

Stories from the Life of a Delta Boy

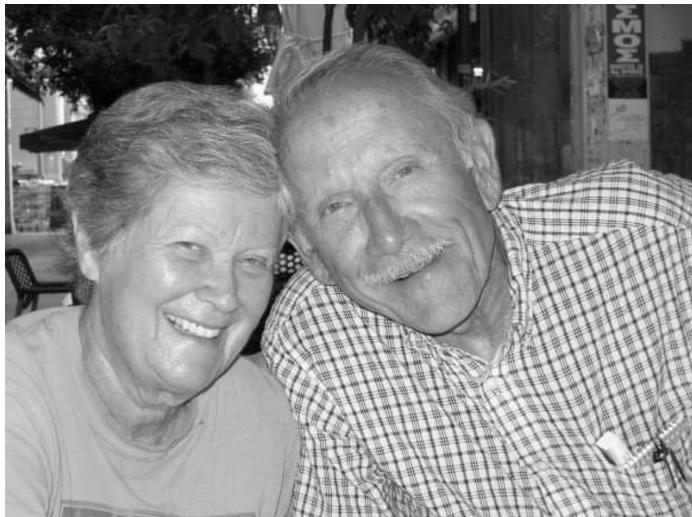
Charles W. Hedrick



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Preface



The author, Charles W. Hedrick, with his beautiful wife, Peggy S. Hedrick.

This book happened because my two daughters, Lois Kathryn Hedrick and Janet Lucinda Kennaley, gifted me with a subscription to write it through the online publisher Storyworth. I never intended to write such a book, but as I received questions

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about my life from Storyworth and family members I suddenly found myself transported back to the Mississippi Delta and the beginnings of my life story. What I have written is intended to inform my children things about me that they may not know. Members of my extended family, friends, and anyone else who might have an interest, are also invited to thumb through its pages. I do not consider the course of my life necessarily to be an example for others to follow. I doubt anyone could emulate my life because the historical circumstances of all human lives are different. One might, however, learn a thing or two from my mistakes.

I consider myself one half of a whole. Peggy Shepherd and I were married when we were little more than kids. She was 18 and I was 20. Neither of us was thoroughly prepared for life when we began our married life together. We were married for 67 years plus a few days. She was taken from my children and me by Alzheimer's disease on January 18, 2023. And the vivifying personality that animated her flesh-blood-bone-self was released. She was a great lady and is sorely missed. Her passing is too recent and fresh in mind for me to reflect on it. None of us (the immediate family) has even begun to process it yet. Hence our picture, taken at our daughter Lucinda's wedding, appears on the cover of the book to illustrate our one whole. She is the other half that fills out my whole. We were life partners. Peggy

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supported me as homemaker and watchful mother over our children while I worked and completed my education. When I finished my education, she picked up and finished her own studies. She graduated college, completed two law degrees, and went into private practice in Springfield, Missouri, where I taught at Missouri State University in the Department of Religious Studies.

The half of the whole that was I began in Bogalusa, Louisiana in 1934. It was not a particularly auspicious beginning for a nobody depression era child. My father Charlie Shreve Hedrick had been a Mess Sergeant in the U. S. Cavalry and after release from service had come to own a Coffee Shop in Bogalusa. He married my mother Harriet Eva Margaret Lettie Magnolia Smith, who was a waitress in the Coffee Shop. She was much younger than he. After my father died mother married my father's younger brother, Henry Berry Hedrick, and mother then moved my younger brother Berry Shreve and I to Greenville, Mississippi (referred to once as the Queen City of the Mississippi Delta). I began my education in the public school system of Greenville. Until I graduated high school, my mother was the only high school graduate in the family. It was a different world then.

I am deeply grateful to my daughter Lois Kathryn (Kay) for selecting, preparing, and publishing the photos that appear in this no doubt dry account.

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Charles Webster Hedrick

Lois

Ah, very nice intro to your stories Dad. I especially like what you say about Mom.

Lucinda H.

Beautiful beginning to tales from a life well and wonderfully lived.

What was your childhood bedroom like?



331 South Broadway, Greenville, Mississippi.

My childhood home at 331 South Broadway, Greenville, Mississippi was on elevated stilts because of the flooding in the Mississippi Delta before the Levees were built. The house was something of an old plantation house that my stepfather (actually the only father that I ever knew) divided into a duplex.

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He rented out the other half of the house. Our half of the duplex was something like a “shotgun house” (you could stand at the front door and fire a shotgun through the house and out the backdoor. It had three bedrooms and an upstairs attic room that housed the attic fan, which cooled the house in the steamy Mississippi summers. There was a living room and a passageway through to the kitchen/dining room. In the early years mother rented out the front bedroom to an elderly gentleman named Mr. Fredrick (I never knew his first name), who took all his meals at the Greenville Hotel, three blocks from our front door. During the war she also rented out the attic room to an Army Master Sergeant (whose name has been lost with the passage of time. He taught me at my mother’s insistence how to tie a Windsor knot). The Master Sergeant worked at the Army Air Force base near to Greenville on the other side of town at the end of North Broadway. There was one bathroom that we all had to share—mom and dad, Charles, Shreve, Dootsie (Delano Ann; named for FDR), Henry Houston Hedrick (named for Ms Mattie Houston who was the principal of Central school one block away), Mr. Frederick, and the Army Master Sergeant.

Mom and dad had a bedroom next to the large room where all four of the children slept. Berry Shreve and I shared a large bed in the center of the room. Henry slept in the baby bed nearest to Mom’s bedroom, and Dootsie slept in a little alcove just on the

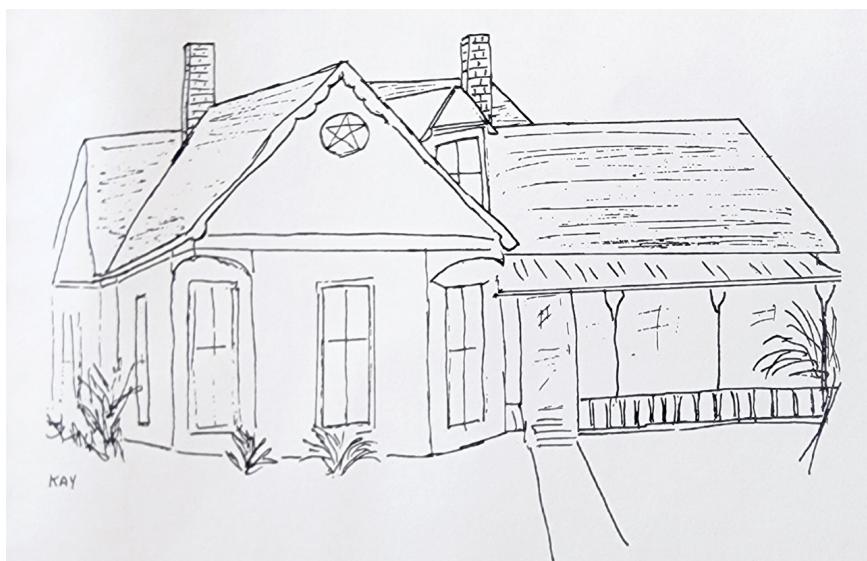
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other side of Mr. Fredrick's room. There was a door adjoining to his room but in my childhood it was never opened.

The room had two windows that were fitted with parallel iron bars on them as did all the rooms in the house. Someone had broken into the house at one point and fired a gun at someone sleeping in the bed in Mr. Fredrick's room; I was never told if the shot killed anyone.

The room was heated by a small stand-alone heater that was lighted with a match and turned up or down by a handle (it stood before a wood fireplace that was sealed). Cooling was provided by the attic fan that drew in the sweet Delta evening air (honeysuckle and other fragrances). Hence all the doors had to remain open to capitalize on the pull of the attic fan. So far as I recall we children never had any difficulties sharing the room. When I reached my junior/senior years of High School (E. E. Bass Junior/Senior high School—five blocks or so away), Mom moved me up to the attic room, where I slept under the noise of the large cumbersome attic fan. It was my room until I left for my first year of college at Mississippi College, a Southern Baptist institution.

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Sketch of the author's childhood home in Greenville, Mississippi.

Drawn by his daughter, Kay Hedrick.

Lois

Good choice Dad! Loved hearing about the old house. I loved that house. I think it is where my love of old houses comes from...

Lucinda H.

Ahhhhhhh I love this so much!!! I've never heard most of this before. This story (like you, Dad) is a treasure.

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Charles

Boy, i have to say these stories are really interesting. I can vaguely remember visiting your old house— i must have been really young— five or so. Things i remember (can't swear any of this is true... just what comes to mind when I think about it; maybe it is fantasy): your father I think was in a wheel chair when we were there and spent a lot of time in the kitchen. Did he like to cook? The house smelled damp (not in a bad way... just wetness and flowers and basement kinds of smells...). I don't remember a roof fan; though i do remember fans in windows. Was there a shed / garage behind the house? And was there an old bike... remember riding a bike on the sidewalk. I also remember sliding down the sides of mounds (indian mounds?) in a cardboard box...

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Memories of My Mother

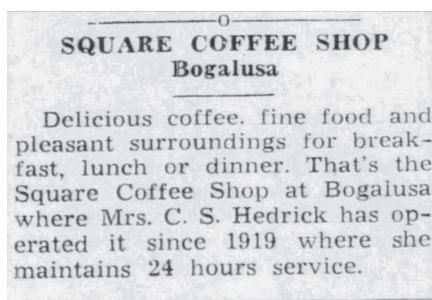


Harriett Eva Margaret Lettie Magnolia Smith

Mother was born Harriett Eva Margaret Lettie Magnolia Smith on 20 May 1907 near Lumberton, Mississippi—an uncommon name for an uncommon lady. It seems that many in the family wanted this baby girl to share their names. I know very little of

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her childhood and early youth. Brother Berry, however, paid a visit to her high school and checked out the high school annuals, discovering that she had some degree of recognition and popularity in high school—as I recall. As a child I once made a visit to what I recall was her childhood home (I may not be correct), and what was most memorable from that visit was the outdoor privy.



Bogalusa Enterprise and American (Bogalusa, LA), Friday, March 31, 1939.

After graduating high school, the only one in her family to do so, she moved to Bogalusa, Louisiana, where she was a waitress for several years in the “Square Coffeeshop.” She finally agreed to marry her boss, my father, Charlie Shreve Hedrick. While Charlie was ill and for three years after his death, she managed the “Square Coffeeshop” in Bogalusa as the boss and I presume the owner of the Coffeeshop.

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Harriett & Charlie on the left and Harriett & Berry on the right.

After Charlie's death she was courted long distance and in personal visits by my father's baby brother Henry Berry Hedrick. My memories of those visits consisted of a handsome fellow who came to see my mother and gave me silver dollars. Mother finally decided to marry Berry and to move her two sons to Greenville, Mississippi, where Berry owned his own home at 331 South Broadway (it was earlier numbered 314 South Broadway). Berry was the Agent of a defunct railroad (perhaps the Columbus & Greenville Railway?). When it was taken over by outside interests, Berry hired on at the Railway Express Agency, where he worked the downtown route. Harriet was homemaker for the family, and always had lunches for us when we came home from Central School (1 block away) or E. E. Bass Junior/Senior High School (5 blocks away).

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I have four memories of life in the Hedrick home in Bogalusa. It must have been close to the Coffeeshop, since I was allowed as a preschool age child to walk between the Coffeeshop and the house. On the way I would walk past the local cab station and the cabbies who were sitting around waiting for a call would toss pennies in the air and when they fell, they would step on them while I scrambled to get them before the foot covered them. If I got there before the foot did, I got to keep the coin. On another occasion at a fair in Bogalusa one evening Mother put me on a merry-go-round alone. I rode for a spin, when the turning stopped, I got off and could not find mother. I searched for her (as I am sure she was searching for me) but could not find her. Dispirited I walked over to the street away from the bright lights of the fair and sat on the curb with my chin in my hands, watching the cars go by. One of the cabbies came by and asked what I was doing there so late at night. I told him I could not find my mother. When he had delivered his fare, he came back and took me home. At home Alberta, who worked for mother, put me to bed. Later mother came in and woke me up. She was very upset about my having gone missing. Alberta was a black woman who did housekeeping and childcare for mother. I recall being in her home and playing with her son (about my age) around the house. Mother told me how I came by my middle name, Webster. My father had a good friend named Mr. Webster. One day, when

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mother was expecting the birth of her first born, he came by our Bogalusa home to bring mother a kitten. Mother for some reason unknown to me did not want to see Mr. Webster, so she hid behind the door until he stopped knocking and left. Several days later Mr. Webster was struck by a car and died as a result. Mother, a very sensitive woman, was so overcome with guilt, she told me, that she decided to name her first born son after Mr. Webster.



Charles Webster
good friend of
Charlie Hedrick.
and he named his
first child after his
good friend.

Mr. Charles Webster and the note on the back of the picture written by Harriett.

Harriet was always a strong willed and goal-oriented person, and through life she has proven to be fiercely loyal to family and

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friends. As a youth she was the one who encouraged her brothers and sisters to keep on attending high school, as she herself did. My fondest memory of her was when she would rock me cradled in her arms in her wicker bottom rocking chair before the gas heater that stood before the boarded-up wood fireplace and sing songs from her childhood. One of my favorites was “The Good Ship Lollipop” (written in 1934, the year of my birth, and later sung by Shirley Temple:

On the good ship lollipop.

It's a sweet trip to a candy shop

Where the bon-bons play

On the sunny beach of Peppermint Bay.

Lemonade stands everywhere.

Crackerjack bands fill the air.

And there you are

Happy landing on a chocolate bar.

Later in her life she studied to become an LPN and later graduated as a Licensed Practical Nurse in Mississippi, even though she had to return to school after all her children were grown. After age seventy she was licensed for nursing home care in Tennessee.

She was proud of her independence and of her earlier work as a waitress. She enjoyed swapping stories about the intricacies of

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waitressing with my youngest daughter, Lois Kathryn, who had also worked as a waitress for a time.

When her second husband was taken terminally ill, she retired from her nursing career at the Greenville Kings Daughters Hospital in order to care for him and did so for about ten years before his death. She was a woman to whom life extended few opportunities, but she capitalized on every one of them.

There are several stories about mother that seem to me to be worth remembering. At one point, when I was in high school, she confided in me that she was thinking of leaving Berry. I became so upset and agitated at what it meant for me (not considering her situation) that she simply dropped the subject. I assumed that I would have to quit school and go to work to help support the family. She never brought-up the subject with me again. Mother always tried to set a good example for her children, but for some reason during my early teenage years she took up smoking, but she would not do it in public. She hid in the bathroom to smoke and opened the one window to fan-out the smoke. I knew what she was doing and once when she was smoking, I went to the bathroom door, and pretended that I had an emergency situation and needed to go to the bathroom. She came out before the smoke had dissipated and was embarrassed to be caught. On another occasion in my later teenage years I had done something that mother decided I should be punished. (The

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situation was unusual for I cannot ever remember mother punishing me.) She sent me into the back to cut a switch for my punishment. I did and returned giving her the switch. She started switching me and for some reason it struck me as funny and I started laughing and the harder she switched the harder I laughed. She finally gave up in frustration.

After Berry passed away, she spent time visiting her children, probably to look over their locations, as well as to look them over. She liked what she saw in Clarksville, Tennessee. So, she sunk her roots into the Tennessee soil, and made a new beginning in Clarksville, where she found my younger brother Berry and his wife Joyce to be that good anchor and help for starting a new life.

It was here that she met and was swept off her feet by Arthur I. Maki. I recall receiving a call from her at one point that she was pondering marriage to Maki (as everyone called him). Her problem was that if she married Maki, she would lose Berry's railroad pension. She wondered what I, her seminary trained and preacher son, would advise her to do. My advice was that she should just "live in sin." That is, she and Maki should set up housekeeping without marriage. She replied, as she usually did when I shocked her: "Chahs!" She gave up the pension and in her best independent spirit, and much to the consternation of both the Hedrick and Maki clans, she and Maki eloped with her

age at 70 plus years. The years with Maki were among the happiest of her life. She moved into Maki's home where he had lived with his first wife. Late one evening in bed during pillow talk in the bedroom Maki had shared with his first wife, she commented, "I would like my own bedroom (as opposed to sharing a bed with Maki in the bedroom that he had shared with his first wife). Maki immediately got up and started work on the project in the dark of night!

I have described her to one and all as a "tough old bird" and a "wily fox." There was nothing simple about her at all. She appeared to be a shy wilting lily who always depended on the kindness of strangers, but at bottom she was as tough as nails and a very shrewd woman.

She was devoted to her family, as her children will tell you, and always extended herself to meet the needs of others. She always did the best she could with what she had. She loved life and up to the very end was exuberant in living. Life never tired her out.

I do not know much about her family, the Smiths, but after knowing her, I would hazard this statement: No matter who they were and what they accomplished, she had to have been the very best of the lot! She exemplified for her children dignity, grace, integrity, honor loyalty, and honesty. She was hardly a perfect woman, however. For example, she shared some of the attitudes

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of those who had practiced “the peculiar institution” in the pre-Civil War South. Black women who did ironing or housework in her home were required to come in the back door (she never sought to pass these attitudes on to her children). Nevertheless, none of her faults could compare to her virtues. Were I to summarize her life in a brief phrase, it would be, Harriet Eva Margaret Lettie Magnolia—a virtuous woman! Her children still rise up today to call her “blessed.”



Harriett Eva Margaret Lettie Magnolia Smith

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Lucinda H.

This is just...beautiful, Dad. A wonderful tribute to a wonderful woman. I love it so much. Thank you for sharing!

Lois

Oh my gosh! I LOVE this story about Grandma and the Grandpas! I added a picture of Grandma, but maybe I should add pictures of Berry and Charlie too?

So many emotions! I laughed, reminisced, and cried. First, I can NOT believe you were fetching coins from the cabbies! Is that where your habit of searching for coins comes from? Stomping on coins to secure your victory over the others searching with you? LOL, that is too funny!!

Grandma was a wonderful woman. I remember visiting her in Tennessee. We were at breakfast at Hardees. I don't recall the specifics of the conversation, but it had something to do with how she handled her money and Maki (handling Maki and handling money with Maki). She was what I would consider a quintessential Southern Belle – and you addressed it in your story towards the end, “I have described her to one and all as a “tough old bird” and a “wily fox.” There was nothing simple about her at all. She appeared to be a shy wilting lily who always depended on the kindness of strangers, but at bottom she was as tough as nails and a very shrewd woman.” She came across as a

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demure, but she was definitely shrewd and in control.

And, as far as her move to Tennessee, I ran across this today:

Goodbye Mississippi Hello Tennessee (1982)

I've been wasting my time in Mississippi
All alone and no place to go
One day I packed up and wound up in Tennessee
What a fine place to be
I'm glad I came to Tennessee.

There has been a big change in my life style
Which has made a difference in me.

I'm going to unpack, settle down and remain in Tennessee
It's a great place to be.

It's funny no one told me I could spread my wings and fly away.
Oh no, they said, don't bother
You are getting older every day
I'm glad I moved to Tennessee.

Everyone is so nice to everyone.
People are great as can be
They say, hello, how are you?
It's good to see you.
Come back and see me.
There is no place like Tennessee.

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People are old folks in Mississippi
They all sit in their rocking chairs.
I'm glad I got away and didn't stay.
I found a great life in Tennessee.

By Harriet S. Maki

One more:

My Family (not dated)

My family is so dear to me.
Each one I adore.
Everyone to me is so dear
I love you more and more.

I think of you every day
And dream of you at night
Talk about you along the way
And cherish you with delight.

Dedicated to all my family.

By Harriet S. Maki

OMIGosh! I just realized that she used 'S' for her middle initial!!
With all those middle names, none start with S so it must stand
for her maiden name, Smith! Just another example of her
strength and independence. She truly was a remarkable woman

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and I miss her.

This was an exceptional story Dad! Keep 'em coming! Love you!

Berry

She was a wonderful Mother-in-law whom I loved very much.
She is missed every day.

Henry

Thank you for the story. Henry will really enjoy this. Thank you

Dad

Yes do so and Maki if you have one.

LD

Charles

Very interesting response from Kay there— how does she (you) have those poems? thought that stuff went to Delano... I'm glad to hear the story of Mr. Webster. Never knew it was a kitten he was trying to deliver. You know, dad, you ought to post your eulogy for Grandma (if you still have a copy)...

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Lois

I've learned so much more about her in the past few days. She was going to night school while she worked at the coffee shop, in the late 1920s!! She was also a business woman of her own accord, running the coffee shop after Charlie died. When she married Berry, the newspaper said she was, "well known in business circles ... and to hundreds of citizens." A strong, progressive woman who came across as a demure, southern belle.

Lucinda H.

I spent a summer with Gramma and Grandpa Berry when I was 18. I stayed in Aunt Dootsie's room at the front of the house. Two memories from that time: Gramma picked me up from the airport. As she cruised along the freeway at 35 mph, cars whizzed past us. The car shook. I said (a chuckle in my tone), "Um, Gramma, do you think you might be going too fast?"

She hit the brakes, "Oh no, See-un-dee, do you think so?"

And this: One night, during Gramma's evening soaps, I sneaked to her bedroom and short-sheeted her bed.

Later, I listened as she turned off the tv, checked the doors and doused the lights. I snickered when her closet door creaked open and waited expectantly when her mattress springs squeaked.

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Moments turned into minutes. The house stayed dark and silent. When I couldn't take it anymore I padded to her room and peeked in.

Gramma was huddled under the covers in a pool of light, reading.

"Um, Gramma, did you notice anything about your bed...?" I began.

Gramma's book slammed shut. She grinned. "Wha, See-un-dee, was that you?" she exclaimed in her thick Miss-ippi accent. "Ah thought Ah'd done it."

I loved her.

Berry

She was quite a lady and missed very much, Thanks for the article. Berry loved his Mother very much. (so did I)

Anecdotes of my Father



On the left is the author's birthfather, Charlie Shreve, and on the right is the man who raised him, Henry Berry.

I never knew my birthfather, Charlie Shreve Hedrick. All that exists of him in my memory is a photograph of Harriet and

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Charlie and me in Charlie's arm taken when I was about two years of age. The only father I have ever really known in life was my stepfather, Henry Berry Hedrick. Mother brought my brother Berry Shreve and I from Bogalusa to Greenville before I was six years of age. So "stepfather" as a name for Berry hardly seems appropriate. True, I am not the issue of his seed; but I am the product of his care and tutelage. Dad will always be Henry Berry.



The author held by his birthfather, Charlie Shreve with mother, Harriet, close by.

Dad was a sportsman. He hunted, fished, and gigged for frogs, and took me along on virtually all fishing trips and several times to go squirrel hunting. I do not recall going frog gigging with

him, but I do remember that he fried frogs' legs and told me to watch the skillet to see them move in the grease. He owned a .22 caliber rifle and a shotgun that he kept in his locked Fibber McGhee shed between the car garage and the boat garage. He and Mr. Poe, an early renter in the other side of the family home, built a fishing boat together. On it was painted the name "Po-Hed," for Poe-Hedrick. It was in this boat that I did most of the fishing that I ever did in life. On one occasion when the boat was moving swiftly with an outboard motor, I was dragging my baited line in the water. Dad told me not to do that as I would snag the line on brush under the surface. At just that moment the line caught—a large bass!

