

Eternal Impact!

*The Life and Ministry of
R.R. Schwambach* ■

Geneva I. Schwambach
and Stephen Schwambach

Eternal Impact

The Life and Ministry of R. R. Schwambach

Dedication . . .

This book is dedicated to my beloved husband,
Richard Robert Schwambach, respectfully dubbed "R.R.,"
to our families, the Bethel Temple family, and
the Television Church viewing family, all of
whom, with the help of God, have
contributed to the love story related herein.



Forward . . .

Most everyone loves a love story. Some enjoy love stories even more if the intrigue of a triangle is involved. That is what this book is – a love story, complete with all the ramifications and complexities typical of the triangle.

When I married Richard R. Schwambach on Thanksgiving Day, back in 1947, he was only 21. Our assets were few: love for each other, love for our God, and a common desire to give our full-time service to Him. I really did not know the measure of the man I married. I discovered he had double the energy of a normal person. It seemed to me he could accomplish twice what the average person could do . . . and in only half the time. When there was a problem or emergency, he was usually the first to arrive on the scene and seemed to know just what to do. I had prayed the Lord would give me a husband who would bring out the best in me and who also needed a wife just like me . . . that together we might be able to accomplish more than either of us could alone. That prayer was answered! We were so right for each other. No matter what struggles or disagreements might come, the assurance that we had married in the will of God was the powerful "glue"



Rev. and Mrs. R.R. Schwambach on their wedding day, November 27, 1947.

which bonded us into one flesh and kept our marriage intact through everything. Nearly 44 hectic, but happy, years have passed. It has been the challenge of my life to keep up with my dynamo of a preacher husband!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. A Life . . . And A Love . . . Of . . . A . . . Human D-Y-N-A-M-O:
Pastor RRS
 2. It's Fun To Serve The Lord
 3. A Bit Of Family History
 4. Recollections Of A Methodist Student Pastor In The Forties
 5. At Spiritual Crossroads
 6. A Change In Direction
 7. Evangelistic Memories
 8. Associate Pastor
 9. It's Fun Growing A Church
 10. A Dream Come True: Winning A Trip To The Holy Land
 11. We Go On TV
 12. 101 Years Of Building Programs
 13. Evansville Christian School – Another Dream Come True
 14. The Awesome Gift Of A Vacant Monastery
 15. Some Memories Of Marriage
 16. Family Memories
 17. Grandchildren Are Fun . . . Most Of The Time
 18. Memories of Answered Prayer
 19. The Day My Husband Left Me
 20. Gleanings
 21. Retirement
-
-

***A life...and a love...of...a
Human D-Y-N-A-M-O:
Pastor RRS!***

Before we ever met, Dick and I had each chosen to place God first in our personal lives. HE was NUMBER ONE. Next in order of our priorities was our love and commitment to the work God had called us to do. Finally, as a result of our love for God and His work, love for each other was born...and that completed the "perfect" triangle!

Of course, our love affair began long before any books were written about living the "balanced life" so we never questioned the rightness or error of our ways. That is not to say there were no struggles or feelings of guilt as each love clamored for priority. Over the years there was an on-going rivalry which nearly always ended with rededication and submission to the pre-eminence of God and His work as we understood it. As any pastor will tell you, when faced with a crucial decision affecting the future of the church, he knows it will receive both approval and opposition from the congregation. No matter how he leads his congregation, some will be pleased and some will be very displeased! That leaves the pastor in the middle. Sometimes he can postpone a decision simply by putting it on the shelf for a year or so. By then, his people may have had the time they needed to digest it, and be more accepting of the change. Or perhaps, an influential member, bitterly opposed to the proposed action, may have been transferred to California! But not every decision can be deferred. So what is a pastor to do? Dick kept it simple. He tried to base his decisions on what he prayerfully felt would please God and be of greatest benefit to the work of the Lord. Although he did his best to keep everyone happy and solicit their coopera-

tion, when action was required, he was not afraid to make bold, sweeping decisions, regardless of the fallout. This trait caused more than one sleepless night in the parsonage. However, had it not been for this factor, the multi-ministry outreach of Bethel Temple would never have become the reality it is today.

I must admit, there were times when I wearied of the continual activity and on-going changes. It was always something, usually something controversial! I did not necessarily believe that the people of Bethel Temple were required by God to do it all or that we were responsible to win the **WHOLE WORLD!** I was perfectly willing to leave some things for other preachers and churches to do in fulfilling the Great Commission. One of Dick's favorite clichés was: "**DO WHAT YOU KNOW TO DO!**" During his 47 years in the ministry, that has been his style. He has kept busy "doing what he knew to do" in his untiring efforts to reach out with the **GOSPEL**. His has been an insatiable desire to declare the message of God's love and offer of salvation, so that men, women, and young people everywhere might know and be brought to Jesus Christ, Our Savior.

