, we prepared the breakfast. The urn was on the boil, and the mobile trays were stacked



with plates and cups and saucers which had been given to the Mission by various restaurants who were refurbishing, so many of them displayed well known names and logos. There were large trays such as you would find in a bakery, which was probably where they came from, containing cakes and sandwiches cut into triangles. This was “breakfast”.

At 7 o'clock we opened the main doors and the men would shuffle in – 100 to 150 of them. They didn't talk much. I guess most of them didn't really like belonging to this “fellowship” so there was no sense of camaraderie amongst them. Their eyes were downcast and, when they found a seat in one of the pews, they showed no interest or emotion, but just sat and waited.

They all understood that this was a “mission” so they knew that a condition of receiving a free meal was that they had to listen to a Bible reading and a prayer before they started. Jim read a short reading and then prayed a few sentences, and they were ready for breakfast. They all respected Jim. He was a mild mannered man and had an obvious love and respect for them, but if anyone got out of line or became aggressive, he was also a very strong man and was able to control them physically if necessary. But mostly he controlled them through the strength of his personality.

Everybody received a cup of tea or coffee and a plate of sandwiches or cakes. When they were finished, they could shuffle out in to the city lane again and start working out how to fill in the long day ahead. But we still had more to offer and this took up much of the rest of the day for us.

In a back corner of the hall, we had set up a couple of benches, and, if they wanted to, the men could stay and have a shave and a bit of a cleanup. We supplied the razors, soap etc. We also had another table set up with equipment for cleaning their shoes. It is true that the majority of them ignored this offer, but there were always a number of them who stayed and cleaned up for the day.

During the breakfast, as we walked around the room while they were eating, we would quite often spot one or more of the men sitting there with little, moving white spots standing out across their shoulders against their dark clothing. We didn’t need to get too close to know that they were lice. So, after the breakfast, we would invite them to stay and get a change of clothing. Jim always did this as unobtrusively as possible.

The Mission had a lot of second-hand clothing sent in, and every afternoon, Jim and I would sort through bags and bags of clothing and other items that had come in during the last 24 hours. When the men had finally finished their ablutions and left the building, it was time for individual interviews. Outside the front door there would be a line of men who wanted to see Jim about something. Some of them wanted clean clothes or shoes, while others wanted money.

Jim would interview them and then work out the best way to help them. Of course it was obvious what the men with the lice needed. We would take these men out the back and ask them to strip off. Then using a stick to lift their clothes off the floor, we dumped them (the clothes that is!) in the incinerator. As these men had probably become infested with lice because they had an aversion to washing, Jim tried to get them to wash, but usually with little success, so he got out the faithful insect spray – you know the old type with the pump action –



and sprayed them all over, including asking them to bend over so that he could spray between their legs and around their bottoms. That done, he would get out a clean set of clothes and provide a new wardrobe for them. Even here, Jim would show great respect and humanity to the men. He would check that the items of clothing were a reasonable fit and that the man was happy with them. Some of those men almost smiled as they walked out of there.

Jim was a very experienced man in this field. Once a young man came in and said that he wanted his train fare to Mildura, because his mother had died and the funeral was in a couple of days’ time. Jim had heard this kind of request a thousand times, and usually saw through

them. But in this case he must have been a little uncertain, and he made the decision to help the man. However, he got me to take the money and go with the man to Spencer Street station and buy his ticket for him. So we set off and at Spencer Street, I bought the ticket and gave it to him and then walked with him to the station to see him off. In those days you had to have a platform ticket if you were seeing someone off and I had not acquired one so I stayed at the ticket barrier and watched as he got on the train.

I was talking to the ticket collector and explaining briefly what I was doing, when, only seconds before the train started to move, we saw a figure leap out of one of the train doors and hide behind a stanchion. “Look at that!” I said to the ticket collector, “that’s my man!” The collector called to a couple of his mates and went and grabbed the man who made some lame excuse, and handed his ticket back to me. Thankfully the ticket collectors arranged for me to get a full refund and I returned to Jim with my story of the little drama I had been involved in.

There were some very interesting stories that I heard from these men as they began to trust me and tell me about themselves.

VENDETTA FLAMES OUT AGAIN--2 MEN KILLED, A WOMAN HURT

Squizzy Taylor Invades Enemy in Carlton House and
in Gun Duel Shoots Him and Wounds His Mother

THEN STAGGERS OUT, COLLAPSES, DIES

TWO men, both notorious members of the underworld, were shot dead, and a woman wounded, last night in a desperate revolver duel in a bedroom in a house in Barkly-street, Carlton.

THE shooting was the outcome of a vendetta, which had existed between the dead men for some years. Although the associates of the men are reticent as to what led up to the shooting, the detectives believe rivalry for the affections of a woman was the immediate incentive.

The Victims are:—

DEAD

LESLIE (SQUIZZY) TAYLOR, 42, of Darlington-parade, Richmond. Bullet wound in right side over the lungs.

JOHN (SNOWY) CUTMORE, 35, of Barkly-street, Carlton. Bullet wound over heart, and on little finger of right hand.

WOUNDED

BRIDGET CUTMORE, 56, mother of John Cutmore. Shot through right shoulder. Condition not serious.

Sun News Pictorial, 28 October 1927
Newspaper article covering events at a house in
Carlton, where Squizzy Taylor and
John 'Snowy' Cutmore had a shootout.

Courtesy of The Herald & Weekly Times Ltd.
From The State Library of Victoria's
Newspaper Collection

There was old Eric who was a hopeless alcoholic, and many mornings used to come for his breakfast, still strongly under the influence of yesterday's alcoholic soaking. He was a harmless old chap and I discovered that he came from Yackandandah in north eastern Victoria. With a little bit of coaching, I could get him to recite poetry to me which he did with enthusiasm and manifesting a surprising memory for poetry. He would build himself up into an emotional state which always climaxed with a poem about "mother", and by the time Eric had finished the tears would be streaming down his face as he thought of his mother.

I sat beside a chap one day while he was waiting to see Jim, and I noticed that he had the ring finger and little finger missing from one hand. He told me he had been around Melbourne for a long time and used to live in Fitzroy. Jim told me later what the man himself had not told me. He was in fact the last of Squizzy Taylor's gang. Squizzy Taylor was of course in infamous underworld figure in Melbourne of the 1920s. This man was the most successful

pickpocket in Melbourne in those days and had deliberately had his ring and little fingers cut off so that his hand could slip more easily into people's pockets and handbags. Sitting next to him some weeks later, I was able to ask him about it and he was quite willing to talk about it. When we started to talk about picking people's pockets, I pretended to be wary of him, and jokingly moved away as if to protect my pockets. "No, no, Ray" he protested, "we might do things like that to other people, or even to each other, but we would never do anything to harm you or Jim. We respect you and what you do for us."

I first met Michael when Jim had him as one of the helpers who set the place up each morning. He was a very intelligent man and I was naturally drawn to him because of his personality. He was a bit like Jim, a quiet and gentle man. Then one day Jim said to me would I come out into the lane and help him bring someone inside. We stepped out and there, lying in the gutter was the wreck of a man, with an almost empty methylated spirits bottle in his hand and the neck of another one sticking out of his pocket. He stared blankly at us and mumbled something incoherent. It was Michael. We tipped his metho into the gutter and then carried him into the hall, where we lay him down on a bench to recuperate. He was probably as bad a case as anyone I had seen there.

Later Michael told me his story. He had trained as a doctor in Ireland, and then had become an alcoholic and been deregistered. Trying to escape his problems in Ireland, he managed to find his way to South Africa, but he had only taken his problems with him. It wasn't long before he became an outcast of South African society also. He remembers that he had taken to breaking into women's bedrooms, not to molest the women, but to get their perfume and drink it for its alcoholic base. Now here he was in Australia, at his best helping other drunks and no-hopers to get by each day, and at his worst, being picked up out of the gutters of Melbourne.

While I was there he spent some months holding down a job, but perhaps inevitably, he fell off the wagon and was back under Jim Collett's wing again.

Sundays were special days. We would start a bit later, but we would often get up to 300 men in for the Sunday breakfast. I don't think this was because the food was any better, but because there were a number of men who were living near the border line and found it harder to cope at the weekends. We would also often have church groups come in and conduct a small service with plenty of music. The men were encouraged to pick favourite hymns. They tended to pick the more sentimental hymns such as "Where is my wandering boy tonight".

The police often detoured down these lanes to see what flotsam and jetsam of life were to be found there. On one occasion, Bev came and spent the day with me, and I was left to lock up when we had finished in the evening. I asked Bev to go out the front door while I turned the lights out and made my way around to the garage and got the AJS out. That left her standing in this undesirable part of town, on her own, in the dark. And it was at this precise moment that a couple of foot cops decided come down the lane to see what was what. The beam of their torch caught Bev full on and they asked her what she thought she was doing here. Trying to explain that her "boyfriend" was just getting his bike out to take her home, she felt that she was digging herself deeper with every word. Fortunately I confirmed her story, by appearing with my bike. But it still took a bit of talking to convince them that we were innocent.

It was a very valuable year for me as it gave me experience in how best to help needy people and also to treat everyone with an equal dose of love. I could not have had a better model than Jim Collett and I will always be grateful to him for his understanding. The year had also been a clarifying one for me.

[Return to Index](#)

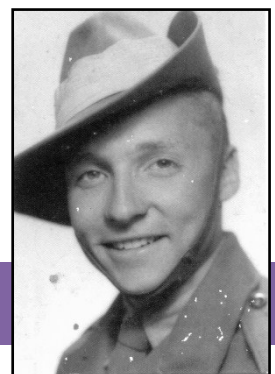
21 How I Defended Australia



Recently I got out my National Service medal. It attests to the fact that I served our country in the armed forces for a short time and prepared myself to defend Australia. I could have become a hero – but didn't.

It went like this.

January 1954 was over eight years after the end of the Second World War. The Korean War was finished and the Vietnam War had not started. I was about to become a National Serviceman. I was



destined to learn how to defend Australia at the large army barracks at Puckapunyal in Victoria. Unlike later call-ups to National Service, ours was playtime. We were to be at Puckapunyal for three months – January to March 1954 - and then for the next couple of years would be expected to attend a fortnight's camp each year and a number of weekends.

So, after reporting for duty at some place in Melbourne, we were “entrained” – that is the word the army uses for packing you on to a troop train – to a place called “Dysart Siding” near Seymour. Here we were “detrained” or something of the sort, outside a huge tin shed and lined up in the open beside the railway track. We were ordered to remove our clothes and a doctor came along and ordered us to bend over while he did some sort of a test of our fitness to serve the queen by checking our testicles. We were then issued with a duffle bag and a lot of clothing and other gear to fill it. Meanwhile the main Melbourne to Sydney rail line was only a few hundred metres away and the passengers on a couple of passing trains were treated to the spectacle of some hundreds of naked defenders-to-be of our great country.

Eventually we were entrucked and detrucked to Puckapunyal where some 1600 of our country's finest young men were divided into groups of 200 and assigned to 8 companies A to H. They were then allocated their living quarters for the next three months in long huts housing 25 men each. I was in H Company and they had run out of huts by the time they came to us, so we found ourselves in large tents which also housed 25 men in each tent.

Our beds were allocated in alphabetical order and so I started off between Private Langford and Private Noakes. Next to Noakes was O'Meara, and for some reason they swapped beds so that I had O'Meara and Langford on either side of me. Langford was gay and one of the other men used to come and sleep with him on many occasions. Noakes had a problem with his sexuality and had painted a picture of the private parts of a woman on the inside of the tent above his bed. Private Black who was opposite to me was a born again Christian and came from “Tommyhawk Creek” in the Western District and did not like getting undressed in front of the other men. So a few minutes after the lights went out, a very bright torch was used to light Private Black up as he removed his clothes, much to his embarrassment and everyone else's amusement.

Another after-lights-out trick was for someone to come around in the dark just as you were going off to sleep and whisper in your ear, “Want a piss?” The power of suggestion had the effect of getting about 25% of the men out of bed again for the twenty metre run across to the toilets.

In a debate which was organized by the Company Command, we discussed whether “Country life was better than City Life”. Half of our company came from Richmond and Hawthorn, and the other half came from Ballarat and the Western District. Private Black argued persuasively that country life was better because they were able to watch lantern slides from time to time in the Mechanics Institute to relieve their boredom.

When we were drilling with our rifles over our shoulders, Private Black always looked as if he was carrying his shovel over ploughed paddocks.

We were in the RAASC – the Royal Australian Army Service Corps. In other words we were truck drivers and responsible for supply. We were “the man behind the man behind the gun.” When the other 1400 National Servicemen went bush for a two weeks' bivouac, we stayed in

camp and drove supplies out to them each day. They were suffering out there on bivouac. The weather was rotten and they had to sleep in small pup tents and were cold, wet and miserable most of the time. We, however, slept in our warm tents back at the camp, and on the one or two occasions when we had to stay in the bush overnight with them, we slept in the back of our covered trucks in comfort.

The most painful experience of the three months was doing guard duty. The second most painful experience was doing drill. H Company was the worst drill company of the whole battalion. Guard duty had its compensations. I spent many happy hours sitting in the moonlight talking with the one prisoner whom I had to guard, and then later I wandered around to the mess hut. Here I found that our “scrambled egg” had been prepared the night before for breakfast. It was made out of reconstituted egg and resembled a large flat roasting dish of yellow jelly. It was cold and would be reheated for breakfast. To compensate for this disgusting sight I found a loaf of bread and a packet of butter and took them back to the Company lines where I toasted the bread on the end of my bayonet at the open door of the furnace which supplied our hot water.

The picture theatre at Puckapunyal had burned down a few weeks before we arrived, so the movies were shown in an outdoor theatre on a hillside with a netting fence surrounding it. It wasn't hard to find a way under the fence and see some good pictures free of charge. The only other entertainment was writing letters and playing ping pong in the Salvo's hall.

On a couple of occasions we arranged a raid of one of the other tents. Inside the tents, each person had a bed with fold away legs, and a six foot cupboard beside it to hang your great coat and store your rifle. The raid was carried out by the simple means of all 25 of us from one tent, surrounding another tent in silence, and then at a given signal pushing the six foot cupboard inwards and grabbing the end of the collapsible bed and collapsing it. The chaos inside the tent was unbelievable and the surprise and ire of its occupants entirely satisfying.

It was during my three months at Puckapunyal that I was relieved of my cloak of innocence. This partly came about from spending that time with a group of men who enjoyed bawdy conversation, jokes and songs, but also because I became friendly with a couple of them who were happy to answer my naïve questions, especially about love and sex, without making me feel embarrassed or foolish. We did have some training films we had to watch on this topic, but for me they answered very few questions which I considered important.

One of the men was a budding race caller. The others would give him the names of half a dozen horses and for the next three minutes or so he would call the race as if he was watching it. We could all see the race too.

I felt entirely at home during this time, possibly because it was not unlike a boarding school regime. The residents were definitely not missionary kids however.

We spent the whole three months driving trucks, which at 19 was my idea of heaven – still is! I had a special penchant for driving and it wasn't long before I was asked to act as a trainer for some of the slower learners.

Our Company was rotten at drill, so we only practised it when overwhelming circumstances demanded it. We had our days out at the rifle range which was situated a few kilometres

away from the camp. Usually we marched out to the range, and this was about the most strenuous exercise we did for the whole of the three months. Our firing practice was with the old Lee Enfield 303's. We did have a small taste of machine guns and Owen guns. We also had to learn to throw grenades, and were constantly reminded of their power, both by the big bang they made, and by the constant harping on safety by the non commissioned officers who may have had a bad experience in the past.

To break the monotony and sometimes, boredom of army life, the Queen decided to visit Melbourne towards the end of February, and we were assigned to "line the route". This meant that we were entrained again (or was it embussed, I don't remember) to Melbourne where we assembled at the Flagstaff Gardens. At the appropriate time, which seemed to involve interminable hours of sitting around on the grass doing nothing, we were marched off in platoons down the streets of Melbourne. I actually loved the rhythm and swing of marching in a platoon like that, and my pleasure was magnified by the fact that we were being watched by thousands of people. At some point we were marched in single file and we halted at a regular distance from each other and faced the centre of the street. Again it was a long wait before the Queen finally drove past and our responsibility was over.

As so often happens in Australia, there were plenty of summer bushfires, and one year we were deployed to fight them. Three of us were taken to a small wooden vehicular bridge and told to see that the fire did no damage. This may seem like a rather frightening responsibility, but in fact the fire was some kilometres away, and we really had nothing to do. It was a hot day, so we stripped off and went for a skinny dip in the creek. While we were enjoying this state of bliss, we heard a vehicle approaching, and soon some officers approached the bridge. We had nowhere to go so we waited to see what would happen. It turned out that one of the officers was a general who was being shown around the fire area to let him see the fantastic job being done by his national servicemen! To our relief, he seemed to see the funny side of the situation and we suffered no negative consequences as a result.