All during my grammar and junior years in school he had a garden every year. He had pear trees from which mother would make preserves for the winter months. And we had a large fenced-in area for chickens from which we had fresh eggs and the occasional chicken meal. We had two roosters, one named Jack and the other named Bill, named after two young men who lived down the street. Jack was the mean rooster. Once Jack attacked mother when she went into the chicken yard to gather eggs. Dad went out into the yard and caught Jack and gave him a mighty whipping. Thereafter, whenever anyone went into the yard Jack always went to a neutral corner. Bill, we ate one Sunday dinner. It was a meal of which brother Berry Shreve would not

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partake. Bill was his favorite.



The author holding his pet rooster, Jack.

Dad worked for the Railway Express Company as a delivery clerk with the downtown route. His perennial dress was always a white shirt, work trousers, and white socks. I would occasionally catch a ride to Central School one block away. Long after he retired, he was hired back to the company as night watchman to keep the bums from sleeping in the rail cars. For this purpose, they gave him a six-shooter that seemed as large as his arm. I always worried about him in that job; it seemed dangerous work.

Dad did not pretend to be a role model for brother Berry and I, but he did have standards that he expected out of us. Once we were sitting at the kitchen table; dad at the head me to his left. He had always warned me about smoking and cautioned that I should never smoke. He was smoking when he told me. I was a teenager at this point. I said, "dad can I have one of those, motioning to the pack of cigarettes on the table?" He said

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nothing. I reached over and took a cigarette out of the pack and said, "are you sure you don't mind." He said nothing. I struck a match and lifted it to the cigarette between my lips. As quick as a flash the old man moved and slapped me upside my head, knocking me into the gas heater behind me. "What did you do that for," I said. He replied, "I told you never to smoke."

Dad was a drinker, and I saw him totally inebriated many times always at home. He kept his booze in the garage and would make a trip several times a night out to his shed for a little snort. One Christmas after we kids had gone to bed and fallen asleep, he decided that I was old enough to know the true story of Santa Claus. He came to the bed in the room where all the kids slept and shook me awake and said, "come on, Boy" (what he usually called me); we padded softly to the living room and silently closed the door behind us. He and I laid out the Christmas boxes for three, while mother was in the kitchen cooking. That was the year I played Santa Claus and watched him inebriated wrestle a bicycle down the narrow stairs from the attic room. Only one time did his drinking become a problem. One Saturday night mother, visibly upset, asked me when I was around sixteen years of age to make a round of the bars on Washington avenue (the main street of the town) to look for dad. I knew them well from my Saturday nights of hawking newspapers in downtown Greenville: "Delta Dem-o-crat Times; get your Sun-day Paper

Here!" I did not find him, however, and returned to report that fact to mother. Sometime later we heard his 1941 Plymouth roll down the driveway and park in the garage. Dad never scraped the car on the garage, in spite of its tight fit and how much he had to drink. Nothing was ever said again about the incident.

There was the time that I recall that dad played referee. I must have been around twelve years old. I had an altercation with some kid about my size in the Central School schoolyard. I hurled a brave insult at him as I left the yard—"Yeah you are very brave up here in your territory, but you wouldn't be so brave down in mine." A few minutes after I got home, he came knocking on our front door and announced that he had come to continue the altercation. Dad overheard and took us both outside to the grassy median that separated South Broadway in front of our house. Dad refereed the fight (mostly wrestling and pushing), finally separating us when the kid had me in a chokehold I could not break. The kid from up north had prevailed in the altercation. Not my finest hour. To dad's credit he handled the situation without either kid being hurt.

In the bathroom Dad's towel had the highest rung of all the towel racks and was sacrosanct in its place. At least I thought so. His Gentleman's Chest, now in my bedroom, and his chest-of-drawers, I never looked in even though I passed them every day. He was a proud man and I always said, "yes sir" and

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“no sir” to him, how he and mom insisted that I treat all adults. It was a lesson well learned and I still do it today. When mom tried to pressure him to attend with the rest of us the First Baptist Church on Main Street. He began dressing up with coat and tie and attended the Methodist church on Washington Avenue, being true to his Methodist faith. Once Berry Shreve, I, and sister Dootsie were in the back yard playing at baseball. Berry Shreve was pitching to me, Dootsie was catching and I was batting with a real bat. I swung at a pitch and in my follow through I accidentally struck Dootsie above the left eye (I think it was). She bore that scar till her death. Mother was aghast at what I had done and immediately sent me into the kitchen to sit at the comic book table and ponder my fate when dad got home. Late in the day, I heard his '41 Plymouth roll down the driveway. I had been sweating out the waiting for several hours and now the fatal moment of my adjudication had come. Dad and mother conferred in their bedroom and then he entered the kitchen and said, “Boy what are you doing here?” So, I told him the tragic story. He turned toward the bedroom and his Gentleman’s chest. “You can get up now,” he said over his shoulder as he disappeared into the bedroom. Did I mention that, although he was gruff, he was kind. I will always remember the dashing figure he cut in a photograph of him in his navy uniform with his thick black moustache and hair. I wonder if he ever pondered the past when looking at it.

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I never heard my father utter a curse word. His speech was matter-of-fact around me, and at this point in time I am not even certain if he had a sense of humor. Nevertheless, there is something he told me once that borders on humor. I tend to get seasick in a rocking boat. It has happened numerous times. I once shared this tendency with him. He told me that even sailors get seasick and then he recited to me a line of mariners' lore: when you are in the throes of barfing up your breakfast, if you feel something hairy in your throat, swallow hard.

requiescat in pace.



Left to right, the author, his sister, Delano Ann, Henry Berry, and brother Berry Shreve.

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Berry

I love this story. I printed it off for Berry Schreve. I met Henry Berry Hedrick in 1963. He was a true gentleman. He always treated me so kind and good. He made me feel so welcome into the family. I still miss him.

Lucinda H.

I love this vivid description of Grandpa. It's art! To say I love it isn't enough. Your words paint a picture of your dad using stories I've never heard. Thank you for sharing this with us!!
More, please?

Charles

I really enjoy reading these; and I was particularly interested to hear the story about the fight with the boy that came over to the house (I'd heard that before, but I think dad told it differently then). I'll also admit that I did not know what was meant by a Fibber McGee shed— as I now understand, the radio character had an overflowing closet; open the door and an avalanche came down on you...



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My First Big Trip

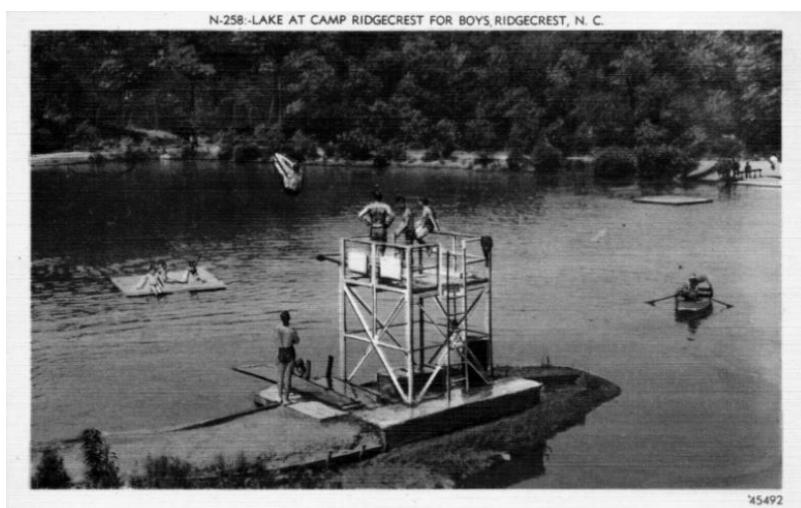


The author on the grounds of Ridgecrest Baptist Assembly

The summer of my 11th year of high school at E. E. Bass Junior/Senior High School in Greenville, Mississippi I applied to Ridgecrest Baptist Assembly Grounds in North Carolina to work on the staff and was accepted. I had been to the Assembly grounds earlier as a visitor for one week of church meetings. On that visit at mealtime the kitchen staff (dishwashers) would

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serenade us with religious songs while we ate. So when I applied to be on staff I had in mind working in the kitchen.



iStock Photos 2023.

I first was assigned to work in the kitchen and then was transferred at my request to the Recreation Crew as a lifeguard at the swimming pool. I returned the summer of my senior year in high school as well, so my memories of the second trip tend to take over what happened during the first year. The staff slept in a barracks four to a room. In my room there were three “preacher boys” and one “deacon.” During the day we worked at our assigned tasks, and when the duty day was over our time was free to do whatever we wanted.

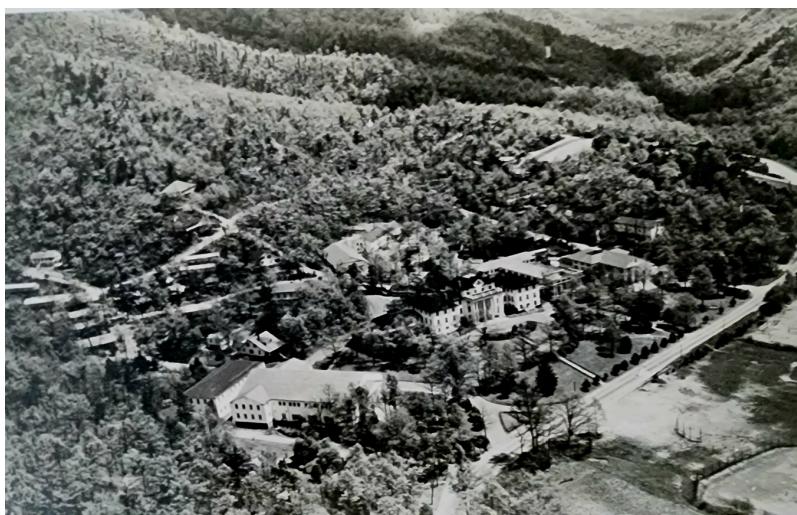
Stories from the Life of a Delta Boy Charles W. Hedrick



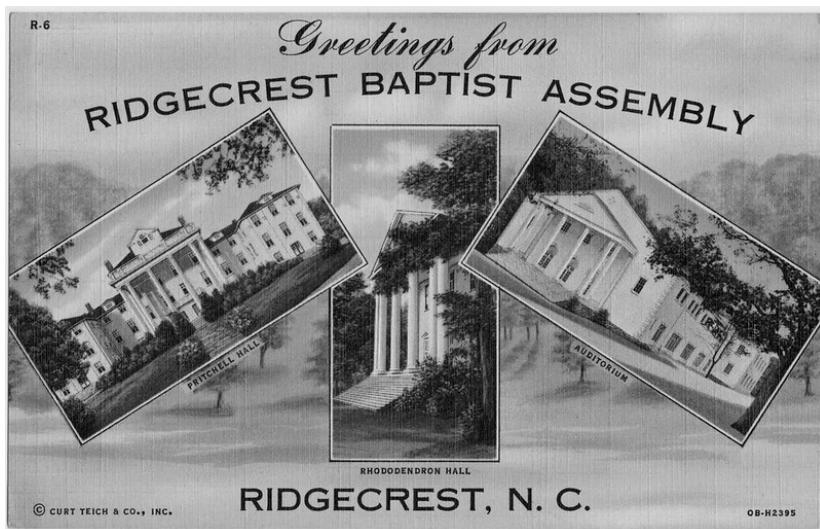
The author, second from right, with some of the staff at Ridgecrest Baptist Assembly.

The staff was comprised mostly of college kids who spent their summers at the Baptist Retreat grounds, but a few of us were still in high school. We dated; went to the Nibble Nook or the prayer garden; played basketball; went on hikes (part of my responsibility was to lead the hikes); acted in plays (I acted in one play and learned that “ain’t” is not a proper word) ; went canoeing; played tennis; visited the book store or the library; and even conducted revivals in some of the small country churches in the hills of North Carolina in teams (that was demanding as I had very few sermons). Some of the memories of those summers can be found in my 1952 staff annual Cakira. Check it out on my shelf.

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Aerial view of the campus at Ridgecrest Baptist Assembly.



Postcard from Ridgecrest Baptist Assembly. iStock Photos 2023.

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Lucinda H.

I loved reading this story about your time the Ridgecrest Baptist Assembly Grounds!!! I'd never heard this before. There's a picture of you and some friends on a pool ladder. Does that picture go with this story? What's a Cakira? Thanks, Dad!!

Lois

Well, I'll be... I ain't never heard that story! 🤣🤣

Yes, let us know about the picture! We can add it to the story so it will be in the book at the end!

Charles

was there a hierarchy among the preacherboys and deacons?

Found this on the camp (from 1960)

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Student Union

Summer at Ridgecrest

MARGARET HOWARD of Southern Baptist College was one of several Arkansas students who served on the staff at Ridgecrest or Glorieta Baptist Assemblies last summer. Applications for summer employment can be secured from Mr. Willard K. Weeks, Ridgecrest Baptist Assembly, Ridgecrest, N. C., or Mr. E. A. Herren, Glorieta Baptist Assembly, Glorieta, N. M. Margaret tells of her summer:

This past summer I had the privilege of working on the staff at Ridgecrest Baptist Assembly, Ridgecrest, N. C. I was one of 500 students from more than 150 colleges and universities who spent the summer in the heart of the Blue Ridge Mountains serving the many guests who came to attend the conference.

As I had always wanted to go to Ridgecrest, my appointment was a dream come true. I was assigned to work as a hall girl, keeping the rooms clean, and the work was very interesting because I met so many people from different places. As a staffer, I could attend the conferences when it did not interfere with my job. Here I heard some of the greatest preachers and speakers in America.



DR. LOGUE

of the summer was when Billy Graham came and spoke to us. At each staff meeting I Corinthians 13 was read.

Ridgecrest means more to me than words can express. Ridgecrest helped me to grow spiritually, and it will always have a place in my heart. The quietness of a moment in the 'prayer garden' alone or perhaps with a prayer mate, the beauty of the mountains, and the feeling of the closeness of God: This is Ridgecrest.—Tom J. Logue, Secretary

COUNSELOR'S CORNER

By DR. R. LOFTON HUDSON

(Author of the new book, "Sir, I Have A Problem," at your Baptist Book Store)

Sickness or Divorce

QUESTION: I have been married fourteen years to a soldier and have three children. I had three children by my previous marriage also. Because of sexual incompatibility I had a nervous breakdown in 1951 and spent 50 days in a mental ward in a hospital.

Now life has become unbearable again. When my husband is home he beats the children, is continually dissatisfied, has a terrible temper. I can see myself going into another breakdown. I have tried to get my husband to go with me to a doctor and try to get along better. He says he knows



DR. HUDSON

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The motto of the staff is "Others." This became a part of my life and it means a lot to me now. We all learned to love and appreciate the Scripture I Corinthians 13 as we tried to apply it to our lives and to share it with others.

Of course, the staff had its own activities. We had our own Sunday School, Training Union, and choir. We had a Bible study period each week led by a different person, such as Dr. Cauthen, Dr. Pierce, or perhaps a foreign missionary.

Recreation was included in our many activities. We had swimming, hiking, basketball, tennis, ping-pong and many others.

The staff has a weekly newspaper, "The Mountain Echo." This gave everyone a chance to see what was going on all over the campus. We also had a yearbook called "The Cakira." The yearbook gives the names and addresses and a picture of each staff member.

The staff had a singspiration each Friday night in the lobby of Pritchell Hall, and many times the guests joined us as we sang.

The staff meetings on Wednesday night were a great blessing to each staffer. We had different types of programs, and one of the highlights

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Do you suppose this is the place?

<https://ridgecrestcamps.com/>

Dad

Not unless the Baptists sold it.

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No, that picture was of the Greenville, Mississippi swimming team. I was a member and swam the 50 meter free style.

Have you ever Doubted your Faith?



Charlie and Peggy at a religious festival in Amoopi, Karpathos, Greece.

Someone asked me recently: have you ever doubted your faith? The question itself is interesting as a question. For one reason, it seems to be lacking a prepositional phrase specifying the object of faith. For example, have you ever doubted your faith in God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, or the Bible? Or perhaps the questioner

intended that “faith” in the question evoke the entire spectrum of my religious beliefs. Or perhaps the question is more secular, and the questioner is asking if I have ever doubted my faith in friends, family, or country, and in this secular form it has the general thrust of have I ever doubted the confidence I placed in something that I believe to be certain, like gravity, for example. If all these observations are possibilities, then I must refine the question and pick the subject that is most interesting to me.

Here is the question I choose to address: have I ever doubted aspects of my personal religious faith? The short answer is yes, and I suspect that everyone of us has moments of doubt about aspects of religious belief. At least I hope so. From my perspective doubting something you think is certain is a positive ability, not a liability. Doubt is a warning mechanism of the mind that can lead to a correction of misplaced confidence.

Like everyone, my personal religious faith has never been static. It began with the child’s prayer I was taught, “now I lay me down to sleep; I pray the Lord my soul to keep; if I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take.” But through the years it has become more sophisticated, logical, and rational with education, as my understanding of life and my place in the cosmos evolved. My faith began with what I was taught in a Southern Baptist Sunday School in the Mississippi Delta of the 40s and 50s. Hence, it was traditional and conservative. Since

childhood, however, my faith has been a thing in process, shedding childish ideas and developing in, what I regard as, more mature and philosophical ways. There is a statement attributed to the Apostle Paul (that he likely did not compose), which best characterizes the development and remaindering of the faith of my childhood: “When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways” (1 Cor 13:11 NRSV). Doubt has played a major role in developing and remaindering my religious faith. A major premise for me has been the following: faith may not require me to believe something I find to be patently false or impossible given the world as I experience it.

Briefly here are three examples of where this process has brought me. God, if God there be, is spirit and does not exist in the sense that we normally use the word “exist.” As spirit, God is not an entity that occupies space and time, as we human beings do. God, as understood by human beings, appears to be an invention of the human mind, whose character and nature change with the confessions of each religious group and individual. God does not correspond exactly to any of the many ideations of the human mind that claim to describe God. And if God does correspond exactly to one of these ideations, how could we tell? The Jewish and Christian Bibles present at least three different concepts of God. Thus, God, if God there be, is shrouded

in mystery. There can be no direct knowledge of God. We learn about God from what others tell us, from the study of religions, and from those who claim to have experienced God, but all these sources offer us radically conflicting opinions.(1)

Whatever else he may have been, Jesus was certainly regarded as a Judean sage, thaumaturge, and healer, or at least the author of the earliest canonical Gospel, Mark, regarded him as such, and those features are reproduced in the other two canonical gospels, Matthew and Luke. His popularity with the masses and laxity in following the traditions of the elders ran him afoul of the Judean religious leaders. He was arrested, found guilty of blasphemy, and eventually crucified for political reasons by Roman authority. The early followers of Jesus, however, believed him to be much more, and used grandiose titles to describe him: God (John 20:28), son of God, Lord, the Anointed (Christ) of the Lord, son of David, King of Israel. These honors are not verifiable by naked eye but rather are verified only through the eyes of faith. These days I prefer to think of Jesus as my brother in faith.

In Acts and Hebrews, Jesus is portrayed as a pioneer (*archēgos*), whom God perfected through his own suffering and his suffering qualified him to lead the way to glory for many other sons of God (Heb 2:10; 12:2). In this way Jesus, the Judean sage, became the firstborn among many brothers (Rom 8:29). My view of Jesus may make me appear as an apostate or certainly a heretic (they

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are not the same thing(2)), since it by-passes divinity for humanity as a classification for Jesus. There were various views about the nature of Jesus in antiquity, and it depended on whom you asked as to whether Jesus was divine. People holding a different view than the so-called orthodox view must nevertheless be classified as being in the stream of Christian history.(3) Whatever group was dominant became the judge of what was orthodox.

In church I was never taught data about the Bible except for the most obvious information. Generally, I was taught to regard the Bible as “God-breathed”(4) and to pattern my life on its precepts. My views have changed. I no longer think of the Bible as a “Holy Book” but as a collection of texts that reflect the evolution of the faith of two religious communities, Jewish and Christian. There are currently three versions of the Bible: the Jewish Bible, the Protestant Bible, and the Catholic Bible. Their contents are not the same. The Protestant Bible with which I grew up uses the Jewish Bible, which it regards as old covenant books; to these texts were added certain new covenant writings, twenty-seven other texts (the New Testament), which were assembled as a collection by the fourth century common era and added to the Jewish Bible. By the fourth century followers of Jesus regarded all these books in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek as in some sense “inspired” by God. Modern Christians transfer

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that high value to its translation in modern languages, forgetting that no translation is an exact reproduction of the original.

I have only touched the surface of my view of the Bible today as compared to where I began. My hasty summary nevertheless shows that if the Bible is “inspired” by God (a view that cannot be proven), it is also to be regarded as a human product. Human beings collected and canonized the writings, and text critics established what they regard as the original wording of the texts and they still debate what words should appear as the original wording.(5)

I have learned to live with the evident lack of certainty in matters of religious faith. The major difficulty with religion is that too many of us are absolutely certain that their religious faith is the true faith.

Charles W. Hedrick

(1)C. W. Hedrick, *Unmasking Biblical Faiths* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2019), 168–70 and in particular: “Out of the Enchanted Forest. Christian Faith in an Age of Reason” pages 13–24 in *When Faith Meets Reason* (Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge, 2008).

(2)Hedrick, “How do I Describe Myself,” Wry Thoughts about Religion, Friday, February 15, 2019: <http://blog.charleshedrick.com/2019/02/how-do-i-describe-myself.html>

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(3)Hedrick, “Is Belief in the Divinity of Jesus Essential to Being Christian,” Unmasking Biblical Faiths, 221–233.

(4)But this could only refer to the Jewish Scriptures in Greek (the Septuagint) for the New Testament had not yet been collected and given the status of “inspired Scripture.”

(5)Hedrick, Unmasking Biblical Faiths, 87–102.

Lucinda H.

Insightful (incite-ful?) as always. Thank you, Dad!

Lois

Loved that. Yes, very insightful and really loved how you got the plug of your book in at the end. 😊

Charles

I'm not sure you answer the question. (If someone asked me, has dad ever doubted his faith, I don't know from this to say yes or no...) I also wonder, as I read this, what the object of faith is? I mean, can one be a Christian and profess faith in the principles of christianity, if one does not believe in the existence of god or the divinity of Jesus, for instance? (Some early Xians didn't believe in the divinity of Jesus; so did they have faith?) I'm also not sure from this if it a good thing or a bad thing to have doubts. Is the struggle to believe strengthening? Is the faith of children a weakness in an adult?

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Dad

I will get back to you. I am going to post this narrative on my blog with a few changes.

LD

Do You have a Favorite Poem? What is it?



I have never consciously decided that there is one poem I like above all others. But if by “favorite” you mean to suggest the poems to which I tend to return because I find hidden depths in them or simply enjoy the cadence of the language. Then, yes, there are certain poems that draw me back to read again.

I understand a poem to be the poet’s description of a certain experience expressed in heightened language. I do return time and again to several poets whose poetic expressions of certain experiences continue to resonate with me. One such poet is Robert Frost and several of his poems continue to haunt me—for example, *Mending Wall*, *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*, and *The Road not Taken*. There are others in his collected works that also call me back, but at least these three hold special places in memory.

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The poet who draws me back most frequently, however, is Wallace Stevens. I encountered his genius while on sabbatical in Chicago at the Lutheran School of Theology library, thumbing through books of poetry. Stevens was Harvard educated, although he never graduated. After Harvard, he went to Law School in New York City where he also practiced law, although not successfully. He wrote poetry in college and was a devout member of the Dutch Reformed Church in his youth, although he gave up his religious faith in later years. Stevens found his economic base when he was employed by the Hartford Insurance Company. His custom was to write his poems in his mind on his walk to work each day and then scribble them on scraps of paper for his secretary to type up for him.

