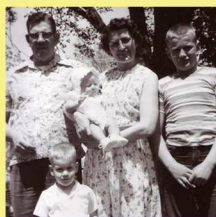


Through *the* Decades

*Memories from a
Life of Ministry*

Stan Rendahl



Through the Decades

Through the Decades

Memories from a Life of Ministry

Stan Rendahl

©2010 J. Stanley Rendahl

First Printing, September 24, 2013

Contents

1	A Prelude to the Memorable Decades	1
2	The Dirty Thirties	11
3	The Frustrating Forties	35
4	The Fabulous Fifties	49
5	The Stretching Sixties	63
6	The Senior Seventies	75
7	The Exciting Eighties	87
8	The Nomadic Nineties	105
9	The Last, or First, Decade	129

A Prelude to the Memorable Decades

My days began in 1915. I was born the son of Pastor Axel and Judith Rendahl. Both of them were born in Sweden. Mother came here with her parents about 1887 and settled with them on an island in Rush Lake in Minnesota and later on a farm a few miles west. At the turn of the century Dad came alone and found the Swedish community called Cambridge. He began working as a telephone lineman and installation crew the Monday after arrival.

After a difficult childhood Mother became connected with the Stanchfield Baptist Church, where she was induced to attend the Women's Baptist Missionary Training School in Chicago. She graduated in 1910 and was hired by the Northern Baptists to be a missionary to the Swedish population of Kansas.

Dad stayed with the telephone crew and when they served the Red Wing area he met the Savior in a personal way and was baptized. Shortly thereafter he left that job and came to the Twin Cities. He had an assortment of jobs, from construction, to lumberjacking, to driving a Wells Fargo express

wagon. He began to witness for Christ and preached at several rescue missions in the Twin Cities. In 1908 he enrolled at Bethel Academy. That same fall he was asked to be the student pastor in Grasston, MN. He also preached at the West Rock Chapel, where a deacon, August Olson, asked if his niece Judith could bring a greeting one Sunday. She had just come home from Bible School. She made a real impression on the young pastor, and they began a relationship. He finished the school year at Bethel. The dean asked if he would like to serve a church full time before he went to seminary. He told Axel of an opening in Kansas. Axel went, and got reacquainted with Judith Erickson. Two years later, he enrolled at the Morgan Park Seminary, graduating in 1914. Who can understand the Lord's leading? In 1914 those two Minnesotans in ministry were married in Topeka and became partners in ministry in Warren, PA.

Then I came. I went with them to church immediately. As Mother taught her ladies' Sunday School class I lay in my basket on the pew beside her. As soon as I could toddle on my own, Dad made me his companion and pulled me in my wagon during his home visitations. One Sunday I looked for a promotion and climbed up to the pulpit until I pressed against his knee and said loudly, "Nu ska Stanley predika," (now Stanley shall preach). Shortly after that Rodger appeared, and I got a "playmate."

Their ministry was effective, but Dad, showing his caring heart for churches that had problems, saw a need. The church in Erie was floundering. Dad resigned and took his family to the big city just as World War I ended. We moved into an apartment in the church. I made myself known on Novem-

ber 11. The neighbors were on the streets pounding their pots and pans in celebration of the Armistice. I joined them. The church got their financial situation straightened out and they got a new vision for their existence. The flu epidemic raged. Emory came. Mother was exhausted.

Then another church caught Dad's attention. With two preschoolers and a baby in their arms they boarded a train for Des Moines, IA. A big freestanding parsonage and the proximity of kin made the call to the church very inviting. I benefitted in that I got to go to school. I was enrolled in a kindergarten well into the school year. The teacher and the kids had some problem with me: they didn't understand my Swedish vocabulary. I got sick and stayed home. Shortly the teacher brought the youngsters to see the classmate they couldn't understand. When I got back to the classroom only a few of them were present. I had had the mumps and shared the bug with the visitors. In school I noticed many of the boys came barefoot. I wanted to be like them, but Mother wouldn't hear of it. So I would leave home with my shoes on, but when I came to someone's woodshed, I'd enter, remove my shoes and stockings, and stash and secure them on the top of a wood pile. After we moved into Eagle Crest the lady across the hall told me, "They likely didn't have shoes ... your school bordered a poverty area." She had gone to another kindergarten in Des Moines at the same time.

That summer I chose to play baseball with the big kids on the corner. I chased a long hit ball into the street. A truck driver didn't see me and ran over my legs. I spent the rest of the summer in bed, except when I got up to ride the banister

to my Sunday School class, which met in our living room. I took one of my shoes to bed to help frighten the rats who had invaded our house and raced up and down between the studs. An old building had been dismantled on the lot behind us, and its rats had come into our home. The summer concluded with me sitting beside a washtub full of soda pop bottles and lifting them up to a voice that called out “Grape” and other such flavors. I was a helper at the church ladies’ waffle booth at the Iowa State Fair.

At the time I didn’t know why, but two years after our arrival we were on the move again — this time to Marinette, WI. Later I learned the church was facing both the language question and relocation, for an American Baptist church was close by. Dad had wanted them to relocate, but they didn’t like the idea and rather than cause a fissure he vacated the pulpit. They did finally relocate twenty years later.

Marinette was a growing experience for me. My teachers were sympathetic to the new kid. My toys took on a new identity. There were roller skates, ice skates, and a sled. Besides that I had neighborhood playmates. They incited a sports interest. The Lutheran preacher’s kid who lived across the street was my age. We played football in his church yard and went to the high school games, where we climbed a tree and watched the first half from our reserved seats. When the ticket seller left at the half-time break we’d walk in.

Dad bought his first car, a 1922 Star, and that opened a new world. That car brought us to a lot of distant activities. We went to Gramma’s house in Minnesota and had to cross the St. Croix river on a ferryboat each way. We used a cabin

on Wood Lake, with tent meetings on the adjacent lot. That became an inspiration for the Wood Lake camp. We drove around Green Bay to get to Sister Bay and camped in a public park on the way. Here the gasoline was siphoned from our car while we slept in it. That is, except for me. I slept in a lean-to tent on the other side of the gas tank opening. We also traveled to the sand dunes along the shores of Green Bay where we dug caves, and took innumerable trips to the Nelson/Johnson farm.

It was in Marinette that I accepted the Lord, while I prayed in my parents' closet. I'd read, "When you pray enter into the closet," but I had no closet in my room. Some time after that I testified to that experience by being baptized by my father. My companion in that event was an eighty-year-old lady.

Those delightful experiences came to an end all too quickly. Delightful ... except one, when a boy in the next block started chasing me with a hand sickle. I ran as fast as I could and came to a backyard shed, ran in, closed the door and secured it. He climbed up to the roof and yelled for me to come out. The owners heard him and eventually came to my rescue.

Before I was ten Dad announced we'd be moving. He had accepted a position as State Missionary for the Swedish Baptists of Wisconsin, and we were to live in a more central part of the state.

I climbed into the back seat with two brothers and many boxes after playing "last tag" with my friends. All I knew was that we were moving to a town where the railroad tracks crossed ... the Soo Line's north/south trains and the east/west

trains. In addition, highways U.S. 8, and Wisconsin 13 crossed. This move was to facilitate his traveling. What I learned meant I'd have an absentee father. We drove several hours on U.S. 8, and then went up a main street to Wisconsin 13. When we came to the top of the high hill on the last block in town, Dad pulled into the driveway of the last house on the west side of the street. He told us, "This is it." We bounced out of the car and began to explore, both outside and inside. It was different from anything I knew. The house seemed huge, for it had attached to it what I thought to be the garage, but what turned out to be a big woodshed. At the end of that was a little room with two holes on a bench. Behind that we found a big red, though faded, building called the "barn" ... that was to be our playroom, our garage, and a chicken coop, with plenty of space for us, especially on the upper level.

Almost too soon Mother called, "Supper." We raced out of the barn, on a board sidewalk alongside the sheds, up two steps onto a porch, and then into a kitchen to a table set for us. I have no idea who unpacked all the stuff. Mother had removed from the picnic basket the remnants of our noon meal. When she told us to wash our hands we curiously asked "Where?" She pointed to a small table with a white basin on it and a pail. She ladled in some water ... there we learned a new lesson on living. After we downed the sandwiches and drank the water from the pail, Dad took us, or at least me, out the kitchen's front door. That house had two front doors ... one to the kitchen and the other to a hall into the main house. We walked to the sidewalk, around the lot line fence to the neighbor's back entry. There stood a pump. Dad showed me

how the water came. We filled the pail and carried it back along that fence. This Rodger and I did daily for the next five years. When bedtime came the three of us were introduced to a big room with one double bed and one crib, all prepared. One unique feature was the hole in the floor at the foot of Emory's bed. It was maybe a foot across with a metal grating. "What's that?" raced through our minds. Dad explained, "That's the way to heat this room in wintertime, the heat from below comes up."

The next morning we learned our identity with this new place wasn't complete. Mother was perking the coffee and cooking some cereal for us on the stove, one that burned wood ... previously we had used gas of some sort. I found a woodbox close to the stove with pieces of wood that could be burned. After breakfast Dad showed me where it came from and gave me my first lessons on chopping wood ... a chore I didn't relinquish until we made the next move. Dad later ordered some wood that came in chunks to split. Weeks later he brought home some logs and I learned to saw them into the right lengths, so they'd fit in the stove.

The next Monday Dad took Rodger and me to school. We drove down our hill and crossed a narrow bridge that gave me the willies for months. It had two sets of planking down the center, as far apart as the wheels of a car. The school was a nice enough old building but I had a shock when I found two grades in my classroom, both fifth and sixth. I had worn the same garments I did in Marinette, knickers and long black stockings, and when Dad left me I got a good ribbing. The next days and years I managed to wear some bib overalls like the other boys. I also got laughed at when the teacher asked

me to sing the scale and I sang it all on the same note.

My mother found a new problem. There was no milk delivery. And though our town had two stores, no milk was sold there either, for there was no refrigeration yet. She found out about the farm north of us. We were the last house in the village and this farm was the first country place, about a quarter mile from us. Inquiring, we were told we could buy milk daily if we came and got it. That became my daily practice. After supper I'd take my tin pail and walk there and back. The redeeming factor was they had a son named Stanley, who was about four years older than I was. We became good friends. He was the one who induced me into getting my favorite toy. At age twelve I bought my 22 rifle with funds I got snaring weasels, which Stanley also taught me to do.

We did our bathing in a washtub with water we carried from the rain barrel or the pump. In summer we went to the mill dam, a mile upstream from that bridge, and bathed in our birthday suits with all the big boys. When Mother did her weekly wash it was either in the kitchen or on the back porch, weather permitting. I got to stay home from school to help. I'd haul cold soft water from the river and hot water from the creamery across the river, on either my sled or wagon. We had the rain barrel, but most weeks that wasn't enough.

Playmates were scarce. In Sunday school I was part of a good class, but the others were all farm boys and lived on all four sides of the village. Albert was the closest one, a mile away. He became my best friend until he died in 1935. It would be interesting to know how many rabbits and woodchucks we shot with our 22s, and how many times we went swimming in the bend of the river a mile from his house. An-

other chore I got was to pick blueberries in a swamp two miles north of us. Mother wanted to can one hundred quarts, but that depended on their abundance and how many Rodger and I ate in the bushes.

On January first, 1928, the thermometer registered twenty below zero, and the Rendahl boys awakened to a strange sound coming up from below, thanks to that hole in the floor. It sounded like a baby crying. What radio program did the folks have on? We dressed quickly in order to avoid the bitter cold, and tramped down the stairs and through our long hallway to investigate. We stopped to warm up at the space heater, and were stunned. Close to it was the source of the crying we heard. It came from an unfamiliar basket. Dad immediately informed us that during the night a baby sister had come. Ruth Evangeline has blessed our lives ever since.

I had some great paying jobs, like picking beans at Lindmarks, hauling hay with Stanley, chopping wood for Bixbys, shocking hay for Nelsons, cleaning the barn for Morners, and carrying back an extra pail of milk for delivery to some new neighbors down the block. I put those coins in my bank savings account, but as we made our entrance into the "Dirty Thirties," something called the Great Depression claimed them. I turned 15 in the summer of that year, 1930, and more changes came.

The Dirty Thirties

It was 1930, the beginning of the decade known as the “Dirty Thirties.” I graduated from the eighth grade in the Prentice, WI, school system. Our family had moved there five years before. It was one of the significant days of my life. My other three graduations seem pale compared to that one.

As the end of the school year approached the class was instructed by our teacher, Elsie Carlson, who was also my Sunday school teacher, to wear a nice dress or a suit for graduation. I mentioned this to Dad and his comment was, “What kind of a suit and what color?” I had no instructions for him nor any inclinations in that direction. He spoke again, “Would a blue serge suit be okay?” I didn’t know what “serge” meant, but I said “Okay.” Mother took some careful measurements of me. A few days later a big package arrived in the mail. It was my suit, and with it a white shirt and a real tie.

The 20th of May was the first day I wore that dark blue suit. Proudly I strutted to the graduation exercises in the City Hall. Promptly a lady pinned a big red rose to my lapel. I’d never worn a rose before. I still have it, all dried, pressed

and included with my graduation certificate. The auditorium was filled, mostly with parents, siblings and other kinfolk who were celebrating with the eleven of us who paraded across the stage to get our diplomas from D. W. Wile, the principal.

The next week I traded that honor for a hoe. The half-acre bean patch that my brother Rodger and I had planted needed weeding. It would be our second summer raising beans for the local cannery. I had picked beans for a neighbor, Mrs. Lindmark, one summer and got paid a penny a pound for all those I picked. I would pick a row and if the pail was full I'd go to the owner, weigh it, and start the next row. Sometimes I made twenty cents a day. Dad said, "If you raised your own beans you'd make more money." So we were trying it. After the weeds were removed, the green plants grew, and the fresh beans appeared. We harvested them, and Dad let me load the car and drive to the cannery with our boxes of freshly picked beans. It was a thrill to drive up to the unloading ramp with my own beans. Now, instead of getting one cent, I got eight cents a pound. Have you ever wondered how many green string beans it takes to make a pound?

Fred Nelson, whose son Albert was my best friend, asked if I'd come to his farm and work during the summer. Albert had an asthma problem, and the dust of the field bothered him, so Fred thought he could help his son by having me on the scene. The big thing of the summer was haying. Fred hitched his horse, Maude, to a mower which was equipped with a freshly sharpened long sickle blade. Fred had honed these wedge shaped pieces of steel on his whetstone, a two foot wide stone wheel that was turned by foot pedals. He

tramped with one foot, and used both hands to move that long series of blades across the sandstone wheel. He tested the sharpness with his thumb, and if sharp enough, he inserted it into the mower and proceeded to cut down his fields of timothy grass. He let the new fallen hay dry for two days, and then hitched Maude to a rake. This was a huge apparatus that looked like a long series of bent fingers. Maude pulled it along, and when Fred lifted the rake, the drawn-together hay would settle in long windrows as they moved on.

In a day or two, in the morning, after the sun had evaporated the night moisture, Albert and I gathered some hay together to make a pile ... a cock about two feet high. It remained like that until it was cured and ready to take into the hay loft. A refreshing interruption was provided by the highway, Wisconsin 13, which bordered the field. As the cars raced past, spreading dust over everything (we had only gravel roads yet), we waved and the occupants waved back. When the hay was thoroughly cured or dry it was moved into the haymow. Maude was brought out and hitched to a hayrack, a wagon about the size of my mother's living room rug, with a two foot high frame around it. Albert and I each had a three-tined pitchfork and tossed each haycock, or as much of it as we could, into the wagon box. Fred stayed in the wagon, and rearranged it, to keep the load even and to secure the hay so it would not slide off as the load got higher than the crate-like sides. When we could no longer toss up the hay because of the height, Fred sat on the load, snapped the reins and old Maude drew the load to the barn.

Heavy ropes had been placed in pairs at intervals across the hayrack, and in the barn was a hoist that ran on a track

in the very peak of the barn. A heavy cable hung from that track, and to this was attached a pair of the ropes. Maude had been unhitched from the wagon and rehitched to a whiffle-tree, attached to the strong cable that followed the track in the barn. On Fred's order, I slowly walked the horse as the first of successive bundles of hay was lifted from the hayrack and carried to a place in the loft where Fred released it. I'd hear a great thud and turn the beast back to our starting point.

In between the hay tasks we did things like hoeing the garden and chopping some wood. The latter was a constant process, for the stove in the kitchen and the heater in the living area consumed wood. If there was nothing else to do, we were in the newly broken fields picking rocks. Fred would claim from the woodlands a quarter of an acre of land every year for cultivation. He had a pattern. The first year he would cut down the trees, using only his axe, and let them dry over the winter. The next year he would trim them and take home the smaller limbs for firewood, and the third year, he would pull the stumps, sometimes with the aid of blasting powder. These would dry over the winter and again he'd find pieces that would be heater fuel. Finally, Maude was brought in to pull a single bottom steel plow over the rough terrain that remained, uprooting roots and stones, which we picked out by hand.

Milking came each day, in fact, twice a day. The Soo Line railroad divided the farm so the pasture land was across the tracks from the home site. It was difficult and dangerous for the cows to cross the tracks. The answer was to have a milking shed in the pasture. Eight cows gathered and each got stripped of her milk. I got a chance to pull the teats ... it

wasn't easy. Fred poured what we extracted into large five gallon containers. He had fashioned a wooden yoke, which he placed on his shoulders. On each end was a long hook, the exact length of his arm and on that hook he hung his heavy cans of milk. Albert and I followed with the milk pails, some with milk in them. We made a little procession as we walked out of the pasture, closed the gates after us, crossed the railroad tracks and opened a gate on the other side . . . these gates were only long horizontal poles, hung between the ends of the fence to fill the opening. In the kitchen one of us had to turn the separator, which separated the cream from the milk. After the chores, we all, including Albert's two younger sisters, would walk a half-mile to "the bend," a turning place in the Jump River, and have a swim . . . it was our only bath tub.

The end of haying marked the end of my job. My dad came to get me. As Fred was paying me, Dad asked, "Was he worth his salt?" I was insulted. Wasn't I worth more than that little white stuff? Fred gave a favorable response in his Swedish brogue. On the way home, I got an explanation — salt is valuable for preserving, seasoning, melting, and more. It is one of the world's most sought after commodities. I felt better.

The summer wasn't over. Threshing came next. August Peterson, who farmed immediately north of our house, and where I went daily to get the milk for our family, had a threshing machine. It was powered by a large gasoline engine, which was dragged from place to place on a stone-boat. He had a son, also named Stanley, who was about four years older than I was, and he was a good friend. Mr. Peterson asked me to come and carry grain from the threshing machine to the

granary. There were to be two of us and with Stanley's help it wouldn't be hard. I agreed and went to work in the harvest.

The engine roared into action, the big machine clanked away as the older men tossed grain bundles, mostly oats, onto a conveyer belt and the cogs propelled them through the machine. The straw came out from a large pipe but the kernels of grain were fed into big gunnysacks which were held under a spout. When the sack was full, the carriers, including me, would take a grip on the top of the sack with the right hand and hold tight as the filled sack was lifted to the left shoulder. Then a long walk to the bins, which were most often on the second floor of the granary. Kermit and I took turns and if we got behind, Stanley, who oversaw the mechanical movements, would run with a sack. It was a pleasant and easy day. The second day was too, but the third day Kermit didn't show up — he was ill. I had to run with all the sacks. Stanley would help at times, but if some problem with the motors persisted he'd stop and I'd be alone. Now I was earning my salt, as well as my dollar a day.

With the beans, the hay, and the grain I managed to have a little savings account. More important though, was the fact that I was to start high school. Before that happened Dad made arrangements to move. The unexpected "long move" was four houses down the street and on the other side. The rent went up from twelve dollars to fifteen dollars a month. Many items we carried over, the larger ones we pulled in Dad's little trailer. We had help only to move the piano. This house was a larger and warmer one and I could have a bedroom all to myself, not one I had to share with my brothers.

I drove our 1922 black Star car to high school, parked it across the street, and walked in to register. I was a freshman, I'd just turned fifteen (no drivers' licenses were needed), and my ego rode high. After all, I'd worked all summer, and now I was enrolling in a school of higher education. It was the same entrance I'd used for four years. The high school department was on the second floor; it had one large assembly room where we each had a desk, and three classrooms. I claimed the last seat and desk in the back corner of the freshman rows. Maybe we were twenty-five green ones.

Dad came home from a trip, looking very forlorn. At dinner he announced that we would have to relocate. He had just lost his job. The Wisconsin Swedish Baptist Conference churches were not giving the amounts they had been giving. Something called the "Depression," with bank foreclosures and the like, had limited the income. There were not enough funds to retain him. He had to go job hunting. We hadn't noticed the impact of the economic situation in our small rural town, where most of the neighbors were farmers and lived "off the land." Dad made inquiries about pastorates, but churches hesitated when they learned he had three growing boys and a pre-school daughter.