Then at the end of the three months we joined the CMF, the Citizen Military Forces and for the next two years attended monthly weekend training sessions at the Sturt Street South Melbourne Depot of the RAASC. This was also a picnic. We fiddled around with trucks, servicing them and then on the Saturday night, we climbed the fence and in a few minutes were in Melbourne where we could spend a pleasant evening of entertainment. Once a year, for the next two years, we went back to the Puckapunyal area to Site 17 where we spent a fortnight's holiday at Government expense.

The hardest part of the CMF experience was being separated from my newly acquired love for a fortnight. However, she was able to visit on Sundays which was our visitors' day and that gave me the strength to see out the following week of this arduous adventure. The frustrating part of these visits was when my father acted as chauffeur and chose to take the family and Bev to visit Alan who was also doing CMF training at this stage. He didn't have a girlfriend to see him and I, who did definitely have one, had to wait while my father fluffed around, not understanding the importance of this visit for both Bev and me.

[Return to Index](#)

22 Holiday at Aireys Inlet

Our 'dysfunctional family' was not always so. While my parents were home on furlough in 1956, we decided to have a family holiday by the beach. After a little research we found the ideal spot at Aireys Inlet.

I opened my eyes that morning to see the most glorious sight. We were camped at the edge of a 60 metre cliff overlooking the sea not far from Airey's Inlet. And although we were overlooking Bass Strait, we seemed to be facing almost to the east instead of south as you might imagine, because the sun rose over the water almost straight ahead of us. It was a spectacular sight. The sunset the night before was heart stopping.



Alan and I had come down on the motor bike the day before and, after looking at a number of places, we found this magnificent site in a small clearing overlooking the water. As always we chose a very isolated spot away from other campers, completely surrounded by tea tree 6 – 7 metres high which provided plenty of shade and privacy for us. It was perfect, except for one thing - I wished Bev was there!

My parents and the two younger children came down in the car later in the day and I met them at the Airey's Inlet Post Office, while Alan stayed at the site to hold it in case anyone else found it before we could set up our camp. We erected the tents about 4 or 5 metres from the edge of the cliff and hoped that none of the family would sleep walk.

The weather was perfect. The sun was shining, it was not too hot and there was a slight breeze blowing in from the sea. As usual, my father was first up in the morning and made a cup of tea for himself and also for my mother. I think he has been doing this all their married life, as I have become used to seeing him at his desk in the bedroom with his cup of tea and my mother sitting up in bed with her cuppa reading when I have gone in to say good morning to them. Even on holiday nothing changed.



We had a small stove on which the kettle was boiled, and so we then took turns in using the stove to make our own breakfast. There is nothing better than the smell of eggs and bacon being fried and toast being burnt at a camp site at the top of a cliff overlooking the sea in the morning. I even enjoy doing the dishes when we are camping.

I celebrated my 21st birthday at this idyllic place - 6th January 1956. I really did wish Bev was here, as I felt that she and I belong together more than I felt I belonged to this family. This was just 2 years since the New Year's Day that we first kissed. I was a bit overwhelmed at what the family gave me for my 21st birthday. The car, yes the dear old Vauxhall (or Vorkshall as my father called it). My parents used it themselves until they returned to Malaya in early July, then it was mine. Also the family had all put in to buy me a beautiful leather satchel with my initials engraved on it in gold. So I felt very rich at that moment with all these good things. This was a rare experience of family harmony.

[Return to Index](#)

23 Wheels

Vehicles have been a part of my life for a long time. My first vehicle was literally a dream come true. At 18 I was working just off the top end of Elizabeth Street in Melbourne, and my lunch hours were always spent walking the few hundred metres down Elizabeth Street. Here I was able to look at and dream about owning one of the powerful motor bikes which graced the windows and much of the footpath. Finally I became the proud owner of an AJS 350. Much of my courting was done on this magnificent machine and most week days I took Bev to work in the city before going on to my place of work in Port Melbourne. I worked in an office and had to wear a suit, so part of the equipment I needed was a lap rug fitted to the bike and a leather jacket and gloves with water proof overpants to keep me dry on wet days. All this equipment went over the top of my suit, and when I arrived at work I was able to walk through the door of the office, immaculate, even on the wettest of days.



We had some good times on our AJS, and I always felt so good with Bev behind me with her arms held tightly around my waist. One episode occurred when I was on my own. Paul Grant, who was also born China (we had met before I was 12 months old) invited me to spend a holiday with him at Urana in southern NSW to look after a friend's farm while they were away on holiday.

I enjoyed the long drive there from Melbourne and arrived safely at this wheat belt town, but not before I had run out of petrol a few kilometres short of my destination, and been helped out by a friendly and generous farmer.

Paul and I had a great time. We shot rabbits and I cooked them. We drove around the sheep to check them and some cattle that were also on the farm. One day we set up a target on the gatepost at the entrance to the house block. The fence line to the right of the gate was largely marked by a high hedge which acted as a windbreak for the house. After we had been shooting for a while with, in my case, a questionable degree of skill, we heard a groan from behind the hedge just after one of my shots. On investigating, we found one of the cows on the ground with a bullet hole right in the centre of its curl, the spot on the head where professionals aim for a quick death. But this was some metres to the right of our target, and, bad as my aim might have been, it couldn't have been that bad! We soon discovered that my shooting had not been that bad, but the bullet had hit a knot on the gatepost and deflected at a sharp angle and the cow had not been in a good position. The local butcher would not take dead meat as he was concerned for his reputation, so a neighbouring farmer helped out by dragging the cow to a paddock where he kept pigs. The cow was deposited and the farmer used his knife to slit the cow open from neck to groin, and there we left her. The next day the farmer took us to his pig paddock on his tractor, and we found the cow with its insides completely eaten out, with a couple of pigs half hidden inside the carcass trying to find more to eat. I didn't know that pigs were so bloodthirsty and vowed I would not budge from the tractor until we were safely out of the paddock.

For my 21st birthday, my parents gave me the old Vauxhall which they had driven for some time, and now no longer would need because they were going overseas again (See picture in previous chapter). I did not need the wet weather equipment which I had used on the motor bike, but still had to drive with gloves to keep my hands warm and a rug across my knees so that I wouldn't freeze in winter. I sold this not long after I had taken possession of it, and it paid for some of my fees to enter the Melbourne Bible Institute.

Diana was my next set of wheels. Diana Durkopp was the name of the powerful little motor



scooter which then became my wheels until we were married. In fact we took Diana on our honeymoon. Two days after we were married, when we drove her proudly on to the Princess of Tasmania to go across Bass Strait, we were directed to place her underneath the tray of a semi-trailer. What ignominy! However, when we reached the Apple Isle she was magnificent. We placed a large suitcase on the pack rack at the back. We hung a large overnight bag just below the handlebars and in front of my legs. There were two of us and we carried another two or three smaller bags over our shoulders. In the two weeks we were there we

travelled over 700 miles (1120 kilometres) and it cost us a total of 26 shillings (\$2.60) for petrol.

Through the years of our marriage we owned a number of different vehicles. When the family were young we favoured station wagons. No seat belts were used and we used to place a mattress in the back for long trips and the family would lay about sleeping, talking, reading or fighting depending on the mood of the moment.

We favoured Holdens, but the only new car we ever bought was a Hillman station wagon which turned out to be a lemon. Another memorable car was the Wolseley which had a charming ambience about it, but in the end I set about giving it a major overhaul. I was never able to get it going after this and so sold it as it stood, with no guarantees, to Hayden, the owner of the Snake Valley garage known as The Reptile Gulch Motors.



But probably the most endearing vehicle we ever had was the Suzuki “Beetle”. The Beetle was a gift to Bev from her Dad and was so small it only took up half the space of other cars on the road. It had an 800cc capacity which meant it did not have much power, but it ran for miles on a spoonful of petrol. It was a van, so was square in shape which meant that it caught the wind. The effect of this was that if the wind was a head wind, you used up twice the petrol than at other times and if it was a side wind, you were blown all over the road. This

was compensated for to some degree by the very narrowness of the vehicle, because it was able to veer across the road quite alarmingly without crossing the centre line or leaving the edge of the road.

This propensity for wandering reached a climax one day when Bev was coming home from a stint of night duty nursing in Ballarat, 35 kilometres away. The road was bitumen until about two kilometres from our home in the forest. This gravel section had just been graded the day before and as a consequence there was a fair bit of loose material in the newly graded surface. Bev came off the end of the bitumen and onto the gravel and the little wheels of the Beetle caught in the loose gravel and it veered across the road. As Bev tried to control it, it left the road and went across the vegetation at the side, missing a large tree stump by feet, and then headed straight for a wire fence surrounding a grazing paddock. When it reached the fence, it never paused. It flattened the fence with no damage to its front end, and went straight over the top and into the paddock. The fence meanwhile sprung up behind it and left it with no way back on to the road.

So, here she was at 7 o'clock in the morning marooned in a paddock. The Beetle's wheels were very small and would not allow the vehicle to go through the ditch in the middle of the paddock, so Bev had to drive around the edge of the paddock until she finally came to a gate and was able to let herself out and onto the road for home again.

As a van it was very useful for carrying all sorts of materials, and we made full use of its space as we were living in the country and doing a lot of house maintenance and renovations. We did not realise that when we loaned the Beetle to our daughter to shift some of her goods to a new residence in the country, that the Beetles days were about to end.



We received a phone call from her saying that she had had an accident and would we come and help her. It was quite a few miles away and when we got there, here was the Beetle with its feet in the air and resting on its roof. Our daughter was OK, and we were able to transfer her furniture to another vehicle, but the Beetle was beyond redemption and we had to tearfully let her go.

I wanted to travel around Australia in a caravan, but there were two problems. We didn't have a caravan, and our car was only a four cylinder Toyota, not powerful enough to tow a caravan. Sometime in the first couple of years of this century, I received a note from a friend in Sydney to say that the British Government were offering a cash payment to British subjects who had been prisoners of war under the Japanese. I was given a contact number in England and the long and the short of it was that one day I found \$AUD27,000 safely deposited in my bank account. With this money we were able to buy a two year old 3.8 litre Holden sedan, and later a caravan which we improved as much as we could. This enabled us to do our trip around Australia in 2007.

When we were in Euroa, we were building a new church building and one day it was necessary to pick up a load of bricks from Seymour. One of the church members had a truck, but no one was available to drive it. I knew the local policeman and when I told him my predicament, he added a truck license to my driver's license.

There is only one unfulfilled dream I have that relates to wheels. I have always wanted to drive a semi-trailer interstate. It's not likely to happen now. Maybe there is a semi waiting for me in heaven.

[Return to Index](#)

24 Odd Job Man

When you make an early decision in your life that you will develop your career to help people and not to make money, at least you know where you are going. But it does very little for your bank balance. As a consequence, Bev has always had to work to help us to make ends meet and as she graduated as a nurse just before we married, she was usually able to find work in the local General Hospital, Bush Nursing Hospital or District Nursing Service.

I also was able to find work over the years to help top up the till. This started long before we were married when I was a poverty stricken student. I did not have any training in a trade or profession, so I took jobs on strictly as an amateur. Here are some of those jobs.

My friend Paul had excelled in his studies and long before I had graduated in anything, had become a Patent Attorney. So I spent one holiday period doing patent searches for him in the patent library. This involved reading the complicated language of a particular patent application and then going through pages and pages of existing patents and jotting down any reference where words were used in a similar way to the application. Paul generously paid me for my efforts, even though my contribution to his success was minimal. I felt a bit better

when he said he was paying me £10 a search and that he would probably get closer to £100 for it from his client.

Another Christmas holiday, I spent a few weeks working for Mayne Nickless, who were then simply a trucking company. Ralph Davis, one of the bosses, was a close friend of my father's and I got the job through him. My role was the most lowly of all. I was a "truck jockey". This meant that I was sent out at 7 am with a truck to the huge railway goods yards, and here I helped the driver load up his truck. Then I stayed at the goods shed and helped each driver load up his truck until the huge pile of merchandise had dwindled away to nothing. Then I was transferred to the wharves at the docks not far away and followed the same procedure. The only rest I got was at meal breaks and I enjoyed these. I remember thinking that I would not like to be doing this job for the rest of my life, but I had to acknowledge a strong tinge of jealousy when I was talking to another truck jockey like myself, who had been in the business for years, and he was a completely satisfied man. He loved his work during the week, and he looked forward to his weekend activities which his income allowed him to perform. He seemed to have the secret of serenity. I admired the man.

I used to help my wife's Uncle Ted on his spud farm at Gembrook. Mostly this involved going round the cattle with him, shifting the long aluminium irrigation pipes from one spot to another, digging out silage and feeding it to the stock. Silage is made when the hay is cut green and buried in a pit and covered to make it air tight. Today the same result is achieved by rolling the green hay into a bail and sealing it in a sort of plastic Glad Wrap. It turns into a rather attractive smelling pickled grass which the cows love. The downside of this is that any silage that remains on your boots, when it dries, smells like a sewer. I looked after the farm once for him when he and Auntie Daisy went away for a holiday. This was a happy experience as all I had to do each day was to hop on the tractor which had a scarifier attached. The scarifier is just an array of spikes which help break up the soil after an initial ploughing. In this case I had to use the scarifier to break up the clods of cow poo to spread them around the paddock where they would perform better as a fertiliser for the grass or next year's spuds.

Another Christmas I was invited to the Mallee to a little town called Rainbow to help on a farm during the wheat harvest. I had lived in China most of my life, but had read and dreamed about the Australian outback. So when I arrived in the Mallee it started a lifelong love affair with the place. Rainbow was a town of about 1,000 people, situated on a flat plain where the highest hill for hundreds of miles would rise twenty feet above the surrounding land. There were one or two higher hills, and these were called "mountains" and were well known landmarks. All the towns in this wheat growing country were characterised by their huge silos, and you could see Rainbow's silos from 20 kilometres away as you approached on the road from Warracknabeal.

About 16 or 18 kilometres out from Rainbow, along a dirt road that wound between mallee gums and over sandhills, I came to the Allen's property. Maud Allen was a widow and she was also my boss and my host, both of which tasks she did well. But her eldest son Ian ran the farm and did all the work around the place. The Mallee people are very hospitable and I was soon feeling part of the family. I also loved the job I was given. Ian drove the big machine that harvested the wheat and then he brought it to the corner of the paddock where he loaded the wheat into the truck with the big bin on the back. When this was full, I drove it the 18 kilometres into Rainbow to the silo and parked in the queue waiting to unload. I soon

made friends with other drivers, many of whom were members of farming families, but some of whom were contract drivers.

When my turn came, I went over the weighbridge and collected my ticket and then to the silo where I undid the locks at the back of the tray where the swinging door allowed the wheat to flow out. Then I activated the tipping mechanism and the tray tipped up and the wheat flowed into the large receptacle at the bottom of the silo and then was lifted up to the top by an auger where it was finally emptied into the silo. I went back across the weighbridge and had the empty truck weighed, thus giving an accurate calculation of the amount of wheat delivered by the Allens. When I finished my training for the Baptist ministry some years later, my first church was at Rainbow and I felt quite at home. As a rookie minister, I loved going out to visit the farmers and talk with them as they worked on the myriad jobs that took up their time. Farmers don't want to have visitors when they are harvesting, so again I offered to drive their wheat trucks in to the silo for them. I also used my amateur ability at signwriting to put their names on their newly acquired farm trucks or, in one case, on a speed boat called after the farmer's daughter, Michelle.

While still studying in Melbourne, my brother started a gardening agency and asked me if I would like to work for him on Saturdays. This was interesting as most of his jobs were with old money in the Kew, Burwood area. I did not have a clue about gardening and I have often wondered whether the early demise of Frank's business had anything to do with the type of employee he had.

Our second church was in Abbotsford and we lived at Clifton Hill. Although the manse was a magnificent building and had belonged to a former mayor of Collingwood, our income was no better than before. So I found a job which did not interfere with my ministry or my studies. I got up at four o'clock each morning and rode my bicycle up to High Street, Northcote where I opened up a newsagent's business for him and sorted out the papers for the delivery boys. I then got the boys out on their rounds and settled down to sell papers and cigarettes to the early birds going to work, until the owner came in at about 8 am. Then I rode back to Clifton Hill and picked up my eldest son, Michael who was about 4 years old and took him to kindergarten, just across the park from our place. After which I rode across the top of Melbourne to Whitley College in Royal Parade for my theological lectures. I very rarely arrived early, and the professors stopped asking me for reasons for my tardiness. Mostly I managed to stay awake for the lectures and passed my subjects OK in the end.

At our third church at Euroa, we were in a similar situation. I had to find a job which I could do that did not interfere with my ministry or my studies. This time it was the local baker that gave me a job. Up again at 4 am and off to the wonderfully aromatic workplace of the bakery soon after the loaves were cooked. My task was to get the bread ready for slicing and then put them over the slicer and wrapper. In those days bread was wrapped in grease proof paper and the machine did both the slicing and wrapping in one process. It mostly worked alright and I enjoyed being able to nibble the crusty little bits of bread that broke away with the slicing.

We then moved to Ballarat, our fourth and final church. From here I moved out of the church ministry and into the role of the first director of Ballarat Lifeline. The Ballarat North Baptist Church was one of four Baptist churches in Ballarat, and was not big in numbers. This meant that after a couple of years its finances dropped to the point where the leadership felt that they

could no longer pay a full time minister. So I offered to try and find part time employment to help out.