There are three words that come to mind in describing Stevens' poems: reality, imagination, and fiction. In crafting his poems Stevens aims to describe things as they are (what seems real to him) but he describes a thing as he sees it in his imagination. For Stevens “[Poetry] is an interdependence of the imagination and reality as equals” (Stevens, “The Noble Rider and the Sound of Words” in *The Necessary Angel. Essays on Reality and the Imagination* (New York: Vintage Books, 1942 [reprint 1951], 27). He thinks of poetry as the equal of philosophy but on balance poetry “may be its superior” (“The Figure of the Youth as Virile Poet” in *The Necessary Angel*, 41-43). The crafted poem

becomes the supreme fiction by which life is ordered. What he achieves can seem rather strange to first-time readers, since it is difficult to orient oneself in the landscape of his poetic descriptions of reality. Nevertheless, it seems to me that he says something important.

“The mind has added nothing to human nature. It is a violence from within that protects us from a violence without. It is the imagination pressing back against the pressure of reality. It seems, in the last analysis, to have something to do with our self-preservation; and that, no doubt, is why the expression of it, the sound of its words, helps us to live our lives.” (Stevens, “Noble Rider” in *The Necessary Angel*, 36).

In fact, in the last analysis poetry is even superior to religion. Today we live in an age of disbelief or one that is “largely humanistic” in which the gods have been dispelled into the air; the gods have “come to nothing” (Stevens, *Opus Posthumous. Poems, Plays. Prose* by Wallace Stevens [New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977], 206]), and for Stevens poetry came to replace religion.

“After one has abandoned a belief in god, poetry is that essence which takes its place as life’s redemption” (Stevens, *Opus Posthumous*, 158).

Here is an example of one of his poems:

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It was when I said,
“There is no such thing as the truth,”
That grapes seemed fatter.
The fox ran out of his hole.

You ... You said,
“There are many truths,
But they are not parts of a truth.”
Then the tree at night began to change,
Smoking through green and smoking blue.
We were two figures in a wood.
We said we stood alone.

It was when I said,
“Words are not forms of a single word.
In the sum of the parts, there are only the parts.
The world must be measured by eye”;

It was when you said,
“The idols have seen lots of poverty,
Snakes and gold and lice,
But not the truth”;

It was at that time, that the silence was largest
And longest, the night was roundest,
The fragrance of the autumn warmest,

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Closest and strongest.

(Stevens, “On the Road Home” in *The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961), 203–204).

There are many of Stevens other poems that I particularly enjoy rereading for various reasons, among which are the following: Earthy Anecdote, Invective Against Swans, Ploughing on Sunday, The Emperor of Ice Cream, Sunday Morning, Anecdote of the Jar, Thirteen ways of Looking at a Blackbird, The Plot against the Giant, The Indigo Grass in the Glass. This list is not exhaustive. I also enjoy pondering some of my own poetry. Here I only offer one example:

Who am I?

I am told I am many things;

Some may well be true.

I am Homo sapiens,

Cousin to the chimpanzee,

A warm-blooded mammal

Spawned in some protozoan sea;

Adam’s child of dust from the stars,

Shaped with spit and spittle

By the finger of God;

Raised like cotton in the hot Delta bottom

Land of the muddy Mississippi;

Baptist of the postwar South by tradition,

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Critic of convention by training,
Skeptic by confession,
Humanist by disposition;
Reason's servant by profession,
Raising horizons,
Altering perceptions.

Epitaphs are for others to write, he thought.

Yet in water he did write

Prematurely

By flesh, blood, and bone

A conflicted legacy;

His wry curiosity

Scribbling

Bold forgettable marginalia

On conventional views

Of reality.

(Hedrick, "Who am I?" in Unmasking Biblical Faiths. The Marginal Relevance of the Bible for Contemporary Faith [Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2019], flyleaf).

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Wallace Stevens

Lois

I love this insight into you and your thoughts on poetry – but mostly into you! Really enjoyed the poem you wrote. I guess I need to get out my poetry books.

Henry

Thank you

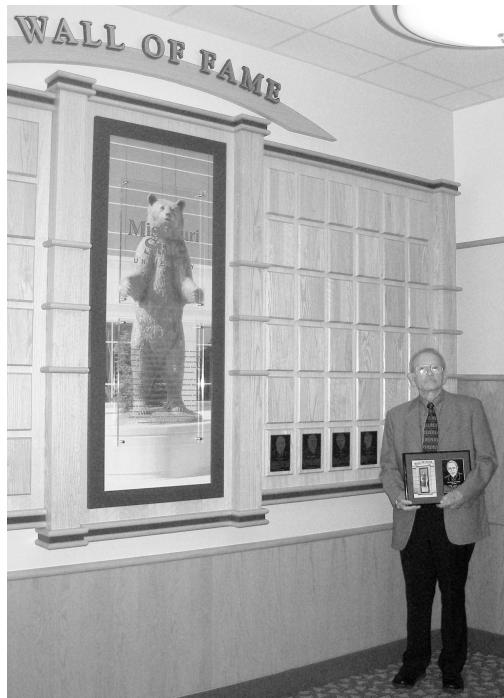
Charles

I enjoyed reading this, though i haven't got much to say about it! you don't seem to particularly like older poetry? Stevens and Frost... no Song of Solomon? I'm struck by the contradictions in your own poem. Both cousin of a Chimpanzee and shaped by the finger of god... Faith doesn't figure in your intellectual bio: "skeptic... humanist... reason." so maybe the key line is "conflicted legacy"? But why "legacy" rather than life?

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You cannot leave a life once you have “passed on.” At best you may leave a legacy, if you are lucky; and memories, at least until the people who knew you “pass on.”

What things are you proudest of in your life?



The author at his Wall of Fame induction at Missouri State University, Springfield, Missouri.

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This question puts me in an awkward position. It appears to be an invitation for me to brag about certain things I have done in life that bring me great pleasure to remember. The Bible, however, teaches that humility is the greatest human attribute. Pride, on the other hand, is vigorously condemned in the Bible in every instance or virtually every instance. (It depends on whether you use the Protestant or Catholic Bible.) In Hebrew Bible a usual synonym for pride is arrogance or haughtiness. Its opposite is humility (Prov 29:23), which God honors (Prov 22:4). I find only two positive statements about pride in the Catholic Old Testament (Judith 15:9 and Sirach 50:1) and none in the Protestant.

A severely negative view of pride has persisted in Western culture under the influence of the Bible. In the 14th century Chaucer describes pride as the first of the seven deadly sins (the “Parson’s Tale”) and Milton (“Paradise Lost”) in the 17th century traced the woes of humankind to the pride of Satan. Viewed from the biblical perspective, pride is firmly condemned by God, but from a secular perspective pride may well be an essential positive trait of being human. Consider a few positive secular statements about pride: “Take pride in your work”; “take pride in your appearance”; “civic pride should be encouraged”; “be proud of who you are instead of wishing you were someone else.” If pride, or being proud, can often be

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positive, the biblical view of pride is inadequate and misleading in that it masks the true nature of pride (see Charles W. Hedrick, “What’s Wrong with being Proud” in *Wry Thoughts about Religion* Blog, Friday, December 8, 2017: <http://blog.charleshedrick.com/search?q=pride>).

With the above comments serving as a caution, I begin reflecting on my proudest moments with my greatest lack of accomplishment. I barely graduated high school. Here is an anecdote that captures the spirit of my undergraduate education. Every graduating senior had to have an exit interview with Mr. H. L. Berryhill, the E. E. Bass Junior/Senior High School Guidance Counselor. He had my academic record in front of him as he asked me “What do you plan on doing after graduation, Charles?” I replied, “I am going to college, Mr. Berryhill; I am going to be a preacher.” He glanced over my high school record and said, “Hmmm! Have you ever considered a good trade school?” In other words, he did not have the confidence that I could succeed academically in college. Such is how I must have been seen by my high school teachers. I flunked ninth grade English and had to repeat it in summer school, which was a good thing. My teacher was Miss Lorraine Shell, who taught me virtually all I know about English that summer and to whom I dedicated my first book (*When History and Faith Collide. Studying Jesus*, 1999): “For Lorraine Shell English Teacher

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Extraordinaire An obligation long overdue.” I have come to consider my one achievement in high school to be winning first place in the Speech for Democracy Contest during my senior year.



English Teacher Extraordinaire, Lorraine Shell, B.A., M.S.C.W., M.A.

I prefer to look on my “proudest moments in life” as personal achievements in which I overcame certain obstacles to achieve a singular goal. In 1953 after eight weeks of Army Basic Training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, I was ordered to the Quartermaster Training Command at Fort Lee, Virginia for eight weeks training at the Quartermaster School as an army storage specialist. At the conclusion of training my Company Commander called several of the class to his office. We were informed that we were “selected to attend the Quartermaster Leader’s Course.” The purpose of the training was “to develop recognized qualities of leadership

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and to provide the army with better qualified leaders. Only men of excellent character and those who have demonstrated potential qualities of leadership are enrolled," so said the Commandant of the school in a letter to my mother dated 17 February 1954. I completed the course even though one of the eight weeks of required training I was in the hospital with pneumonia. I was afraid they would recycle me to a later class, but they allowed me to finish the course. I was selected as the honor graduate of the class and awarded the American Spirit Honor Medal by the Citizens Committee for the Army, Navy, and Airforce "for the display of leadership best expressing the American spirit—honor, initiative, loyalty, and high example to comrades in arms" (Wikipedia). The award "is given to not more than one trainee out of the graduating group." I was also given my choice of the area of my next assignment. I chose the European Command, where in Germany I met and married my wife, Peggy (the rest of my class was assigned to the Far East Command).

After release from the military in 1956, I returned to Mississippi College, where I completed my remaining three years of college in two years while serving as pastor of Mayersville Baptist Church in Mayersville, Mississippi. That same year I competed in the senior declamation contest. Three seniors were entered in the competition. The entire college was gathered at mandatory

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chapel for the competition. While behind the curtain waiting to begin, one competitor withdrew from the contest. The second competitor stepped on the stage from the wings and began his oration, paused—he had forgotten his speech. He started again and paused at the same place—forgetting again. He did this twice more, and finally left the stage no doubt in embarrassment. My turn had come, and I was not a little nervous. I completed my speech and was awarded The Mississippi College Nelson Medal for the best Senior Original Oration in 1956. I was the last person standing and hence the contest was no contest.

After resigning from the First Baptist Church in Needles, California in 1965, I went to work as a Deputy Probation Officer 1 for the Los Angeles County Probation Department, where I was employed for thirteen years (1965-1978) in Juvenile Probation. During my employment I rose to the rank of Deputy Probation Officer 3 and was on the list to be appointed Supervising Deputy Probation Officer. I resigned before my appointment, however, to become Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at Wagner College in New York city in 1978. I was terminated at Wagner in 1980 due to an exigency crisis and was offered a position in the administration by the president of the college, which I declined and started applying to open positions in academia. Later that year I was hired by Southwest Missouri State University.

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At Missouri State University my colleagues twice voted me the great honor of Distinguished Scholar 1991-1996 and 1996-2000. In 2001 I was promoted to the new position of Distinguished Professor. In 2010 I was nominated for and again elected by my colleagues at Missouri State University for the Wall of Fame.

“The Wall of Fame, located outside the Ballroom in the Plaster Student Union, is a designated location for the University to recognize and honor employees who have excelled at Missouri State and significantly contributed to the success and positive collegiate experience of students. While Missouri State University has had many outstanding employees during its long history, the intention of the Wall of Fame is to recognize those faculty and staff members who have had an impact on students that is considered truly noteworthy.” (Missouri State University).

The caption on the plaque reads:

Dr. Charles W. Hedrick

1980-2004

Charles Hedrick earned international recognition for his scholarly work in religious studies and received numerous teaching and research awards. Most notably, Hedrick was the third faculty member to earn the title of Distinguished Professor.

Induction Class 2010

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I am proud to be the husband of Peggy S. Hedrick and we both are proud to be the parents of Charles Webster Hedrick, Jr., Janet Lucinda Kennaley (née Hedrick), and Lois Kathryn Hedrick.



L to R: The author, Cindi Hedrick Kennaley, Charles W. Hedrick, Jr., Peggy S. Hedrick, Lois Kay Hedrick.

Working my Way through Life



Flickr Photos (not the author) 2023.

Someone inquired about jobs I may have had during high school. I am not sure why that would be interesting, but as it so happens, I have had several jobs throughout my life up until the time I joined the Army during the Korean Conflict. My military service became a watershed moment for me. I married Peggy

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Shepherd, an “Army brat,” while in the Army in Germany. The course of my life was set for a military/ecclesiastical/Academic occupation. So, it seems appropriate to ask what kind of jobs I might have had before I was 20 years of age, that is, before the Army.

These are the jobs I remember. There is nothing very unusual about them. I do once recall that Dad (Berry) told me that he had driven a horse drawn wagon for the Railway Express Agency at about age thirteen. It seems that the Hedrick clan was destined from an early age to earn their living by the sweat of their multiple brows. But I imagine that was true for all the working poor during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

The first job that paid a stipend was working for the Delta Democrat Times in Greenville, Mississippi, the Queen City of the Delta region of Mississippi. I worked as a paper carrier delivering newspapers. While I had an earlier paper route closer to home, the one that I remember best was out North Broadway. It ended at the Blocker Dairy. I never clocked it, but it must have been about five or six miles long (twelve miles round trip) that I pedaled on my bicycle named “Leader” tossing papers. Many of my early memories growing up in Greenville are associated in some way with the paper route. When I reached the Dairy, I was permitted to ride the horses and bring in the cows for milking. They had two horses, an old mare named Bimbo and her colt

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named Lucky. Lucky would come when I whistled (I gave him treats). I usually saddled Lucky, rather than Bimbo, to go after the cows. Once in herding home the cows (a misnomer; they essentially came in by themselves) Lucky stumbled over his long, unclipped hooves and fell, throwing me off. Fortunately, Lucky did not fall on me. I got up and finished the “herding-in” of the cows.

On Saturday nights, like other paper carriers of the period, I hawked the Delta Democrat Times up and down Washington Avenue in Greenville, back and forth from one end to the other. Or from the railroad tracks to the World War Two monument at the base of the Levee. The cry was “Delta Democrat Times, Get your Sunday paper here!” We would start selling about 6pm and work till around 10 or 11pm, when the crickets began to fill up the entrances to the stores having windows that were left lighted. There was not much money in the newspaper business for kids of about 10 or 12, but it kept us from getting into trouble and we still had a few dollars in the pockets of our faded blue jeans.

I worked for a short while packing groceries stocking shelves, etc. at a small locally owned grocery store out on Highway 1 near the Catholic High School. I only worked a short while. I found the work dull, boring, and monotonous, but the reason I quit (after asking permission from my mother to do so) was because of raging hormones (and no, I am giving no specifics).

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I managed to get jobs during the Christmas breaks from school, so that I would be able to purchase presents for everyone in the family, generally it was in a shoe store. I worked in the following stores usually the late shifts sometimes for repeat seasons: The Red Penney Store, Thom McCann's, and J. C. Penney Company in Greenville. The work was the same, but as I recall procedures were somewhat different at each store. I recall that J.C. Penney's had two water fountains one labeled "White" and the other labeled "Colored." In addition to salary, I was paid a small commission for each pair of shoes sold.

The last few years of high school, I worked as lifeguard at the Greenville Swimming Pool. I learned how to swim at the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) in Greenville and have always been a strong swimmer. At some point when the Pool was opening, they gave a lifeguard class, I took the class and was hired from the class as a lifeguard for the opening of the Pool during the summers. At my graduation the pool was open after regular closing hours for a special party for my senior class. I was required to work the party. As I recall, I never had to "save" anyone from drowning through my whole career at either Greenville or Ridgecrest.

At some point during high school, I worked a short while as a surveyor's assistant. What this meant was that I held the pole while the surveyor traced and marked out imaginary lines from a

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map. It was tedious and somewhat dangerous. I recall having to walk into swamps up to my thighs to hold the pole, fearing alligators and poisonous snakes (water moccasins), and whatever else my imagination told me lurked beneath the surface of the dark and smelly waters.

Immediately after graduating high school my Sunday School Teacher, Mr. Howard Melton, Sr., got me a job as a Batch Truck Driver for a building project near Greenville. It was hot, dry, dusty work in the high humidity of a Mississippi summer's day. The trucks were not airconditioned. A long line of batch trucks would pull up in a dump truck to a batch drop. The driver would wait till his bed was filled, he would then drive to the building project, and dump his load. Then he would return for another load. They soon pulled me off that job and charged me with keeping the water jugs full of ice and water for the drivers. I was assigned a small pickup and had to make regular runs to the Greenville Ice Plant for the ice and told to hang out at the parts shed between my runs. I fell behind in keeping the ice jugs full, not because there were too many water jugs but because of my inattention to the status of the cool water. They fired me from this cushy assignment and reassigned me to the batch trucks again. This is the only job from which I have ever been fired for cause. I was also fired from Wagner College many years later because of an exigency crisis at the college. I was the most recent

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faculty member hired into the Religious Studies Department and hence I was the first to be let go. The president called me to his office before the pink slips went out to about one-third of the faculty and offered me a job in administration. I foolishly turned down the job but was hired several weeks later by Southwest Missouri State University—but that is another story.

At one point after graduating high school my dad (Berry) got me a job at the U. S. Gypsum Company as a quality control inspector. I do not recall what the product was in 1952 but today they make ceiling panels. As I recall, I walked to a product area and picked up a sample and brought it back to the lab to run several tests on it.

I entered Mississippi College (MC) on a financial shoestring. I had the savings from my jobs after high school and knew I needed to have a job in college. My parents did not have enough money to help defray the costs of college. I had wanted to go to Baylor University because of the people I met on the staff at Ridgecrest Baptist Assembly, but did not have the money to make that happen. So, I wound up at MC. I worked for a while in the school sweet shop, the Wigwam, jerking sodas at the fountain. It did not pay a great deal of money. I tried out for cheerleader for the school teams, the Choctaws. And was browbeaten by my college roommate, Louis Myers and his buddy Barney Loposer, to go out for sports instead (they played on the

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basketball team). Having played football in high school (without receiving a school letter), I went out for football. I was rewarded with a job washing socks and jocks in the athletic department. It paid better than the Wigwam. As it turns out, I did Letter my freshman year of college at MC (and only learned about it many years later). I also had a job at MC for which I did not receive a stipend. I was invited to participate as a part of the Mississippi College Freshman Youth Revival Team as one of two preachers. The other was Ralph Atkinson, who many years later became President of Mississippi College. As I recall the other members of the Revival Team were Earl McLeod (song leader), Martha Ann Smith, and Gaye Holcomb. I recall that Ralph was the more effective preacher. I am not sure why I was selected to be on the revival team.

I don't see any pattern to the jobs that I had in this early phase of my life. None of them except the last unpaid position had any importance to what I finally ended up doing in life. I would like to think that work was formative for my character but cannot say that. Work was something that the working poor did. And my family, while rich in many ways, was not independently wealthy. Hence, we had to work.

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Lois

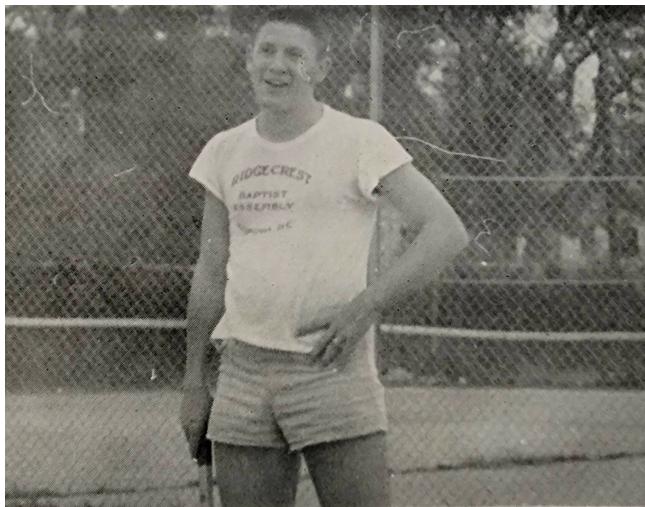
I wondered if someone might be curious about this comment. It had to do with a 13-14 year old male's preoccupation with the adult female form. Does that help?

This was an awesome story! But what was the deal with the raging hormones that would cause you to leave a job?? 😊

Charles

i wonder that stocking shelves caused such a hormonal surge!
And funny that you too had as an early job delivering newspapers
(that is a job that will not be available to future generations!) I
was also struck by the ice pickups. Did folks back then have
ice-boxes still?

Sporting Activities of a Delta Boy



Charles Hedrick, the athletic type.

The question was put to me: which sports did you play in high school? I prefer to think of this question as: in what sporting activities have you engaged? Life is more than high school and “sports” are broader than athletics. There is a picture in The

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Tribesman (The 1953 Mississippi College Annual, p. 32) of me standing on a tennis court my freshman year in short shorts and a shrunken Ridgecrest Baptist Assembly tee-shirt holding a tennis racket (now in the possession of my daughter, Lois Kathryn; she uses it for a wall hanging) with the caption beneath the photo reading: “Charles Hedrick, the athletic type.” I am not sure who took the photo or why they decided to publish it in the annual, or why they described me using the words “athletic type,” which signifies in some dictionaries a “model.” I am scarcely a model of a sports competitor, but to be sure I have enjoyed competing in a variety of sporting activities throughout my entire life. Truth be told, I was average at best in everything I gamed.



The author's tennis racket. Hanging on his daughter's wall.

In grammar school I participated in whatever contests went on at school, both classroom and playground: kickball, dodgeball, racing, soft ball, spelling bee, etc.; there were no organized

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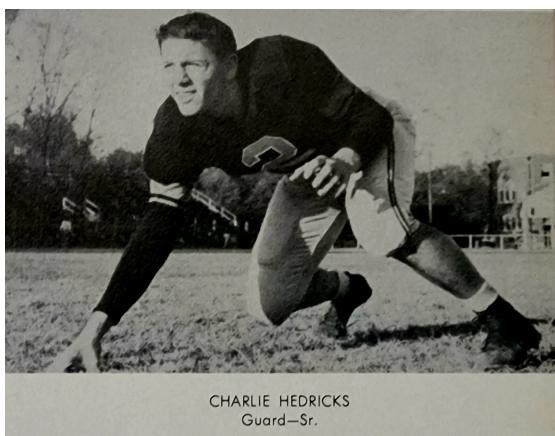
sports then to be found in grammar schools. That came later in junior high and high school. When I got a paper route and had a modicum of independent financial resources, I tried my hand at gambling in local markets in the form of pay-a-fee and get a punch-out from the board to see if I won anything. I quickly learned it was a device to separate me from my hard-earned money. But I did participate in all sorts of gaming activities each year in the midways when the carnival came to Greenville. And there was always the pinball machine, although I was never a pinball wizard.