The State Missionary for the Illinois churches was to retire; Dad was invited to consider that post. The search committee asked him to come to Chicago for an interview. He took Mother and Vangie along. I had to stay home with my two younger brothers. That was okay, except that it was about twenty below zero. I could endure that, but that weekend the church needed to be used for a funeral. I was the janitor. One of the responsibilities of that position was to scrub the floor at

the edge of the platform where the Communion table stood, so the casket could be rolled in to a clean surface. I went to scrub the church floor, carrying the warm water with me. There was no running water in the church, which was only two doors north of our house. I cleared away the table and the chairs and got down on my knees to scrub. I splashed some water on the floor and ran the scrub brush over it. Nothing happened. The water had frozen to the floor. Quickly, I fired the wood-burning furnace and after a couple of hours the sanctuary was warm enough to proceed. I finished the floor and set the furniture back in place for the services the next day, which was Sunday. Immediately after the service I had to remove the Communion setting and straighten all the chairs ... we had only chairs in church ... and get ready for a crowded church in the afternoon. Not only that, I had to feed, clothe, bathe, and watch two little brothers, ages ten and twelve.

I was glad when the folks came back, but awed by the fact Dad had accepted the position. We were to stay in Prentice until school was out; he would leave immediately to survey the territory, locate his first charge, and then find a house. At least Dad had an income, even though he wasn't home until May. When he came back, preparations were made to move. They did. I stayed in Prentice and worked for Fred Nelson for the summer, doing what I'd done the year before, only with some experience.

The summer was nearly over when the Nelsons had a visit from kinfolk who had driven north from the Chicago area. I could ride with them to Chicago and save the bus or train fare,

which would have been more than my one week's pay. Fine! I rode with them. He stopped in Milwaukee to buy gas for his sedan. As the attendant filled his tank, my driver mentioned, "That's the first time I bought gas since I left home." My non-mathematical mind let its computer work and I thought about the distance from Chicago to Price County and all the way back to Milwaukee. I had to ask, "How did you manage to drive that far on one tank of gas?" He related to me that he was a mechanical tinkerer and that he'd taken the carburetor from his new car and made some adjustments and now he was saving gas, almost doubling his miles per gallon. I was taken aback. I had to ask, "If you can make that improvement, why can't the manufacturers?" His answer, "Simply, they don't want to."

We followed the shores of Lake Michigan until we came to Chicago's south side. He turned to the right, and after a few blocks he stopped, and said, "Here's where we part company." I was a puzzled country hick, but said goodbye to the family. He walked with me into a bus station and he asked the clerk some questions about a bus to Steger, where my folks lived. He stayed with me until a bus going south to Steger came and I boarded it. Lights were going on all over the city as the bus traveled south. I had been on the bus for over an hour and all I saw was city. The bus driver called my corner and I got off.

I inquired of a policeman on the corner how to find my Dad. I had no street address. He had no idea. As we discussed what to do next, an inebriated man — this was during Prohibition — butted in and wondered what this was all about. After the policeman told him I was looking for a new preacher's residence, he said, "I know right where that is." In

the patrol car, with a drunk as our guide, I was brought to the front door of my new home. The house was dark, but the response to my knocking brought a curious Dad to see what or who was knocking. I was welcomed home. I claimed my bag and thanked the cop and the drunk and went into the house.

It was great to sit at my mother's kitchen table, but that was all that was familiar. A six room "bungalow," they called it, was to be my home; my part of it was to have a cot in Dad's office. This house was a part of a new community and that put us close to a semi-rural area. The owner belonged to the church Dad was to help in Chicago Heights and he "supposedly" rented it to Dad a "little cheaper" than the neighbors paid.

I went with Dad the next day on an errand and saw sights that were totally foreign to me. For example, I saw a building seven or eight stories high. It had no walls, but on each level was a series of nicely spaced bathtubs. That peculiarity demanded an answer. "The builders just ran out of money and couldn't continue." We came up to the main center of Chicago Heights, and near a rather large building I saw a long line of people, and asked, "Why are they in line?" The reply: "That's a bread line ... those folk don't have money to buy bread and there is a donor at the beginning of the line." Dad pointed out a big steel mill, where I saw no sign of activity, no smoke from the tall chimneys, and every window seemed blackened.

A few days later Dad took me to register at Bloom Township High School in Chicago Heights. Generations of teenagers had walked through the corridors, and the stairs had grooves in them from heavy shoes. A residence or two

had been added to the property to accommodate the increasing enrollment. Teenagers who had quit school to work in the plants were returning. I met two football tackles, whose position I tried to vie for. They were older, bigger, and more mature than the rest of the students. They had spent two years working in a steel mill. They had good “Swedish” names, Vavrus and Vrba. We were to be a thousand or more students. What a contrast to the hundred pupils we had in Prentice. Besides, it was five, yes, five miles from our house. A group of neighborhood kids had transportation in the morning ... one or the other of the parents drove. In the evening we had to find our way home, because we were dismissed at various times. When my day was over, including football practice, I’d have to walk home alone those five miles on city sidewalks.

Our church building was across the street from the school. It had a sanctuary and two “back” rooms for Sunday School classes on the main floor. There was a full basement, with a fellowship hall where the high school band rehearsed. It was the rental fee from the school that kept the church solvent. It was not an imposing building. Dad’s assignment was to revitalize the church. Our family was to be heavily involved in the church program.

Driving north on Ashland Avenue, as the winter winds began to blow, Dad noticed a nice house, surrounded by a high hedge, standing on a corner, with a big *For Rent* sign in the window. It seemed he was in the country; he had passed the city limits. He walked on to the property and was impressed. He wondered what the rental would be, maybe too much. Anyway, he wrote down the number to call and when he came home he made that telephone call. First, the rental

fee was less than he was paying; secondly, it was only two miles from high school and church, and thirdly, there were four full bedrooms. When all the arrangements had been made, we moved. We took some loads of stuff up to the new house. Dad and Mother stayed to put them in place and I drove back and forth hauling the rest of it. I came to the last load. The car was cluttered with all sorts of odds and ends. I had to make a stop in a shopping area and when I came out a policeman stood by the car. Frightened I started to climb in, then he asked, "Is this your car?" I replied, "My Dad's." "What's all this stuff in the back seat?" "We're moving to a new house and this is the last load." He gave me a very skeptical look and walked away.

From that new house I walked the two miles to and from school. In the morning, generally some kind folk picked me up. Coming back, I seldom got a ride. The irony of it was, that on the way was an unfinished large brick school, known as "The New Bloom." It looked ready for students, but it had no plumbing fixtures. The city couldn't find funds to install them. Occupancy would have to wait "until times were better," which was long after we left the area. Business didn't have confidence in local government.

I carried my lunch to school, as did many others. Mother made a sandwich and added some sweets; which she wrapped in old newspaper — to look like a book. Thus it fit nicely in my locker. The lunch room offered milk for a nickel ... most kids didn't buy any. It was that little half-pint container of milk that gave evidence of the fact that "my father is working."

Spring came. Dad saw a place to plant a garden. When summer came it gave his three sons something to do. There

were no summer jobs, no farmers that would employ us, and no beans to pick for neighbors. I worked one day. On that day I helped a florist deliver flowers to merchants along 63rd Street in Chicago during a busy holiday weekend. From a truck I toted two trays of geraniums over my head, one in each hand, as I wiggled my way through passing shoppers to the store display tables. The driver didn't dare leave the truck, double parked in front of the store.

Two of my high school acquaintances had a three-wheel bike with a big square box between the rear wheels, which was an ice cream cooler. They rang a bell as they pedaled up and down the streets or near playgrounds. If some kids had a nickel they could buy a cone. The drivers were called "Pests" by many parents, yet they were the only fellows I knew that had any kind of a job.

I found a soft-ball team with two of my football cronies ... we were the only teenagers, the others were older fellows. We spent every evening on an assortment of ball diamonds in Chicago's south side suburbs. Some, like ours, had only a field with four bases, while others had beautiful well-groomed in-fields and lights for night baseball. Some of those older fellows joined the National Guard and with its weekly training program and its summer camp they got some income. No one dreamed of a coming war ... they only wanted the money.

I didn't understand the full value of the garden nor that of the wind-falls of fruit we picked from the ground on a Sawyer, Michigan (one of Dad's interest points) orchard until Dad told us "it happened again ... the money just isn't coming in." He was given three months terminal leave. It was a repetition of two years before, no one wanted a pastor with three

teenage sons (Emory was still a pre-teenager) and a little girl. Dad bought a box of Bibles and books at The General Conference headquarters, 912 Belmont Ave., Chicago. The Soo Line granted traveling clergy a free pass, so with the aid of his old pass, he visited his old familiar haunts in Wisconsin to try to sell them. I think he sold until the box was empty and came home, but the profit was slight.

Toward spring a South Dakota church invited him to candidate. From the interviewing committee he heard, "We don't have any money, so cash isn't available, but if you come we will supply a house and all you can eat, and maybe one offering a month for gasoline." He came home saying "at least we will have a roof over our heads and something for our stomachs."

When the school year was over we joined the caravans of vehicles moving west. For most of them it was California or Arizona, to warmer climes and maybe jobs. To us it was the vast prairie of the Dakotas. We had left a village with a population of less than 500 to live among the millions in the Chicago metro area, and now we were to be ten miles from the closest town. I doubt we ever walked to our closest neighbors.

The depression wasn't seen in the vacant, unfinished buildings but in the empty grain elevators, where plantain and other weeds poked their way up the loading ramps. Instead of bread lines there was a steer to slaughter or a pig to butcher. The pastor's family benefited greatly from the latter.

I doubt the farmers ever talked about the depression, only the drought. Rain was a commodity that was seldom seen or felt. The fields were as tan as the sunburned arms of the

farmers. The corn was not developing ears and had to be cut early to be made into silage. The grain, if reaped, might make some feed for the cattle or some flour. Nothing to sell. Eggs were only ten cents a dozen.

We had barely settled into that spacious parsonage when a cyclone ripped through our back yard and made kindling of all the outbuildings, including the barn (I saw the wind literally lift the barn straight up over the cow), and the garage, where we had about fifty little chicks. (Both the cow and the chicks were given to the pastor as a part of their “We will feed you” promise.) These buildings could not be replaced; no money for insurance. The pastor revamped the old horse barn behind the church for the three C’s (the cow, the chicks and the car). “Improvise” was the key word when there was no cash.

One farmer heard that I had worked on a farm and asked if I’d help him. I stayed with him about six weeks. He had six horses, not one; he had 360 acres, not 80; and he had a hundred pigs where Fred had none. After I’d learned to saddle a team, I spent my time trying to mow down the irregular vegetation that grew in the fields, in the hopes that it would make some hay. When that job was completed I used the team on a big manure spreader to clean the barnyard, but that spreader box had to be filled by hand. At the end of my time with the farmer and his five daughters, I was given a pair of new bib overalls as my remuneration, in addition to “my keep.” I often wondered if he had really purchased the overalls or if they were an unused Christmas gift.

The big question of the summer was, “What should Stanley do about high school?” Salem had a good school system, but that was ten miles away. Each of the three years in high school I’d taken more than the required four subjects and needed only two credits of something to graduate. Was it good economics to stay home for that and commute or find another option? Bethel was creating a junior college and still had an academy program. Could an arrangement be made to take both college and high school subjects? “Yes,” the school wrote back, “Such is possible . . . we will welcome Stanley.” Of course, I’d have to work my way through — there would be little or no cash from South Dakota.

With what little savings I had left from Prentice days, that is, after some fellow named Franklin had closed the banks and my funds didn’t reappear, I paid the fifty dollar tuition fee and started looking for a job. Nothing was available. A *Minneapolis Journal* agent appeared on the campus looking for paper boys. I could try that. I was assigned a route that began at University and Snelling Avenues. If I made the delivery truck at 4:20 a.m., I could ride with him from the Como Avenue corner down to my corner. I walked my route, carrying my big bag, and then walked back to the campus. I often stopped at the Hamline bakery to buy a day-old roll for a nickel; that was my supper. The Boarding Club at Bethel had a system that year, “You pay for what you eat,” and if I didn’t eat, it didn’t cost anything.

I spent my Saturdays beating rugs, washing windows, hanging storm windows and doing a host of other household chores. I even managed a painting job or two. I was also asked to “baby sit” some kids, one of whom is still my friend.

I claimed the Christmas recess and went home, wondering if it was worth it. The WPA (Works Progress Administration) presented a solution, and maybe I wouldn't go back to school. The morning after Christmas I went to work with a road construction gang. It was 49 degrees below zero and my job was to level the road after horse drawn wagons dumped their loads of gravel. This was fine and I kept warm. The next day, when I came to work I found I had a helper — that made the work easier. The fourth day, I found I had a second helper, that was cumbersome. On the fifth day the third man brought his car (a little Ford two-door sedan) to work, and in it he had a little oil burning space-heater in place of the front passenger seat, and we took turns sitting in the car. A week more of that and I felt I was wasting both my time and the country's money, working only two-thirds of the time. My paper route looked good and I went back to school. My Dad went into the gravel pits instead of me. When the WPA manager learned that a preacher was doing that hard labor, they appealed to the higher office to give Dad a "white collar" job. He got to teach "The Bible as an Historical Book," in four or five different places. This added some cash to the pastor's pocket.

I came home after my graduation from Bethel Academy and learned Dad had made a commitment . . . I was to work for one of the members on his farm, for ten dollars a month and "my keep." The day after I came home I went to the farm. Each morning I was awakened at 4:30 to help with the chores . . . we'd milk, curry the horses, feed the livestock and go in to breakfast in order to satisfy his goal, "We have to be in the field at seven a.m." An hour to eat and rest at noon and

back in the fields until six, dinner and then a repetition of the morning chores. It wasn't hard work. All I had to do was ride behind two horses that pulled a two row corn cultivator. Two experiences taught me about the Dakota "scares." One was the sighting of a tornado funnel and subsequent winds. I drove the team and the cultivator into a deep ravine and waited until all was quiet. The other was a "black blizzard." The wind blew and the sky darkened. Over the landscape came a cloud of dust, really of dirt, that made any movement impossible. I sat in the car out on the road, wondering where the road was ... I was totally enveloped in black dust. During such storms my mother hung blankets in the windows to keep the dirt from coming right through the closed windows.

I finished the cultivating and the recultivating of the corn, including a few acres of soybeans. The beans were just being introduced as a possible commercial crop and it seemed they needed special care. I was ordered to go on my hands and knees up and down the rows of beans and pick out all the non-bean growth that had come up between the wanted beans. This was a laborious and tedious task, especially under the hot late July sun. Bethel had informed me that if I came back early to the campus I could help with the "preparation team" for the new school year, and I'd be credited with thirty cents an hour to my account — that is, for the hours I worked. This sounded good. I told my boss to find another man, and I hitch-hiked back to Bethel.

Aleck Olson and I did all sorts of chores. I remember cutting all the long tables in the cafeteria in half, to make smaller tables for easier conversation. I had to use old four by fours for the new legs. Since no money was available to buy new

lumber, I found some timbers behind the furnace building, enough to satisfy our purpose. We worked about ten hours a day and I must have done okay. I was offered the high position of being the janitor on the lower level of the Academy building. This job provided my board and room for the year, but no cash.

During the week of the Minnesota State Fair, I asked for the privilege of parking cars on the Bethel campus, which happened to be across the street. Orville Burch and I did it together. On several days we completely filled the back property of that old campus with cars. At twenty-five cents a car we had enough money for our tuition.

The summer of 1935 I was back on the Sun Prairie farms. The drought was still there, the earth was covered with dried growth. One farmer I worked for cut Russian thistles for hay ... he cut it green and stacked it like a haystack and the barbs softened as it cured, like the corn in the silo. Another farmer wanted to cultivate his corn with a tractor, not a team. He hitched the cultivator to the tractor; I drove the Farmall up and down the rows, he rode the cultivator as he would behind a team and the dust covered him. It was certainly faster than with horses. After that the manufacturer attached the cultivating blades directly to the tractors.

That summer I also started to preach. The Ramsey church hadn't had a regular preacher for three years and was desperate, and asked me to come Sundays and Wednesdays. I had no aspirations or ambitions toward the ministry, but any student that went to Bethel was supposed to be ready to preach, it seemed. My brother drove back and forth to his high school

in an open Model T Ford. I used it to go from home to church, and to work for an array of farmers. I made better money doing it that way than if I stayed with one farmer all summer. I got one check at the end of the summer from the church and that paid my tuition for another year at Bethel.

If I was going to preach I thought I ought to learn how, so I took the course in preaching; and if I was going to say something, I'd better find out what, so I took a Bible course and dropped some college classes. I became a mixed-up kid. Then with only odd jobs for sustenance it made for a confusing year. Jobs were too few, my grades were too low, I was a discouraged collegian. I really gave up. I walked to the fire house on Midway Parkway to use the telephone — it cost us a nickel at Bethel — to call my aunt in Minneapolis and tell her I was going home. I never made that call. As I crossed Midway Parkway, a car stopped in front of me and the driver asked, "Young man, are you looking for a job?" I muttered, "Yes," and after I got into the car he told me what he wanted, and I went to work, after classes and on Saturday, for the best pay I'd ever received. He was building a new house north of Larpenteur and I was to dig the driveway and after that, do general maintenance work on the grounds.

After another summer at the Ramsey church I came back to Bethel; this time I got my hands in the dishpan and that supplied my board and room. Because I'd done some preaching I got to fill a lot of pulpits. The income was not great ... students were cheap ... but it provided some pocket jingling. Included in those assignments were trips with the Boarding Club truck to the churches which had potatoes and other farm produce to donate to the dining experience of students.

The student body maintained its own eatery; the school didn't provide such. For the farmers the cash supply might be limited, but in some years the potatoes were plentiful.

The summer of 1937 I spent with A. O. Lundeen in Roseau, MN. The steps toward prosperity hadn't reached to the Canadian border. For example: in one place four of us were on the DVBS (Daily Vacation Bible School) staff for two weeks. In the closing service an offering was taken for us and after the expenses were paid, they divided the balance and gave each of us seventeen cents. One of their teenage girls was helping in the Lundeen household. She had graduated from high school the spring before. We enticed her to come to Bethel, she was accepted, but then she said, "I have nothing to wear." Lundeen brought her to his basement, where he had racks of used clothing he had solicited from the Twin Cities churches, where she selected enough garments to fill an old donated suitcase. That was her college wardrobe.

After depositing that girl at Bethel I went on to Sioux Falls, to stay. I did not go back to Bethel. Dad had two and soon three sons in college but even with his very little cash income he felt he needed to help his sons. He located a large house south of Sioux Falls College, and rented it. It had four bedrooms, two of which he could rent out to college students and thus pay the rent and more. The year before Em and Rodger had stayed in Sioux Falls, Emory in high school and Rodger in college, but their living situation was deplorable and Dad felt responsible. Their only table, for both eating (they tried to bach it) and studying, was a free standing ironing board. The folks moved us into the rented house, with four boys from the college. The other boys got the front bedrooms; the back bed-

room the three Rendahl boys shared. A major difficulty with that room was that one had to enter it and leave it through the bathroom. This was rather cumbersome at times. Two months later Dad found a larger house, one with five bedrooms. This was better — he could rent out three rooms.

I walked up to the college from the first house and presented myself to the Dean as a possible student. I had no transcript, but recited all the courses I had taken at Bethel, without stating the GPA. After some discussion I filled my curriculum with Education courses, preparing to teach and maybe escape the ministry. As we concluded the interview the dean remarked, “You look like a deserving student, can I give you a scholarship?” I couldn’t respond, I was too baffled. He made some marks on a paper. I carried the paper to the school business office and was credited with \$87.50 — that would be less than one day’s cost of an education at Bethel today. The generosity of the donor almost covered my tuition. The first time I entered an education class room a nice looking girl sat alone. I asked to sit by her and learned we were both transfer students. She smiled at me and from then on we were frequent companions. That is, until the next decade began.

Now I didn’t need money for tuition, nor for board and room, but I still needed some spending money. Jobs were as scarce as salmon in the Big Sioux River. About the third week of school a church asked if I would preach one Sunday; the First Baptist Church of Parker, which had 185 members, and was thirty miles from the city. They invited me to be their student pastor at five dollars a week. I thought I was trying to escape the ministry but the Lord said, “I want you.” I stayed

with the Parker church until I went back to Bethel to Seminary.

Dad tried to keep on in Sun Prairie, but soon quit. His unemployment didn't last long. He was interviewed and hired by the Swedish National Tubercular Sanitarium of Denver as their field representative, at a cash salary. He would visit churches to tell about this missionary opportunity, bring a greeting from the sanitarium and the people would give him contributions ... rarely did anyone give a whole dollar.

After graduation from Sioux Falls College I went back to the Seminary. I was offered my dishpan job in the Boarding Club kitchen. Some window washing, etc., provided the cash needed. As the year progressed numerous preaching opportunities came. As 1939 began, I was asked to preach every Sunday at a church for five dollars a weekend, but the train fair was \$3.60. As the interest grew, the income did too. I had the high salary of fifteen dollars a week the last weeks of the year I spent with those folk.