The first job I got was with Australia Post or whatever it was called at that time. It seems that there were about 100 red post boxes around Ballarat for people to post their letters, and these had to be emptied each day and taken to the Post Office. I was sent out with a huge ring of gigantic keys, a little like an old fashioned prison warder, and had to work my way around 50 of these post boxes and empty the letters into a large canvas bag, and then take them back to the Post Office. I am not sure how much money I made out of this effort because I had to do it all in my own car and I think the pay I received did not do much more than pay for the running of the car. Still it made me feel that I was doing something worthwhile.

Later, I got a job with a local window cleaning firm. I discovered that the secret ingredient for cleaning windows was methylated spirits in warm to hot water. And, once when I was cleaning the windows of a mansion belonging to a local watchmaker, and had forgotten to put in my clean rags, I also discovered that toilet paper is wonderful for getting a smear free finish. One of the other places whose windows I cleaned was the local Kentucky Fried Chicken franchise. As this is one of my favourite fast foods, it was not difficult to work out what to have for lunch.

I worked for Lifeline for eight or nine years and then had a year or so in which I was unemployed. During this time I did a writing course with International Correspondence Schools, but later in the year I had to find work again. This time it was the local abattoirs. I reported for duty and had to don a white apron and a rather ridiculous looking paper hat. I was sent to the export section where I had to place a light bag over the sheep and then write on the outside the weight of the sheep.

My next job was upstairs in the sorting section for beef. Here I had to push two quarters of beef which were hanging on hooks on a sliding rail overhead and get them into a room and line them up in a particular way. Now two quarters of beef is a fair bit of weight, and I was not very fit. After the first push I was out of breath. After the second push I was wheezing like an old man, and after the third push I was dying. The shift boss came past and asked me how I was and I put on the most pathetic look that a dying man could, but he walked straight on and left me to carry on. I had no choice, but fortunately I got a second wind and eventually started to enjoy it and looked forward to the challenge.

For some years I had been having trouble with my neck. For instance, when driving the car, I found that I could not look around to the right or to the left fully without a good deal of pain. Visits to the chiropractor had been in vain. While I was at the abattoir I was given another job in which some of the other workers pushed sheep carcasses along the overhead rails to a point near me, where I had to lift each carcass off the rail they were on and place them on another rail which would allow them to be pushed downstairs to the loading dock. This meant that most of the time I had to have my head bent backwards looking up at the rails to make sure I shifted the hooks to the right place, while at the same time lifting a couple of hundred fairly heavy sheep carcasses. This turned out to be a cure for my crook neck, because after that I never had any further trouble or pain from it.

And then this same year I had one more job. I went fruit picking near Shepparton at Tatura. It was a pear orchard and I had driven up with a small caravan which my brother Alan had

loaned me. I was directed to the pickers' quarters and was glad I had the caravan as the quarters left much to be desired. When I was ready for work, I was shown to a section of the orchard where there was a large crate which was situated between the rows of pear trees with maybe a dozen trees on either side of it. This was my realm. I could start or finish when I wished and when my crate was full, I reported to the tally man who would then allocate me another area.

So I was up at 6 am and into the work. I had been given a ladder and a bushel bag which I hung around my neck and filled with pears. When it was full, I went over to the crate and undid a hitch on the bottom of the bushel bag and the load of pears dropped out of the bottom and into the crate. I was ready to give up the job after I had collected a dozen bags full and deposited them into the crate and it still seemed terribly empty. However I persevered and eventually filled my first crate. When I heard how fast a 'gun picker' could fill one of these crates, I despaired.

I made a good friend while I was working at this orchard. He was an itinerant picker and was called "Rocky". Rocky was from South Australia and was a nuggety little fellow who was probably an amateur boxer. At any rate I was glad I was his friend and not his enemy. Rocky told me that he was in trouble with the law in South Australia, and would not be able to go back, because as soon as he stepped off a train, bus or plane, he would be arrested. He seemed to enjoy my company and used to spend the evenings in my caravan sharing a beer. When I left, he gave me a couple of Four-ex's as a parting gift which touched me deeply as it seemed to indicate that I had made a successful emotional contact with him in some way.

I was only there a week, before Bev told me that there was a job waiting for me at home. The day I left I was able to pick up off the ground enough pears and even a few peaches to fill the boot of my car. So even though I only earned about \$100 for the week, I salvaged a small amount with this bootfull of fruit.

Looking back, I've certainly had a variety of experiences with odd jobs. They weren't all successful financially, but each one in their own way, has added something to my spiritual pilgrimage and made me a better person.

[Return to Index](#)

25 Testing the Waters

It had been six long years since Bev and I had first become 'an item' at that dawn of a new year in 1954. Since then Bev had finished at Swinburne Tech where she had been the school pianist and had achieved good academic results. She had worked at Paton and Baldwin's becoming an expert knitter in the process. Then she had started her nursing training at Bethesda Salvation Army Hospital. Meanwhile I had worked at the nappy factory, and at Rootes Australia, and then changed direction by working at the Melbourne City Mission.

My next step would be to go to the Melbourne Bible Institute, a live-in college which offered a two year course with the primary aim of preparing young people for missionary work.

It was housed in a magnificent old mansion in Kooyong Road Armadale, and I spent the next two years achieving the first academic success of my career.

MOONDANI KYEMA

Melbourne Bible Institute was a very positive experience for me. I was living with a group of people who were all driven by a similar motivation, so there was a sense of purpose and an academic atmosphere that I flourished in. We also had the job of keeping the place looking its best, so every morning there was a time just after breakfast when we did various chores, including the gardening.



I was not so keen on some of the weekend activities. I had to head to Port Melbourne every Sunday and running a Sunday School. There was a team of us and I became very friendly with them as they were all hassling with the same inner struggles as I was. I was also allocated to another team that met in Bourke Street on a Sunday evening. Here one of the team would drive the MBI truck in and park it at the kerb just near Russell Street. They would fold down a platform that was attached to the side of the truck and also fold up a roof piece over the platform to shelter the team from the rain that might penetrate between the truck and the protection of the shop verandahs.

Fortunately for me, other people were responsible for the singing and preaching, but I was expected to give a 'testimony' at some stage. This terrified me. So to prepare myself for this trial I would go in to the city in the afternoon and make my way to the banks of the Yarra River where there was always a number of speakers on their soap boxes letting the world know about their particular obsession. Most of them were great open air speakers and had developed expertise in the art of repartee. An hour or two here would psych me up for the task ahead.

We had lots of missionary speakers, Bible study and prayer meetings. At one stage Bob, a nuggety and slightly aggressive ex army man, came and asked me if I would join a few of them who were praying 'for the revival of the students' at MBI. Not only did this seem to me to be a rather judgmental motivation for a prayer meeting, but I said to him, "No, Bob. I am already attending too many prayer meetings without adding an extra one." Bob left me with the rejoinder that they would be adding me to their prayer list.

By the time I received my diploma I had decided that I would apply for the Baptist ministry in Victoria. Bev and I had discussed missionary work, but she felt that learning a new language and experiencing an unknown culture were not what she was called to. I also began to see that my interest in missionary work was due to hereditary influences rather than the call of God.

So at the end of 1958 I graduated from the college and set about the task of applying to the Baptist ministry. During this time I was able to earn a bit of money working at Stebbins and Sons, Farm Suppliers. Russell Stebbins and his father Ivan, were heavily involved in Christian work and missionary support. I can only say that they were very understanding of my lack of experience in this kind of work as a storeman.

I was able to buy myself a motor scooter, and also face the formidable tasks which I had to perform to be accepted into the Baptist ministry. The two most difficult of these tasks were the trial sermon and the interview with the Candidates Board.

I was accepting invitations to preach during that year and at one of these visits I found that a couple of the 'heavies' from the Baptist College attended and sat at the back of the church. It was a Free Presbyterian Church which meant that they stood up for all the prayers, but sat for the hymns. As they did not believe in having either flowers or musical instruments in church, the singing was led by a 'presenter' who wailed through the first two or three lines of the hymn before the rest of the congregation caught on and joined in. During the service, I had been watching an elderly dowager with a very severe look on her face and wondering if anything I had said was acceptable to her. It didn't look like it. But at the end of the service she was the one person that really said some very encouraging things to me about the service. I began the hard lesson of learning that I should not jump to conclusions about anyone by the outward appearance.

I entered the Candidates Board Room to find a long, old-fashioned board table in front of me. I sat at one end, and it seemed to stretch out for ever in front of me, and way down the other end were the seven or eight members of the Candidates Board. Their job was to try and determine whether I had been 'called' into the Baptist ministry. After a number of questions which I tried to answer clearly and honestly, I was asked if I had talked to any other people of wisdom about my career options. I replied that I had, with confusing and contradictory responses. In the end it came back to my own understanding of God's call.

Anyway, they were satisfied and we were to get married, go on a honeymoon and then we would be assigned to the Rainbow Baptist Church to start as soon as we returned.

[Return to Index](#)

26 Family Man

I know why families were created with all their imperfections. They humanize you. They are made to make you forget yourself occasionally, so that the beautiful balance of life is maintained-- Anais Nin

**A happy family is but an earlier heaven.
-- John Bowring**

**No matter what you've done for yourself or for humanity, if you can't look back on having given love and attention to your own family, what have you really accomplished?
-- Elbert Hubbard**

**The family you come from isn't as important as the family you're going to have.
-- Ring Lardner**

"I don't care how poor a man is; if he has family, he's rich." - Dan Wilcox and Thad Mumford

The effect of my years spent away from my family at an impressionable part of my life, was that I really did not know or experience what family life could be. I was definitely more comfortable in the setting of a boarding school.

When I came home to Australia, I was a fairly socially isolated, even lonely person, although I fitted in with the young people's group at the Kew Baptist Church OK. I had never been a person to make one or two close friends, and was obviously more comfortable in the larger group situation where I could be part of the crowd and not draw attention to myself.

Until I met Bev. And then I experienced something that I think we all look for – the sense of belonging. I also became part of her family and found myself under the protective wings of her mother and father. Here was a reasonably functional family which I felt secure in. They became an integral part of my life from then until they died many years later.

So when we arrived in Rainbow back from our honeymoon we began to set up our own home and prepare for three or four children to become part of our family.

The Baptist Home Mission loaned us £250 with which to buy furniture, and we were able to settle quickly in to the Baptist manse at Rainbow. Nine months after our honeymoon, Michael was born! The family jokingly cast doubt on this, but we will swear by it! So now I was a father and husband and we were a family.

Bev went into labour on Sunday morning.. These were the days when a husband was supposed to make himself scarce and not get in the way, so she faced most of this time in labour alone. Meanwhile I still had my clerical duties to perform. I preached at the Rainbow church and then had to preach at the Hindmarsh church, a part of a circuit of three churches which also included Brentwood. The road to Hindmarsh had been cut due to the overflow of the Hindmarsh lake, so I had to take a very rough track which started out through some local farms and then became a sandy track through the edge of the Big Desert.

All was going well until I got bogged in the sand. It took me some time and quite a bit of sweat to get the car out of there, and I arrived at the Hindmarsh church a good half an hour late. This 'church' was actually a corrugated iron district hall, which was rarely used for anything else but our church services. There was possibly one farm house in sight, otherwise it was surrounded by hundreds of acres of farmland. It had a very old pedal organ from which I extricated a number of dead mice and other nasties when I first arrived. After patching up the bellows with sheets of vinyl and glue, it did us well for the next three years.

This church had a very small attendance of about three or four families, and when I arrived they had been standing around, as farm people do, chatting about the weather and the crops etc. One of the men had just said in his slow way, "Maybe we could go in and start the service now". I took over from there and then rushed back in to Rainbow without getting bogged this time, to see if I was a Dad yet. But not yet!



The local GP was a slightly eccentric character who lived with his elderly mother and used to spend a fair bit of time on his desert property some miles away. There he had placed a 20 litre drum on the top of a tall pole so that his mother would not get lost when she wandered around the area. On Monday morning, Bev's labour was over and Michael John had emerged into the light of day. But I did not know this at the time, because when the doctor phoned me to give me the good news, I was down at the back fence using the 'dunny' (emptied regularly by the

'night man' from the back lane) and when he got no answer from me, he did not bother phoning back.

None of that mattered when I got to the hospital to find Bev looking beautiful ('pale and interesting' I used to say) and without asking permission I went into the nursery and gave Mike a big cuddle and welcomed him to 'our place'! Bev says I hardly paid any attention to her, but I beg to differ.

For the next two days I literally felt as if I was walking a foot off the ground. It was a delicious, delirious and sometime debilitating experience.

We were proud of Mike. Even though he did not do well at High School, it seemed to us that he was bored. He became enthusiastic about studying Law, but the teacher soon knocked that out of him, and that was the end of his interest. After school he eventually found work with the local Psychiatric Hospital and became a psychiatric student in the days before patients were placed in the community. He was able to make a lot of fun and interest out of what could have been a pretty mundane job.

Due to the accidental death of an elderly patient and the bitterness and misreporting of another nurse, Mike unfortunately had to spend 6 months in prison. Again we were proud of the way he handled a situation that could have left him scarred, but it didn't and the family supported him, especially his wife Louise.

The result of this was that he could no longer work in the nursing field, but a really positive outcome of this was that it gave Mike the chance to become the principal carer for their son Scot, who suffers from a chromosomal disorder. He has unselfishly given his love to Scot and to Jessica and Brent, Scot's older siblings.

Now I was a family man, and we were to have four children, one born in each of the four churches that I pastored. After Michael, came Carolynne Marie, born in Bethesda Hospital in Richmond while we were at the Abbotsford Baptist Church. This time there was no problem about letting me know, and once again I was able to have a welcoming cuddle in the nursery when I arrived. A boy and a girl – the perfect family! What more could we want? For Bev it was like coming home as Bethesda was where she had done her nursing training.

We were living in a rather posh house that had belonged to a former mayor of Collingwood, which looked out onto a park. There was a kindergarten just a block away where we could take Michael, and we had some adoring grandparents who could look after Carolynne, while I went to University and Bev worked as a District Nurse.

Carolynne went on to do her nursing training in Ballarat, followed by midwifery and she also has made us proud as she has shown exceptional qualities as a nurse and administrator. In recent years she has added her Masters in Nursing and a Graduate Diploma in Public Health.

She and Simon have been exemplary parents and their family reflect the results of this love and wisdom.

Our next church was at Euroa, and here Andrew David was born. The little hospital was only a few hundred metres from our manse so it was not hard to keep track of what was going on. I think the feeling of wonderment and a deep sense of the mysterious and miraculous accompanied the arrival of each new member of the family.

Andrew never saw himself as an academic, but in my judgment has a very capable and discerning mind. He has experienced a lot of different jobs in different parts of Australia. He joined the regular army for three years and was based near Brisbane. He worked on a semi outback farm and gained experience in working on fencing and other tasks a long way from civilization. He has worked at Uluru as a bar hand in the resort there.

He has always been fascinated in Harley Davidsons and has owned a couple. This brought him to the outskirts of the outlaw bikie gangs. He has been scuba diving, and finally has found his niche in skydiving. He too is a loving and warm parent who brings a lot of fun into his family life. He has been working on developing a skydiving drop zone and other jobs for a boss who owns a number of drop zones around Australia.

Karina is a very beautiful person whom Andrew loves deeply, but it has not all been smooth sailing. Karina has had to face a number of personal and family problems which have taken their toll on her. This has meant that Karina and Andrew have had to work on their relationship more than most. Here too I am immensely proud of Andrew and what he has achieved over the years. I am also very proud of what Karina has achieved against great odds.

In Ballarat, the last of our four churches, Tracey Lee first saw the light of day. In fact she was born on the day that I heard that I had been accepted as the first director of Ballarat LifeLine. This was the first time that I was asked if I would like to be present at the birth. I was a bit apprehensive about it as it was only just beginning to become common practice. But Bev was not keen so I passed on the offer. Bev says she has always regretted that she did not encourage me, but it really was a whole new procedure for us men who, up to then had been relegated to the waiting room, while we smoked endless cigarettes and walked up and down with a pocket full of cigars to celebrate the occasion after we had heard the news.