I confess there have been times when I expected early widowhood. I did not see how anyone could keep up my husband's pace. The pressures of several prolonged building programs, added to full pastoral duties, plus the television ministry (1961), the founding of Evansville Christian School (1975), the establishing of the Evansville Christian Life Center (1986), and the beginning of the New Life Home for unwed mothers (1987), were overwhelming at times. They took their toll on my husband's energies. Had not the top administrative load of pastoral responsibilities been shifted to Pastor Stephen's shoulders in 1981, I am not at all certain his father would still be around to celebrate his 65th birthday this June 9, 1991. **Dynamos** (Type A personalities) are notorious for being prone to heart attacks and

strokes, I've been told. I believe any couple is uniquely blessed when they have survived the precarious years of marriage, child-rearing, professional pressures, menopause, mid-life crises, and all the rest...finally reaching retirement age together, still in reasonably good health, still on compatible terms! How thankful we are for this blessing. **TO GOD BE ALL THE GLORY FOR ALL THAT HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED IN THE PAST, FOR THE MANY BLESSINGS OF TODAY AND FOR HIS PROMISES FOR THE FUTURE! (Job 5:26; Psalm 37:23; Proverbs 4:18, 16:31; Revelation 2:10b) THE BEST IS YET TO COME!**

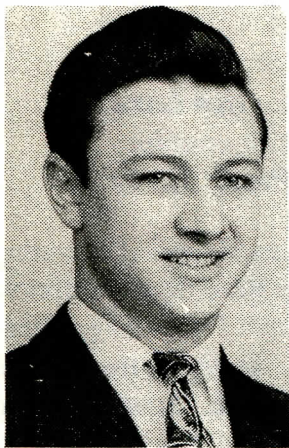
It's Fun to Serve the Lord
(Psalm 16:11; Proverbs
10:22, 31:30; 1 Peter 1:8-9)

I can still remember the excitement and thrill of attending a Youth For Christ rally in my hometown of Bloomington, Illinois in the late 30's. Since our church was small (75 average attendance), there were very few young people. Seeing so many at the rally was a tremendous morale booster for me. Speakers were always dynamic as they spoke about the joy of serving Jesus:

"The Devil tells you if you accept Christ, you won't have any friends. The big liar! While you may lose some old friends, he neglects to tell you that you'll gain a whole new set of friends. Better friends! You can have fun serving the Lord. And besides, the Devil doesn't have any happy old people."

Although I was already a Christian, having accepted Jesus as my Savior during family devotions when I was only 8 years old, the impact made by our city-wide Youth For Christ rally was just what I needed to see me through my teen years. I remember being involved in street meetings, passing out salvation tracts downtown, even entering taverns to slip a Gospel tract on the bar in front of each drinking patron. I'm not sure how the bartender felt about our evangelism; we were having fun serving the Lord. It was a daring, exciting adventure for us back then.

It was 1945 when Rachel Varnell held special meetings at the church where my dad was pastor in Bloomington, Illinois. She told of their plans to begin a Bible school at Bethel Tabernacle in downtown Evansville, where the Varnells pastored. I had a deep hunger in my heart to know more about the Word and devote time



R.R. Schwambach 1945



*Summer of 1946
Geneva Schwambach
and Pearl Mills*



Geneva Schwambach 1947

Calling Card

PHONE 2-7902

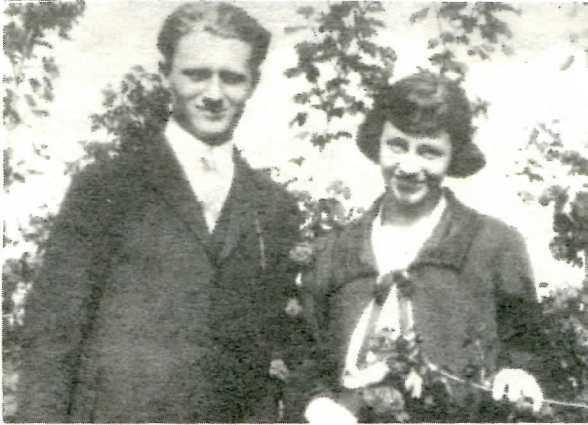
Rev. Richard R. Schwambach
MINISTER
EPWORTH METHODIST CHURCH