That was the fall of 1939 — the “Dirty Thirties” were coming to a close for me. I finished the decade as a seminary student and as student preacher (pastor) at the Baptist church in East Balsam Lake, WI. That decade had other facets that shook the world. A conceited fellow named Adolph Hitler thought his German people were superior and should rule all of Europe. He was most vocal against the Jewish folk and the black world. I had watched the 1933 Big Ten track meet in Evanston, when a youth named Jesse Owens ran away with the sprints and the hurdles. He did the same in Berlin, Germany's Olympic Games in 1936. Hitler's treatment of the running star should

have warned the world, “There is more to come.” With his cohort, Benito Mussolini, they changed all of Europe and North Africa into a military battleground, which didn’t abate until the mid 1940s. We wondered how far the Japanese would go, after walking over China. Russian Communism, a subject I’d dabbled in at Bloom High School, was making some folk very uncomfortable. What had not been covered with dust and drought was soon stained with blood and death.

What did I learn from all of this, besides what professors and textbooks said, whether I was pitching hay, milking cows, hauling manure, spreading gravel, washing and hanging storm windows, painting walls, teaching Bible Schools, riding the train to distant preaching points or trying to tell congregations something from the Word? If the Lord asks, “Do it with all your might.” And, that “The Lord provides.”

The Frustrating Forties

I don't know where to begin to describe this decade. The general public might call it the Fighting Forties, because much of it involved World War II. The transitions in my life were many and totally life-changing. I'd rather shout "Frustrating Forties."

The decade began as I completed my last year of seminary studies. That year was filled with a variety of changes. In February I became student pastor of the Eastern Heights Chapel, a new church plant for the Twin City Baptist Union. A great big difference from other preaching assignments was that it was in St. Paul, and thus didn't demand weekend rides on bumpy trains. Another innovation was that Dad would drive to the Twin Cities, leave his car with me, and take a train to some distant state to canvass for the Denver Sanitarium. These jaunts generally took several weeks, thus I had a car, at least periodically, for much of that year.

When summer came I applied for the same job I had in 1934, the Bethel campus summer handy man. I needed some added funds to pay up my accounts if I was to graduate debt-

free in 1941. Arik Blomquist, who was pastor in Rusk, WI, and several others worked with me. I was awarded the enormous wage of 35 cents an hour. (I got a nickel more than the others since I was to be the “foreman.”) Al and I arranged our schedules so that we could work on the campus 60 hours a week and still serve our churches. We were the only two that worked on the campus full-time. We painted, plastered and more, for twelve hours each on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, and six each on Wednesday and Saturday. Thus we had two afternoons and Sunday to serve our churches and prepare sermons.

The romance in which I'd been involved since my Sioux Falls College days had begun to wane. She wanted to teach school and marry a farmer; my goal was not to teach but to preach. After a “tragic” Fourth of July weekend the irregular correspondence ceased. The morning that final letter came I was mixing plaster for one of the classrooms, and after reading that letter I neglected to sift the powdery stuff, and each time I went into that classroom the next year I could see the threads from the unsifted plaster hanging from the ceiling. That decision left a peculiar void as I came to the last semester of my studies. We managed to get all the planned improvements made just a week before school was to start. I went home to Sioux Falls to get the paint off my hands and to reclaim Dad's car. I told the folks that romance was over. To my consternation both of my parents said, “Good.” “Why so?” was my defensive query. I got this response, “She was a Dane.” There must have been some other reasons but I never learned what they were.

September came and the Minnesota Education Associ-

ation was meeting in the Twin Cities. Two delegates heard there was a function at Bethel and attended an evening session. Both those teachers I knew, one had attended Bethel; she graduated in 1937. I thought back to those days and remembered what I saw, and thought that she was a very nice girl but that she was a little out of my class, “but now that I was a seminary senior ... well, maybe?” I pushed the chairs apart in the college chapel until I could confront her face to face. The initial small talk ended with my asking, “May I see you to your residence?” There was some hesitancy but finally she gave me the privilege. That began a new phase in my life, one that still continues. I said goodnight to her at the door of the apartment where she was staying and drove to the dorm with an interesting inner pounding. The next time I saw her she commented, “You know after you left me at Tanquist’s,” (Dorothea Tanquist was her roommate and fellow teacher in North Branch), “we had to vacate the building — it was on fire.” I thought, “What a hot date,” but then she explained that the resident in the next apartment had gone to bed with a cigarette. There was only some smoke damage. That year ended with two young people sitting in Dad’s car in her family farmyard near Harris, MN, at twenty degrees below zero. We didn’t even notice the cold.

My classroom involvements were over at the end of the semester. I had only my thesis to write and I could do that at my leisure. I could start the “church search” at any time. The Twin City Baptist Union released me from the Eastern Heights Chapel. I didn’t wait long for an invitation to speak elsewhere. On the first Sunday I was free I had to face a new

opportunity. A couple of old school buddies invited me to preach at their new church plant in one of the Twin Cities suburbs. The one room schoolhouse in which they met was filled and excitement was in the air. When I was asked if I'd consider staying with them as the first pastor, I hedged. I guess I wanted out of the Twin Cities after eight years, or maybe I was a bit apprehensive of a second try at church planting. By the way, I took my life-long friend, Arlene Johnson, to that church, and after we were through with the service, we took off for a farm near Harris, MN, where we could flirt with a brother and sister, Archie and Lillian.

I took all my research material for my thesis with me and went home to Sioux Falls with the car. There I sat at the dining room table organizing the data into a document entitled, "The Influence of Evangelicals on American Political Life Prior to 1815." When it was finished I came back to St. Paul. The document was ready for my Aunt Ida, a staff member at the University of Minnesota, to type properly for presentation as a graduate paper. I left the document with her at the U and drove to the seminary, opened the door to my room, got ready to crawl into bed, and then saw a note from the Dean, which read "Stop in."

I reported at his door the next morning and got the news that he'd like me to visit East Rock Creek as a candidate. I leaped for joy, that is, internally, and said, "I'd consider it." It was within an easy hour's drive of the school where Lillian, my new interest, was teaching. Really, I didn't have to consider it. I went and spent the Sunday with them. My big dream bubble burst the next week when I was notified, "We think we'd like a man with more experience." Apparently six years

of experience as a student pastor wasn't enough. Incidentally they called a classmate who had spent only two summers as a student pastor. Why was the Lord closing an "ideal" door, romantically at least? Frustrating.

Another opportunity came and I traveled on two trains and then with a chauffeur. I preached and had a good Sunday. The response was, "Can you come back next Sunday?" I agreed, went and got the same response. On the fourth Sunday the response changed slightly, "Can you come for Palm Sunday and stay over Easter?" I did that and then got the same line. Frustrating. A couple of weekends later was Mother's Day. When I was asked that same question I replied, "No, I have another possibility." If nothing else I could "go home to Mother." It appeared they really didn't want me to stay permanently. They asked me to send someone else. I did and he got the same treatment. They had trouble making up their minds, but to me it was frustrating.

During the week the student who was to go to Kenosha, WI, had to cancel his visit and I was asked to go in his stead. I had a good experience in the pulpit and with the families. After the evening service the search committee called me aside and asked a lot of questions. I remember one, "Have you ever conducted a Vacation Bible School?" I answered, "About ten." (Two in Ramsey, six in northern Minnesota, one in Parker, two in Prentice.) I shocked the questioner. I explained how that came to pass. Someone whispered, "We need him." I was asked to stay as interim pastor for the Baptist Tabernacle, "and then we'll see." What a contrast to the previous months. I really didn't want to commit myself, so asked for time to think and pray about it.

The next week the Midwest Baptist Conference was meeting in annual session in the Second Swedish Baptist Church on Chicago's South Side. Having no responsibilities at Bethel I decided to attend, besides, it was close to my former home in Chicago Heights, and for returning the following Sunday to Kenosha. My hostess volunteered to care for my soiled clothes ... I had only enough for a weekend. My underlying intent for that extended trip was to talk with some of the Conference leadership about both the church and my future. As a result, one pulpit committee interviewed me. I seemed pleased with their response, but at the next session a Bethel representative stated, "All members of the current graduating class are already placed." That rather sealed my doom and gave me an answer for Kenosha. I came back and said, "I'll stay until you call a man or until the Lord opens another door for me."

I returned to the campus, packed my belongings, attended my graduation exercises and took the train out of the Twin Cities, going diagonally across the state of Wisconsin. That, of course, curtailed my trips to the teacher in North Branch. Generally each Friday for the past months I would leave the dinner table at Bethel and hitch-hike the 35 miles north. I got there in time to attend some function at the high school, where Lillian was an instructor. As I entered the building it was not unusual to hear a chorus of early teenagers chanting, for my benefit, "Miss Johnson's got a boyfriend." Later those evenings I'd take the "midnight special" train back to the Cities. Now, her busy schedule on weekdays and my busy program on weekends limited our courting days. Fifty years

later I preached in the Kost Free Church, a rural church near North Branch. In my introductory remarks I mentioned that chant and asked if any of those girls were present and, if so, I'd like to thank them after the service. On the next visits to that church we had dinner with one or the other of them in their homes.

I settled in at the Kenosha Youth Foundation (a name in lieu of a YMCA). That had one huge problem ... it was 23 blocks from the church. My only transportation was my foot-mobile, except when some kind member picked me up. The previous pastor still occupied the parsonage, which was an annex of the church building. About mid-summer he vacated the study, and we placed a cot in it and I used the baptistry changing room for a closet and the church facilities for shaving, etc. Besides, there was no rental fee.

I encouraged the search committee to listen to potential candidates, but they didn't seem satisfied with any. I went on at least one such visit myself and neither they nor I got excited enough to pursue it. Wondering what was to happen, and looking at the world situation I thought about the military chaplaincy. World War II was raging in Europe, without the U.S. participating. It was obvious that the U.S. would be involved in the conflict rather soon and I thought, "If I enlisted early, maybe promotions would come easier." I had registered for the draft in St. Paul and was granted a 4-D rating, "as a pastor." I went to a recruitment office and listened to all their criteria. "Be a college and seminary graduate and have three years of pastoral experience." I replied, "I think I qualify. I have both college and seminary degrees and have six years of experience as a student pastor." He retorted, "But

that's not three years." I explained that I'd done everything a senior pastor would do and some of those churches had always been served by resident pastors. He still was negative. I walked out sensing I should have said, "A pastor while a student."

As winter approached the committee kept asking me if I'd let my name stand as a candidate. I now knew some of the reasons why the previous pastor had been ousted, and some of the other potential problems. They were deterring factors. I finally said I would agree to let my name be presented. The vote was nearly 100%. I was both thrilled and bewildered, partly because Lillian and I hadn't yet solidified any relationship. All other doors seemed to have closed, so I said "Yes." Only a few days after I'd informed them that I'd stay came the Sunday which President Roosevelt called "The Day of Infamy." Now the Army loosened some strings, but I felt I ought to stay away from them for three years.

The next three years were filled with rich blessings and experiences ... in the local church, in the District Conference, and in the camping world, both with the Midwest Conference at Bethany Beach and with the Southeast Wisconsin Fellowship of Baptists.

One of those years I had a unique house-full. My dad got the notion he wanted to pay up the balance on his mortgage payments in Sioux Falls. He reasoned, "If we rent out the house we could go live with Stanley for a year, he has plenty of room." The parsonage had finally been vacated by the previous pastor and I had moved in. "We could help him and get some extra income too." I scrounged enough extra furniture to fill my bachelor's quarters, as I had been having the entire

parsonage to myself. In September 1943 they came, as did Evangeline, who was enrolled in the local high school. This greatly helped my loneliness and especially my diet.

Emory, my brother, was working for an aircraft plant in California which gave him a deferred military status, but he wanted to enlist in the Navy Air Force. He quit at that plant and came to Kenosha too. He immediately was employed at Kenosha Brass. When the Navy called him, his assignment for boot camp was at Great Lakes, a few miles down the road. Rodger came at the end of his school term at Southwestern and was on his way to Lake Nebagamon to be a student pastor for the summer. It was the last time the three Rendahl boys would be together for at least twenty years.

When summer came the folks moved into the parsonage with Rodger at that rural church. The summer of 1944 I vacationed with them. Lillian was visiting in Ashland, where her brother Orville was the pastor. I got to see her and bring her to Lake Nebagamon for several days. That week's fishing rather solidified our relationship.

When I came back to Kenosha after that summer I sensed in a greater way the problems, physical, personal, and even professional, plaguing me. My migraines got worse and my stomach developed some unusual disorders. Fifty names appeared on our Military Roster; I got weary trying to keep in touch with all of them. I got the notion I wanted to be numbered with them. I reappeared at an Army Center in Chicago. I presented my file but I hadn't received an endorsement from the American Baptist Convention office in Philadelphia; to which the officer in charge said, "Forget it ... we know you." After looking at some papers and making a telephone call, he

added, "Take your physical next Monday at Ft. Sheridan." I went to my Kenosha home, told the church, and about thirty days later packed up, leaving exactly three years after I officially became the pastor.

It was on a very, very cold January day in 1945 that I drove U.S. 12 to the Twin Cities. The wind and the below zero temperature demanded that I open one of my boxes and empty out the books. I used the cardboard to fit inside the grill next to the radiator to block out some of the icy wind and deter the car from freezing as I drove. I don't recall whether it was the weather or my aching heart that chilled me the most as I left my first pastorate.

My induction orders came; I was ordered to Ft. Snelling to be "sworn in" and then instructed to have an officer's uniform tailor-made. On February second I gave Lillian her diamond. A few days later I pinned the silver bars and Chaplain's cross to my new Army uniform. Then I entrained for Ft. Devens, MA, for Chaplain's school. It was almost a relief to snuggle into a hard army cot on the upper barracks level, after the frustrating parade of activities the past six months.

Those weeks of marching, learning and discipline were soon over. After graduation I claimed a ten day "delay en route" to spend Mother's Day in Minneapolis where the folks were "house sitting." Oh yes, I saw that sparkling thing I had given away five months before and held the hand that wore it.

The death of Adolph Hitler and the demise of the Nazi power had cancelled my orders to the European theater, and I received a temporary duty assignment at Ft. Francis E. War-

ren, WY. Twenty-six hours after I left the Twin Cities, I checked in at the Cheyenne base. The details of that assignment were mundane and transitory and are recorded elsewhere. The Post Chaplain apparently didn't appreciate a temporary duty assistant and I got all sorts of details and moves. Frustrating, but endurable. I reached a magnificent and enjoyable decision before I left the base to attend the BGC (Baptist General Conference) annual meeting the end of June. On the way to Duluth I detrained in St. Paul to greet the sweet lady who had come to meet me at the Union Station. After we'd settled into her blue Plymouth I said, "Let's get married on Saturday." Her answer was, "We'd better wait until Monday."

After three days of conference in Duluth, Monday came and so did 125 guests to share in the festive event in the Fish Lake Church. When the evening ended, a happy couple registered at the Minneapolis Nicollet Hotel as "Lt. and Mrs. John S. Rendahl." For military reasons I had begun to state my name that way — that's the order it's written on my birth certificate. The next morning a telegram caught up with us. It demanded I report back to the Wyoming base immediately for overseas assignment. That was sudden and very disappointing. Three days later I boarded a troop train for California leaving my bride and my folks standing on the railroad depot platform in Cheyenne. One frustrated officer climbed into the top of a triple-decker bed.

Details of the next years are in another manuscript where they illustrate a military slogan, "Hurry Up and Wait." After a long "cruise" we landed on the Philippine island of Leyte. At that moment Tojo decided he'd had enough. With the war

over, when others were being sent back to the states, I was ordered to an unknown place called Korea, though we knew it as Choson from our geography books. That frustrating wait was over, but other frustrations followed. In November I got my first assignment as a U.S. Army Chaplain, with the 40th Division. The Colonel welcomed me, but his greetings ended with, "Your predecessor is still on duty here and furthermore our Division is being disbanded." Ten weeks later I was transferred to the 7th Division Chaplain's office in Seoul. Two weeks of boredom, as the lowest in rank of five Chaplains in the Division office, prompted my request for another assignment. I got it. The Colonel got rid of me with orders to a regiment in Chunchun, over three-fourths of the way across Korea, along the 38th parallel and about as remote a post as one could find.

Finally I got my "own troops," but it lasted less than three months when I was brought to Seoul to become a Chaplain with Military Government, to work with the national church bodies. I had no choice and unwillingly went, but the assignment became a choice experience, even though I was frustrated and furious at the onset. I had to pioneer a new job, one without precedent. I stayed until I worked myself out of a job (as missionaries came back to the country) and then became the Hospital Chaplain for the 377th Station hospital. I was still in Seoul. The rather frustrating and rapid assortment of military activities and duties came to an end in February 1947 as I walked off the base at Ft. Lewis, WA.

That bride of mine braved a Minnesota blizzard to meet me at the Union Station in Minneapolis. The next months were

a long adjustment period. Opportunities to candidate were scarce; it seemed all the pulpits in the BGC were filled. During the summer we were occupants of the Fish Lake parsonage as an interim pastor. Then on Labor Day weekend we became Pastor and Mrs. Rendahl for the Grace Baptist Church in Bristol, CT. Before 1947 was over we'd welcomed to our family a son, Dale. I became an excited and maybe a clumsy father.

Being on my own, fifteen hundred miles from home and families, from school, from the General Conference office and from any of my peers, and thrust into a new culture and into a church whose needs were great, caused an adjustment that took until the end of the decade, three years later. Then, as the decade ended, the frustrations that had plagued me seemed to lessen, the trend began to change, and we saw some progress. We were getting involved with the neighboring pastors (at least five of us were pastor's kids) in the Mid-Atlantic Conference, the camping programs, and even the planning for a new church building, as the sanctuary had started to fill and would soon become overflowing with attendees.

The Fabulous Fifties

We were in the very middle of the century. I was in my 35th year of living and in my third year of ministry with the Grace Baptist Church of Bristol, Connecticut.

Dale was blessing our lives, and I was adjusting to and enjoying being a dad. He was tottering around in his inverted shoes, the left one on the right foot and his right one on the left. He came with some disorder to his feet and the medic prescribed that switch. The decade began with Lillian carrying a “play-mate” for him. That’s how my Dad prepared me for the arrival of Rodger a generation before, but he used the Swedish term “lekkamrat.” Sadly, our little bundle was too anxious to arrive and came very prematurely. She was here only eleven hours. She was named “LeyAn,” a combination of the last letters of our names, which we rarely used. It was a strange sad May day that I stood in the Bristol cemetery with three men, Pastor Herbert Peterson, Vice-chairman Ernest Hanson, and Mortician Funk, as we committed her tiny body in a white coffin to the ground and her short life to the Lord. Lillian was unable to leave the hospital. Dale would

carry the “only child” title until he was nearly ten years old.

Another birth became significant and brought great joy to our lives. One of the couples, about our age, was expecting their third child. We were good friends and were often their guests, particularly on holidays. One morning she called on the telephone and in a worried voice said, “I think I need to go to the hospital and I can’t find my husband.” I could only reply, “I’ll be right over.” It was several blocks. Immediately, when I opened the door to the car she entered. She had an idea where her husband was working. He was a journeyman carpenter and was high on someone’s roof. We tooted the horn as we went by. He waved and trailed us to the hospital. I stopped at an emergency door and the attendants soon wheeled her away. Her husband arrived shortly and informed me, “We’d planned it that way.” When the youngster was three years old we moved to another state. Years later, the kids found themselves in the same college, Bethel, Dale as a senior and Joyce as a freshman. After his return from Vietnam and after her graduation they were married, on July 1, 1972. I claim the privilege of having “selected” my son’s bride rather early.

Our orientation period to the Eastern ways was about over and we began to feel their acceptance. We welcomed some new people, many non-Swedes. This was revolutionary. Several Maine-iacs came into the fellowship; the employment situation drew many from the northern New England communities to our city. Our house-church became overcrowded. The church family had met in a duplex for generations. A generous donor gave her larger and more elegant home to the church. The interior was remodeled to make a

nice sanctuary, with two large classrooms and a kitchen on the first floor. We lived on the second floor, alongside the office and the women's lounge. The former owners had used the third floor as "servant quarters"; we converted them into Sunday School rooms. Then the basement was refurbished to make room for five classes. When the attendance passed the seating capacity, worshippers were sitting on the stairs to our apartment and looking in through a door at the left of the pulpit. A new building was essential, but the leadership was slow to think a building was necessary. When I talked of a possible new sanctuary I often heard, "All Rendahl wants is a big church building to preach in."

The youth group was a constant joy and challenge. We'd begun with one teenager in our youth group, the first time we met together. Four attendees went away to college and the remainder, five, were WWII vets. I was assigned the Sunday School class for the high school kids. Eight came the first Sunday and I could sense they didn't fit with the older youth group. We began a new group called Grace Teens. The name implied that it was a group other than the Young People's Society and not competitive. Soon, a couple dozen teenagers or more were attending most functions. Eight of them enrolled at Bethel, four went to the Seminary.