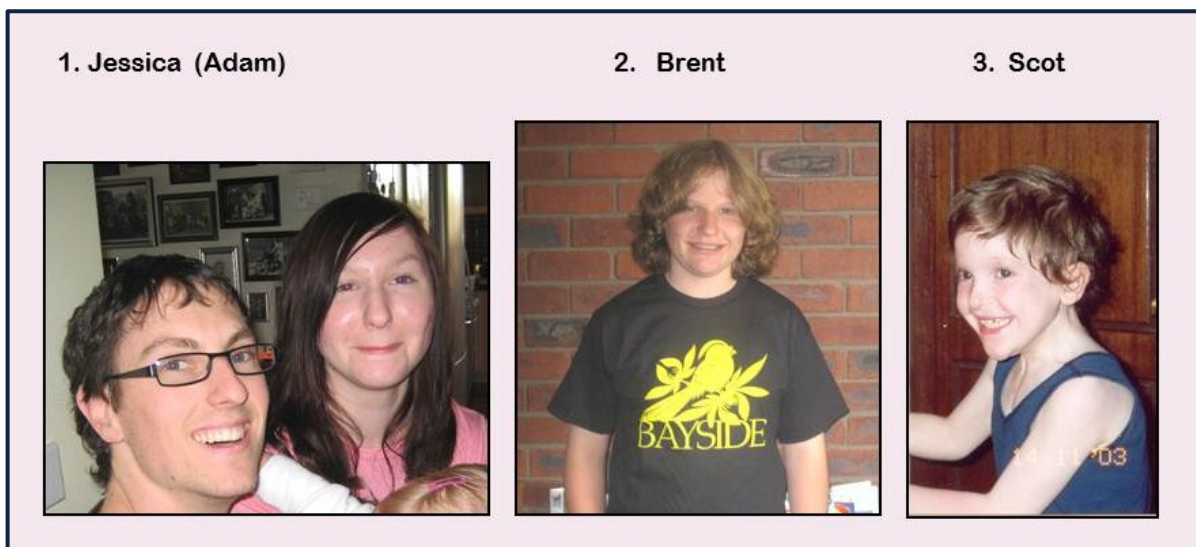
Tracey grew up with a desire to care for children and soon became a much sort after nanny. Families who enlisted her services did not want to see her move on. This career took her to Sydney and then around the world. She took part in the summer camps in America for one season and then went across to Ireland to work for a family there. While in Ireland she met Wilfred from Amsterdam. They soon became close and eventually she moved to Amsterdam

MOONDANI KYEMA

to be with Wilfred. We visited them there and they organised the itinerary for a trip through, Belgium, France, Austria and Switzerland, which the four of us did together.

Wilfred had gained a couple of degrees in engineering and was an IT expert. He was interested in moving to Australia, so they came to Melbourne and were married here. After many heartbreaking years trying to have family, they were finally blessed with twins. Two beautiful girls, Charlie and Abby.

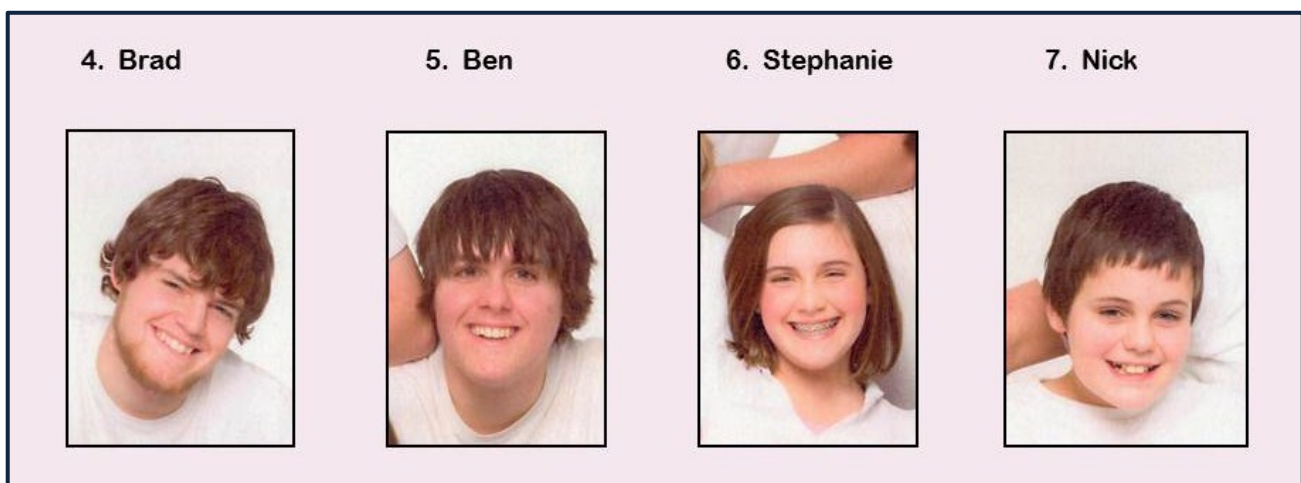
With each of the children, I used to hold them when they were first born and say over and over to them as they snuggled in my arms "I love you. And remember, whatever happens, I will always love you, no matter what." There was no way that we would ever send them away to boarding school if I could help it, even if we followed my parents into overseas missionary work. This was my family and I intended to be as responsible for them as I could possibly be.



And that has always remained a strong part of my family philosophy even though we both know that we have failed the children in some ways, it was not for want of trying.

We continue to be proud of our beautiful family. Michael married Louise and they have a lovely daughter, Jessica and two boys, Brent and Scot. Scot was born with a chromosomal abnormality and is handicapped in some ways, but the family has surrounded him with love and he and his brother and sister give us a lot of joy.

Carolynne married Simon and they have had four children, Brad has inherited some of his father's artistic talents and is working in the area of graphic arts. Ben is an IT expert and



should do well in the field when he breaks into it soon. Stephanie is the girl who, together with her mum helps to keep a balance in the family. And Nick is the youngest and is a constant pleasure and surprise to all of us with his quick mind and musical talent.

8. Crystal 9. Angus 10. Sascha 11. Nate



Andrew, who for some reason since his high school days is called Fred, married Karina. They now have four beautiful children. Crystal is the eldest with Angus following after her. Both have done well at school and shown lots of talent in other ways also. After a bit of a break they then had Sascha and finally Nate arrived. Karina gave birth to each of the children at home with Fred's help (supervised by a midwife) and as the family grew, they were all present at the next birth.

and they had a great deal of trouble starting a family, but after trying IVF etc., they finally had twin girls, Charlotte (Charlie) and Abby.

Tracey married Wilfred

12. Abby

13. Charlie



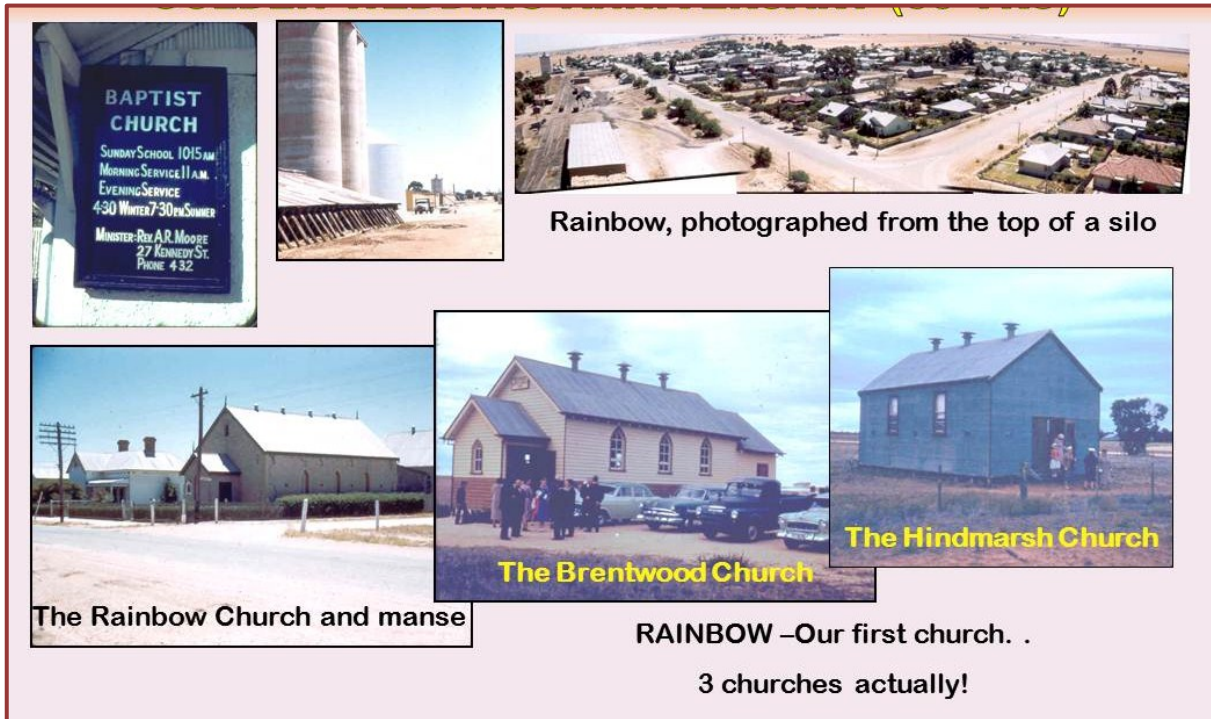
We are extraordinarily rich!

[Return to Index](#)

27 Pastor

MOONDANI KYEMA

Becoming a Baptist minister highlighted for me the dichotomy between my inner instincts and the effect of my upbringing. The message from my upbringing was that I should be involved in some Christian work, preferably missionary work, and if I was not 'good enough' for that then the ministry at home would be second best. The message deep inside me was to break free from all that and be a motor mechanic or truck driver.



Meanwhile as a first time pastor, I found that the training I was getting at the Theological College was good as far as it went, but there was (in those days) a large gap in the training. We were being taught all about the Old and New Testaments. We were learning about theology and Church History. There was also Greek and Hebrew, Hermeneutics, and preaching class. But when I found myself in the Rainbow church, I found that the main element of the church was **people!** There was no teaching about how to handle people, and dealing with the general caring and conflict resolution that was all a part of the role of the pastor.

So I set about trying to work out how to handle the situation. Firstly I realized that very few of them were terribly interested in my hourly activities, but they responded very positively when I showed a real interest in them and their activities. This meant that at Rainbow I had to learn a lot about farming, especially sheep and grain crops such as wheat, barley and oats.

My memories of each church are mainly positive ones. I have become pretty good at forgetting the down side of my life. The people of the Rainbow district were extraordinarily warm hearted. They took us into their lives, and in a couple of cases we have felt even now that we are part of their family. Ian was one of the few people in one farming area that did not come to our church, but I found that I had just as warm a relationship with him and his wife as I did with our church members. Ian was very intelligent and a thinker and writer, so

when I was studying Philosophy at the university, I was able to spend many hours with him trying to nut out some of the intricacies of Platonic thought,

Some of the people were hard to forget. The mother of one of our Sunday School pupils in Rainbow was well known as a prostitute. She lived just on the outskirts of town on the main road. The problem was that whenever I went to visit her, she would come to the door in her dressing gown. I had some mixed feelings about the young Baptist pastor being seen going in to the home of someone with her reputation while she was dressed in her dressing gown, so I used to stand at the front door and talk with her, resisting any invitation to come in for a cuppa.



Our second church at Abbotsford.

The church was in Hoddle Street and the manse (above) in Clifton Hill.

At Abbotsford it became important that we knew what had happened to the Collingwood Football team. We lived in Clifton Hill and our church was in Abbotsford, both of which were part of the City of Collingwood. On Sunday morning, as I came into the church and looked at the faces in the congregation, I knew immediately whether Collingwood had won or lost the day before. When we first arrived in Collingwood, we had been supporting the Hawthorn Football Club, and consequently Bev had made a jumper for Michael, who was about three at that stage, featuring the colours of the Hawthorn Club. This did not meet with much approval when we ventured out with him, so, discretion became the better part of valour, and we changed our allegiance to Collingwood. The church was situated on Hoddle Street and the building took up the whole site. It was just another single fronted building in a line of other commercial buildings. It was getting old and needed repairs especially to the roof, but the deacons were reluctant to spend a lot of money which they did not have. However, one Sunday, I was preaching during a storm, and the rain started leaking into the church at various points. Eventually I had to vacate the pulpit for fear of having an unwanted shower and I preached from the communion table, along with some buckets and pans which surrounded me to catch the rain leaking through a number of other places. The next time it was voted on in a business meeting, the plan for a new roof was passed unanimously.

At Euroa, our third church, there was a more mixed bunch of people, so I had to develop an interest in building, teaching, and even selling life insurance. This latter became a problem when I was asked to preach a sermon (I was even given the outline) on the importance of life insurance as part of our Christian responsibility to our families. I was also offered a commission for anyone who took out a policy as a result of my referral. I was already having difficulty reconciling my beliefs with how I interpreted the Bible, and with my inner instincts, and I found this suggestion one I could not take on board. The salesman, who was a member of our church, was also very generous with his skills. He knew all about cars so when we needed a new engine in our car, we bought it and he put it in for us, which we appreciated very much.

There were two delightful teachers from the local High School who attended our church. One was a red head and the other had the surname of Hughes. We called them Bluey and Hughey.

Our third church at Euroa

We first met in the small building (right) which was formerly a chook shed!



Later we were able to build a new church



I became the target of their wonderful sense of humour when I had to go in to the local hospital to have my appendix out. In those days there was no rush to send people home, so I stayed for ten days or two weeks. Bluey and Hughey used this opportunity to send me a daily get well card, each one professing to come from some famous person such as the Queen, or Chairman Mao etc. We had some good laughs with them.

I never enjoyed taking Religious Instruction in schools, and I remember here at Euroa, that I used to take RI as we called it in the High School on a Thursday. This meant that I started worrying about the next week's lessons over the weekend and this intensified on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, by which time I was a nervous wreck! It really did not do much for my physical and psychological health!

The church, when we first came, was meeting in a converted chook shed - see the picture above - and while we were there the Baptist Home Mission found the money for us to build a new church.

Our last church in Ballarat also represented quite a steep learning curve for me. As there were



Our fourth church - Ballarat



We spent the first months at the Dawson Street Church. It was later sold and became "The White House" nightclub.

We moved to the new manse at Ballarat North where we held services until the new church was built beside it.

two large hospitals and a third aged care hospital, together with a large mental health institution, I found that hospital visitation became an important part of my work. I didn't find this easy as I found myself in Ballarat looking at my motivation for everything I did.

So, when I visited someone in hospital, what was I doing? Was I visiting a friend or acquaintance? Was I there to offer a healing prayer, or comfort from the Scripture? Was I 'doing my duty'? Was I there, in some way, to consolidate the numbers in my church? These were questions I asked in my efforts to carry out my pastoral ministry with integrity.

One underlying aspect of the pastoral ministry that became evident to me was that I was always happier when I was working with one or two people at a time, especially in a time of crisis, conflict or stress. Here I felt as if I was closer to the real me, and that I was doing something more productive than a lot of the other church duties. I found that I really loved people, whoever they were. It was easy for me to talk to the most broken people as well as to the 'upper echelon' of society – I was a member of Rotary for many years.

Although there is a bit of the ham actor in me, I really found preaching difficult. The difficulty was again the dilemma of preaching only what I had come to believe personally and not just preach what I thought I ought to, or in some cases what some members demanded I preach.

It also had to do with the fact that I am not basically a 'social' person. Whenever a church social occasion was organized, I always had to go through a painful orientation of my emotions before I entered the building. I worked out that if I thought of some of the people

whom I knew would be there and thought of some question to ask them to do with their family or business, then I would soon be feeling more at ease as I began to get positive feedback from them.

In all my pastoral ministry Bev was a great support. She seemed to have an easy way with people and everyone seemed to love her. She was also a very practical person and loved looking after the manse gardens, and taking an active, sometimes leading, part in the practical activities of the church. I often used to think that I had been the one who was 'called' to this ministry, yet she seemed to take to it far more easily than I did.

Bev tells me that many of the church people said to her that I was one of the best pastors they had had. I still find this hard to believe.

[Return to Index](#)

28 Funerals and Weddings

The tasks that I loved doing in the ministry were funerals and weddings. This was because I became involved in people's lives when it really mattered.

My first funeral was soon after I had become the pastor of the Rainbow Baptist Church. There was a car crash in which a young man was killed near Warracknabeal. The Baptist pastor at Warracknabeal was away and so was the other experienced pastor at Hopetoun. I was the only Baptist pastor available. I knew nothing about conducting a funeral, so I got out my brand new book of services and tried to familiarize myself with the service. However, the book did not tell me about people skills. I had very little experience of funerals and was unaware of the amount of contact I should have had with the grieving family, such as visiting them and working out the details of the service and finding out about the person who had died. So the first time that I met the family was at the funeral. This meant that my connection with them and my help were minimal. I am still embarrassed to think of it.

I certainly improved very quickly and in the process got to know the undertakers very well. In general they seem to have an overdeveloped sense of humour, although I might be using the word 'overdeveloped' because you do not expect humour from people who are responsible for such a somber undertaking.

When we went to our second church at Abbotsford which was in the city of Collingwood, sitting in the front of the hearse with the undertaker and his driver, we would often be shown respect from the side of the road in the form of the hat placed over the heart or simply removed. I have not seen this in recent years. What was difficult was that the undertaker was often telling me some hilarious story of some of his experiences, and in deference to those along the way that were showing their respect for the dead, I simply could not be seen to be laughing.

He told me that he was contacted once to collect a body from Swan Hill. When he duly arrived he was directed to the pub where, he was told, the body was being held. On getting to the pub he found a full photo session in progress with the deceased mate propped up in the middle of them, while they took the opportunity of some final pictures before he was taken away.