PRESIDENT
METHODIST YOUTH FELLOWSHIP
INDIANA CONFERENCE

620 E. BLACKFORD AVE. EVANSVILLE 13, IND.

to systematic, in-depth Bible study. That's when I quit my job as an underwriter at the home office of the State Farm Insurance Company and moved to Evansville in the fall of 1945. It was a step of faith for me to leave a position I loved just when World War II was ending and the job market was flooded with returning servicemen also seeking employment. However, I was confident God was leading me and I knew in my heart that He had special plans for my life. I quickly found another job as receptionist/bookkeeper for the Salvation Army Men's Social Service Center, where I was the sole employee in the office. This meant I did everything from answering the telephone switchboard and charting daily pick-up routes for the truck crews, to bookkeeping which included doing payroll, petty cash and semi-annual audits, counting and banking store receipts, and writing checks to pay bills. Although I was working for half the salary of my insurance job, I received valuable training and an inside look at the financial workings of one of the world's largest non-profit religious corporations.

In less than a year, the Varnells requested that I resign and work for Bethel Tabernacle instead. They wanted the church records patterned after the Salvation Army bookkeeping procedures. Instead of \$25.00 per week, they offered me \$15.00 per week, plus room and board. Along with the church bookkeeping, I would do church visitation, including canvassing the downtown neighborhood for prospects. I was soon teaching a young singles class, leading a youth service, and developing the musical talent to provide specials for every service. It kept me busy. I loved it all . . . and I was having fun! When a fine looking young man visited a service one night with his mother, I greeted them both, then invited him to attend my singles class. His smile seemed a bit condescending as he reached into his pocket and handed me his card which read: Rev. Richard R. Schwambach, Pastor, Epworth Methodist Church, Newburgh, Indiana. It's a long story, but that's when the fun really began!

A Bit of Family History

Richard P. and Blanche Schwambach
"He promised her a rose garden."

If you like to reminisce and talk of "the olden days," Mom and Dad Schwambach are just the ones to fill you in. Blanche Elizabeth Griffith and Richard Phillip Schwambach were married in a beautiful church wedding on a "Tuesday evening at half after six o'clock, May 12, 1925, in First Christian Church in Evansville, Indiana," where the Griffith family were members. Following a honeymoon in Indianapolis, their wedding announcement stated they would be "at home, June 1st, at 206 E. Iowa St." Although Dad turned 89 on February 25, of 1991 and Mom will reach age 88 come September 21, of this same year, they still make it to church more often than many people half their age! Mom's first love has always been teaching children the wonderful old stories of Jesus' love in her Sunday School classes over the years. She is presently part of a teacher team with Myrtle Towery, Myrtle Kinney and Carol Boeke, who are able to carry on even when Mom's health occasionally keeps her home. All the children of Bethel call her "Grandma"!

Mom Schwambach tells of a happy childhood, growing up in St. Louis with her parents, George Robert and Emma "Ulmo" Griffith, along with sisters, Florence Myrtie and Marie Grace. In addition to being a streetcar conductor, George also operated a combined confectionery, ice cream parlor, and music store. He sold insurance on the side!



*George R. Griffith
Streetcar Conductor - 1894*

When the family relocated to Evansville, he again operated a street car from 2:00 PM until the end of the line at midnight. The next morning, he reported to work at the Gas and Electric Company, where he sold light bulbs, appliances, lighting fixtures, etc. The elder Schwambachs still have a lamp in their cozy apartment which they got from her father. George Robert Griffith was one of a set of twins; the other twin died at birth. He used to say his parents never did know for certain which one had died, whether it was him or his twin brother! When, at the age of 63, George Griffith died in October, 1937, (the year of the great Evansville Flood), he left a heartbroken, 11-year-old grandson, Richard Robert Schwambach, who had been his namesake. Young "Dickie" had a very close relationship with this Grandpa Griffith, whom he missed very much. His Grandma Griffith lived with his school teacher aunt, Marie, until Grandma Griffith's passing at age 85, on October 17, 1960.