The camping program of the district conference claimed our attention and our participation. I eventually became the director of the summer operations. That was time consuming, but a rich and rewarding experience. We arranged the church schedule to have our Sunday evening service on Wednesday and our prayer meeting on Sunday night, when the deacons could have charge. This change was so I could

be at camp on Sunday afternoon and evening. That role led to an invitation to be at the New England Conference Camp at Tispaquin, first as guest speaker and the next year as director for the senior high camp. Our camp had been held in conjunction with the Elim Park Retirement Center the first two years we were on the staff, but they had property across the road with some buildings on it, which we finally had converted into a campground. Through it ran a small stream. Some ingenious owner had made a dam and it held back enough water to make a delightful swimming pool for the campers and us to enjoy. Lillian and I were often doing some work and picnicking on the property. Dale was with us, he was about three. We went swimming. Crossing the dam to the beach side I dove into the water and swam over. Dale got so frightened at the disappearance of his Dad he screamed and wouldn't be consoled. I resolved never to surprise any little ones like that again. He wouldn't go near the water. We hiked past the lake and along a wooded path. He wanted to get further into the woods, but I explained there might be snakes in the nearby swampy area. We walked farther and he seemed to tire. A nice long log abutted the path and we wanted to rest a bit. We sat down, but a few seconds later I noticed a big black snake had wound itself around the other end of the log on which we sat. I hurried Dale and his mother away to the refrain, "Why, Daddy?"

Because of these involvements in Christian Education and the privilege of the GI Bill of Rights education allowance, I enrolled at the Hartford Seminary Foundation in the School of Religious Education. Curriculum building and church camping, especially camp crafts, became the main thrusts for

a year. The added income was a blessing but the added workload was so taxing I didn't continue. Also, Lillian had some recurring health problems.

My continuing education was no longer in a classroom but in other involvements. I was the secretary to the Mid-Atlantic Conference Board and that brought a cascade of involvements with our district churches. I also sat on the Elim Park Retirement Center Board. The local inter-church ministerial claimed some time each month. One of the highlights one year was the assignment to teach two weeks at the training school for the national Home Missions God's Invasion Army contingent, at Temple Church in Bridgeport, CT. This group was an evangelistic outreach sponsored by the BGC for adult young people. Two sessions each day, one on our theology and the other on the cults ... it was like building a dogma and then tearing it down. I also began my five-year tenure on the Baptist General Conference Board of Christian Education. These involvements were fabulous fulfillments, especially when the needed building program at the church dragged.

In the middle of that professional crucible our family life discovered a new delight. Dottie Mae, a two-year-old blond, came to live with us for a year. She was the youngest of five siblings the mother had to surrender, because there was "no visible means of support." The father was incarcerated and if the mother went to some employment situation the kids were left alone. The State was to take them. With the mother's consent I took them and all their belongings in a couple of grocery bags home with me, and after I got the State's approval, I had custody of five children. It's a long story recorded else-

where, but after placing four of them with the Klingberg Children's Home in New Britain we kept the youngest, because the Klingberg home did not have facilities or personnel for her age group. She and Dale were often taken for brother and sister, they looked so much alike. We might have kept her permanently except that we wanted the five siblings to be together. That wasn't to be. When the mother fled the area and we moved to Nebraska, the State again became involved and put the five out for adoption, even though they were well cared for at the Children's Home.

The frustrations we felt as the decade began prompted some inquiries about a change of venue. Nothing was offered. As souls were being saved and many joined the church, and as the involvements with others made a full and interesting fellowship, we felt at home and were content to stay, even to the point of looking for a house of our own. The only question that really haunted us was, "When are we going to build?" I began to reason, "Maybe if we leave, they will have to answer that question to a potential candidate." So when the architect's drawings were presented and the lots purchased I resigned, sensing that when they were to call a new pastor, the candidate might ask "When are you going to start building?" and they'd have to give a firm answer. My logic worked, but by that time we had moved on.

As the year 1953 was ending I asked the Lord, "What is it you want me to do next year?" In January 1954 I was again teaching at the God's Invasion Army training school. One of the pastors involved mentioned that he had given my name to a pulpit committee of a Nebraska Church. Not many days

later, I got a letter asking if I'd consider coming to Omaha and if so, when could I visit them? It was a good church. They had hosted the BGC annual meeting a few years before and two of the members were on national BGC boards. Besides, it was relatively close to our homes. I went on a long train ride. After the lumbering train crossed the Missouri River it stopped at a huge depot, where I was met by a nice looking gentleman. I had a good weekend with the folk at the Bemis Park Baptist Church. They must have been favorably impressed for we got a call to be the pastor some days later.

As I wrestled with that invitation I heard two negative voices. One was Dale's, who commented, "I don't want to go there, there are Indians there." He was five years old and had perhaps remembered that I had talked about a Sunday School ministry the church sponsored for American Indians in Omaha. I assured him they were just like any neighbors. The other was a dream I had about a church in which a lady tried to rule the roost. I asked for some counsel on that one, but was assured such isn't likely to be a problem. Two years later I discovered the Indians were a blessing and the lady buzzed around like a Queen Bee stinging me whenever she had opportunity. Was the Lord trying to tell me something and I wasn't listening?

The middle of April, after a great two week vacation in Florida with my folks in Orlando as a detour, we stopped in front of a real parsonage. We had a great time furnishing the house to Lillian's taste. We had crated or boxed only a few choice items from our Bristol apartment. Almost everything now was new. People had welcomed us with pleasant warmth.

We settled into the work. The beginnings were encour-

aging. The Lord was blessing. Then came the first jolt. The Omaha Bible Institute had been an inter-church promotion since its inception, but now the board had a plurality of GARB (General Association of Regular Baptists) members. It became a GARB school. Several of our people were on the staff, in a variety of staff positions from janitors to professors. My two immediate predecessors had served as presidents. Now their board ruled that staff members must be members of GARB churches and no students could attend any other church than one of theirs. We had several students from there that worshipped with us. Four or five good families left us. One of those students wrote me at the time of his graduation and said, "Could you find a church for me in the BGC? I liked what I found in your church." I dropped his name to a church which called him. He has served several BGC churches with a faithful spirit.

The student presence didn't change. We picked up, literally, several students from the Grace Bible Institute. The attendance continued to grow. Some were making decisions, many were baptized and they and others joined the membership. Space became a problem. One Sunday School class met on our front porch and another in our basement. The church bought the duplex across the street. One half of the brick building we fitted as classrooms and the other half housed a family; their rental paid the mortgage note. By the way, that family became fellow members.

The first summer our DVBS had some problems with staffing. Too many mothers were employed outside the home. The next year an unheard of "Evening DVBS" was an experiment. We had sessions or classes for adults, too. A newly

appointed missionary couple augmented the local personnel. It worked and brought real joy. We tried it a second time the next summer with another set of missionaries. It was another wonderful experience.

When the second fall schedule began, after Labor Day, the attendance was way down. Goals we had set were only half what we'd expected. My busy Queen Bee got after me, "It's all your fault." Naturally I was frustrated. I reviewed the ushers' attendance charts and discovered the names of 103 people who weren't there and on investigation I learned they had all moved completely away from the area. Some Air Force Base personnel were redeployed, graduating students moved on, two couples enrolled at Bethel Seminary, and a number of job changes changed the number in my audiences. I mentioned that to my critic and she responded, "They wouldn't have moved had you been a better pastor, it's all your fault." I mentioned, "The only ones that I may have somewhat influenced to leave are those two couples at the Seminary."

The attendance finally began to climb back to cover what we'd lost. My involvement with the Platte Valley Conference increased. The privileges of that outreach and some of the local situations are reviewed in another article. The critic never let up and left her "honey" in many places. In the middle of a Bible Conference at the church with Eric Lindholm, her husband came to me and said, "You should resign, you're creating problems." He should have added, "My wife says." That was the only time in any of my churches I'd heard that request. I told him, "That's the Lord's decision." But I was ready to jump from the fire into any frying pan.

I might have jumped then, but Dan burst suddenly on the

scene. I was at the mid-week prayer meeting when Dale came in and informed me that his Mother needed me. Dan was anxious to make his appearance into the world. I ran home and with the aid of a dear lady, we rushed Lillian to the hospital. After leaving Lillian on the gurney with the nursing staff I parked the car, stopped at the office and found my way to the father's waiting room. But before I could even sit down, I was greeted by a nurse who asked, "Are you Mr. Rendahl?" I admitted it with a "Yes." Then she opened the bundle in her arms and said, "This is your son." The next Sunday, even though it was July, I preached on, "For unto you a son is born." In the audience was a pulpit committee from the Big Springs Baptist Church in SD. They must have been impressed. I was invited to candidate. I got the call. We got ready to move.

In the midst of that quandary and the new excitement, Lawrence Swanson, the executive minister for the Board of Christian Education of the BGC, asked me to take his place in a round robin missionary conference in the Western Illinois and Eastern Iowa churches and speak on the theme, "The Sunday School as a Mission Field." He must have sensed I needed that type of an exposure. I went and had a fabulous time. The Bemis Park people didn't get to taste the joy of that trip. They had farewelled us the Sunday before I drove over the Missouri and the Mississippi. We planned to start our new assignment for the Lord just after that speaking trip. I brought Lillian and my two boys to my folks in Sioux Falls before I made that tremendous trip to Illinois and Iowa. On my return I met the moving van the next morning at the 34th Street door in Omaha. That evening we had a family reunion

in a new home, though I almost didn't make it. When the van left I loaded the "left-overs" in my car. I then cleaned up the house, eventually myself too. I had reserved some clean garments and put them on. I took the soiled pieces to the car, tossed them into the trunk, and slammed the lid down. When I stepped up to the driver's seat I didn't have my keys — they were in my other pants in the trunk. I unloaded the car from the inside, took out the separating wall and found with remarkable reaching the dirty pants and with them the keys. After reloading I took off and drove north. The Lord's timing was perfect. I came to a new situation refreshed and not defeated.

Big Springs was the Crown Jewel of rural churches in the BGC, and I think still is. I felt honored. Those next years were filled with work and wonder. The adjustment was easy. Lillian was a farmer's daughter. I had some exposure to farming in my Prentice years, again as the son of a rural pastor at Sun Prairie, and as student pastor in Ramsey twenty years before. Besides, they gave us a gracious and generous welcome reception.

Perhaps Dale had the biggest adjustment. He had to attend a one room country school. He had no playmates in the immediate area. Besides that he had to share his parents' time with a four month old brother, Daniel Truett, born in 1957. I tried to make a playroom in the basement for him and his electric train. While attaching some sheet rock to the ceiling I fell or lost my balance and grabbed the floor joist above me. My hand grabbed something and secured itself on a nail which had been pounded upwards on the reverse side. My hand was fastened to the nail and there wasn't enough room

to push my hand into the floor above to loose myself. Our neighbor had to come and saw out a piece from the joist to free me with the nail still in my hand and still in the 2-by-10 cut from the joist. We didn't dare pull it out. I was taken to Akron to the doctor who extricated it. Dale's train had to be set up without a ceiling over it.

This ministry was different. There were very few personal problems that were brought to the parsonage door. They came to use the telephone ... we were on both the Alcester and Hawarden lines. I devoted myself to preaching and with it, variations of style. For example I had a member build a 3 by 6 foot bulletin board that I stood the long way up and I drew on it a map of the Holy Land and spoke for several weeks about "The Places Jesus Visited" and located them as I went along and with slides pictured them. Of course, I told what He did or said in each place. Another time I asked the boys and girls to bring something I could use for an illustration. I took one item each Sunday evening and tried to use it that evening. It was taxing but tickled the donors.

It didn't take long before I got involved in the district, which included both of the Dakotas. The opportunities grew as the decade came to a close. I was the chairperson of the CE (Christian Education) committee which included overseeing summer Bible camps, even conducting one, and the teacher training confabs throughout the states. The last two years I was chairman of the Conference Board. The latter was especially challenging because in the absence of a district worker the board chair had to assume some of his functions. Church squabbles, pastoral placement, and counseling new church plants were some of the added responsibilities.

What was the Lord doing to me? I had been recording secretary to the Midwest Conference Board and director of the Boys' Camp. I had been the same, plus camp director of the Mid-Atlantic Conference. I had been both CE chairman and chairman of the Platte Valley Conference Board without a district worker. Now in the Dakotas the role increased. And, I had been pastor in an industrial city, Kenosha, in a bedroom city, Bristol, in a near inner city church, Omaha, and a totally rural situation, Big Springs. Maybe the next decade would reveal something.

The Stretching Sixties

The avalanche of activities that had been mine as the past decade ended was punctuated by an avalanche of snow descending on Union County, SD, early in 1960. On February 11, I was the guest speaker for a Valentine dinner honoring the CE staff of a church in Hudson, SD, north of Alcester. To attend a celebration of hearts without Lillian seemed inappropriate; she went along. We were cognizant of the fact that a new member to our family was soon to arrive, but we determined to drive through the blowing snow. After the banquet ended and the folk greeted me I noticed that Lillian had not moved from her place. We excused ourselves quickly and faced the white world of blowing snow.

We made it into our garage and into the house and then called the doctor. An hour later I called him again. This time he replied “You’d better bring her in to the hospital.” After starting the motor and backing out of the garage I found that the snow had increased the already high drifts. I was shoveling as fast as I could. The neighbor lady saw the lights and sensed a problem. She came running over with her snow

scoop. With her help I managed to spin the wheels enough to get up the incline and on the way to Hawarden.

Another member, Adeline Wiksen, had promised Lillian she'd be the attending nurse. She was called and joined us at the hospital. The doctor came too, peeled off his big coat and warmed his hands and proceeded into the delivery room. As the expectant father I paced the floor at the other end of the hall, since no fathers were permitted in the inner sanctum. It wasn't long before the door opened and Adeline screamed, "It's a girl." What a thrilling report! It became a stretching experience to have a little girl in our house after two boys. I think the entire congregation was as excited as we were. I can still see the array of diapers hanging on the outdoor clothes line, getting stiffer and stiffer and then we had to redeem them like giant sheets of construction paper. The coming of Kirsten didn't bring any curtailment of church or conference involvements.

A big break, literally, came the next summer, which I call, "The summer that should not have been." First, I tore the ligaments in my leg at Bible camp in early June. Then we all went to the BGC annual meeting on the Bethel campus, with my leg in a plaster cast. One morning Dale got so sick we brought him to the school nurse. Her verdict was, "Take him to Midway." There he was hospitalized while the medics worried about the dreaded polio, but it was pneumonia. After the conference I brought Lillian to her Cambridge family and went to summer school at Bethel mornings and in the afternoons to Dale at Midway Hospital. Finally, Dale improved and I took him to Cambridge. We made preparations to drive home to Big Springs. On the morning we were to leave Lillian

was so weak she couldn't get out of bed. Instead, we went to the doctor, and to the hospital too. She was diagnosed as having a ruptured ulcer. I had three youngsters to manage, one in recovery, one over-active, and one just starting to get into everything. While Lillian was drinking rich cream in bed, a Big Springs member called me. I should perhaps have called them and asked for another Sunday off, but instead, someone had died, and I had to drive back for a funeral, with the three kids. Members helped me with them when I came home. My folks came from Sioux Falls to help me. Then I went back to Cambridge to bring Lillian home. That was enough stretching for one summer. Would there be a routine again?

There was another break in the myriad of involvements. It came with Dale's eighth grade graduation. His days in the one room country school would be over. Four classmates from the Big Springs School and those graduating from all the county rural schools were recognized in ceremonies at the Union County seat, Elkhorn. We were proud of his achievements. In the fall we would be relating to him as our high school freshman. He tried out for sports. I went to watch all his games. The next year the games got more interesting for he was the starting middle linebacker. He got in some B team games in basketball too. He was listed each grading period as "an honor athlete." I was a proud Dad. After the football season I took him to Sioux City to get his blue and white letter jacket, I was as thrilled as he.

The stretching took a unique twist early in 1962. I got my third invitation from the Iowa Baptist Conference asking me to be their "state missionary." Twice before I'd been asked the

same question and had given a negative response. This time I was asking, “Lord, why again?” I didn’t feel the practiced method of church planting was my forté nor that it was very practical. To go to a community, work for a year or more and then pull out and start in another place, trusting a pastor would be found for the first place. I didn’t refuse but told the questioner, “I’d pray about it and then I would meet with their committee at the BGC annual meeting in Michigan.” I suggested to the committee that I’d rather be an Executive Minister as in Minnesota and one other BGC district. I’d seek out the potential areas for new churches, gather some people, and as soon as was feasible help place a resident pastor. I didn’t want the emotional ties that came from being “their pastor.” Nor did I want to uproot my family every year or so. I would also supervise the entire CE program — camping, teacher training, and youth activities. I would assist churches with problems and in pastoral changes, and become a pastor to pastors. The delegation bought that and at their mid-year meeting in December the Board issued a formal call to me to become the Executive Minister.

Now, I really had to wrestle with myself . . . did I want to leave the pastorate of a local church or stretch myself across an entire state? I had been doing most of those things in four districts. I had served a variety of churches. When I prayed about it, the Bible text for the day read, “Arise, go over this river,” from the first chapter of Joshua. The Big Sioux River separated South Dakota from Iowa. We went.

On March 15th we stopped on the bridge between the two states as we drove over and asked God’s blessing on the ven-

tures to a new land. We got to Des Moines in time to tell the moving van personnel where to deposit our belongings. My desk, swivel chair, and typewriter we set up in the basement. At least I had plenty of room. The next day Dale was enrolled at East High School and Dan was registered at a kindergarten class at a nearby school. Dan was to have about the same experience I had 41 years before, when my Dad became pastor of the Union Park Church, by starting kindergarten at the end of the school year. We had looked at a piece of property in Urbandale, a community that appeared to be a likely opportunity for a church plant, on which to have a contractor build a home and office. The Erickson builders promised to have a house ready for us in three months.

When we were somewhat settled, I sat down at my desk and asked the Lord, "What am I to do?" There was no precedent. A voice said, "Write to the brethren and tell them you are here." I did so. I got a stencil from the Union Park Church, cut it on my old portable typewriter, and ran it off on their much used nearly antique mimeograph in the Sunday School Office. I had no letterheads, but something was due at the top of a blank piece of stationery. So in half-inch high letters, I wrote *Newsletter*. That letter was so well received I made it a practice to repeat it each month. First to pastors, then added their assistants, then board members and some other interested folk. It got to be a real production.

The builders went to work and raised a split foyer house, with three bedrooms, living room, dining area and kitchen and bath on the top floor. On the lower level they scattered large windows and framed in a 12 by 12 foot room for an office/study. Then I finished the study area with bookshelves

and frame in a room for Dale with adjoining closets, etc. The builder had commented, "Whatever you need put it on my bill at the lumber yard." Whatever carpenter instincts I may have had got stretched as we raised walls for laundry, storage and the play area which later became the Conference Office. The worst was laying nine-inch square tiles on the floor.

Finally the building was ready, the paper work was completed, the contractor gave us the keys, and we could move in. The movers were engaged and they brought over what we couldn't get into the car. We found a place to set things down, but the arranging was left to Lillian since I had to leave the next night on the train for the BGC conference in Vancouver, BC. To make matters more difficult, I was to bring the first message of the conference on the first day in a huge gymnasium. All the tardy worshippers clicked their heels on the gym floor and the building echoed as I spoke. Horrors. I could have crawled into the hollow space under the floorboards. I came back to Urbandale to set up shop in my new office.

Pastor David Brown of Humboldt was editing the *Iowa Conference News*, which was a monthly newspaper-like printed document that had general distribution among the churches. He wanted to be relieved of that job. I suddenly became an editor. For the first issues I continued with his printer in Odebolt. For each issue there was a three or four-hour trip each way to leave the copy, get the proofs, return the paste-up, and then get the printed issues. I soon found a local printer. I was glad I'd taken a course called "Journalism" in high school. It also became easier when I learned to

“write” those two periodicals each month with a tape recorder in the car as I drove. Mary Gandy, my secretary, could hear my voice and type the script.

The boys were enrolled in Urbandale Schools, one in the eleventh grade and the other in the first. Dale again tried football. We went to the first game on a foreign field. We walked into the stands as they were announcing the starting lineup. I heard over the PA system, “and as middle linebacker, Dale Rendahl.” He hadn’t told us he was a starter. The next year he played both ways. During half time of a Dad’s Day game toward the end of the second season, all the dads lined up on the 40-yard line, and as each son’s number was called, they ran to the 50-yard line to meet their sons. Dale’s was the second name called. When I heard it called I raced to mid-field to meet him. Though he started at the 20-yard line in the opposite direction, he beat me.

Dale graduated the next spring from Urbandale High. He’d spent one summer at our Pine Lake Camp as the lawnmower and the second summer with a local lawn care outfit and a third with a soft drink distribution plant. At the commencement ceremonies in the professional team’s hockey rink he got some honors. It was both a sad day and a glad day that fall when we left him on the edge of the parking lot at Bethel.