I once said a prayer beside a grave into which we had just placed the body of a man who had no relatives or friends. The undertaker and I were the only people present. There was no church or chapel service and, after a short conversation between us as we pondered on the sadness of such an event, I said a prayer for him and those like him, alone in the world. Another time when there were only a couple of us present was when I was asked to bury a still born baby and the parents could not face the idea of being there. Any funeral where a small child has died and this tiny coffin is lowered into the grave, is heart wrenching.

There was the time that the grave was not wide enough for the coffin and, before we could go on with the graveside service, the gravedigger had to come and widen it.

Our Auntie Nell had come to Traralgon to live to be close to us and to her sister, Bev's Mum. When she died however, we had the service in the Traralgon Baptist Church and then she had to be taken down to Springvale to be buried in the same plot as her husband George. I

accompanied the driver in the hearse from Traralgon to Springvale. It was a very hot day, and we stopped at a garage and eating place, now defunct, at Nar Nar Goon, where we left the hearse and Auntie Nell parked in the sun while we found a shady spot under some trees to have our lunch. Continuing our journey, the driver decided that we would enter the huge Springvale Cemetery from the rear entrance as this would give us a better run to the gravesite. This was a good idea, but he had no idea how to get into the appropriate street. When he saw the correct street, we had gone too far and he had to do a U-turn. This proved to be impossible with the hearse so we turned right off the main road on which we were travelling, and once into the smaller suburban street he proceeded to try and execute a three point turn. So here we were with Auntie Nell on board going where no hearse had gone before! We eventually maneuvered out of trouble and arrived at the graveside about the same time as the handful of family and friends who had not been able to go to Traralgon.

Weddings were obviously much happier occasions. Fairly soon after I started conducting weddings, and I had to have a license to do so, I had to decide whether I was willing to conduct a wedding that was not in a church building. My Anglican and Catholic friends were not permitted to do this, but I felt that the building was not important, and God's presence was. So, until I stopped conducting weddings in recent years, the majority of my weddings were not in church buildings.

The most unusual wedding was at a pig farm. The Mediterranean family involved chose a long weekend, and the ceremony was planned for Saturday morning. They had come in to Ballarat to see me for the preparatory discussions and rehearsal for the ceremony, but the wedding was to be held out at their property. They gave me directions somewhere out past Buninyong. I gave myself plenty of time, but got lost. When I eventually arrived the alcohol had already been flowing for a while, but they had placed a folding table with a table cloth covering it under a gum tree. There was no lawn, it was just dirt and scraps of grass. Twenty metres away was the main pig pen. Because I sensed that some of the guests were fast moving in to a state of mind that was not particularly appropriate for a wedding, I suggested to the hosts that we should start the ceremony straight away. It went very well and I was invited to stay for a drink. I stayed for a short time and as I was about to go, they insisted that I bring Bev back with me the next morning as the party would still be going.

The next morning we duly arrived there about 11 am and people were just beginning to stir from where they had bedded down for the night. We soon discovered that they had an endless supply of alcohol which kept being brought up from some area under the house where it always seemed to be appropriately chilled. We also found that the hosts were very hospitable and insistent that we should join them for drinks and stay and have lunch with them. Neither of us was into heavy drinking, and I coped by drinking very slowly. Bev coped by surreptitiously watering the shrubs. We enjoyed the lunch - plenty of pork - and before we left, we were presented with their payment for the wedding - a leg of pork. They partied on through the holiday on Monday.

I also took a wedding at the top of the Lal Lal Falls near Ballarat in a small reserve situated close to the falls. Then there was the wedding held on a ferry on Lake Wendouree (See pictures). The Botanical Gardens at Ballarat were the scene of many weddings as they provided a beautiful backdrop for such an occasion. There was even a spot we chose a couple of times where two trees which had been planted about six feet apart, had grown together and become one at the top (See picture). A great symbol of marriage.

The cheapest wedding I remember was a young couple who had no money, so we held the ceremony in the lounge room at home. This was OK but a bit of a squeeze. All would have been well if a couple of teenage girls hadn't got the giggles. From there we went to an unlined, corrugated iron hall. There had been no effort to set it up, so the benches were still up against the walls. The meal consisted of sandwiches and the greatest expense had been incurred buying a barrel of beer. Most of my weddings I didn't charge for, although I was quite often given an envelope or other expressions of gratitude. In this case that was not ever going to be an issue.

The Begonia Princess when Lake Wendouree was full and (right) the lake is now (2009) more or less dry due to the drought.



Craig's Hotel was often the scene of up to three or four receptions on any given Saturday, and Bev was invited to attend the reception with me. She had not been to the wedding ceremony and so we agreed to catch up at the reception at Craig's. She did not know the people, nor did she know their name, so when she was confronted with the option of attending three receptions, none of which did she knew, she had to have a look in each one until she spotted me. After this she decided that, when she did not know the couple, she would not attend the wedding at all.

At another wedding at Craig's which she did attend, she had gone to a good deal of trouble to dress up and looked beautiful in a new dress. I had told the bride and groom that I preferred not to make any speeches at the reception, so I was sitting at the table, at peace with the world, when the MC said that Ray was now going to present the toast for the bride and groom. I had just taken a mouthful of coffee, and the shock of this announcement caused me to explode coffee all over Bev's new dress. For some reason Bev has never forgotten that. The other memorable aspect of this wedding was that the groom belonged to the fire brigade. There was an alarm during the reception and he promptly disappeared.

[Return to Index](#)

29 My Inner Journey Towards A More Congruent Life

I think children have an instinct about integrity. They know when a person's actions don't line up with their words. The dictionary describes congruent as "coinciding at all points when superimposed: e.g. congruent triangles."

When I am doing cabinet making, (makes me feel good to call it that even though the result is very amateurish!) I sometimes have a template to act as a guide. This helps me get an accurate outcome by superimposing my work over the top of the template. If my work is exactly the same as the template, then it is congruent. This principle is embodied in the many quotations summed up in the saying: "Actions speak louder than words" What you do must line up with what you say.. Children quickly sense any incongruousness between what you say and what you do. We have thirteen grandchildren, so we know!

**To thine own self be true, and it
must follow, as the night the day,
thou canst not then be false to
any man.**

~William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

For some reason this struggle to be 'fair dinkum', genuine or authentic has always been an underlying tension in my life. Trying to live my life with integrity, I have unfortunately failed more than I have succeeded. But that does not mean that I have not tried. Some of my worst moments of feeling failure have come when no one else is affected, but I know that my actions have not fitted the template I was holding up for my own guidance.

Another problem that arises when a person is sensitive to the congruency and integrity of their lives, is that they tend to live their lives under a cloud of guilt. This guilt comes from not living up to your own spoken or felt principles

Think for a moment what this does to you. When you feel guilty, you lose a whole lot of confidence in yourself, because the message that you are hearing in your 'self talk' is "You are not good enough!"

This can lead to isolation and depression.

This can happen when a parent constantly gives their child the message that they are not good enough. I once had a client in for counselling who seemed to have everything going for her. She was attractive and exceptionally intelligent, always coming near the top of her class. But even when she scored the best marks in the class, her father always used to say to her, "Come on, you can do better than that!" She was never good enough.

Another side effect of guilt is the desire to hide your actions from the person or even the society whose standards you feel you have let down.

When I was in the Baptist ministry it was generally understood at that time that using alcohol and tobacco was wrong. I started drinking alcohol while I was still in the church, but always on my own. I didn't believe that Bev thought it was OK, nor did her parents and certainly that was the message I received from the church. So I only had a can of beer when I was travelling somewhere by myself. This of course then added another level of guilt.

Of course it is hard to hide any of this from yourself.

Being the person that I am, and being brought up in what was then referred to as the ‘fundamentalist’ branch of the church, I think that guilt has been my travelling companion for most of my life. In the China Inland Mission (now the Overseas Missionary Fellowship) in which I was raised, there was a constant push to “go into all the world and preach the gospel”. Their job was to “win people to Christ”. And this message was also aimed at the children of missionaries.

I have had more trouble with myself than with any other man I have ever met.

~Dwight Lyman Moody

I was both sensitive and naïve as a child and I certainly took on board the Christian teachings and principles that were presented to us. But even as a child I had this constant tension between some of the feelings which were an important part of my response, and the thoughts which were beginning to show the tendency towards scepticism which I now acknowledge as an innate part of my thinking. (By the way, it is important to note that scepticism is not the same as cynicism. Cynicism says “You’re crazy” and scepticism says “I can’t believe it now, but if you prove it for me, I will consider it believable”)

Let me explain a bit more. There is a side of my character which is what is usually regarded as ‘feminine’. That is, I am emotional, and can be very easily moved by another person’s experience, by music, and by love. In terms of my faith, this exhibits itself in the number of times in my life when I have been moved to “commit myself” to another step of faith, because I am moved by a “call”. This call may have come through a public speaker who penetrated my emotions, or it may have come through sacred songs which have moved me – and still do. My response to God has always been coloured by my relationship with my father. So when I read the Bible and found that “God is Love” it meant a huge amount to me because I had not experienced that from my own father, even though I am sure he loved me in his own way.

Clashing with this is the ‘masculine’ side of me. The rational, controlled side of me. For instance, even at an early age I used to question what was happening when I prayed. Was there really a Person up there who literally heard my words, or did my prayers actually go no further than they could be heard by the human ear? I was never very good at converting other people to Christianity, because I had too many doubts to be able to say that I had the ‘truth’. This was a problem I experienced when I first came to Australia and attended the Katoomba Christian Convention. Here we used to go with a couple of experienced evangelists to the main street of Katoomba and attempt to persuade passers-by of the benefits of giving their lives to Christ.

In each human heart are a tiger, a pig, an ass and a nightingale. Diversity of character is due to their unequal activity.

~Ambrose Bierce

At the Melbourne Bible Institute I was appointed to a group who went in to the centre of Melbourne and set up an old truck which had a fold down platform on one side where we stood, overhanging the footpath and preached to the curious. I found this so difficult that I used to spend Sunday afternoon at what was then called “the Yarra Bank” where numerous individuals with many different viewpoints, some mainstream and some crazy, would stand on their soap boxes and see who could draw the biggest crowd. In a funny sort of a way, they were an inspiration to me!

So this battle between the mystic and the sceptic continued in me for many years. When I was preaching in the four churches that I pastored, I would often be asked to preach on ‘the second coming’. I found this a most confusing part of the Bible with equally competent experts giving opposing views. I did not know what I believed, so I did not preach on this particular subject. I was also expected to preach on ‘stewardship’. I did not mind preaching about good use of your finances and other assets, but I had a real problem with the fact that the expected result of this preaching was meant to be that people put more in the collection plate. You will understand that in my small churches, there was very little money to pay my stipend, so I felt that in the end I was drumming up my own pay. That did not feel right.

This leads me to think of another problem, that of motivation. I was always having an inner battle about the motives for my actions. As a pastor, what was I trying to achieve? A bigger church? More people responding to my preaching (“Ray is a great preacher isn’t he”)? A greater feeling of belonging (read ‘power’) in the community? I don’t know. Maybe it was all of these, but what **should** my motives have been? Even now, I really don’t know.

The next stage in my pilgrimage was to try and clarify all this and then discard the things I had hung on to because I did not want to ‘backslide’. This took a long time and it involved breaking from many aspects of my life which were comfort zones, but were not congruent with my newly clarified template. As I took each step I experienced a wonderful sense of freedom and a lightening of the burden of guilt. I became more comfortable with myself and eventually worked a lot of these things out with Bev, so that our relationship had no hidden corners. We are now more in love than we have ever been!

“Constant development is the law of life, and a man who always tries to maintain his dogmas in order to appear consistent drives himself into a false position.”

Mohandas Gandhi

I still have two sides in me, the mystical and the sceptical, but now I don’t experience it as a conflict, but as two equally important parts of my personality. My Christian faith is strong, but does not escape scanning from the sceptic in me!

[Return to Index](#)

30 Separated

I chipped away at the board with a hammer and chisel, concentrating on a job with which I was not really familiar. The board was lying flat on my work bench in my shed at Snake Valley where we lived, and had a fine grain. It was about one and a half metres long by 400 mm wide and 40mm thick. On it I had carefully transcribed in pencil, a name. Now I was chipping out each letter with great care so that I could paint the board black and pick the letters out in white. Then we would hang it at the front entrance to our 5¼ hectare (13 acre) property.

Later, with pride, I carried the completed project up to the entrance. There was no gate and no fence around the property as it was situated along a gravel track in forest country. So there were plenty of trees and I hung it on one of these facing the direction from which most people came to visit us. Then I stood back and admired my handiwork with satisfaction.

It was a significant name because the last couple of years had been a bit rough. We had been an untroubled family and Bev and I had been happily in love, but our relationship had cooled. And then, about 18 months previously I had an affair, and did all the denial and justification stuff that people do when they know they are in the wrong. We had then separated and I moved out into a flat. It was a bad time for the children. The two oldest were bewildered and probably angry in a deep, unexpressed sort of way, and the two youngest were at that age where they didn't really know what was going on and in recent years have said they remember little of it.

It was a bad time for Bev and she went to a retreat centre to try and find some answers. It was also a bad time for me, attested to by the fact that I lost weight and was the lightest I had been for years. I only ever lose weight for emotional reasons or when I have been in hospital, until a recent change of diet based on the Tony Ferguson Weight Loss Program which has seen me lose 20kgs.

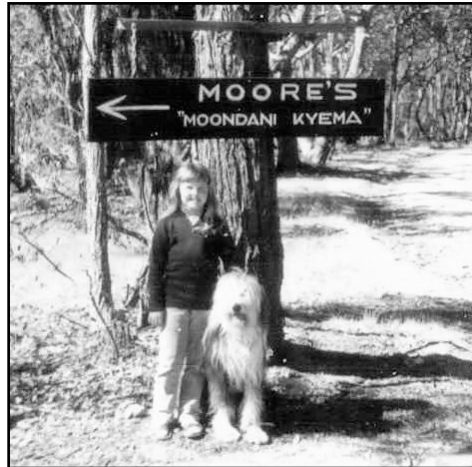
We struggled through the year that we were separated and I saw the family regularly and Bev quite often. Then towards the end of the year things had improved between us and we decided that we would have a holiday together at Mildura as a family. Our feelings for each other were changing and we felt that we could handle that sort of time together. In fact it turned out to be so good that, on the way up the highway, somewhere past Ouyen, after we had stopped because the family couldn't wait any longer to disappear behind trees and shrubs, I said to Bev as we walked back to the car, "How would you feel if I moved back home again?" She immediately expressed delight at the idea and before we drove away from the spot, she told the family. That, of course, changed the whole tone of the holiday and we had a wonderful time.

After returning home we worked at falling in love again, and such was our success that we decided to start a new life in the country, so we bought this 5¼ hectare property in the bush about 35 kilometres from Ballarat. The place had a special ambience as it had been built and developed as a commune. We loved it and hoped that it would be a place where we could start again and leave the mistakes and the pain behind.

Our new home had to have a name – but what? Finally we got out the aborigine word book and found what we wanted. The word "Moondani" we read, means "Embrace" and the word

“Kyema” means “Dawn” or together they would read “Embrace the dawn”. Very quickly I transliterated this as “Welcome the new day”. Perfect.

So I stood at the entrance of our home. I walked 30 or 40 metres back along the gravel road and looked back. Moondani Kyema. Welcome the new day!



It is amazing how much damage a relationship breakdown can have on the two people concerned and on their family also. I stumbled into an affair through my own blindness. Even before I joined Lifeline in 1971 I had started to become more aware of my inability to relate easily with people.

As a pastor of four churches, I had to push myself to attend social functions because I knew what was expected of the pastor. He was supposed to know what was happening in everyone's lives and always come up with a conversation that showed both his interest and concern for each parishioner. Bev tells me that in fact I did very well and, on the whole, I was loved and appreciated by most of them.

I did seem to have an ability to break through to some of the more difficult people in my churches. Perhaps I identified with them more. One lady in Ballarat was quite harsh to talk with and not easy to get close to. I visited her in hospital one day and in the process did something that I had not been able to do with anyone until then. I reached out while she was talking and placed my hand on hers. Her reaction startled me. She immediately grabbed my hand and held on. It reflected a strong need in her for a closeness that I had not realized that she had. After that, when I was visiting members of my churches, I often placed my hand on theirs or on their shoulder to indicate my concern for them.

Then came Lifeline and I was thrown into a situation where I discovered that I knew very little about myself or about real communication. I allowed myself to identify a universal love that I possessed for people, and in some cases to say something to them along those lines. Obviously this was heading into unknown waters and I was misunderstood and sometimes confused about my desire to reflect the love of Jesus to those around me.

This finally culminated with me stepping over the line and having a relationship with one of the Lifeline workers which I should never have tolerated. Someone soon told Bev about it and so we separated for the best part of a year. The pain and depression for both of us was

intense. The two older children were confused and hurt, and the younger ones could not understand what was going on.

Fortunately, a new day dawned as I have described above and we became a family again. However, it was not as simple as that, because it took another thirty years for Bev and I to work all the garbage out of our relationship.

We were, I think, made for each other because even while separated, I knew that no one could really hold a torch to Bev, and she never lost her love for me. All those years of struggle were worth it. Many years later, but still within that thirty year time limit, I wrote this poem to try and pick up some of the heights and depths of our emotional journey.