The primary place for informal (i.e., not organized) sporting activities of all sorts for the white youth of Greenville, Mississippi (it was a segregated society) was the YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association). I became a member quite early in life. The Y was only four blocks from where I lived on South Broadway. It had many resources for sporting activities that a youth might want. A basketball court, swimming pool, two ping pong tables (table tennis), and gaming tables for chess and checkers. I learned to swim at the Y and played water tag in the pool. The place was a mad house with shouting, raucous laughter, and all kinds of "horse play" going on. The main sporting activities of my grammar and junior high years were found at the Y. I was a member of the Greenville YMCA basketball team that played in the state competition at Jackson, Mississippi

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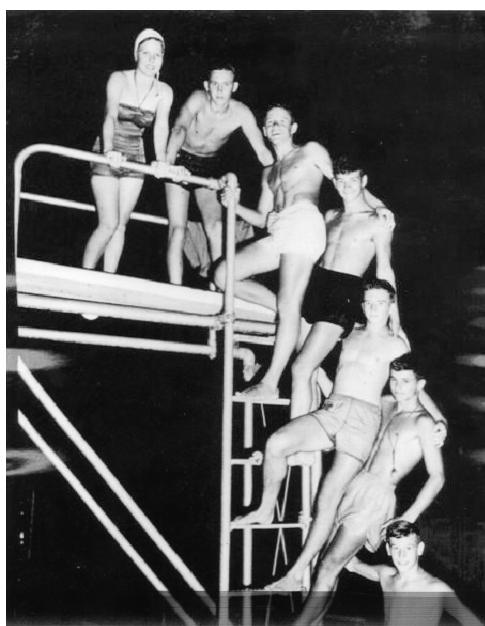
(I do not recall how the team fared in the competition). In one table tennis competition at the Y I won third place in the junior competition. I also won Y letters in basketball and swimming. I have a clipping of a newspaper column that reported the results of The YMCA Senior Basketball league competition between the Lions (my team) and the Leopards. The Lions won and I was the game high scorer with 13 points out of a team score of 31 points. Brother Berry Shreve in this report played for the Panthers in the Junior league. They lost to the Wildcats, but brother Berry was high point scorer for the Panthers with 8 points. I don't recall if there were chess and checkers competitions, but these would have been individual competitions rather than a team activity. In any case every day I was at the Y I played someone checkers and chess (I beat Jimmy Mann, a year ahead of me, only once in chess, that I recall). One year I coached YMCA cadet football. We practiced and played our games at Carrie Stern grammar school out by highway 1. I only recall the name of the quarterback on the team Starkey Allen Morgan Later Starkey was an outstanding athlete at E. E. Bass High School. He earned a Masters degree and later a doctorate in education. He was a teacher and later a principal. When we were kids the Morgan family lived in the other half of our house at 331 South Broadway.

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During high school my senior year I went out for High School football (there is a photo of me on p. 149 of the 1952 Black and Gold High School Annual). I played guard the caption says. I do not recall that I ever played in a regular competition in high school and hence did not receive a school letter. But my photo was larger than the photos of other players. Why that was I have no idea. At some point I found it necessary to quit the football squad. Our then head football coach, Warren Averitte (who was not listed in the 1952 annual), became very agitated about it and slammed me up against a locker when I went to turn in my gear and chewed me out in rather royal fashion.

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The author 3rd from left at the top of the ladder.

I was a lifeguard at the Greenville, Mississippi City Pool and a member of the South-East Team that won most honors in the First City Swim Meet (I don't recall that there was ever a second swim meet). I won two firsts in the competition: I swam the free style 50 meters to win in 35 seconds and won the plunge length first. I was behind the winner in the underwater endurance swim. There is a nice photo from the Delta Democrat Times of the entire team standing on the diving board at the city pool. The article reports that the South-East team was "being coached as a Greenville Unit to vie in the AAU meet at Ole Miss later." I do not recall that the team competed in the AAU meet.

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During my Senior year of High School (E. E. Bass High School) the Greenville Junior Chamber of Commerce in cooperation with the authorities of E. E. Bass High School and radio station WJPR sponsored an “I speak for Democracy” Contest. I was the first-place winner, which was announced at an awards banquet. I was awarded a free round-trip to Jackson, Mississippi (the state capitol) through the courtesy of Southern Airways. I never took the trip because I did not know anyone in Jackson. A radio transcription of my speech was forwarded to the state headquarters of the Jaycees to be judged with other local winners in the State of Mississippi. I did not win that competition.

At Ridgecrest Baptist Assembly during the summers of my Junior year and Senior years, I recall playing basketball, shuffleboard, and badminton, but there were no organized competitions. There was a basketball intramural league in which participated. I do not recall participating in any sporting competitions during my military years except for pick-up basketball games.

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The author in the center going for a rebound.

At Mississippi College (MC) I went out for football my freshman year and made the varsity squad as fullback/linebacker. I must have played enough minutes in several games that I was awarded a school letter, as I later discovered. I do not recall the number of games in which I played in 1953/54, but one report (MC against Ouachita), which MC won 38 to 7, mentions my name. In the school annual (*The 1953 Tribesman*, p. 87) it is reported: "Then Charles Hedrick went from [the MC] 30 to the [Ouachita] two." Through the years since 1953 there had been various attempts from Mississippi College (now Mississippi College A Christian University) to solicit me to join the M-Club (comprised of men who have earned a letter in a major sport: football, basketball, baseball, track, tennis; there were no women's organized sports

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in American Universities and Colleges at that time). I had ignored all these solicitations, since I had never been officially told that I had won a letter. In 2016 I decided to reply to the solicitations and told them their information was in error for I had never lettered. Ms. Lori Bobo, a member of the Alumni Affairs Office, informed me that I had indeed lettered in football. I was still somewhat skeptical but joined the M-Club in 2016 and received for my membership an M Club cap and polo shirt. I called Bobby Turcotte, another freshman player who I remember, like me, had not been first string on the team but who traveled with the varsity. My impression is that we played in the same number of games. He said his situation was the same as mine. He had not been officially notified that he had received a college letter either but was contacted by Ms. Bobo and told that he had indeed won a letter. There were three games that MC won by wide margins that year in which freshmen might have played: with Southwestern, Hendrix, and Ouachita. As I was mentioned in the Ouachita game, so Turcotte was mentioned in the Ouachita and Hendrix games (*Tribesman*, p. 87). When one linebacker was injured in the Colgate game (MC 12, Colgate 53, *Tribesman*, p. 86), I recall thinking those Colgate guys were huge (but the coach did not send me into play). I have a vivid memory of playing linebacker in another game in which I blocked a pass to an opposing player. I had a job washing socks, jocks, and uniforms for the athletic department, prompting Johnny Byrd

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(half back) to comment in my annual, “Sedgewick, I still wish you would wash more” (which I took as a comment on my work and not my hygiene). The only other competition that I can recall at MC were pick-up Rook games in the dayroom of my dormitory. It seems that there was a Rook game going at all hours of the day or night. “Rook is a trick-taking game, usually played with a specialized deck of cards. Sometimes referred to as Christian cards or missionary cards. Rook playing cards were introduced by Parker Brothers in 1906 to provide an alternative to standard playing cards for those in the Puritan tradition, and those in Mennonite culture who considered the face cards in a regular deck inappropriate because of their association with gambling and cartomancy.”

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rook_\(card_game\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rook_(card_game)) .

During my seminary years I had no time for athletics. I worked 40 hours each week, had a large family, and took a full load of academic classes. I do recall that the seminary fielded a flag football team to play against a local Presbyterian Seminary. I have no idea who won but I do recall it was an exhausting game and I did a lot of blocking. Later, when I was pastor of the First Baptist Church at Needles, California, I recruited a basketball team from the community and entered the team in the city intramural league. The name of the team was “The Holy Rollers” (the team represented First Baptist Church). I have no idea how

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well we fared in league play, but I do recall that it was fun, and got me out of the church environment. During graduate school, Peggy and I took up jogging in the neighborhood around our home in LaVerne, CA. Later at Missouri State I became a jogger around Phelps Grove Park and eventually took up with my long-time jogging partner, Jim Giglio of the History Department. We jogged together for years and when we could no longer jog because of our physical infirmities, we took up walking. After retirement from the university my life of competitive athletics was pretty much finished except for individual exercises at the local gymnasium: walking and swimming. I have since retiring from the university retired as well from competitive sports but have maintained a personal practice of walking for about an hour each day. Finally, in my advanced old age in North Kansas City I started a “competition” of sorts with my daughters, Cindi and Kay, and Cindi’s daughters, Kimber and Katie. The “rule” was the following: on a walk if you find a coin, you are obligated to write a rhyme about the experience. There were no winners, but there were losers—those who did not write a poem when they found a coin. No prizes are offered except the pleasure of competing.

My most recent entry into this poetic “competition” was yesterday (1/25/22):

One Cent

A copper glint
On the pavement
One cent
Heaven sent
From the Denver mint

Looking back over my life in sports, I am reminded of the words of Paul, the apostle, who compared life as a Jesus follower to two kinds of sporting events, racing and boxing:

“Do you not know that in a stadium, all racers run, but one receives the prize; thus, all of you run to win. Everyone engaged in a sporting competition exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable one. Well then, I do not run aimlessly. I do not shadow box, but I treat my body roughly and subdue it, lest after preaching to others I myself might become disqualified.” (1 Cor 9:24-27, author’s translation).

I have always been competitive but recognize that I was not as competitive about sports as I was about religion. It is interesting to me that Paul in the statement above compares his life as a Jesus follower to competitive sports as if the athlete’s seriousness about competition could be used to measure how seriously people compete in other fields of endeavor. In some sense the dedication of the athlete was for Paul a way to measure his own religious commitment. Looking back over a lifetime of

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past sporting activities of various kinds, it is apparent to me that I fell short of the standard, in both sports and religion. Although it might be considered too generous by some, perhaps a grade of C- is not out of place for me in both areas? Paul, of course, likely thought of his religious behavior as the standard in religion (see 2 Cor 11:21-33).

Lucinda H.

I loved reading about your sporting life!!! But, C-??? What? It sounds to me like you have a lifetime of A for effort. I look forward to your explanation (perhaps in a future article?) about how someone with a Ph.D and years reading, writing, speaking, blogging knowledge and experience acquired in a subject earns such a score. You neglected to mention, too, how YOU are the ONLY one to find a coin literally EVERY time you go out! Super competitive, much? Or maybe God just really, really loves your poems. 😊

Dad

In answer to your question: Someone achieves such a score by working at it.

LD

Lois

Thanks for the poem! did Kimber and Katie also see it?

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Dad is calling me out

Does he have doubt?

My poem is late

But no need to hate

Here it is for the book

Not for rook.

Dime in the gutter mud

With no crud

Not tossed

Or unknowingly lost

Not just a coin is found

Yes it is round

But lifelong connection to Dad

Is not just a fad

This is not just about rhymes

Or coin finds

There is so much more

To family lore

Family history is rad

I love you Dad.



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Charles

I don't recall having a favorite sport—perhaps football. Today I enjoy watching football. I never cared much for baseball and I watch neither baseball or basketball today. God love money? Hardly. In fact the Bible (if it be inspired by God) declares money as the root of all evil. God doesn't have or need money. As the song declares: "He has the whole world in his hands." And everywhere he goes, people give him gifts.

For a person who was not especially interested in athletics you certainly have a lot of memories! You have told me the story of Berry scoring in basketball before. I don't come away from this with a sense of your favorite sport, though. I've seen pictures of you at the pool; and you've told me you played fullback; but I had always imagined your favorite was basketball. Your last poem makes me wonder if money is heaven sent. Does god love money? Or at least have a lot of it? If Paul thought of his faith as the standard, then he was failing in humility I think.

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Lois

January 18, 1952 Page 5

Tonight

Wildcats Defeat Panthers, Zebras

The Wildcats and Bears were the victors in the YMCA Junior Basketball League Monday afternoon over the Panthers and Zebras respectively. The Wildcats defeated the Panthers in an overtime period 19 to 16 and the Bears handed the Zebras their first defeat by winning 21 to 15.

Capt. Eugene Langley of the Wildcats led his team to victory by scoring 10 points and Shreve Hedrick led the losers with 8 points. Billy Percy and Woody Morris were the leading scorers in the second game with 7 points each.

The Lions scored their second straight victory over the Leopards by handing them a 31 to 24 defeat. Charles Hedrick was the leading scorer with 13 points. Bob Pilcher scored 6 points for the Leopards and Lamar Buck counted 6 for the Lions.

JUNIORS			
WILDCATS (19)	Foul.	PANTHERS (16)	
Langley, 19	I	Irvine,	4
Lemonis, 2	I	Townsend,	3
G. Rayburn, 8	C	Emrich,	4
McClenden, 6	O	S. Hedrick,	4
BRAVES (21)	Foul.	Kelly,	
Percy, 7	F	ZEBRAS (15)	
Left	I	Hines,	3
G. Rayburn, 8	C	Burke,	2
D. Morris, 3	G	W. Morris,	2
Nordstrom, 3	O	Barnes,	2
		Williams,	
SENIORS			
LIONS (31)	Foul.	LEOPARDS (24)	
Abdullah, 12	I	Dunn,	2
Catlin, 10	I	Shelby,	2
Ward,	F	Nease,	2
Christensen, 2	C	E. Rayburn,	2
Gardner, 4	G	Golden,	2
Rosamond, 2	O	Garrett,	
Buck, 8	G	Pilcher,	

Growing up in the Jim Crow South; A House Divided



Photo downloaded 02/08/2023 from Flickr.com

I don't recall that I ever heard of Jim Crow, growing up in the Jim Crow South; the subject was never addressed by my parents, or

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discussed in public school, Sunday School, or church services or any of the other venues in which I circulated as a youth. I grew up in Greenville, Mississippi (Washington County) during the years 1940 (first grade) through 1952 (high school graduation). “Jim Crow” refers to laws that enforced racial segregation in the southern United States. These laws that were aimed to provide a separate but equal racial segregation were enforced until 1964. Looking back, my impression from this distance is that facilities were hardly equal. Had I been aware of the concept of “separate but equal,” I would have known the reason that there stood in the J. C. Penney Company in Greenville two water fountains one labeled “White Only” and the other labeled “Colored Only.” It always struck me as a little odd. I lived in a White world in a county that was approximately 70% colored. First Baptist Church, where I was a member, was comprised of a White membership (their Chinese mission met on Sunday afternoons), the Sunday School and Baptist Training Union were White, the Young Men’s Christian Association, where I spent summer afternoons was White, the Public School was White, and Soda Fountains were White (for reasons of economy my family did not do restaurants). I have no impression of the segregated status of the King’s Daughters Hospital, but I know there was a small colored “hospital” on North Broadway, which I passed every day on my paper route. From the perspective of my White world experience white citizens were politically privileged though

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numerically smaller and one could live in the White world being only dimly aware of one's fellow citizens of darker skin, although they were all around. Mississippians lived in a house divided. I have no memories of personal interactions with colored people (the polite term by which they were referred) in my youth. I use this unfortunate epithet, rather than the contemporary "African-American" or Black, since it was part of the White-world language in the Mississippi Delta.

What I think I knew about colored people was very little. I had no acquaintances or friends who were colored. I recall that before I started grammar school white and colored children played together in the yard of the large Percy house on the corner across the street. That period did not last long. Occasionally, someone colored would pass in front of our house at 331 South Broadway walking from a large colored housing area around the corner on Hinds Street headed to the downtown area of Greenville some three blocks north. Once my dog Trooper tore the dress off a colored lady who passed in front of the house, and we had to give Trooper away to someone who lived on a farm. When I went from grammar school to junior high, each day, as I walked across the railroad tracks and headed left toward school parallel to the tracks, I could see a row of colored shacks strung out along the railroad tracks. I also was aware that the Paramount Theatre had a backdoor ticket counter where colored people could purchase

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tickets to sit in the third-floor balcony. Other than the third-floor balcony at the Paramount they had to go to the colored theater off Washington Avenue. I never saw anyone colored in either the Delta Theatre or the Lake Theatre. My mother insisted that colored people who did ironing for her always present themselves at the back door. There was never any formal explanation for this practice, but it paralleled the practice at the Paramount Theatre.

I have often wondered why the book, *Lanterns on the Levee. Recollections of a Planter's Son* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1941) by William Alexander Percy was never assigned reading for me at any point in school. I was not the best student, however; so perhaps the book was assigned reading, or perhaps students more enterprising than I discovered it on their own initiative. When I did read it many years later, I was impressed that the book might have made me more aware of my privileged status and of the vast inequities in the Southern way of life before 1964. Nevertheless, something prepared me for the different conditions in the rest of the country. When I entered the military in 1953, I found that life in other states was quite different. President Truman had integrated the military services in 1948 (July 26, 1948; Executive Order 9981). The First Sergeant of my basic training company was black. I was a squad leader and my assistant squad leader was black and a good number of fellows in

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the squad were black. Later in Southern California where I was employed by the L. A. County Probation Department, my immediate supervisor, D. P.O. II Greenwood, who wrote my evaluations as a D. P. O. trainee, was black. In my service as a Deputy Probation Officer in juvenile hall many of the incarcerated juveniles and professional officers were black. This integrated World became more natural to me than the White World in which I had grown up in Mississippi. Jesus wisely said, “a house divided against itself will not be able to stand” (Mark 3:25). Paul, the great apostle of the early church would have also affirmed the truth of this statement (had he known it) and argued that the house divided of the early church should unify: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:28).

When I left the military in 1956, returning to complete my college degree at Mississippi College, the South was still a White World. I was called to the Mayersville Baptist Church in Issaquena County nearby to Washington County, where I was reared. At one point in my two years at the church, I thought that the church should at least have “fellowship” with the black churches in the county seat town of Mayersville and spoke to several of the men in the congregation about setting something up. Their response was a blunt NO! After graduation, we left

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Mississippi for seminary in California in 1958.

I am a Delta boy, “Adam’s child of dust from the stars/shaped with spit and spittle/by the finger of God;/raised like cotton in the hot Delta bottom/land of the muddy Mississippi.” I am descended from what William Alexander Percy called the “poor whites” of the Delta. Its stamp is imprinted both in me and on me. I am at once grudgingly proud and slightly embarrassed by my heritage. Once I was asked by a chaplain in New York City who was interviewing me for the unit commander to take his place as chaplain in a reserve unit in New York City. In civilian life the chaplain was president of a Baptist seminary in the Midwest. It turned out that the unit was comprised of a large percentage of black soldiers. “How do you feel about black people,” he asked me in the interview. I replied, “It depends on the black person.” I got the job. During Sunday services in the unit my song leader was a gay (undeclared) black soldier and the services were attended by a predominately black “congregation.”

Today things are much different in Mississippi than in my youth because of the Civil Rights Act signed into law on July 2, 1964 By President Lyndon Johnson. It prohibited discrimination in public places, provided for the integration of schools and other public facilities, and made employment discrimination illegal.

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Lucinda H.

This story is a historical treasure. Wow! Thanks for sharing, Dad.
So glad my kids will know this - and grandkids (and so on) too.
So interesting!

Charles

I'll just second what Cindy said... really interesting. When you took us to visit Grandma and Grandpa (I must have been under 8 or 10 or so, in any event very small— so this would have been in the early 60s) I can remember going to churches and riding a bike around the town, skimming down grassy Indian mounds in a cardboard box... but i don't remember meeting any black folks.

Interesting btw that you say “colored”; which is no longer the right word; was it the word when you were growing up?

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Growing up Baptist in the Mississippi Delta



The “new” Greenville Baptist Church sanctuary, built in 1954.
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It seemed that most everybody grew up something in the Mississippi Delta. It was just my luck (by fate or divine design?) to be born into an almost Baptist family. Hence, Baptist church activities were always a big part of my life. Looking back today I

am not really sure why that was the case. It was simply a given that I would go to Sunday school, stay for the preaching service, and return Sunday evening for Baptist Training Union and the evening service, called the Youth Revival Hour. No one ever told me I had to do it. Sunday was the Lord's Day and Baptists should be in the Lord's House (as the church facilities were referred to). I don't recall that I ever pondered a rationale for why I was doing these things or considered what values I might accrue by doing them. We did them because we were Baptists—all of us but dad (Berry); he was Methodist but never attended, until mother tried to get him to attend First Baptist Church with the rest of the family. Then he began attending the Methodist Church.

I never considered inquiring into the faith of the Presbyterians or Lutherans, or any of the other many Christian denominations in Greenville. There was a Jewish Synagogue (Hebrew Union Temple, completed in 1906) and a Catholic Church (St Joseph Catholic Church commissioned in 1907 and completed in 1908 by Father Korstenbroek, a Dutch Nobleman who had studied architecture before entering the priesthood; he himself paid for the construction with his paternal inheritance) across the street on Main Street from where First Baptist Church (the Gothic style structure I knew was built in 1912 and replaced in 1954) was located and a Methodist Church (First United Methodist Church) one block up on Washington Avenue. I never entered any of these

establishments except the First United Methodist Church, which I attended with my friend Mike Turnage. But it didn't take. Like I said we were Baptists.

I never thought about religion critically, or questioned any of the things I was taught in Sunday school. What my Sunday school teachers taught me I simply accepted as the God's honest truth. Adults wouldn't deceive kids, would they? I was not in the least curious about the history of the Bible. It was God's Holy Word. That was all anyone needed to know. My task was to carry out its precepts without question—or so I was taught. Our Sunday school literature was purchased from the Baptist Sunday School Board. The lessons raised no questions in the minds of the curious faithful but were geared to produce Bible-believing Baptists and pious American citizens. Vacation Bible Schools, for example, always included pledges to the American flag and the Christian flag. There was a lesson for each Sunday in the student's quarterly that pushed on the reader Baptist theology and American values (little difference between them in my youthful view, had I even thought about it).

Early on in Sunday school I was taught that life is a constant struggle between the “wiles of the devil” (Eph 6:11) and “the Way of the Lord/God” (Acts 18:25–26). As I was taught, both of these allegiances have claims on human beings through one's “fallen flesh” and through one's “renewed spirit”; hence the

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moral crisis. There are certain things Christians don't do and places they don't go, and those are precisely the things that appeal to the "flesh." My moral crisis happened this way at age 14 or 15. One Sunday evening I decided to go to a movie instead of church. I was enjoying the movie until time came that I was supposed to be in church. I became so convinced that it was wrong for me to be at the movie that I left before the end of the movie and went to church instead. One week later, I decided that it was silly for me to have felt that way. So, I went to the movie again on Sunday evening and the same thing happened. Learning to live normally with what I was taught in church was a process.

The church voted in 1947 to turn the evening service over to the youth of First Baptist Church. The Junior Deacons were ushers for the service, sang in the youth choir, were called on to pray the evening prayer, and announced the services, which in 1948 went on the air over WJPR, a local radio station. Only the preaching was done by an adult (Dr. E. D. Elliott). We went on the air with the youth choir singing:

Day is dying in the west; Heaven is touching earth with rest;
Wait and worship while the night sets her evening lamps alight
through all the sky.

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts! Heaven and earth are full of thee!

Heaven and earth are praising thee, O Lord Most High! Amen.

I was one of the Junior Deacons and sang in the choir. As I recall, I was once called on to lead the evening prayer. Miss Betty Jane Hammett, Educational Director of First Baptist Church coordinated the Youth Revival Hour service during my tenure.