It was Kirsten’s turn to enter into the halls of learning. I walked with her to a nice new school building just two blocks from our house. As I stood with a lot of young mothers in the registration line I saw the room was not fit for students. The pupils’ desks, for example, had been dragged in with all

the storage and shipping gook still on them and they stood in a very irregular pattern. After my interview with the teacher, my daughter was ushered to a corner with her classmates. I found some rags and began to clean off the new furniture. I'm certain some of the mothers wondered why that janitor was working so hard in that filth wearing a white shirt and tie. As the scholars were being assigned their places I sought the little boys' room and inaugurated those facilities by giving my hands a thorough washing.

Dan advanced to the fourth-grade without any apparent difficulties. There he hit a snag. His teacher sent a note home asking that one of us stop in to see her. I did and got a statement about like this: "Your son is impossible, he won't amount to anything, and he will never make it through school, you'd better find a remedial school for him." Stunned, I walked out and went to the principal's office. I told him what I'd heard. He smiled and said, "Don't worry about it, she doesn't like boys and gives them a hard time." My reaction vocally was, "If she can't like boys she ought to be relieved." He replied, "I wish we could, but she's on tenure and we have to wait for her retirement." Lillian counseled and tutored Dan and he made it. His experience raises a question. "Does seniority outrank ability?"

During Dale's four years at Bethel I was often in the Twin Cities. I attended Bethel Founder's week, BGC Board meetings, and met with prospective pastors for Iowa, etc. When his senior year came, also on the campus were his cousin from Seattle, Emory's daughter Carol, and his playmate from Bristol, the girl I brought to the hospital to be born. I would take the three of them to dinner if it was possible. Was I encour-

aging something? That wasn't my intention.

After Dale's graduation he didn't need to wait long before he knew what his next venture was to be. I think his diploma was still being passed around for everyone to see when Uncle Sam decided he needed Dale in Viet Nam. I left him on the sidewalk at Ft. Des Moines and watched him walk to the registration building and enter. I drove away with great tears running down my cheeks. We went from smiles of pride to tears and prayers of trust in a matter of days. After his basic training and his job orientation he served 15 months in a clerical position in that war-torn country. When he came back he fled to the Twin Cities and soon found employment and the girl he'd left behind, who had faithfully written to him over those many months. But that was in the next decade.

His absence both during his college years and the military left an enormous vacancy in the Rendahl house. There were no ball games to attend; previously, when his schedules appeared I'd circle those dates and make plans to attend. The footballs and baseballs that we threw at each other lay dormant, secure in a big box.

We had wheels in the garage other than those on the car. The Rendahl family could be seen riding the new streets of Urbandale as a foursome, each on a bike. The churches and the Board seemed happy when I took the family with me at times. Lillian's presence brought counsel to a few pastor's wives. The kids got to ride horses in one place. At another, Dan opened the petcock on a gasoline storage tank for the farmer. On another trip, Dan and I explored the Maquoketa caves together and he dropped the flashlight. It broke and hasn't brought light since. He and I found our way out.

And there was the time he fell from a very high pine tree at Pine Lake, and after a thorough examination the doctor commented, "I've never seen a boy so dirty from pine pitch and so scratched up yet not really hurt." He had apparently ridden the branches to the ground.

Contacts with churches and conference activities are reviewed in other documents and could be inserted here. I'll not review them but let me share a visit to one of them.

I had been to only a few of the churches when I learned one of them had just fired their pastor. I asked to visit and preach for them on a Sunday. After the morning service a nice lady said, "You're to have dinner with us today," and she proceeded to tell me how to get there. She went home to attend to the dinner, and when all the attendees had left I drove over and knocked. She greeted me in such a way I saw she was frustrated . . . maybe things were not going well in the kitchen, maybe having this "great big preacher from the capital city" disturbed her, or maybe it was the crying infants in the other room. I was instructed to make myself at home in the living room. A lad, maybe three, was clamoring for attention. I picked him up, hugged him a trifle and sat him down on a chair with some authority. He got quiet. The room wasn't. A baby in a bassinette was wailing. It didn't take many seconds for me to discern the problem. As I looked at her I spied a pile of diapers and proceeded to do the honors. Kirsten had just grown out of that stage in her life so I was somewhat familiar with the procedure. The girl got quiet. I then saw the mother standing in the doorway with a big grin as if to say, "That preacher isn't so bad." That bonded us. I followed their

moves, he was a grain elevator manager. Some twenty years later I became the interim pastor at their church in another state. My secretary was that girl, now grown and a graduate of Bethel. She is now, with her husband and three boys, a missionary to Belgium under the Free Church.

The Senior Seventies

The decade of the sixties was coming to a close. When that decade ended I'd be approaching retirement age. Should I continue in Iowa until retirement or what? Two things I coveted. One was to spend more time in my study ... it had become an office and time for study and sermon preparation was limited. I'd been preaching the same sermons or reworking the old ones for so long I felt empty. The second longing was to spend some more time with my family. Dan was in the eighth grade and Kirsten in the fifth. It would not be long before they fled the coop. I'd been an absentee father too long. I began to ask the Lord for direction.

Also, I began to wonder if my effectiveness was as healthy as it should be. Two of my "baby" churches chose not to join the conference. That was a dual blow. One had an acceptable reason. It was the black congregation in Davenport. When we couldn't supply a black pastor we had to turn to another fellowship and the prospective candidate, whom they called, gave them ties with the Missionary Baptists and they went that direction. The other was befuddling. I felt betrayed. The

leading man of the church plant, who was my “friend,” talked very negatively about the BGC at the meeting to decide on affiliation. The congregation voted his way. He had not expressed those criticisms to me. There also were rumors that one of our larger churches was threatening to leave the BGC, but no one in leadership would talk to me about it. They did leave after I left the state. I began to wonder, “What am I doing wrong?”

At a BGC gathering of District Executive Ministers one of the newer men asked me, “Stan, have you ever thought about returning to the pastorate?” I told him my thoughts and added, “As is my practice I’ll make no overtures, only let the Lord lead.” Sometime later he called and said, “I have a church that needs a pastor like you, could I turn in your name?” It wasn’t long until I got an invitation to Temple, Duluth to visit them. My Sunday schedule was full for weeks ahead, but I mentioned to them that I could stop on Wednesday for a mid-week service prior to the BGC annual meeting in St. Paul. We drove up on Tuesday and met with the search committee that evening. The following day I was introduced to the church property and the city, and I then spoke to a well filled auditorium at the service. The Vice Chairman of the church and the District Executive both reviewed for me the needs and the potential. The call came and after some soul searching we accepted.

On the 15th of October we drove to Duluth in our summer duds only to find that we needed warmer clothes. I had to search through our portable clothes closets or containers for a suit for Sunday. It didn’t take me long to learn that some

of the flirtation remarks were just that. We learned that our church neighborhood was made up of mostly older and retired people. The whole area about the church was aging and changing complexion, with a major interstate, a truckers transfer place, etc., supplanting homes. To serve the area we started a senior citizens group and that thrived. In fact I was to have more weddings from that group than I had with my young folks.

I often wondered if we'd made a proper decision. One day in somewhat of a depression because of that question, three things happened. First, I had some material that had to be sent to the Superior, Odgen Avenue congregation. Rather than post it I took it over to the church. I entered the building. The office was empty, yet there were cars in the parking lot. I walked through the building and heard voices beyond a door. I opened it. Some meeting was in progress. I quickly closed the door and backed away. I hadn't taken many steps before the door opened and a man I didn't really know shouted, "Stan, I've been looking all over for you." He wanted me to speak at some function for the Wisconsin/Upper Michigan Conference. I left the package on the pastor's desk and drove away wondering, "Why had I come here today?" I drove back to Duluth and went to a hospital. I was ascending the stairs when I said to myself, "What am I doing here, I don't have any patients to see?" Just then one of our members met me and said, "My daughter is a patient upstairs and is asking for you." She was a grown young lady who seldom came to church. I stopped in her room, heard her comments and prayed for her. Some weeks later she came to the Lord after a Sunday evening service. After a third such encounter that day I came to a con-

clusion, "Maybe this is where the Lord wants me."

That "maybe" was varied somewhat and virtually became a "must" sometime later. A search committee from one of the historic Illinois churches came to see and hear me. I was flattered. They listened and interviewed me and left with the remark, "You'll definitely be hearing from us." But what I heard when they called was, "We were excited about what we saw, heard and felt, but when we got home we read your dossier from the Conference office and we learned your age. You're much too old for us." That sealed my fate and we kept on.

The Lord began to bless our stick-to-itiveness. A number of adult couples came into membership. In fact we had a net gain in the membership for three years running, which hadn't happened in the church for decades. I got involved in many things, like teaching a weekly Bible class for student nurses at a local hospital. I also became a volunteer chaplain at one of the hospitals and spent a night each week "on duty." I recall one memorable experience. I was called to emergency one night and found two patients, a husband and his wife, who had been shot. An intruder mistook them for some other intended victims. I found and saw them on two separate examining tables and with each hand held one of their hands and prayed. During the night the family gathered. When the wounded were finally transferred to their rooms, on different floors, I followed them. With each new step and progress report, I came back to the family in a waiting room and reviewed it. Toward morning, as my tour of duty was soon over, I came again and one of the sons, no doubt a businessman in the city, pushed me into a corner. I wondered what was coming. He pressed his hands on the wall behind me, he was

much bigger than I was, and said, “We Jews gave to the world law, but you Christians gave to the world love and you showed it tonight.”

The work we did getting ready for and entertaining the 1977 annual meeting of the BGC in our city was time consuming. During those sessions I was asked to be a part of a mission study tour to the Orient. Each district was to have a representative on the trip. I was to be the delegate from Minnesota and report to the churches what I saw. That trip was a tonic and opened many doors to review it, with slides, throughout the state and elsewhere. To be back in the Philippines and Japan after thirty years was exciting. We paused in Hong Kong for a few days between the two BGC fields. We needed that break.

Meanwhile, our kids were growing up. Dan was enrolled in the junior high and there the basketball coach was anxious to have his six-foot-four frame on his team. The next year in high school it seemed he wasn't as welcome in the gym. I went to pick him up one afternoon and watched the basketball practice; he sat or stood alone on the sidelines. I talked to the coach after practice about that very tall kid that just stood around. His reply was, “I haven't got time for newcomers, I've got to make a championship team out of the veterans.” He didn't make it that year or the next two. That discouraged Dan and he forgot school sports and concentrated on woodworking and outdoor activities. These became evident in his adult days. He spent his summers at Trout Lake and then after a year at Bethel he came home to drive a truck for Schmitt Music Co. and then became a canoe and ski guide for the

Sommers Canoe Base in Ely. In the next decade he attended and graduated from the University in Bemidji, with a degree in outdoor education and geography. Kirsten finished grade school, junior high, and Denfeld High School during our years in Duluth. Her interests were music — she played the flute and took piano lessons — and “good grades.” She graduated with high honors and a good scholarship and registered at Bethel. Both the kids developed some good friendships; I had the joy of baptizing Dan and Kirsten there and watching their development and involvement; Dale I had baptized in Big Springs.

Joining our family for a school term was a Japanese exchange student, Myuki Saito. She was a delight. It happened that she didn’t appreciate the home in which she was placed and complained to her placement agency in Tennessee. Her sponsor had lunch with one of the deacons in his church and asked him to pray for her and told him the situation. The deacon’s reply was, “Call Stan Rendahl; he can take care of anything.” That man had been one of the leading layman in the Iowa Conference. Myuki was a sweet little girl about Kirsten’s age. I met her dad in Tokyo, on that missions study tour.

I spent a year on the Grandview Christian Home Board in Cambridge and a year on the Minnesota Conference Board of Trustees. Also I’d been on the BGC Board of Home Missions for five years. I chaired the South Arrowhead Baptist Association BGC for a couple of terms that included some concern for their own Chub Lake camp. One of the most intriguing participations was with the Indian Ministries Advisory Committee of the Minnesota Baptist Conference. I don’t know how I got involved in all of them, except that I couldn’t say

“No.” Maybe the Lord knew that I needed those diversions.

Lillian had been the choir director in every church we'd served together. Duluth was no exception. Mr. Swanson had been choirmaster and song leader in the church for over thirty years and wanted to step down. Lillian was drafted. She even got a stipend, a first, for her services. It was great to share the platform with her.

During those years Emory and I moved our parents to the Grandview Home in Cambridge. We were able to share in their festive days, and to bring them to the Twin Cities, where Mother had kin, and to Duluth. We even made a trip with them to their old haunts in Wisconsin — Prentice, Spirit, Winter, Balsam Lake, and Webster. The latter was the church Dad had found with the windows boarded up and occupied by bats and birds. He sought out the remaining members, all disgruntled Swedes, and suggested they have a funeral for the church. He announced the gathering, removed the window coverings and cleaned the building. They had such a revival that afternoon that the church opened again. Now, dad stood in the foyer of a beautiful new sanctuary and cried.

During those years we bought a cabin on the shores of a nice lake near Cussin, north of Cook. I learned a valuable truth ... cabins are more work than leisure. Something needed to be repaired each time we came; if nothing else, the yard needed mowing. It was a little too far to bring guests out for a day. That busyness got worse when we moved to the Twin Cities. We sold it at a profit.

I was completing my years on the Home Missions Board with a committee meeting at our national headquarters in

Evanston. As I waited for my ride to the airport, I wandered through the beautiful edifice. I spoke with several dignitaries, among them was L. Ted Johnson, head of the Board of Christian Education. He had heard about our senior adult group and asked some questions.

Some weeks later Ted called and made this statement: "I'm looking for an assistant in this office to help small churches with their CE program and to think through and lead us into some type of program for a senior adult ministry. I think there is a lot of talent there going to waste. Would you be that man?" I was stunned and stuttered something. He then commented, "I don't expect an answer today, but you think about it and pray over it and I'll call you back next week." After he hung up I sat still in my chair, and studying the ceiling, this thought came to me, "Maybe the Lord isn't through with me yet." I'd already pioneered in two assignments, one as Chaplain for the U.S. Military Government in Korea and the other as Executive Minister of the Iowa Baptist Conference. Was I ready and willing to tackle another one at age 62? A week later Ted called back and I reported my willingness to consider it further. He wanted me to meet with his board. Arrangements were made as to the date and place. I flew to Chicago one morning and met with the board in the airport guest room and flew back that afternoon. As the meeting was coming to a conclusion one nice younger lady commented, "I can't believe he's old enough to work with senior adults, he can't be 62."

At the annual meeting of the General Conference in Fresno, CA, I was farewelled by the Home Missions Board and grilled by the Board of Christian Education, and then

heard the recommendation to the whole assembly. It was an elected position. A couple of hours later I was entertained as “something”-elect. We drove back to Duluth chatting about the prospects of this new possibility of service. After the call was confirmed in writing we resigned and planned to leave exactly seven years after we came.

We were told we could live anywhere as long as it was within an hour of an airport. We chose the Twin Cities — our older son lived in Fridley, our daughter was at Bethel, and Dan would be with us. My parents lived in Cambridge and the last of Lillian’s family were there too. Several trips of house-hunting provided a townhouse in the Innsbruck complex in Fridley. One thing about that move is very significant. The day after the van operators carried our possessions into our new residence, six ladies from the Duluth church came to help us unpack. They commented, “You don’t have any church ladies to help you this time.” That was love demonstrated. We fitted our belongings into the six room, three story apartment and then I sat down to my desk and asked myself, “Where do I start?” It seemed like I’d asked that before.

The Trout Lake senior adult retreat gave me a chance to flex my muscles in this new role. It wasn’t too shocking — especially after I got up to speak and the man sitting directly in front of me was my first Bethel roommate, Bill Swan. He gave me a sympathetic smile and I sensed, “I guess this is where I belong.”

I selected several members of the BGC churches in the Twin Cities and with the aid of Bill Hagstrom (the admin-

istrator of the Presbyterian retirement homes and a good friend) called a study committee meeting at his office to probe the subject, "What could be done?" Conceived that day was a senior adult rally, outing, picnic, banquet or something. It's called a "Pig Roast" today.

I felt I could begin my new job the way I began the Iowa job by just writing the district executives as I'd done the Iowa pastors telling them I was available. The response was interesting. Some who were my friends were quick to respond positively. I don't know what the others thought, but I gathered later they either didn't think they had senior adults or they didn't want or need me to butt into their churches, they could do all that was necessary.

Pastors, too, were reticent to listen to my pitch. I worshipped one Sunday in one of the churches my dad had served. Over three hundred were in the service. After the service I stood in the foyer watching the line of attendees "congratulate" the pastor on a good sermon. When the audience had almost exited I introduced myself. He responded, "I don't have any old timers here, only one and he is in a care center." I looked around the area and turned back to him and remarked, "I can count at least a half dozen standing right here." I heard, "I never think of them as old." Months later he let me come and he gathered about 25 people and we were seated on the platform of the youth building to be "cozier." That man in the nursing home I remembered from sixty years before. Then it was rumored that he was having a crush on one of my mother's sisters. This I recall from hearing the conversations at the breakfast table.

I went to another district at the invitation of their CE di-

rector to have a workshop at their annual CE conference. One person attended and he was my classmate in the seminary. I went to another church at the direction of the district and the pastor met me at the airport. He greeted me with these words, “My high school seniors are all excited about your coming.” I had to explain I was working with seniors all right but much older ones, senior adults. He explained he had a ministerial gathering in his church at noon and his ladies were serving, but he’d ask them to invite some seniors for an afternoon gathering if I’d speak to the youth in the evening. He had several hundred members and the women managed to corral about thirty gray heads. And so it went. It seemed my major job was to awaken an interest in older folk.

There seemed to be an ignorance of who senior adults are. I attended a seminar for those involved in a ministry to the aging sponsored by Anoka County. The guest speaker began with some lines like this, “The greatest burden to our welfare program are those receiving social security benefits.” I interrupted and said, “Those of us receiving social security are not welfare recipients, we are only drawing from the retirement fund into which we have contributed for all our adult lives. I resent that statement.” His rebuttal was, “Be that as it may...,” and then went on with his lecture. After the session one young lady, a social worker in a care center near my home, told me I was, “Absolutely right — you are not welfare recipients.” A few years later, when I needed help during my mother’s aging needs, I got real encouragement from that young lady.

Another orientation experience came when I had the privilege of attending The White House Conference on Ag-

ing. The White House was involved only in that President Reagan came to the hotel where sessions were being held and spoke at a noon luncheon. I stayed with Dale and Joyce and commuted to the sessions via a fast local train. The sessions were mostly reviews of the nation's Social Ministries philosophy and programs of the government and little if anything about the church's involvement. I did carry home a briefcase full of propaganda.

I was asked to write a page for *The Standard* each month in which I was to identify senior adults, help them discover a more fulfilling retirement and to illustrate what seniors are doing. I was further assigned to write a manual, which was published by Harvest Publications and was entitled, *Working With Older Adults*. Although I took a course in high school in journalism, and later became the business manager for the Bethel *Clarion*, I did not dream I'd be a writer to that degree. Yes, there were those Iowa pieces, but I thought of them as only my reports. These assignments I kept fulfilling into the next decade, when I finally retired.

The Exciting Eighties

Would you ever think that the year one reaches the retirement age of 65 he would be inducted into a decade of excitement? That excitement began in a farm house in northern Wisconsin, just south of Lake Superior, where we were virtually marooned. I'd been asked to lead the Lake Nebagamon Church through some Prayer Week services during the first week in January. We left the cities as snowflakes began to fall. The further north we went, the more the flakes multiplied, and the wind kept moving them around. Thinking that I'd found the right farm I managed to force the car through the mounting drifts, which crossed the long driveway into the Carlson yard. We were greeted by a very large dog. When I stepped from the car he placed his snow covered front paws on my shoulders and started to lick my face. He was an enormously big dog, but friendly. Our host had pulled his high boots on by then and came out, called the dog away and welcomed us.

After a delicious farm dinner it seemed the storm had abated, somewhat at least. Mr. Carlson made a track in his long lane, and thought we could get to church. We got there,

but had to leave the vehicle in a snowbank in front of the church, for there was no way into their parking lot. Three couples came, two of them had walked. One brave couple had their son with them. I think he was seven or eight years old. I was introduced and made a few remarks and suggested, "Let's have a few short prayers and go home." I could sense they were concerned about the weather. When there was a pause between each adult praying, the little lad prayed. I'll never forget one of his prayers. He said, "Dear God, thank you for the snow." My mind silently shouted, "But why now?" He continued, "Because it covers the strawberries, so they don't freeze and you know how I like strawberries." The entire week was worth hearing that boy's prayer.