The Four Seasons

Spring

The earth warms in the spring sunshine
New life begins to stir.
Bare branches seeming dead
Bulge with eager hope
And the world smiles again
Assured of summer's promise

Summer

We became as one
That teenage summer time.
Your eyes met mine and smiled,
And I with breathless longing
Trembled in your radiance,
Heart melted, body saturated
With desire,
Blinded to the foibles or flaws
In heaven and humanity
We saw only a world perfected
Through eyes of love.
Unseeing affirmation
Total absolution.
We walked together heedless of our goal,
The journey only mattered
Oblivious of destination.
We opened our hearts
And made our plans,
Audaciously scheming, shamelessly dreaming,
Then sitting silently serene
The warm summer sun soaking our souls.
Then walking again, sky blue, grass green,
And our feet touching lightly on the turf.
Happiness hurrying to meet us,

Joy coming from behind, infusing us,
And we became as one
Under the summer sun

Autumn

Autumn follows , changing green to gold.
Gold becomes brown and falls
Leaving branches bare and bleak
Flowers that bloomed in warmth
Now wait in vain
To display their charms.

Winter

Are you leaving?
The weak winter afternoon sun
Giving no warmth
Clouds over.
Not cloud but
A blackness permeating
My inner force and obscuring all ability to see
Reality or direction.
Shadows of fear
Ominous, potent with devastation.
Causes lost in criticism
Reconciliation cowering behind retribution
And anger
Scattergunned
Hitting just and unjust targets with equal force.
The blackness goes deeper
And finds my soul
And through it I see a door
Leading I know, to escape
And oblivion
I fiddle fitfully with the handle
Uncertain
A small hope tingles into my fingers
And I let go
But feel again the darkness
Where no light penetrates.
Are you leaving?
Me?

Spring

The earth warms in the spring sunshine
New life begins to stir.
Bare branches seeming dead
Bulge with eager hope
And the world smiles again
Assured of summer's promise

Summer - Mark 2

Slowly we explore our springtime
We start to dream of what could be
And around each corner
As summer surrounds our hearts
Blossoms begin to bloom
Dormant shoots long buried
Push through the softening soil
And winter weeds are left to die

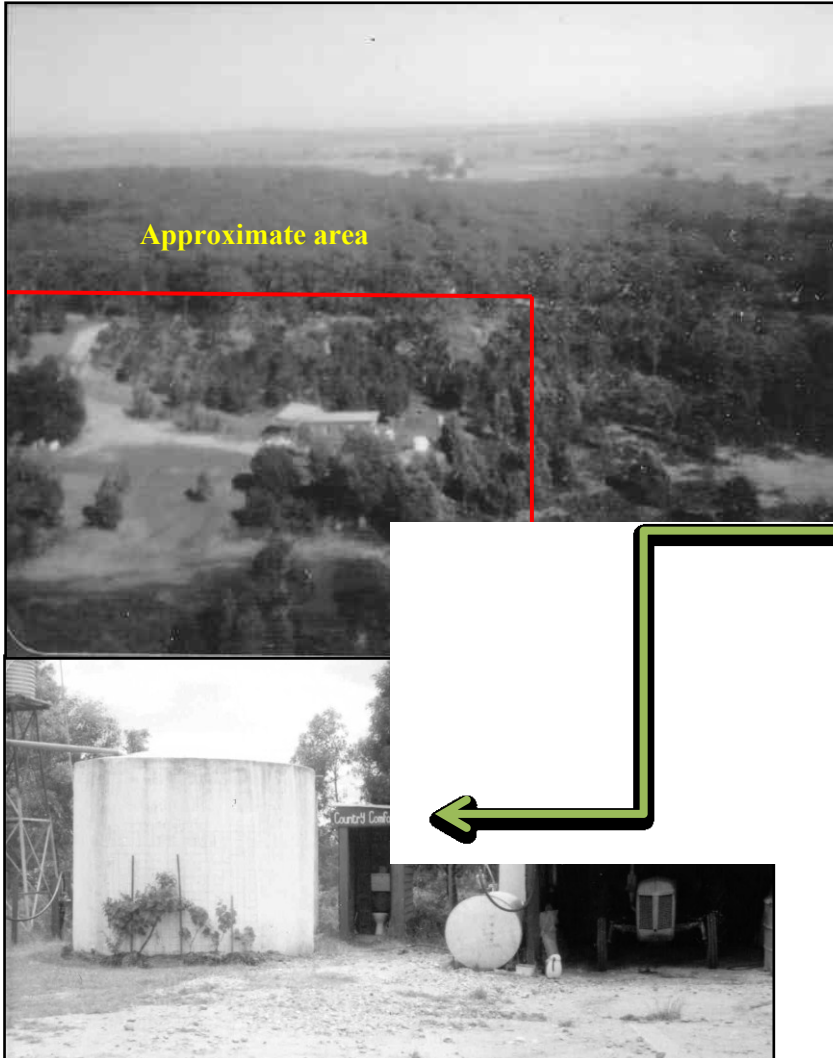
We start to search in this summer of our souls
For the wonder of past summers
The remembered thrill of love
And beauty
And discovery
And contentment
And deep joy but
It all seems so far away
And long ago
But the impetus of our hope
Drives us to travel on
Searching together for love and faith
And in the end we found both
in our God
And in each other.

Ray Moore

[Return to Index](#)

31 Country Living

Our 5¼ hectares (13 acres) of forest at Snake Valley was our home for the next few years. The house had been built by five young men and their partners who had tried to start a



commune. It was a very basic weatherboard house. Half of it was an open living area with bathroom and kitchen opening off it. The other half was a long hallway with five bedrooms opening off it. The toilet was outside. We removed the property name from its place of prominence and I placed the sign over the toilet door. It read "Country Comfort". Some birds had a habit of roosting in the roof of the toilet at night and the family were not at all keen on going out there in the dark to be met by the thrashing of wings over their heads as they entered. So every night I would take the whole family for a toilet run, firstly making sure that there were no birds in the roof and then, because

there were no lights, shining a torch so that they could see what they were doing, while I discreetly looked the other way!

There was not electricity, so we had to buy a generator for this purpose. Before we moved in we dug a ditch between the house and the shed to hold the electric wires that would bring power to the house from the generator. Coming one morning to continue the ditch digging, we found two bewildered snakes at the bottom of the ditch, wondering how on earth they were going to get out of this trap they had fallen in to. We solved their problem by despatching them with the shovel.

A few months after we moved there we were able, together with the other residents of Rowlers Road, to have the power lines extended along our road. Because it was a forest area, we had to have a twelve metre swathe cut through the forest to provide a safe line for the poles and wires required. To save money, the residents banded together, and we had a working bee most weekends to hone our skills with our chainsaws and clear the trees. Because we were the only permanent residents who seemed interested in using the trees that

we had felled, I was able to spend the next twelve months or so gradually cutting up the fallen trees for firewood.

Talking about snakes, when we moved in we brought our Old English Sheepdog with us, and after that we only saw one or two snakes each year. One of the more memorable sightings was when Bev and I were sitting at the kitchen table having a cup of tea. As we looked out the window past the verandah, to the beautiful bush setting we lived in, we both realised that a snake was climbing the verandah post through the creeper that was trained around it. It was aiming to reach the mud swallow's nest that those busy birds had built under the verandah eaves. Again, I assisted this hopeful reptile down from the verandah post with my shovel, and out of this life.

The swallows had originally planned their nest at our front door. After all, it was obvious that this was the place where everyone came and went. What better position? We, however, had trouble educating them to the fact that our toilet, called "Country Comfort", was over there beside the shed, and that we did not appreciate them using the area around our front door for this purpose. The only solution was: No building of nests at our front door. So, as a result of our self-made building regulations, we were forced to destroy a number of their embryo nests before they became more than just foundations. They persevered, and eventually we compromised and stretched the building regulations to allow them to build at our back door. The snake had obviously been watching this process with great interest.

Rags, the placid Old English Sheepdog who always sat with us in front of the fire and often (against our orders) slept in No. 2 son's bed with him, kept a quiet eye on the place. "She would never hurt a fly," we said, "she is certainly not a watch dog!" We were pleased however, when our "fruit man" who came with a trailer load of fruit and vegetables each week around the local properties, told us that when we were not there, Rags became a formidable guardian of her kingdom, baring her teeth at anyone who entered the place.

Before we left Ballarat, somebody hit a small dog near our front gate and left it there in the middle of the road. Our youngest daughter, whom we had tried to shield from some of the more painful facts of life, found it. "It looks just like the pieces of steak we buy from the butcher" was her considered comment. So much for childish hysteria at the sight of a dead animal. We tried to salvage the situation by suggesting that we should bury it decently somewhere on the property. Two elder brothers and an elder sister took this suggestion up with enthusiasm. I had been a minister of religion in a previous life, and Eldest Brother found my discarded dog collar and black bib in the box of play clothes and donned these, while the girls found appropriate adult looking dresses and hats to wear, and they proceeded to have a funeral service. The shovel came out and a suitable hole was dug. The deceased was wrapped in an old rag and placed with due reverence in the hole. The hole was filled in and Eldest Brother, who had been taking trumpet lessons, got the trumpet out and played "The Last Post" with great solemnity. Finally No. 2 Brother made a small cross out of some scrap timber and placed it on top of the mound. All this we observed from an unobtrusive position behind the lounge room curtains.

At Snake Valley we were at various times the protectors of small birds which had fallen out of nests or had been abandoned by their parents. These were brought inside and carefully fed with eye drops, pudgy fingers and food which specialised in milk or its derivatives. Invariably however the result was the same. They died, and then were taken out to the special

spot behind the shed, where there was already a small array of crosses indicating the passing of previous feathered fledglings. Priscilla was a goose that flew into our property and stayed for a while, working her way into our emotional lives to some extent, only to fly away after a few days, once again teaching us a lesson in separation and grief.

In the part of my shed I used as a workshop, I had a shelf above my work bench on which was an ice cream container with a few screws and nails in it. One day I went in to work at the bench and a blackbird flew out of the ice cream container. Later I noticed that a nest had been built in it, and one day I went in and the blackbird was sitting in the container and did not move, but stayed there and let me move around without disturbing it. Sheer magic! It was not long before the nest contained eggs and finally, to my delight, the eggs hatched and there were four little scrawny, nude blackbirds. I became part of their lives and was captivated by their day to day activities. I watched mama blackbird bring in worms and other titbits for them to eat – which they did enthusiastically. I also watched with fascination one day as one of the babies poo'd in the nest and the tiny bit of poo was caught by mama bird in her beak and it was deposited outside the ice cream container. It seems that blackbirds at any rate, do not foul their own nests.

There were a number of unwanted animals as well as the snakes mentioned above. Feral cats were spotted from time to time, and usually caused us little problem until one had its litter in one of our small sheds. Here were these three beautiful little kittens looking as gentle and mild as you could wish, but we knew that if they were allowed to live, they would join the destructive company of their relatives in the wild. I looked at them and could not bring myself to harm these little bundles of fluff. I said to my two sons, "I can't do it". After I disappeared strategically, I heard the bang of the .22 rifle three times, and knew that the job had been done.

And then there were Bev's organic tomatoes. She had carefully prepared the base for the plants according to the book, and it wasn't long before we had a healthy crop of tomatoes coming on. But when we were not looking, a couple of kangaroos found them and started on what they hoped would be a nightly feast. So we built a kangaroo proof fence around the tomatoes. Soon after this we noticed that tomatoes were still being purloined. This time it was rabbits, so we built a rabbit proof fence which included digging down a foot or more to bury the bottom of the fence as a deterrent to the burrowing bunnies. We hadn't allowed for the cockatoos who chose this moment to fly in from above, and wreak havoc with our precious plants. And after we had covered the plants with netting we discovered that the field mice had found our tomatoes and developed a taste for them. We ate what were left.



I was very happy on our little 'farm'. I had a small grey Ferguson tractor which I used to tow the trailer; to collect wood using my Stihl chainsaw, drive the bench saw, slash the bracken and carry all sorts of loads.

Bev was also happy in this retreat. She gradually extended the garden and lawn out from the house, and as always, it looked beautiful. Drew (Fred) was still at home and we were able to get him a small Suzuki trail bike which he rode for miles through the forest as there were few fences to stop him. Bev used to say that she did not worry so much when she could hear the sound of the motor bike, it was the silence that worried her more. The place had been a goldfield in the 19th century and there were still a lot of deep shafts dotted here and there amongst the trees. We knew that he used to jump his bike over these shafts from time to time.

One day, when the bike fell silent, it wasn't long before a sheepish Fred came back to the house. He had taken quite a bad spill and grazed his body.

[Return to Index](#)

32 Family Counselor - Chaplain - Probation Officer - Prison Monitor

After my 12 years in the ministry, I joined Lifeline and became, not only a manager but also a personal counselor. This was to be my role for the rest of my career until I retired.

I was very proud of my appointment as the first director of Ballarat Lifeline. I had always admired the Rev. Alan Walker and the organization he had started a few years earlier. Ballarat Lifeline was largely supported by the local Uniting Church, the same denomination to which Alan Walker belonged. Consequently the salary was on a par with that of a Uniting Church minister.

The committee had secured a charming old residential building not far from the CBD, and I met the chairman there and we sat on two chairs, the only pieces of furniture in the place. In a way it was good to be able to start with a clean slate. The first thing that I had to do was to attend a training course at the Lifeline Centre in Melbourne. But this was not a happy experience for me.

The training was fairly basic, and concentrated on skills in communication, especially listening. The principle of good listening centers around the ability to 'hear' what the other person is really saying, not just their words, and not to 'transfer' your own feelings and experiences to what they are saying. Sounds easy doesn't it? But it was a new concept for me. I thought good communication was conversing and being interested in the other person. Unfortunately I discovered that there are a huge number of impediments to the process of hearing. We had to do role plays and practice the skills, but all I learnt at that stage was that I was far from skilled at this new concept.

Fortunately I was given the task, when I returned to Ballarat, of training the new bunch of people applying for the voluntary positions of telephone counselors. I say 'fortunately' because, having discovered what I didn't know, compelled me to put all my energy into learning as much as I could from as many sources as I could. So my skills were gradually built up, until I felt much more confident about my ability to help people.

To begin with I was the only paid staff and we had a volunteer pool of 50 or 60 people who had submitted to a fairly rigid application procedure and undertaken about 100 hours of training. They were a great bunch of people from all walks of life and with a wonderful range of personalities. We had housewives, teachers, business people, priests and nuns, and a lot more. Eventually we were able to afford a secretary, who was a great support to me.

The role of director also meant that I was responsible for publicity. This gave me experience in dealing with the media - especially the local newspapers and television station. Every year we had "Lifeline Sunday" which was our main fundraising thrust for the year. The committee would work out ways of advertising for funds and I would arrange to provide speakers to as many of the churches as possible. My own role on Lifeline Sunday actually started on Saturday evening when I spoke at the evening mass at the Catholic Cathedral, St. Patrick's. I had got to know the priests quite well, and they always invited me to sit with them near the altar during mass, and then I would give a talk about Lifeline from the big brass reading stand. It was probably the first time that a Baptist minister had taken such a position at St. Pat's. On

Sunday I would spend the day with the priests and perform the same undertaking at four more masses. The priests asked me not to participate in the Eucharist, explaining that they would happily allow me to do so, but there was a strong element of conservatism, especially amongst the older parishioners which they needed to consider. I must say that I found myself appreciating the important place that the prayers and liturgy played in the long history of the Church.

Throughout the year I was also expected to speak at numerous service clubs and women's groups around Western Victoria. I enjoyed this and my talk was always accepted with appreciation and often accompanied by a long question and answer time.

After I left Lifeline, I set up my own counseling business which I called The Ballarat Personal Counseling Service. I ran this for two years, but spent a lot of time waiting for clients and was only able to keep my head above water because Lifeline asked me to run some training courses in Warrnambool where they were hoping to open up a branch office.

For another six or seven years I also worked for the mental health organization called GROW. It was an interesting experience and one where I felt that I was never able to stretch my talents or stray from the fairly rigid path that was laid out for us. It had a similar role to Alcoholics Anonymous and was based on the same ten step program.

Then I came to Traralgon where there had been a counseling service set up by the church a couple of years before, but, due to some problems with their inaugural manager, it had been closed for a year. The office was situated on the Baptist Church property and was only a stone's throw from the shopping centre.

I spent the next six years or so here and we built up quite a good service. I had a secretary and two counselors who did a fantastic job. I admired their skills, especially when dealing with children and teenagers, an area in which I did not perform very well.

From the start we let it be known that it was not going to be an emergency service with twenty four hour availability, as there were a couple of emergency after hours services already. I thought this would make life a bit easier for us, but I had not taken into account another development. We were asked by the Department of Human Services (or whatever it was called at that time!) to manage some residential homes for teenagers. This gave rise to a huge clash in my value system. Because the young people we were asked to care for were regarded as the more difficult kids in the system, we could not run these homes as regular homes with a couple of house parents in charge. We had to have a rostered staff who worked eight hour shifts and then went home. I had a great group of people on the staff. They honestly cared for the young people and were able to develop some terrific strategies to deal with their behavior.