Baptists practice what they describe as “altar calls.” If one wants to join the church, he or she must first respond to the minister’s invitation to “accept Christ,” walk down in front of the congregation, and “profess faith in Christ.” This event is called a conversion experience, and is followed by baptism, which is full immersion in the church’s baptistery. Baptism is depicted in Paul’s letter to the Romans 6:3-4, which is regularly quoted by Baptist ministers as they baptize candidates. At this distance from my conversion experience and baptism, I assume I thought about the experience as any average Baptist my age (then about 15 or 16). I was not a critical thinker at that age. Not long after my conversion experience, which launched me on the journey to a religious vocation, I “felt the call to preach.” In Baptist churches one does not just decide to become a minister, one must be called by God (similar to the “call” of Paul the great apostle to the Gentiles in Galatians 1:11-17). For me the operative phrase that triggered my “call” came in a sermon by Dr. Elliott, a native of Scotland and a former WWII Army Chaplain, when he said, “Can you not hear the tramp, tramp, tramp, of men [he meant people] going to Hell?” I walked the aisle again and

dedicated my life “to full time Christian service.” Elliott was a Chaplain in the Mississippi National Guard and when the Guard (The 31st Infantry Division (“Dixie Division”]) was called up for service in the Korean Conflict in 1950, he and two of his “preacher boys” (we usually assisted him behind the scenes in baptismal services), Billy Latham and David Sansing (Dinky), whom he had brought into the division as Chaplain’s Assistants, were activated with him, missing their last year of high school. They were permitted to graduate high school with their class, however. Dinky went on to earn a Ph.D. in History from the University of Mississippi; Billy went on to become the Director of Baptist Training Union for Mississippi Baptists.

First Baptist seemed to be focused on serving its youth. During my sophomore year in high school the church sponsored a program of memorizing Scripture. I do not recall how many months the program ran, but for several months participants had to memorize weekly rather sizeable passages from the Bible. At the end of the period those participants who successfully completed their memory work (we had to recite in Sunday School) would be sponsored for a week at the Ridgecrest Baptist Assembly grounds. I participated and committed whole chunks of the Bible to memory. At this point I do not recall the passages that were required memory work, but two passages I do recall were the 23rd Psalm, and the Lord’s Prayer. The others were

passages dear to the Baptist heart, such as Isaiah 53:1-7. I recall little from the week at Ridgecrest. Except for the vast auditorium and the lusty Baptist congregational singing, one memory fondly clings to my memory. The kitchen crew, all staffers from Baptist colleges throughout the south, would arrive for the evening meal donned in their kitchen whites and sit in the middle of what seemed a sea of tables seating ten or twelve of the guests and regale us with Baptist hymns and choruses. It created in me a great desire to be part of that group. I did join them as a fellow staffer the summer of my junior year in high school.

The result for me of Growing up Baptist in the Mississippi Delta is that I was “solemnly and publicly set apart and ordained to the work of The Gospel Ministry by authority and order of the First Baptist Church of Greenville, Mississippi on the 8th of July 1956.” It happened in the Educational Unit of the Church. The Ordaining Council consisted of Perry Claxton as moderator (Pastor of First Baptist Church), Paul Fox, Clerk, and six pastors from the Washington County Baptist Association. I had completed one year of college and had just been released from the military. After the council had put me through about an hour of questions with me answering, the vote was taken and solemnized by the laying of hands. Within a few weeks I was called as the pastor of First Baptist Church at Mayersville, Mississippi. It was not until I began graduate work at the

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University of Southern California (M.A.) and Claremont Graduate University (Ph. D.) that I discovered different ways of thinking about religion.



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Lucinda H.

WOW another treasure, Dad. This a glimpse into another time and place but tells my story too. Thank you for sharing!

Lois

That last sentence seems like foreshadowing. Can we anticipate a follow up to this about being Baptist in graduate school? 😊 I really enjoyed this Dad. I think when we were kids, church was still similar. It seems to now be something completely different, maybe that is because the youth have changed so the focus on the youth has to change too.

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Dad

I don't know. I am thinking now about the Army years.

LD

Lois

I should've asked if it was normal for a Baptist Preacher to be ordained when he didn't have a college degree?

Charles

Well, I laughed out loud at the story that Grandpa slept in on Sundays till Grandma tried to pressure him to come to the Baptist church; then he went back to the Methodists... I was also amused that your church handed evening services over to the youth (except for the sermon...)

BTW, you mean "altar (as opposed to alter) calls?

I am, btw, sitting in a bar with wifi to read and write this! Not sure what the Baptists would make of this...

Berry

Thank You so much for sending this article.

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Army Years: Toward becoming a Soldier for Life



The author as a recruit.

I had completed my first year of college in 1952/53. When July of 1953 rolled around, not having money for a second year and not having a job with a future, I joined the army to lock in the G. I. Bill, which gave me educational benefits, after three years of military service. I don't recall if I even talked to my parents

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about my decision. I figured it was my only choice if I wanted to finish college.

I remember a large bus fully loaded with Delta boys that took us from Greenville, Mississippi to a temporary reception station located somewhere but I remember little else of the early moments of my entrance into military life. But this much I do recall, I was Regular Army, RA14498981, my serial number, something you never forget even though it was printed on your dog tags along with your blood type. The reception station is a blur, a jumble of partial memories. We spent time being processed into military service, and then there were the details: working in the mess hall and cleaning the grease trap. Once I was put on a detail to guard prisoners while they policed up an area (picking up trash). Once we fell into formation, some burly sergeant addressed the formation: "Any you boys had college?" I had one year of non-exemplary performance at Mississippi College. Immediately, my hand shot up and I was picked for the detail, which turned out to be answering the telephone in company HQ. Only later did I find out that one never volunteers without knowing the detail to which one would be assigned.

I was sent from the reception station to Fort Jackson, South Carolina for basic training on Tank Hill and assigned to Easy Company of the 13th Infantry Regiment of the 8th Infantry Division. My Company Commander was First Lieutenant Herbert

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H. Ray. We hardly ever saw him in the training areas. But there are two things for which he is remembered. The first day the First Sergeant fell us out on the company street, the Company Commander sat in front of us and went through the roster asking questions of every man in the Company, as we stood at ease. When he called my name, he asked me, "private Hedrick, where in the Bible does one find the Sermon on the Mount?" I replied, "Matthew, chapters five through seven." When he concluded going through the roster, he called out the names of certain soldiers to remain behind. Mine was included and I was appointed a squad leader. At some point during our eight weeks First Lieutenant Ray decided he wanted a choral group to perform at Post functions. Fortunately, one of the Company had been a choir director in civilian life. I joined the chorus. I can only remember the group practicing one time and never performing.

We began Basic Training on 10 September 1953. This was not book learning but rather hands on. We had to qualify with the M1 Garand rifle and know its component parts. It was the weapon used by the army (1936-1958) and by some of the other services. The M1 weighed 9.5 pounds and on a forced march one felt every one of those pounds. The M1 was a .30-06 semi-automatic battle rifle. It was a weapon and not a gun. Get caught calling it a gun and you had to stand at the door of the mess hall with one hand

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on the M1 and the other holding your crotch and repeat to every soldier who entered: "This is my weapon, and this is my gun." Its effective firing range was 500 yards. We also had to qualify with the M1 Carbine. We fired and worked in the pits posting targets while others fired. On the range we learned that "waving Maggie's drawers" was a slam and not an announcement of erotic adventures. I qualified in both weapons.

During the eight weeks, they tried to teach us such notable skills as hand-to-hand combat with fixed bayonets, how to throw a hand grenade, marching, more marching, the art of making a bunk, field sanitation, first aid, reading a compass, bivouac, and how to wear a gas mask. The conclusion of that lesson ended with a trip to a gas chamber full of gas where you removed your mask and repeated to the NCOIC name, rank, and serial number. That way we knew our gas masks worked. We exited the chamber coughing, tears streaming down our cheeks. Along the way we got to play on the Army Confidence course and finally the infiltration course with live ammunition firing over our heads. These were only a few of the skills they threw at us. We graduated on 4 November 1953, after eight weeks of training into the basics of military life. I still had another eight weeks of MOS (mobilization occupational specialty) training ahead of me. This was performed a Ft. Lee, Virginia.

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Chaplain (Colonel) Charles W. Hedrick

I was sent to the Quartermaster School at Fort Lee, Virginia, where I spent eight weeks training as a Quartermaster Storage Specialist. The course consisted of 352 hours related to all aspects of military supply. A few of the subjects were Unit and Organization Supply, Depot Operations, Storage Operations, Processing, Packaging, Crating and Marking, Classification and Disposal, and included 40 hours of physical conditioning. After the completion of this course, I "was selected to attend the

Quartermaster Leaders' Course" at Fort Lee. Members of my class spent about five weeks training followed by three weeks serving as O. J. T. (On the Job Trainee) in another training unit (probably the Army Basic course). I vividly recall one event that happened during the training. We were assigned to pass a course, where small groups (about six trainees) were presented with problems that called for a decision in combat situations; it was an opportunity to show leadership; each trainee in the group took turns being in charge. I don't recall what the problem was when I was in charge. I do recall another. We were walking single file, weapons loaded with blanks, down a narrow defile heavily covered with brush and thick trees on either side of the defile. Suddenly we were attacked from the right with heavy fire from numerous weapons, fortunately firing blanks. We immediately jumped left into a small ditch and assumed the prone position facing the heavy "enemy" fire. The firing "fell" on us for several minutes. We were pinned down. Our situation was hopeless. Our leader was doing nothing. I called out to the rest of the "squad": "if we stay here, we are dead. Let's go get them." Our squad followed me as we rushed the enemy position, firing as we went right up into the enemy position. Fortunately, white banded monitors stopped us before we engaged the enemy in hand-to-hand combat. I suppose this kind of reaction was not in the play book and that I would be done at leaders' school. In any case I am confident it could not have been the "school solution."

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I was, however, retained as O. J. T. in the Leadership School without being sent out to the Basic Training Units. This was a rather fun time. I was expected to harass a new group beginning Leaders' Training as my class had been harassed. I was given a barracks full of soldiers and charged to keep it clean using the soldiers under my "command" and marching them to training sites and chow on time. We threw one or two clean-up parties in preparation for inspections and the floors were so clean one could eat off them, and that included the head (toilet). I once gave a leader's trainee 22 demerits during an inspection when I found a Lincoln-Head penny in his wall locker during an inspection (penny not properly displayed, Lincoln needed a shave, Lincoln not in proper uniform, penny needed shining, etc.). At the end of the training day, when I fell the platoon out, I would give them permission to trample me, if they could catch before I got into the barracks. They never succeeded; it was a noisy affair with a lot of shouting as they rushed at me, but I could move rather fast with thirty motivated guys rushing my back. My last act in Leadership training was less than stellar. The entire company (four platoons) was formed up in the company street. I was in front of my platoon on the far right as platoon leader. We were all standing at ease waiting for the commander to stride out to receive the company from the executive officer. I looked up saw an officer coming in front of my platoon. I did a

sharp about face and in my loudest command voice called out “Atten—TION!” my platoon snapped to attention as one man, I performed one of my sharpest salutes. The officer received my salute and proceeded to the front of the company. I did another sharp about face and gave the order “AtEASE!” I was told later that in that formation platoon leaders do not individually report to the commander. I should have waited for the executive officers order “Company” and then I should call “Platoon,” and then the executive officer called Atten—TION! and saluted the commander. Egg on my face again! But they made me the honor graduate anyway!

I only have two memories of Army chapels during these early months of my conversion into military life. During basic training one Sunday we were marched over to the chapel for services. There were several other units there as well. As I was walking down the aisle looking for a seat. I spied a uniformed upper classman that I knew from Mississippi College, George H. Dukes, Jr. He was a graduating senior during my freshman year (and incidentally was elected Mr. M. C. for 1952/53). I sat beside him. During the service the chaplain celebrated the Lord’s Supper (as known to a Baptist), but which is better known as the Eucharist. My other memory occurred, I think, during my second eight weeks of training at Fort Lee. I was walking alone back to barracks, chanced upon an army chapel dimly lighted; its door

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being unlocked I walked in. There was no one there. I walked to the front of the chapel, stood behind the pulpit, and commenced loudly to sing several verses of a hymn. As the echo of the hymn faded, I walked to the front door and went out into the night.

I toyed with the idea of putting in papers to attend O. C. S. (Officer's Candidate School), but not very long. I had enough of the basics of military life and wanted to move on to a permanent station. As Honor Graduate of Leadership School, the Army had promised to send me to the Area Command I had chosen upon entering the leadership training program. I had selected the European Command. My Port of Debarkation was Bremerhaven, Germany.

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The reservist CH (MAJ) Hedrick in Springfield, Missouri, ready for his weekend service.

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Lucinda H.

This is wonderful. I haven't enough words for how wonderful this is. I laughed out loud at "This is my weapon and this is my gun." Expecting a punch line (a crowd of officers meeting in a dark corner, perhaps?) I cried at the end when you gently "...walked to the front door and went out into the night." So much detail!!! Another treasure. Dad, I'm honored to read your stories and overjoyed that they're here for your kids, your kids' kids and your kids' kids' kids (and beyond). Thank you! I love you. Cindi

Lois

New stories I'd never heard you tell before! I especially like the image of you standing behind the pulpit singing hymns in the dimly lit chapel. 😊

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Germany: 1953-1956



Troopship from the early 1950s. flickr Photos 2023.

Troop Ships are not a pleasant way to travel! Bunks in the hold leave only an inch or so between the tip end of one's nose and the bottom of the rack above. We were crowded in worse than sardines. The head (toilet) for all soldiers below decks was as far forward in the bow as one could go and as the ship rose and fell, meeting the rise and fall of the ocean, so did the head. Sitting on

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the stool sometimes kept one on one's toes (so to speak). Fortunately, there was a navy chaplain on board and all those with a pious bent crowded into his small office, helping him with whatever paperwork or typing he may have needed to have done. It took us out of the humdrum routine of life on the troop ship and restored a bit of normalcy to our lives.

From Bremerhaven we were boarded on buses with our single duffel bags, everything we possessed stuffed inside, virtually all of it military issue and headed for the USAREUR (United States Army Europe) Replacement Depot at Zweibrücken. Here they sorted soldiers for the major commands to which they were assigned. I was assigned to HQ Southern Area Command, Munich, Germany located at McGraw Kaserne. After processing in, I headed to Quartermaster HQ Southern Area Command where I was interviewed by M/SGT (Master Sergeant) Tom Harmon. He was the NCOIC (noncommissioned officer in charge) of the Southern Area Command Quartermaster Office. He had my records in front of him and when he learned that I planned to enter the ministry after completing Mississippi College when my tour of duty was over, he had me assigned to his office. The reason was that he was Sunday School Superintendent at an Army Hospital (run by the 2nd Field Army Hospital) nearby to McGraw Kaserne and he needed Sunday School teachers. When Tom retired from the military, he himself entered the Southern

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Baptist ministry. Initially, I worked in the Post Commissary assigned to M/SGT (Master Sergeant) Genot, who was in charge of the commissary warehouse. I was put “in charge” of rationed items (like Coffee, sugar, tea, etc.). They were stored in a large wire cage in a back room of the commissary. “In charge” is likely a misnomer; German civilians working for the U.S. Army did all the work and had all the keys. I also supervised the loading of trucks delivering milk to Army dependent families from the loading dock. It was from that loading dock that I caught my first sight of University of Maryland co-eds on their way to classes, one of whom later turned out to be Peggy Shepherd destined to become my wife and the mother of our children. Later, I was moved to the headquarters building in Harmon’s office riding a desk.

Our “barracks” was a multi-storied building housing Headquarters Company located on McGraw Kaserne “main street” right across from the University of Maryland Girl’s dormitory. I was initially assigned a two-man room on the first floor, Bob Schriemer (his wife Ardie) from Michigan was my roommate. I was later assigned a tiny single room on the second floor overlooking the back of the Kaserne where the snack bar and gymnasium were located. We GIs did not have to clean our living areas; that was done by a Putzfrau (a cleaning lady) for something like several Marks or so a cleaning. Ed Kolakowski

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lived just across the hall. He was one year from graduating from a Catholic Seminary and becoming a priest but decided to take a year off from his studies and see a bit of the world. He was later to serve as a witness for Peggy and me at our wedding before the German Standesamt (Register Office in Munich). Our Heiratsurkunde (Marriage Certificate) was issued by the Standesamt on 30 November 1955. But that is another story.

I was in the Army and wore a military uniform to work every day, but my two years plus in Germany involved very few military-like functions. We were called out occasionally to serve as an honor guard for visiting dignitaries, assembled for company formations routinely, served once as the week-end charge of quarters, once went into the field to sleep overnight in a tent, once assigned as driver for a practice alert in which we simulated driving a convoy of army dependents to France (it is what would happen if the Big Russian Bear ever awoke). I (SPC4—Specialist 4, equivalent to a Corporal) was driver of the vehicle, the convoy commander was a Captain, and the two of us drove to France and back, hitting timed check points. I vaguely recall driving occasionally a military deuce-and-a-half through German villages on very narrow roads. As surprising as it may sound, it was for the most part just a 9 to 5 job. What my attention actually focused on was teaching Sunday School, attending Baptist Mid-Missions Saturday evening religious

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services for servicemen, attending the Servicemen's Gospel Hour conducted on Sunday Evenings at the American Way Service Club, and courting Peggy Shepherd, the daughter of an American Baptist Chaplain assigned to Zweibrücken. Peggy had come to Munich to attend the branch campus of the University of Maryland located on McGraw Kaserne.



The author entertaining a group at a Baptist Mission in Munich, Germany.

The Baptist Mid-Missions operation was a faith-based (conservative) mission enterprise. What this meant is that the missionaries, Warren and Dottie Pals, were forced to do deputation work back in America every so often in order to raise the funds for their support. On Saturday nights they held religious services conducted in English for servicemen and anyone else who wanted to attend. They drew on the talent from

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those in attendance for the music. I recall once singing a duet with Senior Airman Jim Adams with Peggy Shepherd playing the organ for us. Afterwards there were always refreshments prepared in the Pals' kitchen. I am not sure, but there must have been an offering taken, which went to support the mission; the Pals always struck me as being as poor as church mice. Peggy started dating Jim Adams, but that did not last long. One evening I was playing a game of pick-up basketball at the Kaserne gymnasium. I looked over at the sidelines and noticed That Peggy was watching the game. We took a timeout, and I walked over to ask her what she was doing. She said that she had a date that night with a Senior Airman (read Jim Adams) but he stood her up. So, I left the game and took her to the snack bar. She later discovered that Jim had been called out at the last moment to fill in for another navigator on a necessary flight. His misfortune translated into my good fortune.

Servicemen's Gospel Hour was a religious service on Sunday evenings at the American Way Service Club. We had small cards printed that read: "Servicemen's Gospel Hour. Munich, Germany: Fundamental, Evangelistic, Interdenominational." There was a Bible verse in small print at the bottom: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. ACTS 16:31." There was a preservice prayer meeting that began at 1715 hours. The service itself began at 1800 hours and a period of fellowship that

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began at 1915. There was a group of regular attenders numbering 50 plus or so. The services drew from all English-speaking communities in Munich and environs. As I found out later, it was not sponsored by military chaplains. I was never told how it began, but in 1953-1955 it was directed by airman Staff Sergeant John Harris, a very conservative Baptist from Virginia, as I recall. The service was led by laymen and laywomen. John arranged for the order of the service, music, and preaching. Speakers were local and from elsewhere in the military, all of them presented from a religiously conservative perspective. I wound up leading the singing on occasion and recall that I even spoke a few times. So great was the influence of these conservative associations that I briefly considered attending Bob Jones University in Greenville, South Carolina. In the end, however, I returned to Mississippi College and completed my final three years in two years by going winters and summers 1956-1958, and entered Golden Gate Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Mill Valley, California.

My principal focus of attention during 1954-55 was Peggy Shepherd (or as she was officially known Bertha Margaret Shepherd, a name she never liked and so renamed herself Peggy. We dated and then went steady, generally attending the religious services that I mentioned or fellowship activities with the Servicemen's Gospel Hour group. CPL (Corporal) Jack L. Gray (a

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very close friend) and I pooled our resources and purchased a 1939 Opel with charming “Machts nichts sticks,” an improvement on arm signals, but not as effective as directional signals on a modern automobile. Jack and I used the “Gospel Wagon,” as we called it, principally for dating. I would use it for dates with Peggy and Jack for dates with his future wife Alice. Jack was in the Medical Corps and used his military training after college to pursue a career as a medical administrator/CEO in medical services. He also remained in the military reserve and was a M/SGT (Master Sergeant) at the time he left the service.



The author with his date, Peggy Shepherd, on a weekend trip to Rome.

Peggy and I took a university sponsored weekend trip by train to Rome on one occasion, and several other trips out into the

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Bayern (Bavaria) countryside by car and train. On one occasion we were going to visit another group that had religious services nearby Munich. The speaker did not show up and they asked me to preach an impromptu sermon. I agreed to do it and spoke rather long (saying what, I now have no idea). Thereafter Peggy teased me saying, "Ask him to preach a 20-minute sermon; it will take him 2 hours to prepare. Ask him on the spur of the moment and he will talk for an hour with no preparation." I remember well our first kiss. We were on our way to Art and JoAnn Mallory's rather large home in a nearby housing area for a gathering of friends. (Arthur was a corporal, a 32nd degree Mason at 21, and worked for the Commanding General of the Southern Area Command). Art appeared to have keys to every room in the command. After his hitch in the military he returned to Southwest Missouri University and eventually became its President during the turbulent years of student unrest in the 60s. He ended his career in academia as Chairman of the Coordinating Board for Higher Education for the State of Missouri. As Peggy and I were on our way to the gathering at Art and JoAnne's home, we stopped for a moment and I leaned over and kissed Peggy, she quickly slapped me. We, of course, later moved beyond that, particularly on the trip to Rome, and in the evenings at the top of the stairs of the McGraw Kaserne administration building, which was dark at night. I proposed marriage to Peggy one evening during a walk in the Garden at

the Haus der Kunst. In the gathering darkness, I dropped on one knee before the bench on which Peggy sat and said, "Would you marry me?" Quick as a flash, she replied, "Would I if what?" I Got the point and changed the mood of the question to "will you marry me," to which she replied, "Yes!" We selected our rings together at the Army Post Exchange (PX) and began plans for our wedding by renting two rooms in a house at 74 Oberbiberger Strasse several blocks from the Kaserne.

Our Two rooms constituted the landlady's (Frau Schlüssel) attic. In one room was the kitchen, which consisted of kitchen table, sink, cabinet, hot plate, and wood fireplace for heating the two rooms that constituted the attic. There was no refrigerator, but the kitchen had one window with two panes. Peggy used the space between the windowpanes for a freezer and cooler. In the German winters it was my job to get up early and build a fire in the frosty mornings There was one bathroom in the house that was shared by all inhabitants of the building: Frau Schlüssel and a man to whom she rented out half of her bed on the first floor; a German prostitute and an enlisted Military Policeman and his wife on the second floor; and Peggy and I in the attic (das Kleines Himmel, I called it). If you started a fire in the bathroom, you had to guard it, for someone was sure to help themselves to the warm water in the winter. Our attic floor also included a tiny bedroom. Before our wedding, Peggy's mom came to visit. We

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(all three) crowded into the small bed. Mom Shepherd slept in the middle with Peggy and I on either side. It was a small bed.

My company Commander, CPT (Captain) Vorobryoff was required by regulation to give his permission for me to be married in Germany, since I was underage (age 20). He did, and our Wedding took place on the 8th of December 1955 with Peggy's father, MAJ (Major) Clayton C. Shepherd officiating. Airman 1st Class David Grey and Susan Crownover were Best Man and Maid of honor. Ushers were Arthur Mallory and Marion Kerr. Everitt Shepherd (Peggy's younger brother) escorted the bride to the altar. Doris Roethlisberger (Baptist Missionary) provided special music. This is the wedding date Peggy and I celebrate. The Reception took place at the Enlisted Men's Club, McGraw Kaserne. After the reception. David and Diane Grey (they were later married) gave Peg and me a ride to Garmisch for our honeymoon, where Peggy taught me how to shoot pool.