The next morning the wind had ceased, but the snow remained. I asked my host if he had a woodpile that should be split, adding, "I'd like to tackle it," and then I told him I enjoyed that chore. He nodded "yes" and I asked for some winter work clothes. He dressed me in his snowmobile suit, which was much too large for me. I found his tool shed, took out an axe and a wedge and reached back for the long steel crowbar, in the event the wood chunks were frozen together. I saw a place where he'd started to chop and had neatly piled the stove wood. I hacked away for an hour or more and became very sweaty. Some salty wet stuff ran over my glasses, blinding me. I took them off and laid them on top of the four foot high wood pile. I continued until the hostess called me for lunch. When I reached for my glasses, they were not where I'd put them. As I began to stir at the foot of the pile I sensed the presence of that big dog and looked at him. He was sitting at the other end of that row of wood and was chewing

away at something. I saw one of the bows from my glasses protruding from his mouth. Carefully, I claimed the saliva stained and very bent pieces that should sit on my nose. Close examination revealed one lens was missing. The dog didn't have it, where could I find it? I prayed, "Lord, if you want me to read the Scriptures and my notes tonight please help me find it." I saw nothing that resembled glass around the place where I had stood and two feet of snow covered my path to the shed. I picked up the tools and using the crowbar for a cane took a step or two toward the red door. I heard a faint click as I put the steel bar down into the snow. I reached down, curiously, and there was my lens. The ladies in the house used their delicate fingers to twist the frame into the proper shape and insert the lens. The Lord takes care of His servants.

The next trip wasn't plagued with driven snow, but blessed with sandy beaches. We were in the Caribbean and later went across to the Gulf of Mexico. I had been invited by Pastor Woods of the Altoona church in St. Croix to help him with some teacher training, which was part of my job. In my preparation I visited the Spanish Bible Institute in Chicago, which came into being during my term on the Home Missions Board, and asked their leadership what was needed in that area on St. Croix. Their reply was, "Mostly teaching aids." While I was collecting teaching aids, including a white board with an erasable black felt pen, Ted, my boss, was in communication with Missionary Bubar about an island-wide CE Conference in the Christiansted church. When we arrived I learned of that larger gathering and that Ted was to speak each evening. I gave a few introductory remarks from an old

Iowa outline on the subject, "How to study the Bible," dividing it into a paragraph each night. Ted gave his usual pitch on the purpose and philosophy of Christian Education. I did squeeze in the opportunity to preach at four of the Island churches on the two Sundays we were there. Seeing the Danish style buildings and the sugar cane plantations and snorkeling in the ocean waters were redemptive. We were privileged to stay with Pastor Woods and his wife, who was once Lillian Johnson, and to play with his children, Alexis, a little girl and J.W., whose name was Jalesware, but I told him I'd call him "J.W." . . . soon his father was doing it too. We were their guests that entire week.

On Monday our stay ended. We reported to the airport. Ted boarded his flight to The States. Lillian and I were to fly to Bonaire. We had to change planes in San Juan, Puerto Rico and our first lap was in a small island hopper. The attendant asked my weight and Lillian's. Because of the vast difference in our weight she was seated in the front of the plane and I in the middle. I tried to carry my briefcase aboard, but the attendant said, "No, that'll have to be checked." I tried to object, but she assured me it would catch up with us in San Juan. When we landed in Puerto Rico I inquired about our luggage. Before we boarded the plane to Bonaire, I was assured our luggage would be with us. We put down on several of the islands in the Netherlands Antilles chain, just north of the South American country of Venezuela. We deplaned at each stop and walked through the airport, each time we got curious stares. In Aruba I inquired about our stuff and with a blank, cold look on his face the clerk walked away as if to look for it. I followed him with my eyes and made some remarks to

Lillian in Swedish and we were still talking when he returned. His face lit up with a big smile and he answered my questions courteously. Somewhat puzzled we walked over to another counter, still talking Swedish, and got a warm reception. After we deplaned on Bonaire I asked Stan, our host, about it and his reply was, "They don't like Americans around here." In talking Swedish we were Europeans.

We had a great time without a change of clothes for the week, Lillian washed them up each evening and we stepped into them again in the morning. We were with Stan and Karen, Lillian's niece, and their girls. We found the cacti hedges, the "sacred" goats, and the Dutch motifs very interesting. We snorkeled among the coral reefs. I was dressed neatly but tightly in the other Stan's swimsuit, which was about three sizes too small. I swam beyond the coral reefs and saw a very large school of colorful fish. I understood then how the disciples could fill their net with one draw ... there must have been hundreds. One evening we were ushered through the studios of the Trans World Radio ministries, where Stan worked. I was given a 30 inch neon light bulb to carry. A few steps into the generator room it lit up as if I'd fit it into an electric wall socket. There was that much electricity in the air.

After a few days we left and had to change planes in Miami. There again, I inquired about the luggage. No report. I asked that they send the pieces directly to our home in Fridley. Waiting for us at the baggage carousel was my friend John Kooistra. He was a lad from Kenosha, who was a great singer and pianist. I had taken him with me to sing and play occasionally, and he was now music director at one of the large

Southern Baptist churches. It was a thrill to hear what the Lord had done with him over the past 35 years.

We put down in St. Petersburg, where Lillian's Uncle Martin met us. At his home Lillian put me to bed and washed and ironed everything I wore, so I could be presentable at a rally for senior adults in Sun City the next day. We left Uncle Martin's home the following day carrying with us two very heavy suitcases. They were filled with Uncle Martin's home grown grapefruit. We opened the door to our Fridley townhouse and there stood our pieces of luggage, unmolested.

The Conference Annual meeting was being held in Erie, PA, one of my childhood hometowns. It was the year of my 65th birthday, the year of compulsory retirement in the BGC offices. The Board didn't feel my work was done. They reasoned, "You've just gotten a handle on senior adult ministries and the churches are beginning to respond, we need to keep you on." I was urged to stay on as a consultant until age seventy and work three-fifths time. Afterwards, Lillian would remark, "Stan works five-thirds time for three-fifths pay."

The excitement of 1982 was a jumble of mixed emotions. In March we helped my Dad celebrate his 100th birthday with a grand affair in the Grandview Home. As the party ended it was a delight to see Dad with his sharp mind, having a profound conversation with Dean Edwin Omark, formerly of Bethel Seminary. Six weeks later we were called back to Cambridge. Dad was ill. The next morning he died. After the celebration Mother became very ill and was hospitalized; subsequently we had to find another care center for her. The day after she was settled at Trevilla in New Brighton, we

took her to the mortuary to see Dad. The funeral was held in the Grasston Baptist Church where he began his ministry in 1908. The details were handled by his nephew Waldo Randall, Algot's son, of the Rock Randall Mortuary in Braham.

I traveled alone for a few trips while Lillian stayed home and prepared the garments our daughter Kirsten was to wear at her wedding in June. She married Dan Walker after her graduation from Bethel. They settled into an apartment in New Brighton until he graduated and then they took positions with a Christian school in Burbank, California.

Meanwhile, our Dan had matriculated at Bemidji State and was spending his summers as manager of the canoe shack at the Mink Lake Camp. His assignment after graduation was to a remedial center for boys in Hersey, Michigan.

After the wedding we "rested" by flying to the 1982 Conference in California. There two men from New England buttonholed me; one was the chairman of their Board and the other was a pastor I knew well. They wanted me to come to the Northeast Conference as the interim District Executive Minister. I told them of my new situation. Their response was, "We need you, come and work two-fifths time for us and live on the field, we need someone like you in the office." Two districts had merged ... the Mid-Atlantic and the New England. They had bought a new campsite and sold the other two. There apparently was some dissension and these men seemed desperate and were looking for someone with a background in those states. They thought some familiar voice was needed to make things gel. They reasoned I was that voice. I talked it over with Ted and he remarked, "Try it, but be sure you

don't stay permanently, we need you too." For nine months I did the two assignments. I was relieved when a new Executive Minister was selected and I could be farewelled at their annual meeting in Avon, CT. One of the great joys of that New England experience was the visits to Dale and Joyce. Every time we had an errand to our Pennsylvania and Delaware churches we'd attach a few extra miles and visit our son and daughter-in-law and our grandsons, living now in Maryland.

When we first moved to our Oberlin Circle home in Fridley we had one great advantage. Dale and Joyce and grandson Aaron were living just a mile away, an easy walk, but Dale had been transferred to the Washington D.C. office of the Department of Agriculture. When they were house hunting in the Maryland area we had the privilege of having three-year-old Aaron with us at a lake cabin. What fun for Grandma and Grandpa! To sell his house Dale had to remove the plywood panels which had formed a car-port over the driveway. We claimed those panels and stored them in our garage wondering what we would do with them. In the next decade I would use them for shelves in our Shirlee Lane garage.

While in Massachusetts, as a recreational venture, I found some huge elm pieces that needed splitting. The camp custodian had cut down some giant elms and had them sawed into fireplace or stove length chunks. With the aid of a wedge and a mall I managed to make portable flame ready pieces. That custodian was also pastor of a Conference church just over the New York state line. We went there to worship and entered the building through a basement door and sought the stairs to the sanctuary. We made it. After the service I suggested that they repair the main entrance, it was a disgrace. He had

mentioned it to the powers that be, but the board was slow to act due to the fact they didn't want to disturb the old stained glass windows. I suggested that they build around them, with a large entry with enclosed steps. When we left the area this craftsman pastor was doing just that. I'm certain it was a God inspired idea.

In the spring we vacated and cleaned out the apartment near Pittsfield, MA, in the Berkshires. The building was to be a part of the camp and hopefully the Conference office. I discouraged the latter and said, "The Conference office should be in a more central place, closer to a core of the churches." Then we drove to Warren, PA. We had stopped there many times in our cross country travels. Margaret Samuelson Young was our hostess. She was the younger sister of Marvin and Grant. Grant had been my roommate at Bethel for two years. Margaret would often comment. "You're the closest thing I've got to a brother." I was honored.

Each time we went away we had some folk live in our town house. They took care of the bills and the mail that needed to be forwarded. We reserved the right to stay in Dan's basement room when we came to the Twin Cities. Among them were Carla and Dan Chalmers before they went to the Philippines. Also, Renee and Art Gibbons stayed with us. She is the daughter of the Morris Andersons. Evan Baltz stayed two years and Brett, the son of Larry Olson stayed a year. Four of them, Carla, Renee, Evan, and Brett, were pastors' kids in churches where we had some ministry.

The next year we criss-crossed the country with retreats and rallies for senior adults and workshops or seminars and

encouraged others who could be involved in serving the older folk. The summer of '84 we got a break. Alrik and Harriette Blomquist were co-sponsoring a tour to Europe with emphasis on the Passion Play in Oberammegau. We went along with about 35 others and got glimpses of Germany, Austria, Switzerland and a corner of Italy, as well as the famous play. The tour ended in Frankfurt but we continued without them. We had pre-rented a car and drove from the airport to the Netherlands to spend a few days with newly transferred Karen and Stan again and then on to Sweden. We spent a week in Småland with Lillian's kin. Then met Emory and Helen near Stockholm and together we visited the home sites of our parents. Our father was born in Medelpod, Torp Socken and our mother in Södermanland, near Floda. What a thrill to share those places with my brother. To preach in Dad's home parish and see the chapel where he attended Sunday School and then to speak to Lillian's kin in Ljunby were rewards I can't measure. At Dad's church the pastor told me, "There may be only eight people present, our congregation is very small." I assured him that numbers didn't matter. That Sunday there were 64 worshippers ... mostly my kin in one way or the other.

After a month's absence we had to compress a lot of activities into the fall. When the holiday seasons approached we had no bookings. Nobody wants an old itinerant preacher during those weeks. The Sunday evening following Thanksgiving we attended a worship service at the Central Baptist Church. After the service Dr. Bass of the Bethel faculty grabbed my lapel and said, "I'm leaving for the Holy Land on Wednesday, why don't you come along ... I've got one space

available.” Lillian jabbed me and said, “Go!” I couldn’t refuse, even my passport said “Okay.” By the end of the week I was in Egypt and from Cairo to the Pyramids (I climbed up and down inside of one). In Israel, with Jerusalem as a base, we went from Bethlehem to The Resurrection Garden and in Jordan to Petra and Masada. Being housed and feted in luxurious hotels added to the thrill.

The middle of the decade descended on us with a cascade of celebrations. We celebrated my Mother’s 99th birthday at Trevilla. I was farewelled at the annual meeting of the BGC in Wheaton, IL, and in the college’s great chapel an audience stood and clapped for us as we completed fifty years of preaching, forty years of marriage, and seven years with senior adult ministries.

Now I was done. Retired, I thought. Oh, there were a few assignments across the country I thought I ought to follow through. By coincidence or more likely by Divine planning, the last trip included Warren, PA, the place of my birth. To make haste we flew to Cleveland, rented a car, made some stops, and came to Warren the night before the rally to be rested for the noon session on the morrow. We settled in at Margaret’s house all ready for bed. A telephone call interrupted our quiet. A nurse at the Trevilla residence said, “We just took your mother to the hospital. She isn’t doing too well.” I called the airport to change our flights and were told, “Three thirty tomorrow afternoon.” We finished our address in Warren at about 2 p.m. and took off for the airport. The plane landed and at the gate were my sister and some others. They told me Mother had expired at 2 p.m. She was buried in

the Rush Point, MN, cemetery alongside Dad, just a few rods from her first home in America. It was as though the Lord kept Mother here, to keep praying for me until I was finished. I was through in the place where it all began for me seventy years before.

My successor had been named. Marilyn Starr came to our house and I gave her all the senior adult data I'd accumulated and the electric typewriter the BGC office had bought for me. A missionary to India came by and was looking for some religious books for a Bible school in India. He looked at my shelves and offered to buy some. His companion said, "I'll pay for them, how much do you want." I didn't really want to give them away and I didn't know either the men or their agency so I said, "How about fifty cents a volume, no matter which one?" The missionary about cleaned my shelves and I got a nice check. It seemed all I had left was my seminary typewriter, my Kenosha desk (given me at my ordination), my Big Springs chair (I bought it while there with some gift money), and my antique wooden file cabinet (given me by a benefactor in Des Moines). The room was as empty as I felt.

I neatened the empty shelves and the desk top and went down the steps thinking Lillian might have some coffee for me. I nibbled at what she set before me and I thought she did likewise. Maybe "the empty nest" syndrome was getting the best of both of us. Dale and Joyce were in far off Maryland, Dan was at the U in Bemidji far to the north and Kirsten and her Dan were in California. I finally said to Lillian, "Since we missed our 1945 honeymoon, let's take it now ... go on a long trip without a time table or a briefcase and let's see where we get." With almost a triumphant smile she began to pick off the

table as she said, "Let's do it."

I had the oil in the car changed and tested the brake fluid. I bought a lot of fresh film and threw it into my camera bag. We filled our traveling bags with casual clothes, loaded the car, turned off the lights and locked the door. There was no one to tell. Previously, at least, I left an itinerary at Mother's care center. We pulled down the squeaky garage door, slammed the car door, and asked the Lord to protect us in our wanderings. We went west. All the way to Mitchell, SD, where we found a motel room and viewed the Corn Palace ... that unique building veneered with corn cobs. We waved at the faces in the Black Hills that had smiled at us forty years before. We watched the groundhogs till the soil below The Devil's Tower as humans tried like ants to scale the perpendicular rock formation. The bears and the geysers claimed our attention in Yellowstone. In the Big Sky State of Montana we found the first familiar folk we knew, Rev. and Mrs. Don Fuller. I'd called the night before to warn them. She was an infant in the Ramsey church when I was the student pastor, fifty years before.

After we had bothered them long enough we meandered across the mountains, over the trail of Lewis and Clark until Seattle came into view. The family gatherings in that area were sweet. Then we drove north to Vancouver, BC, and became the guests of Jack and Gladys Bergeson, an old friend and now the first District Executive Minister for the British Columbia district. They supplied the housing and we attended the World's Fair Exposition, the first such I'd seen since the Chicago Fair of 1933. With minds saturated

with other cultures and our stomachs growling with foreign foods we trekked back to Seattle and then south along the rocky coastal drive through Oregon and through the Redwood forests of northern California to Burbank. It was along the same route I'd traveled on a troop train in 1947 as I came home from Korea. Guess whom we found in Burbank.

We sat at Kirsten's reading the Sunday paper. In the travel section was a paragraph from a travel agency that stated they had some vacancies on a charter to Hawaii. I made inquiries. We thought it sounded reasonable. Off we went into the wild blue yonder. Everything was great until we tried to rent a car to get a better view of the other side of the island. I made all the contacts, filled in all the forms and the attendant wanted to see my driver's license. He looked at it, gave it back with the comment, "Sorry, we can't let you have that car — you're too old." With my deflated ego our adventure continued on foot.

Finally we came back to the mainland, to Burbank first, and then to Hemet. At Hemet we were the guests of Allan and Shirley Johnson. Al was one of my roommates at Bethel and Shirley was a parishioner in Duluth, both were now in a second marriage. We had such a good time enjoying each other and the oranges and figs that we looked for a place of our own. We saw a mobile home in a clean park and made a bid on it. We could take possession after the new year. That seemed ideal, especially with Kirsten only an hour away.

Ultimately we started back to the Midwest. We got held up near the Zion National Park in Utah by "Bumbleberry Pie" — it was delicious. After visiting kin and friends in a few Colorado places we thought we'd had excitement and ad-

venture enough and went to our empty house. We began to study our Innsbruck townhouse asking, "Could we make it more appealing?" We'd seen some beautiful kitchens, this one wasn't, nor was it very practical.

When one starts thinking like that something is bound to happen. It did, and after a series of interruptions it got done ... new ceiling, with stained box-car siding to make it glow like Swedish kitchens. Then we enlarged a doorway to lengthen the counter and added new oak cabinets. Finally, a new floor, a one piece vinyl laid by the one who would walk on it the most. The project really never got done until we moved in the next decade. There were exciting delays of all sorts.

I was unaware of it, but a whole new career was about to start. Just after the new year Doug Baltz, the Iowa District Executive Minister, called. His words were: "Stan, I want you to come to Olivet as interim pastor." I had not planned on anything like that. I had two major problems. First, the house was a mess; second, I was to take possession of a new property in Hemet. He said, "They would work around that, but please come." We stopped there on my way to California and agreed to come back as the interim six weeks later. It was a good experience. Just to preach to the same people week after week and see what the Lord was doing in their lives was refreshing.

After six months I went back to my cabinetry in Fridley. Then came winter and off to Hemet we went to enjoy and be involved with another redecorating process. We papered and painted the interior of our mobile home and thrilled to share it with both Dale's and Kirsten's families. When the frost was out of the ground in Minnesota we came back but another

District Executive Minister called a few months later, saying, “We need you in Elkhorn, NE.” We went down in August and got there just in time to pick the ripe tomatoes in the parsonage yard. Added to the spark of that period was that the Marshalls, with Penny, from West Liberty, IA, were now among the members. Too, we were close to our old habitat in Omaha and could refresh some old memories. We got news that there was to be a new arrival in Burbank. In November we drove out and I left Lillian and the Chev — “Old Blue” had reached its last threads. I flew to Puyallup for Mary LaGesse’s wedding and back to the Twin Cities. I found a “Talking Car” and drove back to Elkhorn. Two weeks later I met Lillian at the airport in Omaha and purposely left the car door slightly open. When I turned on the ignition she heard, “The door is ajar.”

We went back to Hemet when the new pastor was about to come, but I wondered if this chase was worth it. Too, Dan and Kirsten were talking about returning to Minnesota. We listed the mobile home for sale and went back to the Midwest. We stopped in Nebraska for a weekend retreat, with campers and tents, with the Elkhorn folk and then home to our reconstruction. We made the place livable again and gave a sigh of relief. Then John Soneson called from South Dakota, “We need you in Yankton.” Five months later a candidate came, they called him. I accepted the next assignment to be the interim District Executive Minister for Iowa. We moved on without going home. After a few months in our old office, which was now in the Merrill Hay Tower and not in our basement, we became interim at Union Park, again without a break. They had their eye on a young neighbor pastor and when he said

“yes,” we went down I-80 to Iowa City to finish out the decade pastoring a lot of campus dignitaries.

Some dare to call this “retirement.” It truly was an exciting decade.

The Nomadic Nineties

The century was about to end. As I reviewed the nineties they seemed like they could have been a frightening experience. What we endured or enjoyed as the last decade of the twentieth century slipped through our fingers. As a little boy I often wondered how it would be to write the year 2000. How does one conclude all those teens? We became Nomads, a part of the wandering hordes.

The decade started pleasantly enough. We turned the calendar with the congregation in Iowa City, IA. The year was introduced with dining in various homes. Everything from turkey dinners to soup suppers to Italian spaghetti strengthened us for the unknown years ahead.

During the New Year's week the church had a candidate who stayed the entire week. We followed our practice of being absent during that time. We used those days to make a trip to Maryland and visit with Dale and Joyce. We followed the Lincoln trails going east and after a nice stay started back via Richmond and then more of Lincoln's memorabilia. It was a moving experience to walk where Lincoln walked in Spring-

field and in Salem, and to drive past his birthplace cabin.