An example of the kind of reward we savoured was the response of one of the young people for whom one of the staff bought three pairs of socks. He looked at the socks there on his bed and burst into tears. He had never been given a gift like that except on some of his birthdays, and then it would only have been one pair of socks - but three!

Of course there was the other side of things where the residents ran away or abused the staff and even drew knives on them. All of this we could have handled, if we had not been supervised or controlled by the Department by whom we were funded. They had an entirely

bureaucratic way of handling things, and the people who were directly involved with us had got to the top because they worked hard at being bureaucrats and not carers.

The final straw came when I was asked by our Baptist Social Services Department to draw up a Purpose Statement. This was to sum up the principles on which the service would be based and under which we would work. As this was a Christian organization and all the staff had signed on with the agreement that whether or not they were Christians themselves, they were happy to work in an organization based on Christian principles, I felt it important that this Purpose Statement should reflect that. After consulting with my staff, I put it together and sent it to the Baptist Social Services office in Melbourne. It was sent back to me asking me to scrap it entirely and draw up another statement based on some (entirely secular) examples which were attached.

Not only did I disagree with this, but they also ignored some important forward planning I had been doing with another agency in the Latrobe Valley. I put in my resignation dated a couple of months away to give them time to find another manager. I was told by the CEO of Baptist Social Services to pack up immediately and leave, which I refused to do, but agreed to leave at the end of the week. I should add that the CEO, whom I had known since teenage years, did ask me to attend a staff meeting in Melbourne some time later and paid me some nice compliments including the comment that I had been responsible for reminding them that they were working in a Christian organization.

The other area of my work that really interested and fulfilled me more than most, was my involvement with the probation service and prisons. I started doing probation work while I was at the Abbotsford Church. This brought me into contact with a culture that I had not experienced before. I had to make regular visits to my clients and their families as most of my probationees were teenagers. It was interesting to meet with known criminals, or drink thick Turkish coffee with a hugely hospitable mum. One teenager told me that I need not worry about leaving our car in front of the house overnight. He said, if it was stolen, he would probably know who did it and get it back for me pronto.

I had to write reports on my clients when they appeared in court and present the court with a coherent picture of my client's circumstances and behavior and usually accompany this by taking the witness stand during the hearing.

My involvement with prisons began when I was working with GROW in Ballarat. GROW had developed some prison groups which we 'field workers' had to supervise. In my case this included Bendigo, Castlemaine and Geelong prisons.

When I arrived in the Latrobe Valley I applied to become a 'prison visitor'. This was a voluntary position with the State Government. Its purpose was to have a number of people, independent of the government, who could visit prisons and make the authorities aware of any weaknesses or potential problems, so that they could be dealt with before they became major.

I had a couple of orientation days when I was shown over prisons. The first one I went to was Pentridge prison. Here one of the prison governors was allocated to showing me around. It was fascinating to say the least! Another prison I was shown over was the Women's Prison in Deer Park, and at a later stage I spent a day in the Metropolitan Assessment Prison in Spencer Street, where a lot of prisoners were held while on remand.

My first assignment was to the Morwell River Prison, a low security prison miles from anywhere in the middle of magnificent mountain and forest country south of Morwell. It consisted of a number of small two man huts and a service block which housed the kitchen, dining room, toilets, store rooms etc. The prisoners did a lot of work around the area for the local council. One of the prisoners had the task of phoning in the weather details, temperature, rainfall etc., to the Weather Bureau twice a day.

I always used to visit the prison half way through the afternoon, and was given free rein to go anywhere I wanted to in the prison precincts. Just before I had to go home I used to make my way to the kitchen to see what was on for the evening meal. Their cook was excellent and they usually had a more gourmet meal than I had when I got home! After being in prison for twelve years, this cook was finally released and went to work for the Salvation Army in Geelong. However a very patient and punitive relative of his original victim, dobbed him in for being involved in another murder, and he was back in prison again for another long term.

Eventually Morwell River closed down and I went across to a new prison near Sale, the Fulham Correctional Centre, a medium security prison. I visited there once a week for a number of years, and began to get a bit of insight into the 'pack hierarchy' of a prison. They had a small swimming pool, but the only people I saw swimming there were a couple of thugs and their friends. They used to lie in the sun in provocative poses, making sure that everyone could see their bulging muscles and other attributes. The same applied in the gym. The best time of the day was always commandeered by a small group of heavy weights and some of their hangers-on.

One of these hangers-on was a rather weak looking character and I wondered how he got into this inner sanctum, until one day he was listed to have an interview with me, and he proudly showed me his 'little black book' containing the names of the men he had prostituted himself to.

I used to spend quite a bit of time at Fulham chatting with a prisoner who was there as a result of being nabbed by the Federal Police for trafficking drugs from Thailand. He was a talented artist and he was permitted to stay in his room through the day so that he could paint. I loved his work, but unfortunately none of the staff, nor myself or visitors were allowed to either buy or receive his works as a gift, because it could be seen as a possible bribe for favours.

Although I often struggled with my own inner demons, and found it hard to accept that there was anything extraordinary about me, I still slowly developed an understanding of myself and an acceptance of the fact that I had an instinctive ability to do two things: I was able to pick up what people were telling me and analyze it and put it together with my own intuitive perception of the situation and often be able to go directly to where the real problem lay. The other thing was that I had a truly compassionate heart and an understanding of people's feelings.

[Return to Index](#)

33 These Things Have I Learnt.

- **Look for the inner beauty in a person however plain or unattractive the wrapper may be.**

When I was fossicking with a friend near Mount Buninyong, I picked up this rock. I was about to throw it away, when my friend stopped me and took the rock from me and placed it in his collection. Some days later he returned the rock to me. He had cut through the ordinary looking rock revealing a beautiful rich brown wood pattern.



This highlighted something that I had learnt from childhood, which had been reinforced at the Melbourne City Mission and throughout my life: There is no person in the world that does not have something of value or something beautiful inside them if you look hard enough.

- **Don't generalize (except when you are saying 'Don't generalize'!).** Generalizations are usually untrue or at least inaccurate. One of my travelling friends will say "that is what the Germans do (or eat)" and in turn I have heard him say to visitors to our country, "Australians are like that" or "This is how we do it here". He was assuming that when he went to Germany, the family that he stayed with or the city that he visited was cloned in every home and city in the country, and we all know that is not the case. Nor are the idiosyncrasies of one family those of the whole country.

This was the advice I used to give to telephone workers at Lifeline. If they were going to understand exactly what the problem was, they needed to be specific and not talk in generalizations themselves nor let their caller talk in generalizations when describing their problem. One example I used to give was when a teenage girl phoned and said "I did it with this boy. Do you think I can become pregnant?" The assumption would immediately be that she had had sex with him. But this was not the case. She had in fact had oral sex with him and was worried that she may have swallowed some sperm!

This was also the advice that I used to give to married couples (and try and follow myself!) when they are arguing. Don't use terms such as "You always . . ." or "You never . . ." Very rarely does a person "always" or "never" do something. It is more likely that they do it "a lot" or "every time there is a full moon" or something not quite so all embracing. The response to "You always . . ." is usually "I never . . ." whereas the response to "You sometimes . . ." or "You did that the last time we . . ." is more likely to be less defensive. At least it doesn't back a person into a corner.

- **Say "I don't know", "I'm sorry", "I was (am) wrong"** To be able to say "I don't know" is a very freeing thing to do. It is difficult for someone who has a shaky self-

confidence to 'lose face' and look like they are 'ignorant' about something. It is good to realize that you don't have to be 'God'. You can leave that up to Him. It is OK to not know and it is amazing how much you learn when you please ignorance.

As for the other two phrases, they are particularly difficult to say when you are angry or upset about something. It is also hard to be the first person to acknowledge that you are sorry or wrong. But it is worth it in the end. It takes a lot of courage and self-esteem to be able to use these terms sincerely. They are for the mature person only - or at least the person that is getting there.

- Learn what **forgiveness** is and how to practice it. Mahatma Gandhi once said, "The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong."

The dictionary says that forgiveness is to cease to blame or hold resentment . . . to grant pardon for a mistake, wrongdoing, etc. . . to free someone from penalty . . . to free someone from the obligation of something they owe you.

Forgiveness is not necessarily forgetting, but it is acting as if you have forgotten. It also means changing your perception of the original event or episode so that there is nothing left to forgive. This can be extremely hard to do, but the more you practice, the easier it becomes, and in the end you may actually forget what it was all about.

Forgiveness is actually three dimensional. So far I have described forgiving others, but we must also forgive ourselves. Some of us get very sore from kicking ourselves all our lives about some shortcoming. The third dimension is for those who believe in God. It is really important that forgiveness is sought in this relationship as well.

- **Water the grass.** This is important if you want to keep the lawn of any relationship green. If you don't do this, the grass will start looking greener on the other side of the fence.

Of course, in relationships that are not so important, you might choose to let the grass dry out, because it doesn't matter to you.

- **Withhold judgment.** I spent a lot of time trying to be non-judgmental, but with limited success. However I was much more successful at withholding my judgment and allowing myself to open my mind up to aspects of life and people that have, in many cases, eventually enriched me.

You would have to be a special type of person to be completely non-judgmental.

- **Mirror principle.** This principle relates to criticism. Have a careful look at what or who you are criticizing and invariably you will find that you are seeing something in yourself that you don't like.

Try this. Write down 5 words or phrases of criticism that come to mind when you think of this person. Take a look of the list of words carefully and reflect on it. OK, here's the crunch, if you're really honest with yourself you will see that you too possess those same qualities that you find distasteful in that person. They may be

repressed or you may be denying them, but they are there. Often you don't even realize it yourself. It might take someone else to tell you; try asking someone who will be honest with you. The simple fact is, you would not be so upset by the person if you didn't have some of them in you.

- **Encouragement** is both easy and hard, but always worth doing. It is easy because it often simply needs a smile or a wave to indicate your support or encouragement of someone. But it can be hard because it must be sincere. It is too easy to sound patronizing and colonial.

The word “sincere” has an interesting etymology: “In the time of the ancient Romans, devious dealers in marble and pottery would conceal defects in their products by filling the cracks and holes with wax. Honest merchants, who did not doctor their products, proudly displayed their wares as being ‘without wax’; that is, they were *sine cera*.”

Try waving ‘thank you’ to a driver who gives way to you. Say thank you to the person who cooks your meals every day for a particular meal. Say something appreciative to the check-out chick at the supermarket. Notice, and comment favourably on changes in your loved ones clothes, hair style etc.

- **You can’t guide a person up mountain tracks that you have not yet reached.** This has always been a challenge to me to keep growing and learning. Counseling involves pointing people along a better track than they have been on (by the way, you don’t push them. Any change must be their decision). How can you do this if you are nowhere near that track in your own experience? Don’t give advice, offer it! Nowadays, in retirement, I am not trying to lead others up the track, but I still enjoy the climb.
- **To help someone is to fan the spark of life into a flame - not to let the living dead eat you up.** Don’t associate with ‘toxic’ people. It means the same thing. These are the people who drain you of energy instead of enriching you; the people who leave you feeling worse after being with them than before; they are consistently negative, complaining, needy, manipulative people who can turn a happy day into misery. In counseling they never seem to get anywhere, yet they tell you often how much they need you and how much you are helping. You then feel guilty or a failure if you ask them not to make any further appointments. The best way to deal with toxic people is to not deal with them at all; to avoid them. In some cases it may not be an option, but more often than not, it is. It is common to think you have to deal with someone, when you actually do not. It is also common to believe you can get a toxic person to change while interacting with them. My experience is that it usually doesn’t work in the long run.
- I have learnt a lot about **love**. Just read this story again!
- And finally, I have learnt that **learning never stops**. Each day I learn something new, sometimes trivial, sometimes life changing. Now, more than ever, I am enjoying the journey.

[Return to Index](#)

Appendix 1: How The Pin Yin Spelling Is Pronounced

(With thanks to The Lonely Planet)

Pronunciation

Most letters are pronounced as in English, with the exception of the following:

Vowels

a	as in 'father'
ai	as in 'high'
ao	as the 'ow' in 'cow'
e	as the 'u' in 'fur'
ei	as the 'ei' in 'weigh'
i	as the 'ee' in 'meet' (or like the 'oo' in 'book' after c , ch , r , s , sh , z or zh)
ian	as in 'yen'
ie	as the English word 'yeah'
o	as in 'or'
ou	as the 'oa' in 'boat'
u	as in 'flute'
ui	as in the word 'way'
uo	like a 'w' followed by 'o'
yu	as in the German 'ü' – pucker your lips and try saying 'ee'
ü	as the German 'ü'

Consonants

c	as the 'ts' in 'bits'
ch	as in 'chop', but with the tongue curled back
h	as in 'hay', but articulated from farther back in the throat
q	as the 'ch' in 'cheese'

r	as the 's' in 'pleasure'
sh	as in 'ship', but with the tongue curled back
x	as in 'ship'
z	as the 'dz' in 'suds'
zh	as the 'j' in 'judge' but with the tongue curled back

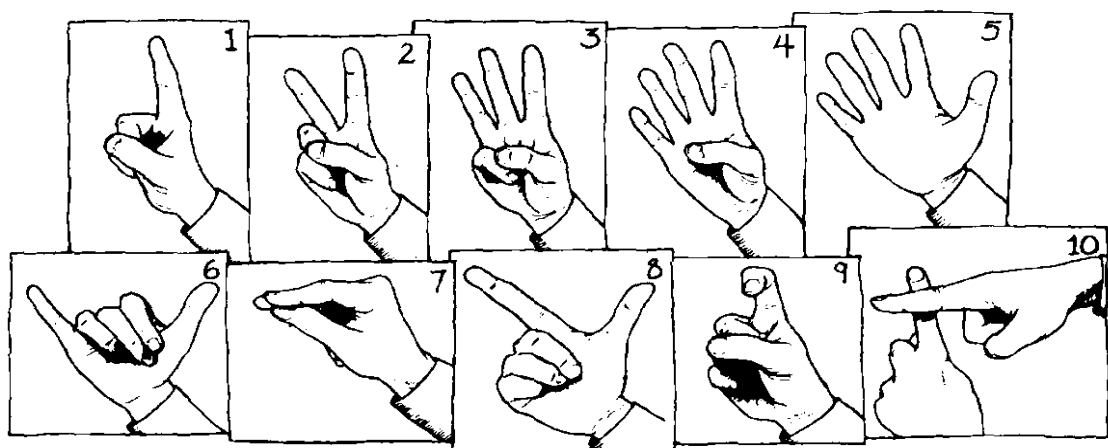
The only consonants that occur at the end of a syllable are **n**, **ng** and **r**.

In Pinyin, apostrophes are occasionally used to separate syllables in order to prevent ambiguity, eg the word *píng'ān* can be written with an apostrophe after the 'g' to prevent it being pronounced as *pín'gān*.

Gestures

Hand signs are frequently used in China. The 'thumbs-up' sign has a long tradition as an indication of excellence. An alternative way to indicate excellence is to gently pull your earlobe between your thumb and index finger.

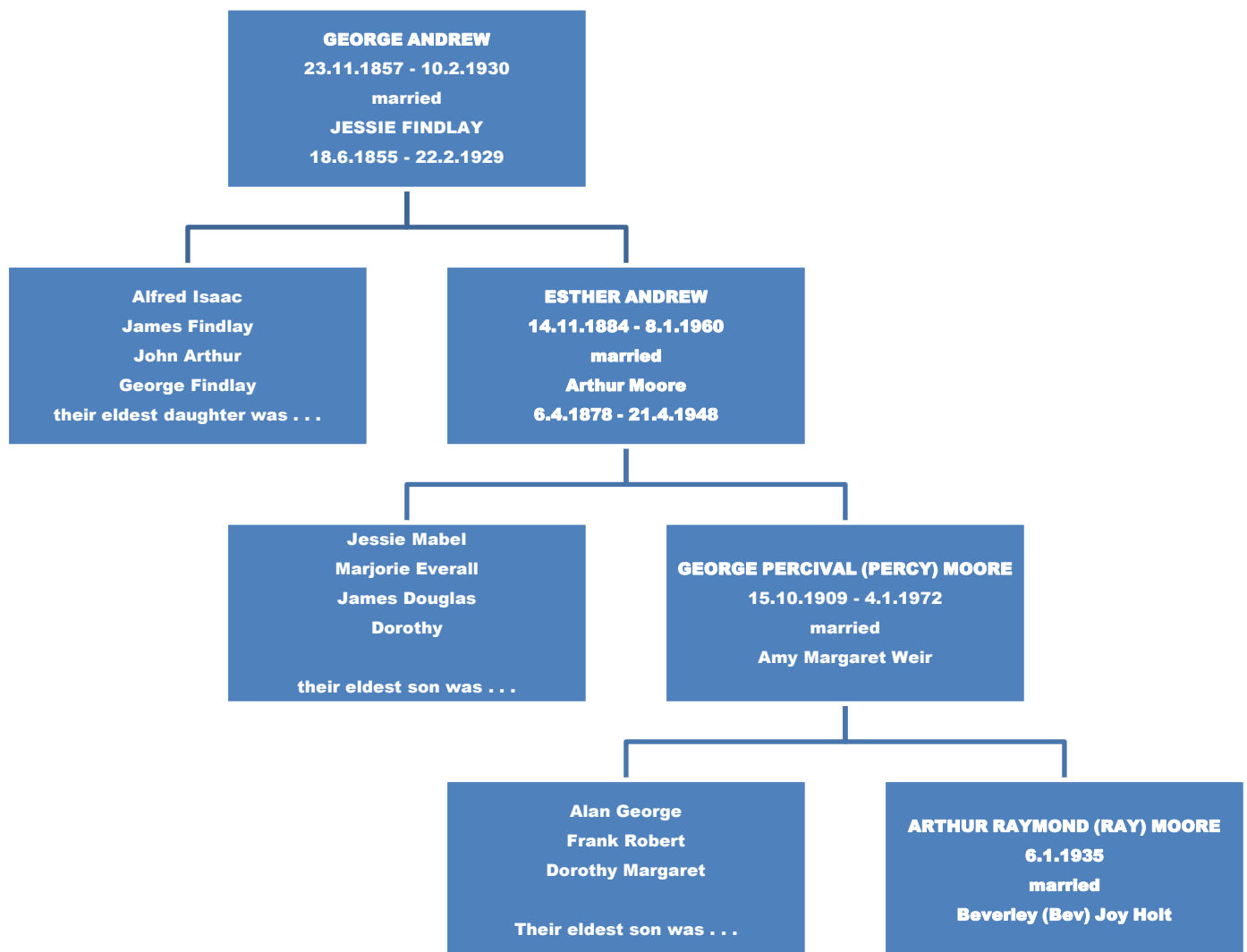
Finger counting is widely used in China, but usually as a confirmation of a spoken number. One of the disadvantages of finger counting is that there are regional differences. The sign for No 10, for instance, can also be made with a single fist in many parts of China.