I was released from the military three months early to return to Mississippi College for my last three years of college. We had a sleeper compartment for the trip overnight by military train from Munich to Bremerhaven, from whence we took a troop ship to New York City. Peggy slept in a state room with several other dependent wives whose husbands were also below the rank of Sergeant. The husbands below the rank of Sergeant slept in the hold, where they also took their meals; so, I as SP4 (Specialist 4)

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was again in the hold of the ship, but we were allowed to visit our wives during the day. Like I said, troop ships are not a pleasant way to travel. Those years in Germany made a lasting impression on me and in many ways were formative for the rest of my life.



Charlie and Peggy wed in Munich, Germany.

Charles

It was 74 Oberbiberger Strasse. I tried to correct the “alphabet soup.”

it is funny (if that is the word that I want) how fascinating these stories are. I've heard about the kleines Himmel from mom; makes me want to find the place in Munich. Do you remember the address? Also struck by the way the story of the courtship jostles up against the alphabet soup of the military...

I'm not surprised you talk long when unprepared. Brevity takes discipline!

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Lucinda H.

Another amazing narrative, Dad. WOW. I've never heard most of this before. I want to hear the story about the earlier wedding date next, please. THANK YOU, DAD!

Lois

Charles, Jr., please be sure to sign your notes! They will be published in the book at the end. 😊

You too Cindi! Please sign your name at the end...

USAREUR=United States Army Europe

NCOIC=NonCommissioned Officer in Charge

SPC4=Specialist 4 (equals Corporal)

Mom Shep slept in the center

Dave and Dianne dropped us off at Garmisch

As usual, I LOVE these memories and look forward to reading each of your stories! Just a few questions...

What are:

USAREUR

NCOIC

SPC4

Wait, you shared the apartment and bed BEFORE your wedding?

That is news to me!! You said Mom slept between you and

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Grandma Shep... Oooo, this is breaking news! 😊

David Grey was best man? I thought Jack Gray was your best man? Also, I always thought you took the train to Garmisch and didn't know you brought friends, David & Diane Grey, along on the honeymoon!

Thank you Dad! Looking forward to From Needles to Nag Hammadi! Love, Kay

From Germany to Needles



When we left Germany, my goal was to finish college, and attend a Southern Baptist seminary with the plan of becoming a Baptist minister. Peggy and I purchased our first car a Chevrolet (my father wanted us to purchase a Pontiac) and drove down to Clinton where I enrolled again in Mississippi College and Peggy now pregnant (with Charles) went to work as a bookkeeper. Charles Jr. was born in the Baptist hospital at Jackson, Mississippi on December 11, 1956. As I recall, the doctor bill was \$100.00 (and he made house calls). I was a little worried, for Charles' head initially was shaped like a football, oval in shape. The Doctor (I think his name was Ireland) said not to worry because it would soon correct itself. My academic performance was much better this time around at Mississippi College. I reentered in the summer of 1955 and received one C and three A grades. Looking back on my academic performance, I would have to say that I improved from my slightly below average performance in high school to a slightly better than average

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performance in college after three years in the military. Not an auspicious beginning for an academic career, but no matter; I had a world to save.

I was sent to “fill the pulpit” one Sunday in 1956 at a small Baptist church in Mayersville, the county seat of Issaquena County, Mississippi. We returned several times and the church “called” Peggy and me as pastor and wife. Peggy directed the youth choir and as I recall she won a state competition among Baptist churches for youth choirs. We drove some one hundred plus miles every weekend and every other Wednesday night and stayed overnight on Saturday nights in the homes of church members. When we stayed with the Barner Scotts, I slept in the same bed as their two sons and Peggy slept with their daughter. They treated us as one of the family. We resigned about two years later in order to attend seminary in California. After graduating from Mississippi College, I had discussions with a small rural school district about teaching Latin at the high school level, but my tentative plans fell through when the school board failed to authorize the position, not much call for Latin in the rural south. We left for seminary in Berkeley, California (Golden Gate Southern Baptist Theological Seminary) in the summer of 1958. When we arrived pulling a small trailer with our meagre possessions, we went immediately to the seminary where the Director of Student Services (Harry R. Koontz) had

promised us all the aid we might need in establishing ourselves (finding a place to stay and work). To that end he handed me a copy of the local newspaper with job listings and apartments for rent and sent me out the door, where Peggy waited in the car.

We did find a place to rent in a basement apartment in Berkeley, but it did not work out. Our little tyke, Charles Jr., was playing out in the back and suddenly came down with painful cries. We thought that he had ingested some poison that was found near him and rushed him to the hospital emergency unit. The staff admitted him and left him alone with us in an observation room. After a bit he fell asleep and was breathing regularly. So, we checked him out and took him home with the threats of the hospital staff ringing in our ears. After that, we were uncomfortable in our apartment and found another place on the second floor of a duplex. In the meantime, I found work with The Colgate Palmolive Company as a junior chemist (my two grades of D in the freshman year of college were in Chemistry); I worked there during my three years in the seminary. I was hired at the magnificent sum of \$325.00 a month by Mr. Harold Mumford, the heard of the lab and a devout Presbyterian layman, who liked to have graduate students working in the lab. At first, I worked the day shift in quality control on the soap production lines and then was shifted to the lab working on the Brabender, doing chemical analyses on the soap slurries from which the soap

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powder was eventually made. After the first year I received a small raise, but my take home pay was reduced because the raise put me in a different income tax bracket. I immediately went to Mr. Mumford and asked him to please take the raise back because I could not afford it. It was embarrassing for him, and he had my salary raised again, and I took home about the same amount as I did before the raise. After one year the Seminary moved from Berkeley to its new campus across the Bay in Mill Valley. This required in my case a daily car-pool across the San Rafael Bridge to a workstation in Berkeley. I car-pooled with a seminary classmate, Don Richey, and from time-to-time others rode with us. We whiled away the hour's drive across the Bay testing one another with questions about Greek and Hebrew.

Our two daughters were born in California during the seminary years. Janet Lucinda Kennaley (nee Hedrick) was born on Jan 5, 1959 at Alta Bates Community Hospital in Berkeley, California. My memory is that she had a squeezed face and a head of black hair. Lois Kathryn Hedrick was finally born on the 4th of August 1960 at Marin General Hospital in San Raphael, California. We waited a week in the hospital for her to decide to be born and finally the doctor gave up and induced labor. He came in from a party in the evening of August 3rd, and Kay, finally, made an appearance at 03:02 in the wee hours of the morning. My impression at the time? This one was going to be a bit stubborn.

In a professional paper (“Excavating Museums: From Bible Thumping to Fishing in the Stream of Western Civilization,” pp. 78–94 in *Forbidden Texts on the Western Frontier. The Christian Apocrypha from North American Perspectives* [ed. Tony Burke; Cascade; Eugene, OR, 2015]) I described my seminary training as “intellectually superficial and narrow” (p. 80). Perhaps, it was an unkind comment, for I did very well academically in seminary. Of the 36 courses taken from 1958 to 1962, four courses were scored 88 and three were scored 89; all the other courses were scored 90 and above with 95 (four) being the highest score. Seminary education was focused on ministry and information that an enterprising minister might need to be successful in a ministerial career in Southern Baptist circles. It was focused on Baptist answers. I, on the other hand, was beginning to be more interested in the questions. Answers come and go, but basic questions for the curious student seem to endure. When I discovered that there was no course on the individual manuscripts of the New Testament or the formation of the New Testament canon, I asked Clayton Harrop, who had written a dissertation on the subject at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, to teach such a course. He responded that he would be happy to do so, if I could drum up enough students to fill the class. I did. Toward the end of my classwork at the seminary, I discovered that I was interested in furthering my education and had college and seminary transcripts sent to

graduate programs in religion at Emory University, Duke University, the University of Southern California, and Claremont Graduate School. These schools were not seminaries where one would learn the practice of confessional religion from a denominational perspective, but rather they were graduate programs in religion where one would learn about religion from a broad critical perspective. I hasten to add that critical ideas about religion were not fully developed in my mind but only simmering beneath the surface, if I ever thought about them consciously at all, but I did know that I wanted a bigger academic pool in which to swim.

I was still very interested in ministry. Peggy and I, to that end, decided to begin a church. Peggy played an Army field organ while we conducted Sunday school and church services on a vacant lot in Woodacre, California for several weeks in the shadow of Mount Tamalpais by beating the bushes for folks to attend. On one occasion, while beating the bushes, I knocked upon a door and identified myself as pastor of the Woodacre Baptist Church. I was admitted and briefly spoke with the admitting person who informed me she was a visitor and went to call the owner of the house. She came back to tell me that the owner of the house was indisposed as she was not dressed. I assumed that she was wearing scruffy clothing and replied, "that's O.K." When she emerged into the room, she was clad

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only in a towel, and I stared into the lady's eyes while making my pitch for her to attend the services of the church. One never knows what one will find while making visits without an appointment (it's called cold calling). We eventually moved into a rented building and served the growing congregation for about a year. Serving as pastor of a mission church, juggling family concerns, working 40 hours per week (plus an hour's commute each way), and being a full-time student, however, proved to be one too many irons in the fire for me. When we resigned the church Edward L. Phelps a fellow student at the seminary became the pastor.

After graduation from seminary, Peggy and I took our family and visited my mom and dad in Mississippi. On the trip we stopped off in Needles, California to visit Don and Judy Branson, who had graduated from seminary the previous year. Don was Minister of Education at the Needles Baptist Church. When we returned to Seminary, I received a call from Don Branson inviting me to "preach in view of a call" at the Needles Baptist Church. The former pastor, Don Loving had resigned for another pastorate in Las Vegas, Nevada, where the Needles church went for Associational meetings. Peggy and I were called and pastored at Needles Baptist Church from the Fall of 1962 to 1965. When we moved to Needles, I received a letter from my father telling me that he was glad that I finally had settled down in a job.



First Baptist Church, Needles, California. Internet Photos 2023.

It was the best of times; it was the worst of times. Being a pastor was not a freeing experience. I enjoyed the academic aspects of pastoring a Baptist church, pulling together two sermons and a Bible study every week. I did not enjoy fund raising and all the administrative tasks of the church that fell to the pastor. I never have been great at praying, which made hospital visits awkward, particularly if people were not all that ill. The Needles church was one of the oldest churches in the California Southern Baptist Convention, and there were different factions in the church that had crystalized through the years. My first day on the field, I was in the office when one of the longtime members came in; he stuck his finger under my nose, rolled it around like the junior high principal at Greenville (Mr. Herman Solomon) was accustomed to do, and said, "Preacher, this is the way it is going to be...." He proceeded to bring up years-old disagreements with another family in the church and stated that unless I

championed his side of the disagreements, he was not coming back to church. He then wheeled around and marched out of the office, leaving me standing with my mouth agape. We never did resolve that issue. But the work was not always that intense. In the main the people were gracious, helpful, and, if one were thinking biblically, they might be described as the salt of the earth. In short there were so many pleasant moments that one tends to remember the difficult ones best.

Peggy was immersed in church and family but felt a need for a little space and personal creativity. She started acting with a small repertory company in Needles. Not long after, one of the men coming out of church one Sunday strongly criticized me at the front door for “allowing” my wife to get mixed in such “stuff.” I shared it with Peggy, and as I recall she dropped out of the repertory company. Another thing of family interest is that before he started school Charles, Jr. had advanced in reading about as far as Peggy felt comfortable in tutoring him and asked one of the ladies in the church who was a first-grade teacher in the local school to continue tutoring him. She agreed to do so, and everyday after she returned from school, Charles walked a block to her house. The result was that Charles skipped the first grade because of his reading skills.

Except for the reason I did what I did, I recall another event quite well. I decided to use a visual aid for my sermon one Sunday

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morning and borrowed a casket from the local undertaker to use at morning services. He kindly consented and delivered to the church that morning one casket in good shape (he usually called me if he had indigent people passing through Needles in need of funeral services; I provided services for no pay). People came in from Sunday School for the morning service and were perplexed when they saw the casket in front of the pulpit. The service began and finished without me or anyone else mentioning the name of a deceased. I greeted the worshippers as they filed out of the service and cannot remember anyone mentioning the casket. At this point in time, I cannot remember the title or the subject of the sermon or why I felt a need to use a casket as a visual aid. I was not fired for the debacle, for as I mentioned the Needles church was comprised of gracious people.

One morning as we were preparing to leave town going (as I recall) to visit Peggy's sister at long beach. Daughter Kay ingested an unknown number of aspirin. It fell to me to rush her to the doctor's office (the only doctor in Needles) and there was no alternative except to pump out her stomach. It was a traumatic moment.

While we were at Needles, the U. S. Army had some war games (Fifth Army Exercise Desert Strike) scheduled in the desert near Needles. They approached me about using the educational unit of Needles First Baptist Church as classrooms for training before

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the exercise. The church granted its permission, and the only rule was that they could not smoke in the building. One memory from that period that I have kept with me was of the overflowing cigarette butt cans outside the doors of the building. This contact with the military renewed my interest in military service. For some time, I had been thinking about service as a reserve Army chaplain. To do this, one must first secure permission from one's denomination. The denominational requirements were three years of full-time pastoral experience, so I was not eligible until I had completed three years of ministry at Needles. The military required that I must have graduated from college and from an accredited graduate program, which usually meant seminary. I applied through the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. Among the documents that I had to present to them was an interview with a Southern Baptist chaplain. Fortunately, one of the chaplains serving in Desert Strike was Southern Baptist. He interviewed me and sent the report to the Home Mission Board. I was accepted and appointed by the President. My Presidential commission began: "To all who shall see these presents, greeting: Know ye, that reposing special trust and confidence in the patriotism, valor, fidelity, and abilities of Charles Webster Hedrick, I do appoint Him a Reserve Commissioned Officer in the Army of the United States to date as such from the eighth day of September nineteen hundred and sixty-four." Around age 30 I was appointed a First Lieutenant in

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the U. S. Army. I had to complete in the future the following Army Coursework partially by correspondence and partially by residence: Chaplain Officer Basic Course and Command and General Course to be retained and promoted in the military.

At some point during my pastoral responsibilities at Needles (church administration, preaching and teaching, counseling, marrying, and burying the dead, etc.) I became unsatisfied with the depth and breadth of my training and felt a strong need to continue my education. I took a week off from pastoral responsibilities. I had arranged to stay in Long Beach at the home of Lois and Ed Inlow, Peggy's sister and husband, and good friends, while I sought work in the Los Angeles area of California. I had been accepted in the Master's Program in Religion at the University of Southern California. The week was a blur and toward the end of the allotted time I had not found work. I decided to consult a professional employment agency. I was given a battery of tests which only told me what I knew already. But as I was about to leave the office that evening, the counselor casually mentioned that he had heard that the L. A. County Probation Department was hiring. I called and got an appointment the next day and was hired as a Deputy Probation Officer Trainee. I had signed an agreement to pay the employment agency for their consultation but was told that they had done nothing to help me get the job. Upon returning to

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Needles, I immediately resigned. We packed our bags and towing a trailer, moved to 203 North Maclay Street in San Fernando, CA, located on a major street within an easy walk to a grammar school. The house was old (turn of the nineteenth century type) with a postage-stamp front yard, a small back and wide side yard. There was a screened in porch on one side of the front of the house, a living room, old kitchen, office area in the back that was joined to the master bedroom by a bathroom. The upstairs had rooms for the kids (they will be able to describe it better than I). On one corner of the lot was a garage from which an elderly gentleman upholstered furniture; on another corner beside the house was a small real estate office. On the other side of the house was a sandwich factory that abutted the house with little space between. In the yard between the garage and the real estate office stood a large old loquat tree. This was our home for several years (1965-1968). I measure the short distance from Needles to USC in terms of education: Academic (USC) and Life (LA County Probation) both of which affected my religious life positively or negatively depending on one's point of view.

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Sunset over the Mojave Desert outside of Needles, California.

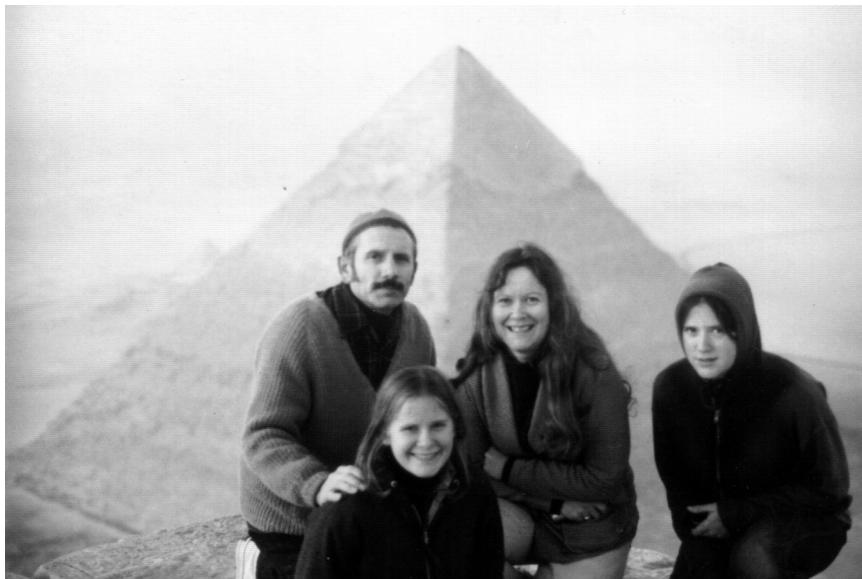
Lucinda H.

You may be correct, but my memory of the Maclay house is that the side yard next to the street between the garage and the real estate office was rather large. The backyard from the back door to the ally seemed quite small, as I recall it anyway.

Love Dad

Another keeper, Dad. I've relived my childhood from a new place.
(You're wrong about the back yard of the Maclay house! That yard was enormous! The house was immense!)

From Needles to Nag Hammadi



The author with his girls, Peggy, Cindi, and Kay, on top of the Great Pyramid in Cairo Egypt. Son, Charles, slept in and missed out.

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Needles (California) to Nag Hammadi (Egypt) is a long geographical journey. Needles is situated in the California desert, nearly 150 miles from Barstow, about 100 miles from Las Vegas, Nevada and over 200 miles from Flagstaff, Arizona with nothing in between. Nag Hammadi, on the other hand, is found in the desert of Upper Egypt near the first big bend of the Nile River nearly 600 miles from Cairo. In my personal story, however, “Needles to Nag Hammadi” is not a geographical journey. The two locations represent contrasting ideologies and the distance from one to the other is separated by critical thinking, rational thought, and a coming of age in the contemporary world. The gap between the two spaces is not bridged without a considerable reorientation of mind.

After leaving Needles, I was accepted into the Masters’ Program in Religion at the University of Southern California for the Spring Semester of 1966, but my transformation of mind first began in the LA County Probation Department. I was one of those hired to open a New Juvenile Hall at Sylmar, California. Those newly hired for the Sylmar Juvenile Hall spent a week or more in training to reorient our thinking to a new philosophical approach to Juvenile detention. We had classes in the California Penal Code, Psychology, and social work. This information was all new to me. Initially the group met around a large table to introduce ourselves to one another. I remember this meeting graphically

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and painfully. When it came my turn to introduce myself, I was inadequate to the task. I felt almost embarrassed to be in the room. I was completely out of my element. All I had to offer this group of people, whose training specifically qualified them for working with juvenile offenders, was me, a minister trained for ecclesiastical duties in a Baptist framework. My introduction of myself was anything but competently done and almost apologetic.

Until Sylmar opened, I was sent to Los Padrinos, the newest juvenile hall of the L.A. County Probation Department, located in Downey, California. I was assigned as a Probation Counselor to a living group (two living groups to a building; my building was G/H) on the day shift (6am to 2pm). Each unit had a Deputy Probation Officer II (Mr. Greenwood in G/H) as supervisor and two counselors (either a Probation Counselor or DPO I) leading two different living groups of juveniles (they fell under section 602 of the California Penal Code). The day shift was the most active time for the juveniles in detention. We woke them up about 6:30 for breakfast and walked them to the Mess Hall in military formation (“dress right, DRESS”). I had to supervise the meal to ensure that kids got enough to eat, and to ensure that fights did not break out. I wore one-way sunglasses, so the kids could not tell where I was looking. We walked them to school about 9am and I came back to the unit and “charted.” Each kid

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in my group had to have an entry made in his chart during my shift. We picked them up at school to walk to lunch and back to school. In the afternoons there were exercise activities and games. And there was always the cry of the peacocks!

When Sylmar opened, I was assigned as day shift DPO I and ran the infirmary. Living unit Counselors brought their sick kids over in the morning about 9am for sick call. I supervised the Day Room holding about 20 juveniles and made hourly checks on locked rooms holding kids admitted to the infirmary. One of the new concepts is that Sylmar would not have “an adjustment unit” (a unit where kids could be removed from their living unit for fighting or other destructive behavior), but the institution quickly began using the infirmary as a kind of “lock up” facility. Some secure area, particularly for juveniles suffering from paranoia or schizophrenia, for example, was essential. Mentally ill kids frequently wound up in the infirmary. On one occasion we had a juvenile who had attempted suicide in the infirmary. When I would go by to check how he was doing (by peering through a rectangular window in the door), the kid had his face up against the window blocking a full view of him. Fortunately, a Supervising Deputy came through the unit and happened to open the door to speak to the kid. The Supervising Deputy discovered that the kid had broken the stitches on his wrists and was bleeding again. There was a pool of blood on the floor that I had

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to mop up. He was transferred immediately to the hospital.

When I was promoted to DPO II, I was assigned to Central Juvenile Hall as an Intake, Detention, and Control (IDC) Officer. My job was to receive arrest reports from the police, who brought the arrested juvenile to Juvenile Hall for detention prior to a court hearing, evaluate his/her infraction of the law, contact parents, and decide if the kid could be released home prior to his/her court hearing. I usually detained any kid that was arrested for a violation of section 187 of the California Penal Code (murder) but nevertheless had the authority to release the kid to his parents, if in my judgment the situation warranted it. At some point the IDC function was moved out of the hall to the police stations, where the IDC officer could interview the arresting police officer as well, if necessary. This change of location for the IDC function (the program was called "Intercept") made my job more difficult because the philosophy of the probation department was to release juvenile offenders, if at all possible, and the philosophy of the police department was to incarcerate law breakers. Conversations with the police were generally somewhat tense.