We paused in our history trek to hunt for Vangie's son Steve and family near Erlanger, KY. We had no idea where they lived. We sought a rest stop along the highway and from there called them. The one who answered the telephone remarked, "Look out the back door and you'll see our house." Then Sandy, Steve's wife, told us how to get there. We had to continue on the interstate until we could exit and go back past the rest stop. It took us ten miles of driving to get to the house we'd seen about a mile away.

Back in Iowa City we learned that the congregation had called the man from California whose chief credentials included, "He chaired the Committee on Local Activities for the recent annual meeting of the BGC in California." Spring was on its way when we went back to our Fridley home.

To welcome us back, the Dick Turnwalls invited us to dinner. "Back" had meaning for it indicated we'd been an interim in Yankton, SD, an interim District Executive Minister for the Iowa Conference, an interim at Union Park, Des Moines, and again in Iowa City — all in succession, without a break. A couple of weary travelers sat at the Turnwalls' table. About the time the evening was coming to a conclusion Marge came up with these words, "Our neighbor has gone to a care center and her place will soon come up for sale, you should move there." She added, coyly, "I've got a key — let's go in and look at it." We were pleased with the layout and it had some advantages our present home didn't have. In the next hours we came to a conclusion, "If we can trade dollar for dollar we ought to move over there." Besides, we'd be close to our best

friends the Turnwalls and the Blomquists, who were only a half block away. We called the realtor who helped us buy the Innsbruck property, Stan Hardwick. We told him our thinking and he went to work on it. A few days later he called and said, "It's feasible . . . let's go to work on it." We listed our property with him and left town for our Hemet, California abode near Kirsten and Dan. Not two weeks later, Mr. Hardwick called and told us, "The deal's done — we have a potential buyer and an affirmation from the Turnwalls' neighbor." In the same period Kirsten and Dan listed their Burbank home for sale and we listed our Hemet mobile unit. We came back to the Twin Cities via Seattle and Puyallup. A real family shuffle was in the making.

The deal was done, but the work had just begun. The remodeling we had started had to be finished, and the touch up painting. It stretched every muscle to finish in time, and to pack all our belongings. We carried out everything on a hot summer day . . . it was the 29th of June. We loaded things into a U-haul truck, repeating the process again and again, and the crew deposited them at the South Shirlee Lane, Shoreview, address. The new place had all the living area on one floor, the upper level of a split foyer entry. The lower level had a double garage and a basement that could be divided into two rooms. Now the sweat really began to flow. I cleared boxes from one side of the garage and cut Dale's 4 by 8 foot sheets of plywood in half lengthwise. (It was of these I had wondered, "What am I going to do with these?") I used them to make floor to ceiling storage shelves the entire length of the garage. As fast as I could secure them to the uprights, I piled in the stuff from the floor and soon we could walk through

the garage.

We tackled the other half of the lower level. We divided it into two rooms. We made a bedroom for Dan, should he need it, and an all-purpose room of which one corner would be an office. After we put sheet-rock on the walls we dropped the ceiling with styrofoam panels. We had saved the old kitchen cabinets from the Innsbruck townhouse remodeling and hung the upper sections in the laundry and set the lower pieces in the garage as the basis for a work bench. The furniture for the lower level was moved into place on a new piece of wall to wall carpeting. Now the car could be driven into the garage.

We managed to interrupt our toil with trips to Superior for the 50th anniversary of Dagny, my step cousin, and Gordon Larson, whom I'd married in 1940, and later to Aunt Margaret's 90th birthday celebration and Orville and Marion's golden wedding. That gave us some respite.

It didn't take long for the house to be filled with family. Dan and Kirsten sold their place in Burbank and came home to resettle in the Twin Cities. Our son Dan was in a transient stage. He had resigned his post in Michigan and was job hunting. His little nieces were thrilled when he lifted them, one in each hand, so they could touch the ceiling. He didn't stay long, his time was too brief. He went south to look at some possibilities with Outward Bound. He found his niche in Yulee, Florida, with a mentor from the University at Bemidji as his superior. He came back for his belongings and the room we fixed for him became vacant. Kirsten's Dan had a little more difficulty. His teaching experience and education must have been too much for the Twin Cities school systems.

He started to work as a substitute teacher and worked at the Target store. He didn't enjoy either.

We had another trip to the east. The Warren, PA, church was celebrating their centennial and wanted us to be on the scene. I'd been born there during my dad's pastorate 75 years before. We stopped in Norwalk, Ohio, with Ginger and Iver Johnson who had been active in the Bristol church during our tenure. We stopped in Jamestown, NY, with Sylvia and Richard Johnson who had been with me on that missionary trip to the Orient in '77. Then we celebrated in Warren. I had been there at their 25th, their 50th, their 75th and had spoken at each one (I cried at the 25th) and now I was to be the speaker at their centennial banquet. From there we went to Santa's Land in New York, to the Northeast Conference's Lakeside camp in Pittsfield, MA, to Old Sturbridge in Massachusetts, and then to Bristol, CT, before ending up at Bowie, MD.

A Minnesota blizzard on Halloween dampened our welcome back to Minnesota. The morning after our arrival we had to open the overhead garage door from the inside and then shovel our way to the front entrance. We could not push the door open from within. It melted enough so we could attend a retreat at Trout Lake, then a funeral at Sandstone, and race to Iowa City for an anniversary.

I thought we could stay home, but the church in Hershey, NE, called and asked, a second time, if we would please come as their interim. In late November we left the high drifts of Minnesota and drove out to the barren prairie of western Nebraska. A little fresh snow had covered the landscape as we

entered the city of Hershey, with a Hershey candy bar for a village logo. It was hanging near an old wooden windmill. We stopped at the church where the man who had called us met us and led us to the house that would be our home for the next months. It was a recently remodeled farm house about three miles from the church. He opened the front door, gave us the key and told us he had an involvement elsewhere. We entered the clean and well furnished unit and then I went to unload the car. I told Lillian to hold open the door and take the items in after I reached the stoop. I had learned that the path under the snow was made of something like "mud." Later I discovered that under the snow was a newly cultivated and seeded lawn, with no sidewalk. My boots got heavier and heavier. When I finished unloading, I carried the mud packs to the laundry in a far corner of the house and came in stocking-footed to explore our new domain. A well laden pantry provided all we needed for a tasty supper and for our continued eating.

The next morning we realized we were in for an education. It was Sunday and at the sanctuary door we were greeted by the men of the church who tossed their ten gallon Stetsons on a hat rack and kicked the snow off their high heeled and pointed toed boots. We later learned that the major city to the east of us was the home of Buffalo Bill, who was immortalized everywhere. The town to the west was the site of the cemetery where they buried "the gun fighters with their boots on." Now it was known as "Boot Hill." It was a real contrast to our familiar colonial east.

It was an exciting church to serve. Each worship service on Sunday morning began with a testimony meeting in which

folk reviewed what the Lord had done for them that week. A large AWANA program was held each Wednesday night. An active ladies group provided bulk kitchen supplies. The leaders of the group contracted with a wholesaler who brought a huge truck load of multiple quantities of various edibles to the church gym and the ladies properly distributed them.

We got involved in the community, in the school system, and in the senior citizen dinners. We studied the sand cranes, the constant moving of railroad cars behind our house and the barren sand hills to our north. We missed a live rodeo but we witnessed a cattle branding. Our host at the branding apologized afterward with, "I wish I'd let you brand one of the big ones." I would have been thrilled. He explained that the horrendous noises heard at the branding were not from the pain of burned flesh but from the separation of a mother and her calf.

Our stay was punctuated with visits to Otis, CO, with Lillian's sister, Irene. Also her daughter and her husband, Marlene and Waldo Thompson. We made a trek to Loomis, NE, where Lillian found relatives, Paul and Irene Mattson, whom she had not met before. En route we had stopped at Minden and viewed the massive antique display, but the Loomis museum was far more interesting. It held several artifacts from the Mattsons.

The search committee had their eyes on a young pastor in eastern Nebraska. He came out to candidate and both he and the congregation were pleased. He got the call. He later brought his pretty wife out to see the place before he accepted. When they drove home she informed him that she didn't want to be a preacher's wife anymore. That meant the church got a

negative reply. The search committee had to start over again. A candidate from western Illinois accepted the call and said he would come as soon as school was out in the spring. We had made some commitments thinking the first fellow would come and had to excuse ourselves after Easter. On that Easter Sunday we said “our goodbyes” after a glorious sunrise service on the shore of a man-made lake and later to a filled sanctuary.

One of those commitments was to Camp Forest Springs near Westboro, WI, for a senior adult one day retreat. That’s the group that met the first time in the Prentice church, after flood waters covered eight inches of the basement floor. The jaunt to Forest Springs was always a major delight for it brought me in contact with the churches and communities of my childhood. Even Westboro had memories from a defunct church to the high school gym and ball fields.

Again, we thought we would stay home. In our garage, we set up the loom we had claimed from Milly’s basement when she took residence at Grandview. We laid a red rug on the garage floor, a remnant from the previous occupant and set the loom on it . . . it would not slide as much that way as it would on the bare concrete. We strung about forty yards of warp on the rear axle. With the balls of prepared woof, I could begin to weave to my heart’s content. My arthritic shoulders got good therapy. All this staying home business was interrupted with a visit to Big Springs for a banquet and weekend honoring their older adults. A week at Lake Vermilion in Orville and Marion’s cabin was restful. It preceded a hasty sprint to Colorado for Irene’s funeral. We stayed long enough for Lillian to help sort her older sister’s belongings.

A few Sundays we dashed down to Washington, IA, as a pulpit supply for the folk of one of our Iowa “baby” churches. One trip was for their 25th anniversary celebration. Another trip had an unusual pause. I stopped to greet the pastor of one of our Cedar Rapids churches and as the door opened his wife greeted me with, “Stan Rendahl, we’ve been looking all over for you . . . at least the folk at Marion have.” I still don’t know who knew I was in the area and might stop. After a delicious dinner at Bishops Cafeteria those hunting me told me of their current church dilemma. They were about to merge with another, but a little larger group and the question was, “Was that good?” I told them what would happen if they followed through on that proposal. It did as I indicated and it was negative. Those couples greet me with affection at any gathering at Bethel or BGC conference they attend. What a lesson on God’s prompting.

Residing in St. Paul we could attend the annual meetings of the BGC at Bethel without paying motel fees or travel expenses. What a change! Prentice had a centennial and I had to speak at the banquet in the “massive,” I thought, high school gym. I was warmly greeted by Albert’s sisters, Mae and Rosella Nelson, my childhood playmates. I hadn’t seen Mae in all her adult life. We attended the Fish Lake church, which once had blessed our lives, and was now affiliated with the Evangelical Free church.

We bought a new Buick. I thought the “talking” Chrysler was getting weary. The new car’s inaugural trip was to Bowie, MD, to see our son Dale and his family. Coming back, when our haste wasn’t so necessary, we stopped in Atlantic City, Philadelphia, Audubon, Gettysburg, and the Amish

Colonies, where we attended a worship service. We got back to Shoreview just in time to collect our thoughts and drive to Big Springs for Lloyd Johnson's memorial service. He was our neighbor and benefactor while we occupied the parsonage in that great prairie metropolis.

Just before the year ended, December 28th, my Princess was to be honored, by surprise, for her 74th birthday. I didn't want to wait until the 75th, as she might expect something then. With Kirsten and both Dans at home to carry out the details we took a lovers' trek to Hastings and stayed in a fantastic B and B. After a good dinner, and a comfortable night, we attended a fine worship service. With dinner digesting we started back. The Buick looped in and out of scenic spots, prolonging the ride home. Finally we stepped out of the car at our residence and mounted the steps to our front door. When Lillian entered the building she heard a house filled with people shout "Happy Birthday!" Family and friends had gathered to greet her.

Kirsten got work in the office of the Minnetonka Baptist Church and through that position heard of an opening at the Chapel Hill Academy for a teacher. Dan applied. He soon began teaching third grade. That meant they should relocate in that area. They bought a nice home between the school and the church. They lived with us a few months before the transactions were completed.

We had not been alone in our new surroundings, even though our Dan had moved lock, stock, and barrel to his Florida base. He had remodeled an old storage shed into comfortable living quarters. He was to help retrain young people who were

misfits so that they would fit into society without problems.

He had a few days off at Christmas, but too short a time to drive home and back, yet he wanted to be with us. We sent some flight money. We had a great family celebration. I can see him yet, stretching his long form along the floor to reach all the gifts under the tree. He had been in Florida long enough to find a good golf course and had a set of clubs tailored to his long legs and arms. With the assurance we'd be down in a couple of weeks to help him introduce himself to those clubs, we put him on the return plane.

In January we loaded my old golf clubs and some summer duds in the car and drove south. We stopped with former parishioners; in Hannibal, MO, with Bob Martinsons of Duluth, in Evansville, IN, with the Don Richardsons of Ramsey, SD, and Bristol, CT, and in Washington, IN, with the Claytons from Union Park, Des Moines. We ended up with Archie and Arlene in their lovely rental near Panama City, FL, and were to spend a few days on the sandy shore of the Gulf of Mexico. We enjoyed a long walk on the beach and after we had wiped the sand off our feet Arlene spread some eatables on the table for lunch.

We said our table grace just before the telephone rang. Archie answered it and said that it was for me. I stepped to the counter where he had laid it. When I had identified myself the voice of a man on the other end of the line said, "I'm Bob Norbie, administrator of the Yulee Outward Bound Base. I hate to tell you this, but your son, Dan, dropped dead at 12:15 this noon." I was stunned. I dropped the phone and turned to the table and said, "Dan's dead." I had broken the connection. Archie put it back in the cradle and it rang again. Mr.

Norbie was calling back and verified the fact and told us how it happened and what they had done. Dan had been playing volleyball with his friends during their lunch break and died instantly. Mr. Norbie explained that Dan had been taken away for an autopsy. He further said he had reserved a room for us at a motel and gave us the address. I sensed he was very grief stricken. So were we, of course. We left some of our travel load with Archie to bring back to Minnesota and with our thinned out garment bags started the long, long tear filled drive across the panhandle of Florida.

We found the motel. We called Mr. Norbie, at his request, and he came right over and reviewed all they had done. They tried every manner of resuscitation and called the emergency personnel, but to no avail. The autopsy revealed it was myocarditis, an inflammation of his heart muscle. We phoned Dale in Maryland, and he came immediately. The staff from the base met him at the airport in Jacksonville the next noon. During the hours as we waited for him we picked from Dan's bachelor quarters his belongings. What we didn't load into our car we gave to the base for their use and distribution. We made arrangements for the disposal of his good bike and his newly purchased truck. He had insured his vehicle so that in the event of his demise it would be debt free, and we became the benefactors. The staff made a promise that they would sell it for us, which they did and we got a monthly allotment from the buyer for a long time. We made arrangements with the local mortician and called our friends at Larson/Obsorne in Minneapolis to do that which was necessary in the Twin Cities. We sadly cancelled all our appointments in Florida.

Dale arrived and helped us pack. We tried to sleep that

evening in the motel, but sleep eluded us. With Dale to do most of the driving I thought we could leave. I was exceedingly glad that he was with us. We got underway about 4:30 a.m. and proceeded north and west. As we came to Illinois we looked for a motel. We checked into one and sought the restaurant we'd just passed . . . it was closing while we registered but they gave us a snack. Early the next morning we started out, and drove to Janesville, WI, where we stopped for breakfast. As we ordered Dale called a friend from Bethel days, who was a local pastor. He came down to the eatery and comforted us.

That evening we were back in our townhouse. We tried to put away at least some of the items we'd taken back. A friend from the church where Dan and Kirsten had been attending, now pastored by the same man they had enjoyed in Burbank, CA, brought our supper to us. We were grateful. When she identified herself we were more excited. She had been brought to the Twin Cities to attend Bethel by Vangie and had stayed in our Innsbruck home that first night. We had entertained angels unaware.

We had the memorial service at Bethany. The internment was at Sunset Cemetery, next to where we will be laid. Dan Madvig, one of the casket bearers and Dan's skiing friend, followed the hearse to the grave site at the cemetery on his skis. His remark was, "He always got there before me — he has only one more time to wait for me."

I had received as a Christmas present the gift of a router, a wood finishing tool, which Dan helped me assemble and taught me to use before he left. He was very proficient in those areas. After that I had difficulty using it, emotionally

I guess. Other details of Dan's exploits and some statements about him are found in other writings.

To alleviate some of the pain our good friends the Blomquists and the Turnwalls told us they were to spend the month of February in Hawaii and suggested that we come along in two weeks. They would make all the arrangements through their agent, if we paid our tour bill. Two very sad people boarded the same plane as they did and we did appreciate their fellowship those days, even climbing Diamond-head. What a blessing they were.

I wondered if I'd ever preach again. Emotionally and spiritually I felt drained. Would I have anything to say? Could I face an audience? An invitation to spend Palm Sunday in Cumberland, WI, provided an opportunity. I was reticent. A young couple from Duluth, good friends of our Dan and Kirsten, were involved in the church. I would have their sympathy. Too, I had never been to that church so that lessened the emotional potential. I found a responsive audience which included two Olympic medal winners in wrestling. I was still dubious but they invited us back for Easter Sunday.

There followed a series of jaunts mostly without speaking. One was to Willmar, MN, for the ordination of Rob Olsen, another was to Charles City, IA, to get Dan and Kirsten whose car had broken down, then to Albert Lea, MN, to attend Brenda Armstrong's wedding and to Owatonna, MN, to worship with Steve and Harriette Anderson (he from Burlington, IA, and she from Duluth, MN). Then we went to Duluth for Signe Forsman's 100th birthday party, then to Cross Lake with Al and Harriette, and to Des Moines to deliver a trunk

full of rugs and gain some more fabric, to Trout Lake for a retirement retreat and finally Seattle and Puyallup, WA, and Coos Bay, OR, for nephew Phil's wedding.

The Lord opened a different door. There would be no long travels, just a 35 mile jaunt over and likewise the same back each Sunday morning. I was to teach the Road Runners' Sunday School Class at the Minnetonka Baptist Church, all retirees, for months. Kirsten was on the church staff. Dan Anderson was the assistant pastor; he had been my predecessor when I came as interim to Olivet, West Des Moines. He had called and asked what Bible book studies I'd done as a pastor. I named some and he asked if I'd review some of them for this class. He then explained that they were in the practice of having a "Guest Teacher" for this class and that there would be a remuneration. I got paid, the first such teaching experience that granted me that, at least since I left the seminary. I went back for a number of such series, each time with a different book or sequence. A very rich part of that experience was that we could spend Sunday noon and afternoon with Kirsten, Dan and the girls.

The teaching was a restful interlude, but the chase didn't stop. This delightful nomadic life seemed to continue. We drove out to Prentice to share in Signe Nelson's funeral. I'd lost a dear lifelong friend. The maple sap was running in the Hayward, WI, area and out to Archie's cabin we went. A quick flight to Seattle/Puyallup, WA, for brother-in-law Keith's funeral. We increased the momentum when we flew directly from Washington to Maryland to help Dale and Joyce move to their new home. We spent Mother's Day with them and

took off to Bettendorf, IA, to share in that church's anniversary. Then to Duluth to Kent and Heather's wedding reception. He had been a good friend of our Dan. Rachel Green's high school graduation party brought us to Cloquet, MN — her father had been one of our assistants at Temple. Then to Rush Point for their annual Homecoming fanfare, to Stillwater to ride a train with Twin Cities seniors, to Eau Claire for Ralph Carlson Jr.'s wedding reception, to Archie and Arlene's golden wedding anniversary, to Des Moines for the BGC annual meeting and to share in a senior craft display, to Cross Lake and to Camp Forest Springs for a senior adult retreat. All these filled our time that summer and fall.

We started the next year with a drive south with stops in Des Moines and in Omaha. We went on to Lindsborg, KS, which is a quaint Swedish settlement with an inn furnished with Swedish decor and serving Swedish food. To break the monotony of just driving we stopped in Oklahoma City, OK, and Duncanville, before going on to Whitney, TX, to visit with my brother Rodger and his wife Mary.

On the return we stopped, again, with Tom and Janet Headland, formerly of Duluth and the Philippines. We visited the Lamar, MO, birthplace of President General Eisenhower and the Precious Moments creations in Carthage, MO. On to Kansas City where we paid our respects to President Harry Truman, at his birthplace and farm. We didn't forget to pause with the Gandys, and the Union Park Church in Des Moines. After a month at home we must have gotten restless so to California we went to visit Al and Shirley Johnson in Hemet, but Kirsten and her family were no longer in Burbank. Our real destination was the Seattle/Puyallup parts of my family. We

got back to Shoreview and found Arlene ill in a Duluth hospital, so there we went and afterwards stayed at Hayward “to help.”

Two church anniversaries book-ended a trip to Bowie, MD. The Baptist Tabernacle of Kenosha, WI, had their Centennial and I'd been pastor there after seminary graduation, when they recognized their 40th birthday. The Big Springs church in South Dakota had their 125th, and 35 years has elapsed since we were at that rural parish. One of the delights of this aging process is to go to such gatherings and review what the Lord has been doing and to know that He is still at it.