The name "SCHWAMBACH" has been around town for some time. Grandpa Charles Wesley Schwambach was a colorful figure in his own right. Beginning in 1901, he operated a grocery store at 3rd and Delaware. Then in 1924, he built a new building at Second Avenue and West Virginia for \$12,000. (It is still there

and still bears the name "SCHWAMBACH" in stone on one side.) In some ways it was a forerunner of the modern super market. He would buy an entire train car load of sugar at \$4.00 for a 100 pounds when the market was at bottom, then sell it for going prices which made for a nice profit on his volume buying. He was sometimes referred to as "THE SUGAR KING"! However, not every item was so successful. Once he loaded up on a cereal with the name "OGRE! OGRE!" which customers simply would not buy. For years after, Grandpa and family ate "ORGE! OGRE!" cereal, according to his son, Richard P.! After Blanche and Richard were married in 1925, the new bride began baking cakes to sell at the store. Dad Schwambach declares her culinary masterpieces sold like hot cakes and made a nice profit. Mom's cakes still disappear fast at our family celebrations—especially the fresh coconut cakes she bakes from scratch!

Not too long ago, Dick met a woman who remembered Grandpa's "super market" at 2nd Avenue and West Virginia and the super sales he offered. She told how her mother made her ride her bicycle across town to buy a broom that was on sale at a bargain price of 19¢ and how awkward it was having to juggle that broom on the bicycle through traffic without poking into something or wrecking her bike!

The Schwambachs were active members in the Fourth Street Methodist Church, where Charles Wesley served on the church board and his wife was the organist. He was always a generous contributor. Once when the board felt it could not pay to have electricity installed in the parsonage, (at a time when others were getting electric service), he quietly had it done and paid for it out of his own pocket. He was always on the giving hand, often to the dismay of his wife, Lydia Marie. In one board meeting to raise funds for the church, he made a pledge to give all of his Saturday profit to the church, except that which came from

sugar sales. Since Saturday was the big business day of the entire week, that was a very sacrificial pledge. Unfortunately, a creditor of Grandpa's heard about his generous pledge and demanded immediate payment of the entire \$5,000 debt Grandpa owed on the new building. This created cash flow problems for Grandpa. It didn't help any that the nation was on the brink of depression, a period when many people, including Grandpa, would lose all their savings and stock market holdings. At one time Dunn & Bradstreet had listed his net worth at \$100,000. It was all wiped out by the '29 Crash. However, his treasures laid up in Heaven survived! And so did Grandpa. Even when his house burned down later on, his faith in God remained steadfast. Grandma Lydia passed away in 1943, so I never knew her personally, but Grandpa made his home with son, Richard P. It was during his remaining six years that I came to know him quite well.

Grandpa went to bed every night at 8 PM and was up at 4 AM. He spent an extended period of prayer and Bible devotions both night and morning. At daybreak, he would go outside to sweep and tidy up the walks, yard, and even the street in front of the house. One summer day, an anonymous letter appeared in the mailbox for Grandpa from an irate neighbor. (Complete with spelling errors), it read:

Kind Sir:

Aren't you being a little inconsiderate of or neighbors? Just because you get up at 4 and 5 o'clock do you think it just to wake all the neighbors? If you must pond on a box like a drum can't you wait till a little later in the day? Most of us are on vacation or not able to work at all and if we are woke up at such an ungodly hour, how are we to get our rest these hot night.

Please cant you refrain from ponding

boxes, sweeping cleaning and hauling garbage pails and chains over the aley untill we can enjoy the cool morning sleep. Its bad enough to have the holering at you which mabe cant be helped. [Grandpa had poor hearing and would often forget to wear his hearing aid. This necessitated that others speak loudly to get his attention!]

I am sure this is the voice of at least 6 neighbors. Thanks.

The family really kidded Grandpa about that letter. They had tried again and again to curtail his extensive sweeping. Their side walks were probably the cleanest in town but they could not get the grass to grow on either side because of Grandpa's excessive sweeping! When Grandpa passed away July 23, 1953, we all missed his prayers for his family, especially his preacher grandson. To this day, I see so many of Grandpa Charles Wesley Schwambach's personality traits in my husband, especially in the above amusing incident!

In 1928, young Richard and Blanche rented a building at Franklin and Edgar Street for \$12.00 a month, where they went into the grocery business themselves. To start, some of the older stock from the family business helped fill the shelves of the new venture. Since they had no baby sitter, young "Dickie," then 2 years old, had the run of the store.

One day a lady who lived in the neighborhood came to make some purchases. She returned soon after, carrying a pound of butter with a complaint. It had definitely been tampered with and she thought maybe a rat had gotten into it. When Mom examined the butter, sure enough there were small teeth marks plainly to be seen, but she had to smile. Those were "Dickie's"

teeth marks. Somehow he had gotten into the ice box where it was stored. The customer laughed and insisted on keeping the butter, once she knew whose teethmarks they were!