When I was promoted to DPO III, I took a position running the "adjustment unit" (euphemistically called "the lock up") at Los Padrinos (other DPO IIIs ahead of me on the promotion list had turned it down); the previous two holders of the position had

failed to pass their probation period in their new position. As the adjustment counselor, I had to receive juveniles brought to the unit who were under restraints, angry, upset, and combative because of some incident in the living units. My job was to receive them from the DPO who brought them in restraints, remove the restraints, and talk them into stripping nude in front of me while I checked clothing and body cavities for contraband (drugs). I never had a problem accomplishing the security check. Kids calmed down after the counselor who had brought him in was gone, and my demeanor with an unlighted cigar in my mouth was calm and non-threatening. The usual routine in lock up was the following: I took a bucket of hot soapy water around to every room in the morning for the kid to scrub out his porcelain toilet (it had no wooden or plastic seat). After that chore was done, I would bring small groups down to the dayroom for a short period of TV and conversation with one another and then they went back into their rooms. Meals were eaten alone in the room. The goal of the “adjustment” unit/lock up was to “aid” the kids “attitude adjustment” so he could return to the living unit as soon as possible (kids are generally quite social). I did have an incident in the lock up on one shift. One of the young men set fire to his mattress. He was a tall black young man, a member of the notorious Cripps Gang. I called Control for help. Several Officers came to the unit and stood by while we got the fire stopped and removed the mattress. We took

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the young man to a new room. As he was going into the room, he suddenly wheeled and hit me in the mouth. I was stunned and staggered back, but he made no further hostile moves. After my shift, I was taken to the hospital to be checked out by a physician. The young man had been sent to the adjustment unit by the California Youth Authority Unit. California Youth Authority is now called Department of Juvenile Justice that provides education, trauma and informed treatment to California's youthful offenders up to the age of 25 who have the most serious criminal backgrounds. As it turned out, I was successful in passing my probationary period (6 months in the job) and shortly thereafter took a leave of absence (1974-75) to live in Egypt for seven months to work on the Nag Hammadi Codices.



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Christmas in Maadi, Egypt. Left to right in front, Peggy Hedrick, Charlie Hedrick, Jim Robinson, Rosemary Robinson, Cindi Hedrick, Charles Hedrick Jr., and Anita Robinson. In back left to right, Kay Hedrick, Joy Robinson, and Steve Emmel.

Our entire family joined the Robinson family (Jim, Anita, Joy, and Rosemary) in separate flats one floor apart in the upscale neighborhood of the Maadi sector of Cairo. Steve Emmel, who had just graduated college, shared a room with Charles Jr., Cindi and Kay shared a room, and Peggy and I had a room just off the patio on the third floor (I wrote part of my dissertation for my Ph.D. program on the patio). We commuted by train to the Museum each day from Maadi to Old Cairo for work on the codices. Cindi and Kay attended Cairo American College continuing their high school education, and Charles did his freshman year of college at the American University in Cairo. Peggy, I, Cindi, and Kay left him behind in Cairo to finish up his first year of college, when we returned to the States. We left what we thought were sufficient Egyptian pounds for him to finish out the year (I was paid in Egyptian pounds); the funds for Charles were left with John Dohrman, Director of the American Research Center in Cairo. Charles drew a monthly stipend from Dohrman to carry him till the next month. We calculated there were enough funds to carry him through till his return to the United States. I say it was sufficient; he may have different ideas about

that, as he tells me he ate a great deal of ful medames, an inexpensive Egyptian breakfast of fava beans with tahini seasoned with garlic, cumin and lemon, from the Cairo street food carts.

I had carried with me to Cairo a letter of introduction from the Chief Probation Officer in Los Angeles County to the head of prisons in Egypt. I took it by his office in Cairo and was told that someone would get back to me. Several weeks later I received a call from his office and was told that the following day he would pick me up for a visit to a prison outside of Cairo. We journeyed by automobile into the desert surrounding Cairo and arrived in front of the main entrance. At that point two men were rolling out a red carpet to the door of the vehicle upon which I walked into the prison. The tour of the facility lasted several hours and included my interviews with prisoners, the head of the Egyptian prison system himself translating for me.

When I returned to California from my leave of absence in Cairo, the Probation Department assigned me as court officer to represent the department in juvenile court. Initially, I was assigned to work on the master calendar for the juvenile court. As liaison for the probation department, I had the files (25 files or more) of every case being heard throughout the juvenile court system for that day on my desk. Everything happened very quickly, and the process was something of a “mad house.” If the

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kid was to appear in court and there was no file, it was my job to interface with IDC or an area office and secure the file. Without it the kid, represented by a probation officer and advised by a public defender, might be released, which would not make the prosecutor or police very happy. These files were sent from the master calendar to the court that heard the kid's case. Later I was assigned to a court that heard the cases and had to argue with defense attorneys in support of the probation officer's recommendation. The prosecutor and the probation department always agreed. Arriving in court each morning the prosecutor would turn to me and say, "what do you want me to do with this case?" my standard reply was, "Go for the jugular!" I was employed by the probation department for 13 years (1965-78) and retired from active service in 1978 to become a full-time academic (assistant professor) at Wagner College, Staten Island, New York. My probation career was lived simultaneously during my academic training (at USC, 1965-68; at CGS, 1967-77) and U. S Army Reserve service (1964-94).

I matriculated at the University of Southern California (USC) because I wanted to examine the Christian tradition from different perspectives. By now I had become quite aware of the confessional constraints that continue to plague education in Baptist colleges and seminaries. Fortunately, my advisor, Eldon Epp (a Harvard Ph.D. and an expert in textual criticism), was able

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to secure 28 hours of work at Golden Gate Seminary to count toward the Master of Arts in Religion at USC. The result was that I was only required to take five courses for the master's degree, The courses were History of New Testament Criticism, History of Old Testament Criticism, Cultural Backgrounds of the New Testament, Cultural Backgrounds of the Old Testament, Theology of the New Testament. My MA Thesis (never published) was titled: "Eschatological Existence: The Meaning of Eschatology. A Study of Rudolf Bultmann's Understanding of Eschatology in the New Testament" (Eldon J. Epp, Advisor). The thesis was written partially while performing two weeks active duty with the US Army out in the field at Fort Hunter Liggett, California. I sent a copy to Dr. Fred Fisher (New Testament Professor at Golden Gate Seminary), who chided me for straying from conservative approaches to the study of the New Testament. Rudolf Bultmann was a German scholar who represented a critical counter to Karl Barth, then the current influential theologian among conservatives and evangelicals. Southern Baptists were in the main Barthians.

I applied again to Claremont Graduate School for doctoral study, which required the usual letters of recommendation. I discovered later that Dr. Epp had provided me with an excellent letter of recommendation. When I asked Dr. Tucker (Gene M. Tucker, my Old Testament instructor at USC and a Yale Ph.D.) for a

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recommendation, to his credit he informed me that he could only give me a qualified letter of recommendation. I was candid with him as well and rejected his offer, securing letters of recommendation elsewhere. Many years later at a meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature he caught me while I was hurrying from one meeting to another and told me at the end of our short conversation that if I ever needed a letter of recommendation, he would be happy to write one for me. And one more anecdote completes that story. After I had completed my class work at Claremont and was writing my dissertation, Claremont was looking for a teacher in Old Testament and I was asked to comment on how Gene Tucker was as a teacher.

I was admitted to Claremont Graduate School on conditional standing March 30, 1967, and began classes that coming Fall semester. I was told that the graduate committee would review my work at the end of a semester to determine the quality of my work. I received as grades that semester two "High Passes" (which equal the grade of B at Claremont). Grading was done on the basis of class participation and the final course essay. There were no examinations. The paper carried the major weight in determining the grade. At the end of the Fall semester, I had received nothing from the Religion Department notifying me about the state of my standing in the school. But went ahead and enrolled in classes for the Spring semester of 1968. I took a

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course on the Theology of Paul with Hans Dieter Betz and another course in Coptic Texts with Jim Robinson; In addition, I was in an unofficial class with a group of students who were being tutored in the Coptic language by Ernie Tune, Librarian at the Claremont School of Theology. We used a mimeographed grammar to the Coptic language keyed to the Gospel of Thomas (prepared by Orval Wintermute, Duke University) and eventually graduated to the excellent small grammar by Walter Till, *Koptische Grammatik*. I was still not informed about my standing in the School, and eventually went to inquire. I was told that I had been advanced to full graduate standing on May 3, 1968.

Claremont had a residency requirement. Each student had to take a full load of three courses for two semesters back-to-back. I was in my second semester of the residency requirement, when I failed to pass the standardized state administered French exam (In language exams the previous practice had been to give the student a page from some technical theological book and a dictionary, and the student then provided whoever was administering the exam a translation—it was how I passed the German language exam at Claremont). Joseph C. Hough, Jr. (Yale University) was then Chair of the Religion Department and he informed me that I would have to drop a course in the Spring Semester of 1970. I objected that this would work an

unreasonable hardship on me as I would be forced to take another year of full-time study to fulfill the residency requirement. Hough insisted that I had to drop a course. I replied that I would petition the graduate committee. He replied that if I did, he would oppose me. I petitioned the Committee and they allowed me to complete the residency year provided I took the State language exam in French the next time it was offered and pass it. All summer I concentrated on reading French, even while I was in the field with the Army for two weeks annual training at Fort Irwin, CA. The book that gave me the best chance for passing the French exam was by Edward M. Stack, *Reading French in the Arts and Sciences* (2nd ed.; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1957). I passed the exam in the 80th percentile at the next time it was offered. Later I reviewed a French language publication in *The Second Century* 2 (1982): 45-47: Yvonne Janssens “*La Protencoia trimorphe (NH XIII, 1) Texte établi et présenté.*”

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The author working on the original Nag Hammadi Codices at the Coptic Museum in Cairo, Egypt.

During 1969-73, I served as the unpaid office manager of the Coptic Project of the Institute for Antiquity and Christianity (IAC), which in part necessitated correspondence around the world on the Nag Hammadi texts. Later I became the instructor for an unofficial class in Coptic at Claremont for new Ph.D. students at Claremont. In 1971 Jim Robinson asked me if I could go to Cairo for two weeks as part of a team reconstructing the Nag Hammadi Codices. I took the place of Birger Pearson, who withdrew from the trip at the last minute. He was flying out early before the gathering in Cairo on another engagement but one of

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the engines of his airplane caught fire and he had to return to the point of departure. He was unavailable for the two weeks in Cairo for personal reasons. I managed to clear my two weeks absence with my employer, the Probation Department, and joined the group of students and senior scholars working with the International Committee for the Nag Hammadi Codices of which Jim Robinson was the Permanent Chairman.

The working conditions in the museum initially were much less than optimum. The light was dim, and we were crowded elbow to elbow around tables far too small to accommodate workers, plexiglass containers of papyrus, Coptic books, dictionaries, papers, and magnifying glasses. During the early 70s I participated in a number of such two-week work sessions and later Peggy was able to join me in the two-week work sessions in the Coptic Museum. We always stayed in Cairo at the Garden City House, a favorite lodging on the part of scholars of the frayed-elbow variety.

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The author's wife, Peggy S. Hedrick, meeting Henry Kissinger at the Coptic Museum.

I took and passed my Ph.D. Qualifying Exams in February of 1972. Truth be told it was a conditional pass. The committee kept me waiting in the kitchen of the IAC for more than an hour. I later asked Jim Robinson, my dissertation advisor, what had taken so long. He replied that they finished quickly with me and went on to other things. Nevertheless, I still had to write two essays on Gnosticism on the early Gnostic teachers Basilides and Valentinus for Ekkard Muhlenberg, which he found acceptable. It was a good thing I passed. I had made plans to host the committee as we celebrated my advancement to candidacy for the Ph.D. at Griswold's Restaurant. Jim Robinson was Chairman

of the Committee. The other members were Burton Mack, Ekkard Muhlenberg, and George MacRae (outside reader from Harvard Divinity School).

My dissertation was typed by Lenore Brashler, wife of a fellow student, and I met all requirements for the Ph.D. degree, which was awarded on June 4, 1977. The dissertation was later selected for inclusion in the Dissertation Series of the Society of Biblical Literature under the title *The Apocalypse of Adam. A Literary and Source Analysis* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1980). Howard C. Kee served as editor for the two volumes of 308 pages. I received copies from Scholars Press during my first year at Southwest Missouri State (now Missouri State), Springfield, Missouri, after being terminated by Wagner College, Staten Island, New York because of an exigency crisis. Wagner College had terminated approximately 25% of the teaching faculty of the college over the exigency crisis facing the college. I was the last hired in the Religion Department and hence was first to be terminated (the last to be hired before me had fourteen years in the department). The day before the termination notices went out the President of the College called me to his office and told me what was going to happen. He then offered me a position on his staff, which I foolishly turned down. I went home that day and immediately began sending out letters of application for teaching positions. One finally received a favorable response from Gerritt

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tenZythoff, chair of the Religious Studies Department at Southwest Missouri State University, where I was hired for the academic year 1980/81.

When I received a copy of my book from Scholars Press, I proudly passed it around to my students in a class (Introduction to the New Testament) at Springfield, all the time describing the book in glowing language. Then one young co-ed in the back of the room raised her hand and shyly asked, "Sir did you notice that the word 'Analysis' in the title is misspelled?" I looked and sure enough it read "Source Analyis." Not a good beginning for my first professional publication. In my defense, however, I was never sent the front matter pages by the press for me to proof. I can only assume that the celebrated New Testament Scholar who edited the book had never seen the front matter either. As a result, the press prepared a paste over strip for the expression that read "And Source Analysis" on the title page. Aargh! I hate it when that happens! When I send out papers to colleagues, I always ask them for their snide remarks. It is always better to receive snide remarks in private than in public.

The dedication of the book read: "To Peggy and our offspring, Charlie, Cindi, and Kay: small payment for their considerable expense."

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Looking back over this leg of my life journey I am impressed that Peggy had to be both father and mother to our children during this period where my time was divided between the Army Reserve, the Probation Department, my graduate education requirements, and reconstructing the Nag Hammadi Codices. Fortunately, Peggy was willing to forgo for a time her own education and professional aspirations until late in my own educational journey. She graduated Pitzer College on an S & H Green Stamp Scholarship (BA in German and Sociology) in 1972 near the end of our time in Claremont. She went on to graduate from Yeshiva University's Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law (JD) in 1981. When we moved the family home to Springfield in 1980, she moved to Kansas City to take a year of courses at the Law School of the University of Missouri at Kansas City and transferred them back to Yeshiva (in New York City) to complete the degree. She practiced Law for two years with Legal Aid of Southwest Missouri in Springfield, Missouri and had her own private practice for 20+ years. (I cannot be sure how long it was because she would never let me use the word "retired" to describe her situation). That our Children became so successful in their lives is largely due to her selfless investment of herself in their lives. She was the lynchpin that held the family together. As the author of Proverbs opined: "Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: many women have done excellently, but you surpass them all" (Prov 31:28-29 RSV).

The South African native, Robert G. Hammerton-Kelly (Th.D. Union Theological Seminary, New York) became my first advisor at Claremont. He asked me at our first meeting at Scripps College where he taught: "What is your goal in this program? Do you see yourself as a servant of the church or a servant of the discipline?" I thought it was an odd question at the time, but now suspect that it might likely reflect something of a struggle in his own mind (He was an ordained United Methodist minister and served as Dean of the Chapel at Stanford University and minister of Stanford Memorial Church for thirteen years after leaving Claremont). At the time he posed the question I did not see any serious competition between the two options he offered me but nevertheless replied, "a servant of the discipline." Today, however, after a 24-year career teaching religious studies courses at Missouri State University where I did research and published without ideological constraints and at the same time maintained active membership in the religious denomination of my youth, I see things rather differently. In historical scholarship it is not possible, in the final analysis, to be a servant of the church and the discipline at the same time. Eventually, outcomes will conflict, and at that point, whether consciously or unconsciously, confessional constraints are ignored and research disturbing the status quo proceeds, or a scholar will be guided by confessional constraints and find research subjects

fitting safely within confessional boundaries I implied as much in my essay, “Religion and Public Education. The Bible in the Bible Belt,” Bulletin for the Council of Societies for the Study of Religion 31.4 (2002), 90–94, but unequivocally stated this view in another essay: “On Wearing Two Hats while Standing on a Banana Peel: Confessional Statements in Theological Education,” Perspectives in Religious Studies 11.2 (1984): 105–14.

The man that wrote “I believe in Vacation Bible School,” The Sunday School Builder (May, 1966), 21 (republished as “Yo Creo en La Escuela Biblica de Vacaciones,” La Fe Bautista [April May June, 1968], 10–11]) is not the same man as he who wrote “Is belief in the divinity of Jesus essential to being Christian?” The Fourth R 24.5 (September–October 2011), 15–20, 26.

Such is the distance from Needles to Nag Hammadi.

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Lucinda H.

WOW!! So many visual details. Like the one way sunglasses in Juvy. And peacocks!! Wut? I like the irony, like a professor offering a “qualified” recommendation, only to be the subject of your review later. Did you “go for the jugular!”? Would love to read what the author of “Eschatological Existence: The Meaning of Eschatology. A Study of Rudolf Bultmann’s understanding of Eschatology in the New Testament” had to say about why he believes in Vacation Bible School. And the crazy irony of a misspelling in your thesis title discovered by a student in your class! Well written and oh-so-interesting. Thank you for writing this essay!

LnHC

Charles

Man, you cover a lot of ground with this one! Next time i'm in mo. we can chat about it... One small detail: I remember him as John (not Harrison) Dohrman... Am I wrong?

No you are correct! I made the change.

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Academe: A Short Career in Higher Education



The author teaching a class at Missouri State University, Springfield, Missouri.

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I graduated from Claremont Graduate University in June 1977 at 43 years of age, and with my new Ph. D. Diploma in hand, I advertised myself in the Society of Biblical Literature TOIL (Teaching Opportunities Information Listing): “Charles W, Hedrick, 1977 Ph. D. is now receiving inquiries about teaching opportunities.” Of course, there were no responses; it was a very tight job market. I sent out letters in response to teaching jobs being advertised in TOIL. The odds did not seem good that I would find a teaching position. I was an older guy with little teaching experience, but nevertheless I sent out the letters. No matter what happened I still had a job with the Probation Department in L. A. County.

I am not sure what I expected of a career in academia. I had only seen the academic promised land through the eyes of a student. As I look back today, in my academic career I turned out to be just another academic “working stiff,” as my friend Bob Miller once described himself. The academy was not the best of worlds, nor the worst of worlds. I found it to be an interesting world and, as I lived it, the academy turned out to be a life of the mind. I published professional articles, books, and did a great deal of public speaking around the country in addition to my classroom activities. These activities required research and preparation that pushed me beyond what I had learned in my years of formal education. The workplace was pleasant if demanding. I had good

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colleagues in both universities where I worked for the 26 years of my academic career.

After applying for every teaching position, I heard about, I got a nibble from Carlyle Holland, chair of the Religious Studies Department at Wagner College, Staten Island, New York. I do not recall the interview (it must have been during an SBL meeting, however), but I was given a contract to join the Wagner faculty. There were three graduates in New Testament from Claremont that year, and I was the only one to be hired for a teaching position. I was told later by Holland that the quality of my training at Claremont, in which the Wagner faculty had full confidence, was not the reason that I was hired at Wagner; it was because that I as a former Deputy Probation Office would likely be able to handle the street-wise kids from New York City that matriculated at Wagner in large numbers every year. Wagner was a private college in the Lutheran tradition, and the religious services that I attended at the college featured hymns that neither Peggy nor I knew. My teaching load was four courses each semester and the four semesters I was at Wagner they were all new preparations each semester. In addition, I supervised the work of one Masters' student. I do not think that I did that latter task very well. In retrospect I was too demanding.

I was always one day ahead of the students and my schedule allowed little time for independent research but I did publish an

article for the local newspaper entitled “Preachers might learn from Broadway Actors,” Broadway Review, Staten Island Advance, March 11, 1979: Section 2, p. 1. It was a review of a one man show on Broadway in which the single actor simply quoted the Gospel of Mark. I continued editing what later became volume 28 of Nag Hammadi Studies (Codices XI, XII, and XIII), the papers of which were spread out on a long table purchased for that purpose in the basement of our Staten Island home. One event at Wagner stands out in my mind. Peggy and I threw a party for the members of the Religious Studies Department and their spouses. I purchased ample quantities of beer and wine (I thought), but before the party was half done (I recall the last guests left about midnight) I had to go out for more spirits. There was very little left either to eat or drink at the end of the party. Clearly there were no prohibitions against strong drink in the Lutheran tradition.

After being fired from Wagner over an exigency crisis, I immediately returned home and began sending out letters that same day seeking a new teaching position, having turned down the offer of a staff position at Wagner. I could have completely covered the walls of the basement with the abundance of rejection letters that I received. But amidst the rejections came a positive contact from Gerrit tenZythoff, Chair of the Religious Studies Department at Southwest Missouri State University. I

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was invited to an interview on campus. When my flight landed at the Springfield airport (now Springfield-Branson airport), I was met by Gerrit (a Dutch Reformed missionary from Holland to expatriates in Canada), Jim Moyer (a homegrown Baptist Evangelical), and Karl Luckert (a German refugee, a man of the Renaissance, and a Methodist by religious tradition). Karl told me that as I was walking toward them from the airplane, he turned to Gerrit and whispered, “Er Kommt, der Wunderkind.” I once asked Karl to describe for me the deaths of the old Gods. He replied “Charlie, the old Gods are not dead; they are just waiting to be rediscovered.” I agreed with him and had to radically revise my essay.

They took me to The Mongolian Barbeque in Springfield for lunch, where I met with the rest of the department (Gerrit loved to meet and eat), and then followed a whirlwind tour of the campus. The meeting that most stands out in my memory was the meeting with the President and Academic Dean. At the end of the interviews Gerrit took me to the office of President Duane G. Meyer where I was to be interviewed by him and Robert Gilmore, the Academic Dean. Gerrit and I sat in chairs facing Meyer and Gilmore. Oddly, it was Gerrit that conducted the interview. He made an introductory statement and then turned to me and said, “tell them about X.” When I finished, he said, “tell them about Y” and so it went for the whole interview. When the interview

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concluded, he took me out of their office and sat me down in an adjoining office and said, “just a minute.” He returned to Meyer’s office was gone a short while and then he returned with an offer of employment. I called Peggy for approval and that sealed the deal. It seems that I was the only candidate for the position. In those days departments at Southwest Missouri State University (now Missouri State University) were required to make up their minds who they wanted before an invitation to interview on campus was extended to a candidate. If the candidate turned out to have two left feet, then they could invite a second candidate. I was 46 years of age when I stepped into my first classroom at Missouri State University.

The university immediately hired a second New Testament specialist, Robert Hodgson, Jr. Bob and I were assigned offices across the street from campus in a private home converted into offices that we shared with the Theatre Department. One day we were called to Gerrit’s office for a “visit.” As we left his office scratching our heads, we pondered the reason that we were called to campus. Some days later we discovered that one evening janitors had found some marijuana in our building and the administration was gently probing if they had a problem with one or more of their two new New Testament assistant professors. The suspicion was perhaps the guy from the “land of grass and free love” (California) by way of New York City and the

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guy from out of the country (Bob had gotten his training in Germany and was teaching in a Roman Catholic Seminary in the Philippines when he was hired by SMSU) had picked up some bad habits along the way. Bob and I immediately asked for locks on the doors to our respective offices. They eventually moved us back on campus into offices that had no windows.

Once when I was away for two weeks military duty, I received a call from JoAnne Brown, the Department Secretary, that an office with a window had become available. She wanted to know if I wanted it. She said it was my choice, since I was the first to be hired of the two new guys (I was hired about two weeks before Bob). I felt that two weeks didn't warrant unilaterally taking the office with a window. I asked JoAnne to flip a coin. I called heads and got the office with a window. Bob had a joke that he liked to tell on Gerrit in those early days. The university offered short courses between the Fall and Spring Sessions properly referred to as "intersession courses." Gerrit, however, always referred to them as "intercourse sessions." Another great story that Bob told about Gerrit concerns fishing. Gerrit decided to take Bob to a place in Arkansas where you caught your own trout and the establishment would prepare a trout dinner with what had been caught. While they were waiting for their dinner to be prepared. Gerrit spied then former Governor of the state of Missouri, Christopher Bond, and excused himself to speak to him. Bob,

who had just recently come to Missouri, did not know the former governor. He leaned over to another fellow at the table and nodded to where Gerrit was speaking with the governor, and asked “do you know who that is?” The fellow looked, spied Gerrit standing and speaking to the seated governor and said “I don’t know who the seated man is (i.e., the governor) but the person talking to him is Gerrit J. tenZythoff. Such was Gerrit’s popularity in Southwest Missouri. After several years, Bob resigned from the university and took a position with the American Bible Society, eventually becoming Dean of the Society.