About August first the search committee chairman for the Belmont St. Baptist Church of Worcester, MA, called and asked if we would come as their interim. I hedged. I thought I was too old, that the church was too big and that it was too far. The inquirer asked that I pray about it for a few days and another gentleman would call me. Lillian and I prayed and I talked with my friend Virgil Olson about it. His comment was, “Go for it — you can do it.” The other gentleman called and after a few preliminary remarks commented, “I remember you from Tispaquin and I (with a real emphasis on the I) would like to have you come.” That was a real compliment. It had been forty years since we were at that camp and he remembered. We said “Yes” and in late August we drove to Massachusetts. It became one of the most delightful experiences we'd had in our interim ministry. The response by the membership was superior to anything we'd had. The older generation embraced us like long lost kinfolk. The financial arrangements were generous even to paying for the time spent

driving out, besides the expenses. That had never happened before. Their generosity and appreciation showed in many other ways too. That trip became a real benediction to sixty years of preaching.

Along the way east we stopped for a night at the Swedish Inn in Rockford, IL, and the next night with the Malcolm Youngs in Warren, PA. During our stay in the Belmont St. parsonage, we enjoyed the exquisite fall scenery of Massachusetts. We studied the witches of Salem, we watched the fishing boats return in Gloucester, we beheld the art of Norman Rockwell at centers in Lennox and Stockbridge, and we climbed Mt. Greylock, which was the highest point in that state. We also sailed with the senior adults of Belmont St. on Lake Stenople in Vermont, and in Connecticut, got to Bristol, to Elim Park, and to Cromwell to visit my niece Becky and her husband Doyle.

Those months were slightly aborted when we went home for Archie's death and funeral. The next pastor was due to arrive in a couple of weeks and I and their board didn't feel it was wise to have me return for that short time. Within that year's time span Lillian lost her three remaining siblings ... Archie, Mildred and Orville. It was good to be home when those experiences came. Also in that decade Lillian's sister Irene in Colorado died, as did my brother Rodger in Texas. Dan was the first. We spent a lot of time following hearses.

The next year I was invited as a pulpit supply to the very historic Scandia Church in Waconia, MN. Several Sundays we filled that role. It was beginning to be a habit for this eighty-year-old pastor to cross the Twin Cities to preach. One Sunday I was informed that a young student at Bethel Sem-

inary, just out of the military, had volunteered to come as their pastor. The leaders were impressed and the congregation called him. That was fine, but when I asked about him at the seminary, he was not listed as a student. Later I learned he was attending an evening class. Later some of the seniors in the church complained to me about him, adding, "He even comes to the pulpit on Sunday in dungarees." I'd been defrocked by the younger generation of pastors. Time to quit.

In March we wanted a restful and warm "vacation." The press carried an ad about a place near Orlando and Disneyland which had "cheap" rental fees. We could fly down, sit on the balcony outside our entrance and read and then occupy the pool. When we arrived we called our former schoolmate, Hope Widen. She got excited and thought we ought to see Splendid China and Epcot. She even came and got us and deposited us at the gates. For the latter she introduced us to her son who was employed at Epcot and he gave us passes. The Dyes spent an afternoon and evening with us at the motel. It was all leisure and recreation.

After a four hour flight delay on the way home and a rescue by Dick Turnwall we had four weeks respite before the wheels began to move again. A weekend was planned for us in Des Moines. It included a presentation of our "For such a time as this" for Union Park's senior group and a cafeteria luncheon with the Olivet counterparts and concluded with a potluck anniversary dinner in recognition of the founding of the Olivet Church at the Clive School.

Instead of returning to Minnesota we took off the next morning for points west. We stopped in Omaha, NE, to

see Hazel Peterson, in Crete to see the Harold Richardsons, and in Hershey to see the Chuck Holmes. When we got to Ogalalla, NE, we thought we needed a change of venue and viewed such sights in the sandy hills as Chimney Rock. We drove along the Oregon Trail. After riding through three tunnels we came to Scottsbluff and Gering, NE. Then we dropped down to Otis, CO, and dined with the Thompsons at the Norka Cafe, which they had just opened. In Denver we attended Judy and Duane's motorcycle show and went to the Northwest Baptist Church (that pastor went next to Union Park, Des Moines) with Ansel and Doris McAllister. She was part of my Orient trip in 1977. We went south to Colorado Springs to be with Bob and Judy, our Bristol kids. We made a side trip to the Royal Gorge. It was fascinating. On the return to Minnesota we stopped in Abilene, KS, to view Eisenhower's home. We stayed overnight with the Gandy's in Des Moines and picked up some fabric for more rugs. Someone must have thought we'd be staying home now.

The decade provided three grand exits from the contiguous states. That is, in addition to the vacation in Hawaii with the Blomquists and Turnwalls in 1992. The first was a tour with the BGC Gold to England, with stops in Wales and Scotland. All the details are reviewed elsewhere, but it was a delight to see London, the Thames and stand in the shadow of Big Ben. We stayed in a castle in Wales, heard the bagpipes in Scotland, walked through the ruins of WWII bombings in Covington and into their new Cathedral, and watched the friendly goats. Then the Hadrian Wall intrigued us, to say nothing of the array of castles. The second major exit was with a similar group

on a cruise to Alaska via the inland passage. From the glaciers to the whales to the great Denali Park and the attempts to view Mt. McKinley through the clouds, we got infusions of joy.

Again we went to Europe: We stopped for a brief visit in Oslo as an introduction to a second trip to Sweden, where my sister Vangie joined us. We were wonderfully entertained by the Rendahl and Erickson clans. Without Vangie we toured Småland, thanks to chauffeuring relatives. It was indeed a “relative” vacation. We should mention one unique experience in Stockholm when Vangie was with us. We were in line for something and some gruff old Swede started shoving me around from the back. I wondered how rude these folk can be. When I turned around he said, “Hi Stan.” He identified himself as one of my Sunday school class boys in Elim, Minneapolis, in 1935. He introduced me to his wife and I started to name my ladies when Vangie and the other lady bolted into each others arms. Those two had been classmates as seniors at Edison High School in Minneapolis.

In between trips we cut rags, made large balls of woof and sent them through the loom. We registered for several craft sales ... for example, the Bethel Seminary wives’ Christmas craft sales, the city of Vadnais Heights sales in their city hall, the Presbyterian Homes sales on Lake Johanna, and a few church related experiences. In all we had a good time bragging about and explaining our handiwork and getting praises from many and selling a considerable number. The exercise had to stop when we moved into this retirement community. As I write this in September 2006, I just packaged one of the remaining rugs for shipment to southern Illinois for someone wanting “another one of Rendahl’s rugs.”

We stayed home over Christmas and in cold snowy January we thought Texas might be better, but on the way to Rodger's we ran into a blizzard in Oklahoma that minimized many Minnesota storms. We finally sacked in at a Red Roof Inn next to the Texas border. On icy streets in Dallas we maneuvered ourselves to the Headlands in Duncanville. The next day we drove to Whitney and found Rodger, but Mary had just gone for a walk outside and had fallen on the ice coated walk and was hospitalized. We soon departed in search of better weather. We were in Minnesota for about two weeks when Rodger called and we made a return trip to Texas for Mary's funeral. We flew south this time and rented a car in the Dallas airport to drive to Whitney. Rick and Mary, Vangie's daughter, and her daughters, blessed our lives as we returned the car and waited for the plane.

A further long haul was to Seattle to be present at a huge family reunion in Puyallup, during which Connie went for a walk in the chill and "got lost." We spent hours trying to find her. We did . . . on a park bench she sat, but I couldn't persuade her to come back with me. I had to get help.

Door County, on a bus with the BGC Gold, brought a quiet ending to these escapades. While there, in a lodge which hosted about forty of us, we met three sisters I had in DVBS in Roseau in 1937. The oldest was Elaine Halverson, who had married John Anderson, who was pastor in Bristol prior to our coming, and later they were missionaries in Assam, India. They retired in Ames, IA.

A near tragedy came toward the end of the decade. We were driving on a city street to some point west and as I turned to

the left on County Road H a yellow truck broad-sided us and spun us around into a steel guard rail. After the initial impact I don't recall a thing until I heard Lillian's voice shouting, "Get out of the car quick, it's on fire." I saw the smoke ascending from the engine front (it was the steam from the cracked radiator). I tried to push or pry myself loose but some strong hands on the outside were already at work and I was helped out of the car. An ambulance was already on the scene and transported both of us to Unity Hospital. While riding on a stretcher the attendants checked all the parts of my anatomy. After some further examination at the emergency room and a series of x-rays they found Lillian was okay and I had a fractured wrist, a dislocated collar bone and separated shoulder. We called a neighbor who brought us home, me with both arms in slings. The next day I had my fingers released on my right hand so that I could at least eat. The police had taken the vehicle to their impound lot; my insurance company looked at it and totaled it. Lillian and Dick went and claimed our personal belongings. The other neighbor across the street sold cars and asked if he could find one for me. He brought over a 1996 Buick Le Sabre, two years old with only 28,000 miles on it ... after eight years maybe we've added another fifty thousand.

When I could drive again we made one jaunt. This time to Iowa City to help them recognize the tenth anniversary of their senior adult group, which was started during our tenure. It began to snow on the way down, and before we got to Iowa City the drifts were very high and the air filled with blowing snow. I could not find my way. We called the house where we were to be guests and they said, "We'll open the door and

leave the light on.” I could not find either the door or the light, though I was on the right street. Finally our host, Mr. Backman, came out and flagged us down.

Maybe we should call it a “Decade of Drama” instead of “The Nomadic Nineties.” But whatever name we give it, it was one of delightful touring and Divine blessing.

The Last, or First, Decade

It was interesting to make that switch, not only from a century but to a new millennium, from the 1900s to the 2000s. Some thought that new era would immediately bring the Lord's return. These last ten years have made some enormous changes in our lifestyle. The first five years of that decade we lived in our Shoreview townhouse and the latter five in the Eagle Crest residence for senior adults.

Preaching assignments got fewer and fewer. We were invited to some church anniversaries, a multiple number of funerals involving both kin and friends, and some retreats for retired pastors. The most time-consuming occupation in the first half was our weaving. We made hundreds of woven rag rugs on our loom and sold them at various craft shows in the late fall. Other time-consuming tasks were to make our townhouse ready for sale, should we move to a retirement community. Oh, what a lot of repairs the realtors suggested.

The second year, 2001, was a most dramatic one for both us and the nation, even the world for that matter. Spring was

coming when Kirsten called to say that Rachel was home from school because of illness. We didn't think she should be alone all day so we drove out there. After a couple of hours I got itchy feet and went for a walk. The weather was balmy and the sidewalks had icy places greased by newly fallen and melted snow. On one of those patches toward the end of the Walker block my feet slid out from under me and I sat down hard. I wasn't able to lift myself erect. A neighbor saw me and came over. After he questioned me he felt it necessary to call 911. The medics came and after some more questions they said, "It looks like you broke a hip." They gently lifted me from the walk to a stretcher and shoved me into their vehicle, picked up Lillian, and brought me to a south Minneapolis hospital.

The 911 crew rolled me into an emergency room. The white gowned attendants peeled off my jacket and cut off my pants. I reclaimed them for carpet rags. They probed a little and then I was X-rayed. The doctor came in with the verdict, "You fractured your leg just below the hip. I recommend that we put some pins in until the break knits." I went through the procedure, then learned to walk with a walker. After some days Dick Turnwall came to bring me home. He mentioned that he and Marge were going on a cruise to Alaska in September and asked, "Why don't you come along?" We talked that over and learned that there were still several months before flight time, and by then I ought to be mobile enough for such a trip.

During that wait the pain subsided for a spell, but then it returned with a furious thrust. My doctor said, "We better take the pins out." Gleefully and expecting relief I let him do that on a Friday afternoon. But the pain grew worse. The

nurse's first shots, while I held the pins in my hand, didn't provide much, if any, relief. Some minutes later during a sudden jolt I screamed and a nurse said, "Give him a stronger shot and send him home." The staff injected me with something and moved me from the table to a gurney, to a wheelchair, and then to Jerry Osborn's car. The street seams seemed like hammers. It was a very long ride home. After Jerry drove into the garage, he and Dick helped me out of the car, but my mobility was nil. There was no way I could get upstairs, even with the aid of a 911 crew and some officers that came to help. Lillian made a bed for me on the downstairs sofa and I groaned in pain all weekend. On Monday X-rays showed the hip had not healed. The doctor said, "Let's repair your hip with a new ball joint." A few hours after surgery, I immediately felt better.

Four weeks after that, while still walking with a cane, we took off for the Alaskan waters. We had prepaid our trip and would lose our money if we didn't go. With the aid of some helpful people and good guides we boarded our ship in Vancouver, BC, on September 10th, all excited. We sailed all night and docked at Ketchikan. After a good rest we began to stir and were awake enough to answer the telephone. Dick was calling from the next cabin. All he said was "Turn on your TV." We pressed the right buttons. In front of us appeared a full screen picture of some tall building into which an airplane was being piloted. We watched carefully to get the rest of the story. You know that blast introduced us to 9/11. That blast greatly diminished our expected excitement, even though we had a good morning with nephew Dave and in the numerous sight-

seeing treks the next days. The guides were extremely kind to me. For example, they'd see to it I could sit on the front seat of each bus even though they might have to ask others to move. But that 9/11 event gave to us and our world international woes, including a war that doesn't seem to end.

After ten days of magnificent scenery from glaciers to grizzly bears we boarded a plane for the States. After we landed at the SeaTac Airport to change planes, we learned all state-side air traffic had been cancelled. As we waited for some response from the airport personnel who were looking for a motel for us we got word that the ban had been lifted as of midnight. We waited until midnight and got on the first flight east. The Humphrey Airport never looked so good. Even our townhouse glowed like gold.

It was a relief to be home and with no painful moving around, even though a slight limp and my cane were evident. We busied ourselves with the weaving procedures, endeavoring to get ample rugs for the Christmas boutiques. The most unique innovation was the rugs made out of neckties. At least they were very colorful and at sales they went fast.

Before the first half of the decade ended we had two long trips, at least I had both of them. Someone decided that our Seminary Alumni Council ought to get acquainted with the Bethel Seminary of the East (BSOE). I was invited to go along, cane and all. On the April '04 flight day, the others waited for me at the appropriate flight gate. I was on time and checked in but waited for them in the wrong area. After landing at La Guardia and the taxi ride to the church where the BSOE classes were held, we were greeted in the parking lot by many

of their staff members, including the Doug Fombells, whom I knew from my New England days as the District Executive Minister. Their warm greeting stunned my traveling companions, with a big “How do you know them?”

After some introductory speeches and a great multi-national dinner I was asked if I could walk four blocks to the Grand Central Station. It seemed like four miles until a board member saw my aching hulk and assisted me to and through the down escalator. Beyond that we were to catch a fast train to the Boston area for our next stop. I sat down in the waiting area to “watch the bags” as the others browsed. Soon a guy came and sat by me and asked questions. “Where are you from?” was one. When I said “St. Paul,” he asked if I knew a Nancy Lundquist. Of course, I answered “yes” and added some explanation. When I paused he replied, “I’m her son-in-law.” Wow! I learned he was on the BSOE faculty. That seminary holds sessions in four different cities.

We got off at Auburn, MA. Someone met us and took us to a motel. I was assigned a room on the second floor. Then the clerk said, “No elevator,” and me with a cane and a bag. I walked to the foot of the stairs, and paused. Some kind soul I didn’t recognize grabbed my bag and carried it to my room. We did some forenoon exploring, and then were invited to lunch. I found a place next to a white-haired older gentleman and his wife. I thought they might be of my vintage. I had barely sat down when our host came and said, “Stan, you ought to meet this couple.” He named me. As the white-haired gentleman stuck out his hand he remarked, “Not *the* Stan Rendahl.” I turned my head and found another pastor’s kid, whose mother had been a member of our Omaha church.

The eating disrupted my long conversation with the Allan Olsons.

Early the next morning we boarded a really fast train for Washington, D.C., but we got off at a Philadelphia stop for a noon meeting. The Fombelle's met us and ushered us in. As we entered, the emcee said, "And our oldest attendee is sitting right here." My gang looked at Mel Swanson and shouted, "He's not the oldest, Stan's here." Mel was a schoolmate of mine around 1940.

When the session was over we were loaded into automobiles and were driven to the Landover church in Glenarden, MD. The two thousand member church hosted the fourth campus for the BSOE. We were greeted with a buffet lap dinner. As we found an eating spot the pastor greeted each one of us. After a long and impressive evening we were taken to our hotel. My room was on the 20th floor ... some luxury. I called my son Dale, who lived not too far away. He came over the next morning. I checked out and enjoyed his hospitality and company at the last sessions and spent the next night and Sunday, until flight time, with him and Joyce. What a benediction!

I barely got my legs in tune with each other before we were invited to a string of celebrations. Historic church anniversaries were held at Kenosha, Big Springs, Elkhorn, Temple Duluth, Waverly, Balsam Lake, and Prentice. Besides those were some golden wedding anniversaries. The most significant one to me was that of Verla and Don Richardson ... the knot that tied together a Ramsey and Bristol connection had lasted fifty years.

We made our first definite inquiries at Eagle Crest about a possible residence in that retirement community. We got some assurance we were acceptable members to that family and went home to wait and get ready to move. Five years after that the door opened. During the interval we flew to SeaTac again, to help family and friends recognize my brother Emory's 85th birthday. A couple of years later we went back there for Helen's funeral. Each time we were the guests of my sister, Vangie.

We began the process of sorting, selling, giving, throwing, and packing in dead earnest. We listed the place with realtors, obeying all their suggestions. Eagle Crest offered us "the penthouse," which we could occupy until a less expensive apartment was available. In September a large assembly of family, nephews, and friends loaded items from the Shirlee Lane property into an assortment of vehicles, then drove the loads to the elevator on the garage level of the Lincoln Drive address. I stood at the entry to Apt. 619, guiding the carriers with, "into that room." By evening it was all in the sixth floor apartment, and in place. We stayed overnight, in fact several nights, and in the morning we went back to clean up the debris in our townhouse to make it livable for the young lady whose father helped her buy it.

Fifteen months of adjustment took place before we got the opportunity to move up a flight of stairs. We lost the jacuzzi, the deck, and some floor space, but we got a cozier flat with ample room at far less rent. Besides, we can see traffic moving rather than just the tops of some trees. The greatest sacrifice in this style of living was my loom, my workbench with its electric tools, and my skis, which I could put on in the garage

and could propel myself into the park behind our home. My frequent complaint, is “no toys” . . . no loom, no work bench, and no tools. Lillian plays for chapel here every other month. I’ve led a few times. We tend our little store two mornings a month.

The years 2005 through 2009 brought some milestones, to both enjoy and embattle. Our 60th wedding anniversary and my 90th birthday brought a lot of guests to our party room. Lillian’s 90th birthday brought the guests back. Then she stunned the fellowship with a mastectomy but recovered miraculously fast and totally. I had to keep up with her so had the medics put a pace-maker inside my flesh. That was precipitated by my being hospitalized three times with congestive heart failure. I am now being monitored by an electric computerized scale. It asks me a series of questions each morning, then it records my weight and tells me of any change. If the change is too extreme a nurse will call and ask why.

Old age continued to show when our two grandsons graduated from Bethel University and the older one from the University of Minnesota with a Ph.D. Their younger cousins, our granddaughters, are now in college. The older is a senior at George Washington University and the younger one is a sophomore at Bethel. Two relatively big changes: our son Dale retired and his son, Aaron, and his wife, Tessa, made us great-grandparents. Among the great thrills in these years is to have “our kids” of yesteryear’s ministry, about fifteen from Bristol alone, contact us, mostly via computer. Several have stopped in.

How far into this millennium will we stay here? Only the One who has led us all the way knows.



With his wife Lillian, Stan Rendahl has faithfully served the Lord in the roles of pastor, evangelist, chaplain, camp director, church planter, and district executive, as well as husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, uncle, and friend. Born in 1915 to Swedish immigrants, his faithful response to God's call to a life of ministry has led him across the country and around the world, sharing the love of Christ.

This volume of his memoirs, *Through the Decades*, is an overview of his life and ministry, with stories and highlights from every decade of his life, from his birth in 1915 to the present. There are stories from his youth in the Dirty Thirties, from his student preaching and military service in the Frustrating Forties and his full-time pastorates in the Fabulous Fifties, from challenging new roles in the Stretching Sixties and Senior Seventies, and from interim pastorates and travels as retirement began in the Exciting Eighties and continues into the Nomadic Nineties and the first decade of the new millenium.

On the cover: Stan's high school graduation, 1934, Stan and Lillian, 1942, Stan in Korea, 1945, Stan and family, 1960, Stan and Lillian, 1970s. Background: The Baptist Tabernacle, Kenosha, WI, 1940.