The Chinese system of finger counting.

Appendix 2: The Family Tree

You can see here that I was the eldest son of the eldest son of the eldest daughter of George and Jessie Andrew, and the third generation born in China.



[Return to Index](#)

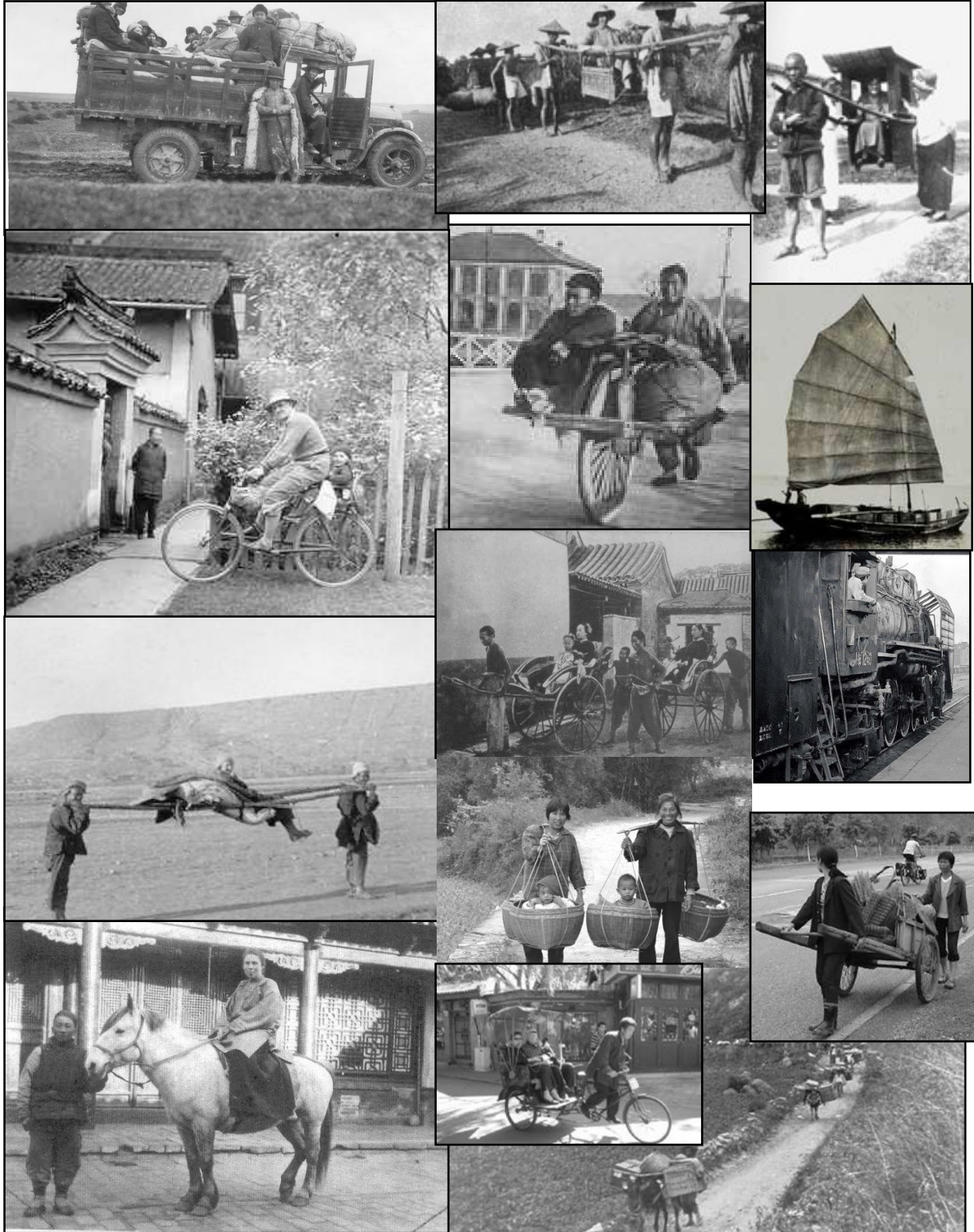
Appendix 3: Map Of China



This map of China shows the places I called home between 1935 and 1950. They are picked out with stars. The black star shows where the Frenchams lived when they were taken hostage – see page 10ff.

Appendix 4: China Transport Pre 1950

During my time in China there were many different types of transport that had to be used to get anywhere. Here are some of them.



[Return to Index](#)

Appendix 5 Ray's TimeLine

YEAR	MY AGE	RESIDENCE	COMMENTS	CHINESE HISTORY
1935	0	Hanzhong	Born 6 January in Hanzhong, but My parents worked in Xixiang	"Long March" 1934-1935 Communists march from south China to Yan'an
1936	1	Xixiang		
1937	2		Alan is born 17 April	Japan attacks China. Communists & Guomindang form alliance
1938	3			
1939	4	Australia	Parents on furlough. Frank is born (and Bev)	World War II starts in Europe
1940	5	Chefoo (Yantai)	Parents return to China. Ray goes straight to boarding school with teacher by boat from Shanghai	
1941	6			Japs bomb Pearl Harbour 5 December. Japs take control of Chefoo School Property
1942	7	Chefoo (Temple Hill)	1 st Internment Camp at Chefoo	
1943	8	Weihsien (Weifang)	Boat to Qingdao then train to Weihsien	
1944	9			
1945	10		I am flown out to Hanzhong in September	15 August WWII ends
1946	11	Hanzhong	School does not reopen for 12 months	Civil War continues between Communists and Goumindang.
1947	12	Shanghai	Boarding School reopens in CIM HQ	
1948	13	Guling (Lushan)	Boarding School moves to 4000 ft holiday resort	
1949	14			People's Republic of China proclaimed by Communists. Guomindang moves to Taiwan
1950	15		"Ejected" by PR of China to Hong Kong and then via Ceylon (Sri Lanka) to Sydney	Land reform. China enters Korean War
1951	16	Sydney		"Three Anti's Campaign"
1952	17			"Five Anti's Campaign"
1953	18	Melbourne	Work at JW Faulkner's "Nappy Factory"	
1954	19		Work at Rootes - Do National Service. 1 st January relationship with Bev starts	
1955	20		Rootes	
1956	21		Melbourne City Mission	
1957	22		Melbourne Bible Institute	Anti Rightist Campaign
1958	23		Melbourne Bible Institute	"Great Leap Forward"
1959	24		Worked at Stebbins & Sons farm	Famine until 1961

			suppliers. Accepted for Theological Trg.	
1960	25	Rainbow	Bev & Ray marry 6 Feb – Michael born 14 Nov	
1961	26			
1962	27			
1963	28	Abbotsford	Carolynne born	Cult of Mao escalates
1964	29			
1965	30			
1966	31	Euroa	Andrew (“Fred”) born	Cultural Revolution starts and goes for 10 years.
1967	32		Ray ordained as a Baptist Minister	
1968	33			
1969	34	Ballarat		
1970	35			
1971	36	Wendouree	Tracey born – Appointed Lifeline Director	Lin Biao dies
1972	37			Nixon visits China
1973	38			
1974	39			
1975	40			
1976	41			Mao dies – Zhou Enlai dies – Cultural Revolution ends – “Gang of Four” arrested
1977	42			Deng Xiaoping back in power
1978	43	Snake Valley	Resigned from Lifeline – unemployed	
1979	44		Private Counseling Service in Ballarat	
1980	45		Private Counseling Service in Ballarat	
1981	46		EE Day & Sons	
1982	47		GROW	
1983	48			
1984	49			
1985	50			
1986	51			
1987	52			
1988	53	Traralgon	Latrobe Family Support Centre	
1989	54			Tiananmen Square Massacre
1990	55			
1991	56			
1992	57			
1993	58			
1994	59		“Retired” (May) but started with ITIM as a part time Industrial Chaplain	
1995	60			
1996	61			

1997	62			Hong Kong returned to China by the British
1998	63			
1999	64		Return to China 14 Aug – 12 Sep. Retire at end of December	50 th Anniversary of Mao's proclamation of The People's Republic of China
2000	65		Start pension	
2001	66			
2002	67		Feb. trip to China with Frank. Trip to Europe and Great Britain in May/June	
2003	68		Sept. started Creative Writing Group with Sandra.	
2004	69		April started U3A Creative Writing	
2005	70			
2006	71			
2007	72		Caravan trip round Australia - 3 months	
2008	73			China hosts the Olympic Games
2009	74			
2010	75		Golden Wedding Anniversary	
2011	76			
2012	77			
2013	78			

Endnotes

¹ Hanzhong History

Introduction

In the west of China are three protected basins surrounded by mountains and other natural barriers. The most northerly is the catchment of the Wei River and its tributaries in Shaanxi. It is known as the Guanzhong, or the “the Land within the Passes”, and is well known as a site of ancient Chinese civilisation and where the Zhou, Qin, Han, Sui and Tang as well as many originally foreign northern Dynasties grew, emerged to conquer and govern. Chang’an (present day Xi’an) is a site which has been the centre of government for China for the longest period of its history.

Although the Guanzhong is best known there are two other “lands within the passes” to the south. To the far south, across the Qinling and Ba Mountain ranges lies the Sichuan basin. Although not as famous as the Guanzhong, the Sichuan plain has also been the site of ancient civilisations which grew in parallel with those of the north and east. The ancient name for Sichuan was “Shu” or silkworm and the silk of Sichuan was traded across the Silk Road well before its “discovery” by Zhang Qian in the western Han period.

Between these two areas, south of the high Qinling mountains and north of the Ba mountains lies the Hanzhong basin. The Hanzhong basin was known in ancient times as “Yu Pen” or “the Jade Basin” for its rich natural resources and these, together with its position has made it the linking region for the traffic that grew as people found ways to move across the mountains between the Guanzhong and Shu area and ways to move along the Han river to link Shu, Guanzhong and the lower Yangtse river area. The roads they built between north and south were the Shu roads – one of which was the famous Baoxie Plank Road. But the traffic did not only connect settlement as these mountains also divide the environment and climate of China into north and south. They separate the predominantly wheat growing areas from the predominantly rice growing areas and the climate at Hanzhong reflects a balance of north and south as well.

‘Hanzhong, in the midst of the QinLing and Bashan mountains, is quite unassuming, and not even easy to locate on most maps, and yet it has great claims to fame. Not only does the region have unique natural resources, giving it the reputation far and wide as “The little South China of the northwest” or “Shaanxi's land of plenty”, but it has also been a stage on which for some thousands of years the history of the Chinese people has been played out. Furthermore, it has been a background for famous novels and events from ancient times of deep and lasting cultural significance.

Hanzhong is located in the southwestern part of the Shaanxi province, about 230 km. from Xian, (about three hours drive) in the center of the Hanzhong Basin, on the Han River, near the Sichuan border. Hanzhong lies 500 meters above sea level. It has an area of 27,246 square kilometers. Annual mean temperature: 14.3°C.

Situated in the transition area between warm temperate zone and subtropical zone, Hanzhong has moderate and humid weather without torrid summer. The winter current coming from North China was blocked by the Qinling Mountain, so its winter is relatively warmer. The rainy season usually appears during June to September.

The city was formerly called Nanzheng. It formed the center of the Han Principality. The latter was assigned to Liu Bang by Xiang Yu after the fall of Qin, during the 18 Kingdoms interregnum preceding the establishment of the Han Empire by Liu. During the Three Kingdoms Period Hanzhong, as a border city between the kingdoms of Wei and Shu, had considerable strategic importance, but only from the Wei side of the city.

Hanzhong gained its name for the Han River. As early as 2,400 years ago, Hanzhong Shire was established by the Qin Kingdom during the Warring States Period (476BC-221BC). It is the birthplace of the Han Dynasty (206BC-220AD).

Hanzhong is most famous because of its strategic location during the period of the Three Kingdoms and as the place where Han Dynasty had its origin. Most of the places of interest in the city are therefore related to these two historical facts, with the most famous one being the Ancient Plank Road that in the old times connected Sichuan and Shaanxi province.



The ancient plank road between Sichuan and Shaanxi was first constructed during the Warring States Period (476BC-221BC), and expanded in the Qin (221BC-206BC) and Han (206BC-220AD) dynasties. Ninety percent of the plank road was built in Hanzhong along the Han River. The most famous section is the Baoxie Road with the Rock Gate and Shimen Cliffside Inscriptions in today's Shimen reservoir area. Ancient Baoxie Plank Road, also called Baoxie Road or Daogu. It stretches for 120 km from Baocheng County of Hanzhong City in the south to Xieyu Pass in Meixian County in the north.

Through its association with the events behind the expressions "Openly repair the plank road, secretly approach Chencang (Baoji city nowadays)", Xiao He pursuing Han Xin in the moonlight, peace created in troubled times by the "Five Pecks of Rice" Daoist rebellion, "Spare no effort to do one's duty without stopping unless one dies" and " War horses fight bravely at the Great San Pass " etc, Hanzhong's fame is well known, and often re-told in the annals of its colourful written history.

But Hanzhong's long history does not only consist in these events. Among the great historical cities of China, Hanzhong possesses an amazing wealth of history and culture, including the site of the Neolithic Lijiacun Culture, Shang & Yin dynasty Bronze ware and other relics at Baoshan , the Han period Temple of Zhang Liang, the tombs of Zhang Qian (discoverer of the Silk Road), Li Gu (incorruptible later Han statesman), Cai Lun (inventor of paper in the later Han) and the Three Kingdoms tomb and temple of Zhuge Liang (the Martial Lord of Shu Han) etc, to name but a few. In the midst of these relics of history and culture, in the heart of Hanzhong city lie the "three relics of the early Han". These are the ancient Hantai, the Alter of Conferring Titles and the Pool for Watering Horses. These create a heavy responsibility as with all significant historical sites for their care, especially the ancient Hantai, which is a famous drawcard for the historical culture of the city, and provides a link between ancient and modern history. (Chris Ning)

[Return to Index](#)

² **PROMISES (See page 11)**

Made to me by God in February 1953 as I left all my four children to go in obedience to Him to Malaya.

Isaiah 8:8	I and the children the Lord has given me shall be for signs.
Isaiah 44:3-5	I will pour My spirit upon your descendents, and My blessing on your offspring. This one shall say 'I am the Lord's'. another shall call himself by the name of Jacob. Another will write on his hand 'The Lord's', and surname himself by the name of Israel.
Isaiah 49:25	I will save your children.
Isaiah 51:8	My deliverance will be forever. My salvation to all generations.
Isaiah 54:13	All your sons shall be taught by the Lord, and great shall be the prosperity of your sons.

Isaiah 59:21	This is My covenant with them, says the Lord, My Spirit which is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth shall not depart out of your mouth nor out of the mouth of your children, or out of the mouth of your children's children, says the Lord, from this time forth and for evermore.
Isaiah 61:8-9	His everlasting covenant:- their descendents shall be known among the nations, their offspring in the midst of the peoples. All who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed.
Isaiah 65:23	My people, My chosen shall not labour in vain or bear children for calamity, for they shall be the offspring of the blessed of the Lord and their children with them.
Isaiah 66:22	As the new heavens and the new earth shall remain before Me says the Lord, so shall your descendents and your name remain.

[Return to Index](#)