I continued working on Nag Hammadi XI, XII, XIII right into the computer age. The university had a contract with a local firm to computerize the university. Certain selected persons on campus were in the first class to be taught word processors in selected classes. I was not among those chosen for the first wave but talked Bob Gilmore into letting me take a mini course at the firm handling this university transition to the computer age, because I needed to finish up the book (XI, XII, XIII), and entering the book directly onto floppy disks by word processor would be cheaper than having a typist type corrected hard copy and send it to the printer. The university awarded me two faculty research grants in 1983 and 1984 that primarily supported the final typing of the volume and the verification of the indices. In fact, I have always felt like a wolf among a flock of sheep or a hungry

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barracuda at Missouri State. I was awarded twelve research and travel grants for research projects by the Faculty Research Committee during my tenure at Missouri State.

The largest and most prestigious grant was a National Endowment for the Humanities Research Conference Grant in 1982. Bob Hodgson and I collaborated on that project, but it was Bob's idea. Bob and I brought thirteen of the leading scholars in the study of Gnosticism to Springfield for an international conference on Gnosticism. The papers were taped and made a part of the University Library and published in a book, Nag Hammadi, Gnosticism, and Early Christianity. Fourteen Leading Scholars discuss the Current Issues in Gnostic Studies (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1986), edited by both Bob and me (Somewhat presumptuously, I was the fourteenth "Leading Scholar").

From 1991-2000 I was recommended by a faculty committee at Missouri State University and approved by the Board of Regents of the University for three sequential terms of three years each as Distinguished Scholar. My teaching load was reduced to three courses per semester, and I was expected to use the time released from teaching for research. The status carried no raise in pay. In 2001 the university instituted another category in faculty levels, that of Distinguished Professor. To qualify for the promotion a candidate must be distinguished in one of three areas of teaching, research, and service, and

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outstanding in the other two. I applied for the promotion and was promoted to Distinguished Professor. My distinguished area was research and publication. The promotion carried with it a modest raise in pay but no released time. The position was a permanent promotion. By that time, however, the university had conceived of faculty positions as having a three-course teaching load while excelling in one area of teaching, research, or service to compensate for the fourth course. My fourth area was research. I retired at the beginning of December 2005 at 70 years of age but continued to teach one course for the next two and a half years. What prompted retirement at that time, I cannot say. I awoke one morning and knew that it was time. I typed out a letter requesting that I be retired, and it was granted.

As I look back over my short academic career of 26 years, I have the nagging fear that it may have been full of “sound and fury,” yet “signifying nothing.” I can say that an academic career was something I chose and was fortunate enough to be able to live out my choice. I have never regretted the choice. One must do something in life, and a career in teaching, research, and publication has been personally satisfying. I do regret that I was never able to fire the imagination of the public (both professional and popular) with my published ideas. I once had a conversation with Charles Talbert, a Southern Baptist colleague and in my view a distinguished Baptist Theologian and New

Testament Scholar. We were both teaching in London at the time (for me the Missouri London Program, January through May 1990). Talbert wondered how I rated myself as a scholar. I had never thought about it. He said, "I rate us both as second tier." By which I think he meant that in terms of our ideas and publications, our influence spread little beyond our classrooms and local communities but nevertheless failed to make a serious impression on the guild. I was honored to be ranked by him along with him in the second tier. As I look back today, however, I think he was far too modest about himself, and rather ambitious in his thinking about my status; there are still lower tiers.

To summarize my publication activity briefly: ten books authored, seven books edited, several pages of articles all peer reviewed, fourteen encyclopedia articles, seventeen book reviews, over 30 chapters in published books, several pages of guest lectureships around the country and in Europe, several pages of other publications (mostly newspaper articles) and a blog published from 2007 and continuing until the time of this writing, publishing every two weeks a brief essay on religion, ethics, and human values. Only time will tell if it "signified" anything.

There are two honors that I received in my career that deserve special mention. I was elected Vice President of the National

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Association of Baptist Professors of Religion 1987-88 and then as President 1988-89. Both positions were largely honorary. I served as president and chaired the session at the ninth annual meeting of the National Association of Baptist Professors of Religion at Anaheim, CA 20 November 1989. The title of my address at the meeting was “Toward a Code of Conduct for New Testament Scholars: ‘Heavenly Labels in a World of Gutturals.’” It was published in Perspectives in Religious Studies^{17.2} (Summer 1990): 101-15. The second honor was being interviewed in the Spring of 2018 at the National Meeting of the Westar Institute in Santa Rosa, California. I regard the interview as an honor because it associated me with the careers and critical work of those other scholars who had been interviewed at previous meetings. Bob Miller, Editor of the Fourth R conducted the interview. I regard these two events as capstones to my academic career; one caps my lifelong association, professional and personal, with Baptists, and the other caps my professional aim to produce independent critical scholarship during my career as an academic.

Robert Hamerton-Kelly’s question, however, has haunted me since Claremont days: “do you consider yourself a servant of the church or a servant of the discipline?” he asked. I replied on that occasion, “the guild,” but looking back it appears to me that I have been attempting to serve both the discipline as well as the

church. It has not always been understood as service rendered, however. Tom Crabtree, the late pastor of the First Baptist Church in Springfield, Missouri, (usually known as T. T.) came to my office at the university before his death to chide me for my association with the Jesus Seminar. He told me that I would never be able to work for Southern Baptists while I was a member of the Jesus Seminar. I replied, "Tom, what makes you think I want to work for Southern Baptists?" Teaching in a state university I was free within the bounds of decorum and decency to pursue any ideas that roused my curiosity. I could never have done that in a university controlled by Southern Baptists. Crabtree, however, turned out to be correct. I was interviewed for a position in a (Baptist) Chair of Bible at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma to which I was recommended by my archaeology professor from Golden Gate Seminary, Kyle M. Yates, Jr., who was then the holder of the chair. The Chair of Bible had two bosses, the State of Oklahoma (for it was a state university), but Oklahoma Baptists had endowed the chair in Bible with Baptist money. Hence Baptists had a say in who occupied the chair and had delegated the supervision of the Bible chair to the Director of the Baptist Student Union for the State of Oklahoma. In my interview with him, he was direct and pointed in his questions, which largely concerned faith issues and Baptist political considerations; I was candid in my responses. I was not hired for the position, particularly after having failed to secure

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the recommendation of my Pastor in Springfield, who was contacted about my possible appointment and T. T. did not give me a positive recommendation.

Here is the quotation that I alluded to just above (“full of sound and fury yet signifying nothing”):

“Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow creeps in this petty pace from day to day, to the last syllable of recorded time; and all our yesterdays have lighted fools the way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle! Life’s but a walking shadow, a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage and is heard no more. It is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound of fury, signifying nothing.”

So said Macbeth in William Shakespeare’s play of the same name. I first encountered it in Latin classes at E. E. Bass Junior/Senior High School in Greenville, Mississippi. Excerpts from it were included in a banner in the front of Miss Moss’s classroom.

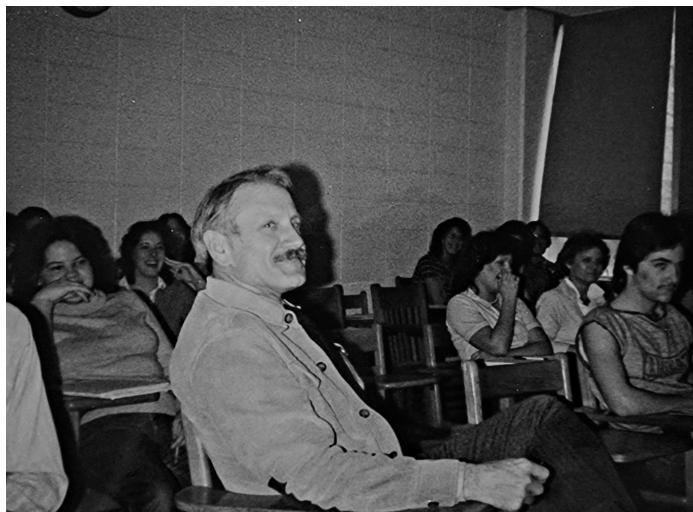
Whether Macbeth/Shakespeare is correct that life is only a walking shadow that ultimately signifies nothing in long term, I am not prepared to say. I think, however, this last third of my life in academia has been personally satisfying. It is true, however, that our time on life’s stage is limited:

“The moving finger writes, and having writ moves on; nor all thy Piety nor wit shall lure it back to cancel half a line, nor all thy

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tears wash out a word of it." (Omar Khayyam, The Rubaiyat, quatrain 70 in the translation by Edward FitzGerald).

It is what it was. The question is will any of it live on in human memory, when so much of life's "petty pace" does not.



The author watching a Belly Dancer hired by his daughters to perform in a New Testament class at Southwest Missouri State University in celebration of his birthday. Even the Dean was watching at the door.

Lucinda H.

Another great essay. Thank you Dad! Your legacy is ensured for your children's children's children (and beyond) to review. I'm so proud. LnHC

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Dad

Thank you!

Charles

Well that was interesting! I'm struck by the detail of this (vs. some of your other stories). You've told me many of these before— hadn't heard the bit about the solicitation of your pastor for a recommendation and having him decline! A little bit of a downer there at the end... You know even "top tier" scholars don't have a long shelf life anymore. After they retire their profile fades quickly. And I don't know that "public intellectuals" do much better. Maybe worse. Twitter buzz moves quickly on to the next thing... The old scholars I still cite are people who write substantive things, not necessarily people who were politically important in the guild or who were known by the public.

I tend to cite those from whom I learn. But you are correct that profile fades quickly and perhaps that is a reason you should be buried rather than cremated. At least there will be a tombstone with your name on it. But to be honest no one should enter scholarship to be remembered.

Lois

I'm struck by the title, "A Short Career..." but this is probably the longest, most detailed story yet. :)

Life in My Latter Days



Once I was as quick as a fox on a hill, but in recent days rising is more difficult and walking, unbalanced and slower. Through the years the weight of gravity seems to have increased. The distance between think and speak is longer and words are sometimes lost or misstated. Memory comes back more slowly. There is always a brief nap after lunch in order to still my brain, calm my dizziness, and restore my balance. Hearing once keen and clear, in recent days is muted and garbled by static. Sight has dimmed and must be aided by mechanical devices. Dizziness and imbalance put me always on the cusp of falling. Stepladders, I once mounted with alacrity and intrepidity, I now completely avoid them. Pains persist in almost every joint. A dwindling stamina affects what I can plan for each day. Not anything in my body works as well as once it did, and some things do not work at all. Age is not just a number. It is the body's acquiescence to one law of the universe—what I have called obsolescence. I am informed (by Bill Yarchin) that what I call obsolescence is

actually the second law of thermodynamics: Hot things always cool unless one does something to stop them. This is a simple truth about the universe: disorder (called entropy) always increases. What this means for the universe is that it will eventually collapse. (<https://www.newscientist.com/definition/second-law-thermodynamics/#:~:text=The%20second%20law%20of%20thermodynamics,known%20as%20entropy%2C%20always%20increases>), if the expansion of the universe is slowing down, which does not seem to be the case (<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/expanding-universe-slows-then-peeds/#:~:text=Until%20recently%2C%20astronomers%20fully%20expected,the%20repulsive%20side%20of%20gravity.&text=And%20this%20explanation%2C%20in%20turn,speeding%20up%2C%20not%20slowing%20down>).

My major activity in my latter days has been as caregiver and caretaker for my wife of 67 years. Alzheimer's disease is gradually robbing her of her memory and judgment and hence of her identity and dignity. It is an insidious disease. I take each day at a time and work toward as much normalcy as can be possible under such circumstances. Being a solitary caregiver is a life changing experience. It teaches one patience. A major loss is finding personal time to pursue things that interest me, in which mom is not interested. She no longer reads, and we watch a lot of television reruns in the evening because they appeal to her. She

spends more time sleeping and puttering and is more and more confused, particularly upon rising. I am “on duty,” as it were, 24/7. There is little flexibility in my schedule. The family has seen it to be necessary that mom cannot be left alone except for very short periods (an hour at most).

I have continued to write an occasional article for publication in print media, generally for “The Fourth R.” One that appeared in recent days is “Be There Dragons in the Bible?” *The Fourth R* 34.3 (May-June 2021): 15–16. There is at least one other essay waiting in the queue to appear. They are both edited and expanded essays from my blog. I no longer have time for scholarship of a professional nature. I have had photographs of a Coptic text (on loan from the British Museum) spread out on my desk for months/years for restoration and translation but have had little time to think about it much less work on it. I continue to publish fortnightly on my blog (*Wry Thoughts about Religion*) a brief essay (around two pages) on a subject that interests me, generally about religion, the Bible, the church, or occasionally some contemporary issue.

Most of my desk time is taken up with paying bills, handling solicitations, paying income and other forms of taxes. Other “housekeeping issues” at the desk are tending to the professional memberships I have retained. I must check the Home-Owners Association website periodically and read the

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numerous lengthy screeds that sometimes appear there. I have been taking Peggy to Break Time Club in Kansas City (run by Northland's Shepherds Center) once a month for three hours a week (I am supposed to leave her there and get a break, but Peggy insists I stay). My daughter, Cindi, finally took over that responsibility, until it became evident that Peggy could no longer attend. Cindi could not leave the area either. Peggy's Alzheimer's had finally reached the point that the meds were not working for her—when we could get her to take them. During the day she would wander around the house whimpering and being agitated.

During holidays, especially Christmas, one must rise to the occasion buying and wrapping presents and remembering birthdays. Birthdays are remembered by card and personal check, as has been my practice for many years. But recently I have been ordering some gifts through mail order houses. For the majority, close friends and family members, we send Ozarks Mountain Popcorn (from Springfield, Missouri) or some other appropriate gift basket, as we have done for a number of years.

I must manage our certificates of deposit that we have invested in numerous banks spread out between Kansas City and Springfield where they sit and periodically mature. When they do mature, it is a very time-consuming process. I must call all banks in the Kansas City area to determine which bank has a preferable rate, call the bank where the CD is maturing to

determine if it will match that rate. If not, I must arrange for the money to be wired into our current bank, and then secure a CD from the bank that offers the best rate locally, which entails going there in person with proper documentation. Years ago, I elected to use the CD option rather than investing money in the stock market because I did not want to invest the time and energy to daily monitor the stock market. I felt it was too big an investment of time, but as it has turned out CDs, at times, require almost as much monitoring and time investment.

Then there are the real homemaking tasks: preparation of meals, cleaning the house (at least once a month broken down into one morning each on dusting, vacuuming, “swifting” the floors, cleaning the porcelain, etc.), washing dishes and clothing and other cloth items, shopping one day a week (two to three hours, usually at two different stores, Price Chopper and HyVee), yard maintenance, servicing and washing the car, monitoring health and hygiene issues, daily assisting mom’s bathing, and dressing for the day, ordering medications (from Express Scripts) and dispensing mom’s pills, making medical appointments and taking mom and me both to meet the appointments (current regular appointments are with mom’s podiatrist, dentist, neurologist). All these items above do not occur on the same day, but they occur with regularity so that a big portion of my time is spent in accommodating them. They are what they are, and all

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must be done (if one will pardon the word) religiously. When Peggy came under Hospice care, her medical appointments were greatly reduced.

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The author at 81 on one of his many coin-hunting walks in Springfield, Missouri.

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For personal exercise I walk about an hour each day along a predetermined 2 1/2-mile route. During inclement weather I will walk in the house but walk I will. One thing that I do in connection with the walk is that when I find a coin (penny, nickel, quarter; occasionally bills), I write a short rhyme (I do not claim it is "good" poetry) about the discovery and publish it for Cindi, Kay, and my two granddaughters, Kimberly and Katie, to read. Later we admitted son Charles to this group. They will do the same when they find coins. It is an interesting, and somewhat demanding, activity that adds a creative component to the daily grind. At least I feel that I am creatively engaging life.

Here is a sample of one poem:

The Brown Nickel

A copper nickel? Can it be?

Or is it a slug that I see?

No, it is far too heavy.

A slug is not thick but thin.

In consistency like tin.

Yes, a nickel have I found,

Dirty and copper brown

Lying on the ground

With a logo

Of Monticello.

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Here is a second:

Ditty Three

A silver dime doth ten coppers make.

Unless forged by some callous rake

This coin was solid and strong as the state,

And as decreed by fate

Bore the date 2014 (alas not 1948).

In her last months, Peggy and I had very few social obligations out of the house due to her declining condition. For example, the pandemic has brought me to sitting in a virtual pew and observing religious services at Grace Baptist Church in nearby Kansas City. Previously when we could attend and there was no mask mandate, Peggy saw that many people in the services do not wear masks and then she pulled hers off exposing us both to whatever strain (delta, omicron) of the covid-19 virus might be around. Sometime ago I had stopped insisting that mom watch the service with me because it upsets her.

My enforced isolation because of advanced age, health circumstances, and especially the pandemic has introduced into my life a kind of near-bearable monotony, even though the range of different things to be managed these days brings with them a kind of diversity. I find that I do not miss extensive engagement with the world; it distracts me from other things more compelling. Truth be told, the world is too much with us. I

do miss, however, intelligent communication with colleagues on subjects of common interest. A little of what I need I find by blogging short essays. But what I really want to do is to go back in time and do it all over again and this time to do it well. Alas, however, there are no do-overs in life!

There was a time I engaged life with hearty gusto. Now I find myself tired and in retirement, forced to engage the outside world for economic and medical reasons that take up time and reduce the amount of available time to give to things that bring real pleasure. I recall well when a friend decided to withdraw from what he called “public life.” He cut off all engagement with the world and as far as I knew made the decision stick. At least he never answered my emails after his withdrawal. I cannot withdraw from the world in which I find myself, and do not wish to cut myself off from friends.

William Wordsworth has a poem entitled, “The World is Too Much with Us.”

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers.
Little we see in Nature is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
This sea that bares her bosom to the moon,
The winds that will be howling at all hours,

And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers,
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
It moves us not.—Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

As I read the poet, human beings have surrendered their engagement with the natural order of things for the machinations of a modern industrial world; the present age, one might say. We are so preoccupied with the necessities of surviving in such a world that we seldom pause to see the beauty and wonders of the natural world. The poet imagines renouncing faith and returning to an ancient Pagan world where human life was more in tune with the natural order of things and imagination added a certain spice to existence. There is a kind of world-weariness to the poem and a sense of loss that makes him “forlorn.” But sitting here today, January 1, 2022, I understand the poet’s frustration and loss caused by a necessary world-engagement. So might I, in some sheltered carrel, retreat into my mind from world engagement to imagine other worlds aborning.

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Recently, time and the cosmos have thrown another wrinkle into my life. Peggy passed away on January 18, 2023. We had finally trusted her into the care of a memory care unit (Anthology of Burlington Creek in the Kansas City Northland) on Friday January 6, where we left her for her first weekend to get adjusted. On the first day she seemed to be comfortable in her surroundings. I received a call around 10 am Monday morning January 9 that Peggy had been transferred to North Kansas City Hospital (without their having contacted me) for evaluation. I called my children, and we rushed over to the hospital. Cindi, Kay, and I found Peggy highly distraught; no one from Anthology had accompanied her and it was clear she did not know what was happening in the strange environment. We found her in emergency. She was eventually transferred to a hospital ward later that day. She remained in the Hospital Ward till January 11 when she was transferred to Kansas City Hospice as a terminal Alzheimer's patient. She never regained consciousness after her stay in the hospital ward and lingered neither eating nor drinking and passed away January 18 at 2:42 am. The swiftness of her death was a shock to us all. Her Death Certification read "Alzheimer's Disease - Years."

My daughter Cindi wrote her obituary, with minor input from the family. Her funeral service was held at McGilley Antioch Chapel in Kansas City, Missouri on Sunday January 29 at 1 pm

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and her inhumation in a green casket (her favorite color) on Monday January 30th at the Missouri Veterans Cemetery on Monday January 30 at 2 pm. The Rev. Dr. Jerry B. Cain, retired President of Judson University in Elgin, Illinois, officiated at her Celebration of Life Service, assisted by Rev. Stephen Barbee, Interim Minister at Grace Baptist Church. Mr. William Turnage sang “At the End of the Road” (by Alfred Achley), accompanied by Ms. Karen Ziegler, Church Musician and Choir Director at Grace Baptist Church.

I have not yet begun to think seriously about this singular life-changing event in my life. She was a great lady and is sorely missed by those who knew her.

Can a person of faith, no matter how eroded, find any consolation and solace in advanced old age and the passing of loved ones from the ancient writings of the Judeo-Christian faiths? The answer is “perhaps.”

To everything there is a season, as one biblical writer puts it (Eccl 3:1-8) and as the musical group, the Birds, have suggested most recently (in “Turn, Turn, Turn”), no doubt drawing on Ecclesiastes. The nostalgic mementos that we gather through life mark our inevitable “turns” into other seasons of our lives. No matter how much we may wish to remain at one stage, the turns are inevitable. The early Christian writer, Paul, left behind two

pearls of wisdom for those of us who have arrived at the season of advanced old age and solitude: on one occasion he opined: “I have learned, in whatever state I am to be content” (Phil 4:11-13 RSV). Sounds like cogent advice for those of us finding ourselves in that most difficult and inevitable season of life, if we are lucky enough to reach it. Nevertheless, he might have been led to that view because he thought the world was going to end in his lifetime (1 Cor 7:25-31). Hence, his advice to all those in his day gathering in the name of Jesus, the Judean thaumaturge, was “remain as you are” (1 Cor 7:17-24). In other words, learn to live with your situation; it will be for only a short period.

The astute reader of 1 Cor 7:17-24 should by now have discovered his second pearl of wisdom: “were you a slave when called [into faith]? Never mind. But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity. For he who was called in the Lord as a slave is a freedman of the Lord. Likewise, he who was free when called is a slave of Christ” (1 Cor 7:21-22). Where slavery is concerned, Paul willingly violates his own rule of “remain as you are” (1 Cor 7:17, 20, 24). The principle involved in both statements appears to be the following: learn to live with your situation, unless you can change it. This principle applied to those of us trapped in the final season of life is this: “Cope with it, unless you can change the situation to your benefit in some way.”

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Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was made:
Our times are in His hand,
Who saith “A whole I planned,
Youth shows but half; trust God: see all, nor be afraid!”
(Robert Browning , “Rabbi Ben Ezra”)



Charlie and Peggy in somewhat younger days in Springfield, Missouri.

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A great lady. Sorely missed by all.

Lucinda H.

Thank you Cindi!

I experienced so many emotions while reading of this wonderful essay. I'm so grateful you wrote it. Thank you, Dad.

Thank you. I will correct it!

PS Dad, it's "Yarchin." 😊😊😊

Lois

Thank you daughter Kay! It has been fun rummaging through my odyssey. Thank you for pushing me into doing it.

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I am so glad you decided to do these stories Dad! I'm loving reading through the stories of your life. Now I need to add pictures! 😊