I have always enjoyed hearing Mom Schwambach tell little incidents from Dick's boyhood, which often give insight into what he was to become later on. I asked her to write down some of her memories to include in this book. Here in her own words are just a few:

"After we were married (May 12, 1925), and I knew I was pregnant, I quietly began praying for a boy. Since everyone on my side of the family



*Mother at home from
the hospital - 1926*

had girls only, they took it as a foregone conclusion that Richard and I would also have a girl. But in my heart, I felt God was going to give me a son. Dick was born at Deaconess Hospital, June 9, 1926, at 12:36 AM. After a 7-day stay in the hospital we got to go home. When I put him into the new white

crib we had ready for him, I expected him to go to sleep, but he stayed awake. Wide awake. That's how he has always been, wide awake. His first grade teacher called him "hyper-active" and he still seems to be!



Dick with Daddy

"On July 16, 1929, just after Dick turned 3 years old, my oldest sister, Florence, married Omer L. Deweese, and we took Dick to the wedding. For years after, Dick told people he could remember when his Mom and Dad were married because he went to their wedding!

"We had our membership at First Christian Church at 2nd and Walnut, where my parents belonged. One Thanksgiving, the church held a special service and I wanted to go. I took Dick and we rode the streetcar to the church downtown. The crowd was small so they asked if anyone wanted to give a word of thanks. Several did so. To my surprise, Dick suddenly popped up and quoted the 23rd Psalm. I had taught it to him at home, but had no idea he would do something like that on his own. Even our family physician, Dr. Joseph Willis was there. Everyone was amazed. Dick was 4 years old at the time. After service, we took the streetcar back home again.



*Enjoying a snack -
1 year old*

"One Sunday morning, he was to say an Easter poem, but someone put a real live bunny rabbit in his arms to hold while he said it. Instead of reciting his poem, he kept petting the bunny and talking to it. He was almost 5 years old that Easter.

"When we lived at Virginia Street, we were about one-half block from busy Fulton Av-



enue. One day I was in the kitchen and heard a door close. I quickly checked for Dick and discovered he was gone. I ran out after him and caught him just as he was about to cross Fulton Avenue. Under his arm he was carrying our Bible. He explained he wanted to go to school. Fulton Avenue School was just across the street. He was age 3 at the time.

*Dick ready for
Sunday School - 1934*

Finally he was old enough to be enrolled at school. He always wrote with his left hand. One of his teachers did her best to stop him and make him switch to his right hand. During this time, I noticed he was nervous and upset about

school, so I questioned him. No doubt she thought it best to change the hand he wrote with, but I finally went to the school to talk to her about this. We agreed that he should be permitted to write with his left hand from then on. He was fine after that. Some years later, when he was 17, in his college speech class, he spoke on the topic: "THE



*Dick Schwambach - 1936
Delaware School*

FIRST TIME I TRIED TO WRITE WITH MY RIGHT HAND." It revealed how deeply upset he had been as an 9-year-old in fifth grade.

"From a very young age, Dick showed leadership and, at school, was always organizing games during recess. One of their favorites was to choose up sides and play "crack-the-whip." But most everyone wanted to be on Dick's side, and it caused some trouble on the playground. When it got too rough, the teachers had to put a stop to it.

"At home, Dick helped his dad in the shoe shop and delivered shoes to customers after they were repaired. He was 12 years old when he was

bitten by a mad dog while out making deliveries and had to take rabies shots.

"Dick loved to ride anything that had wheels. In 1935, my husband, Richard bought a 1918 Dodge touring car for \$12.00. The tires were pretty worn but they held air. He was able to make necessary repairs without much expense and kept it going for 2 1/2 years. One weekend we drove it on a trip to French Lick and it caught fire. Richard knew what to do. He quickly pulled the wires in time to salvage the battery. Otherwise, we would have had a long walk home! Another time, he and Dick took it out for a drive on the highway and decided to open it up to see how fast it would go. When the speedometer registered 54 miles per hour the canvas top began to disintegrate and blow apart all around their heads. Evidently their "high rate of speed" was too much for the old Dodge! Still, Richard got \$15.00 trade-in on a 1928 Essex (for \$35.00 difference). It got



*Tenderfoot Scout
12 years old*

35 miles per gallon of gas on the highway.

"In November of 1938, Dick enrolled as a Tenderfoot Scout in Troop No. 27. He thoroughly enjoyed his years of scouting. As he got older, he became a Den Chief and helped with the younger scouts, finally rising to the rank of Star Scout. He was especially proud of his ALPHA-PHI-OMEGA frat pin with its tiny gold gavel, received when he was president of the scouting fraternity at Evansville College.

"Dick always loved Sunday School and church. He never wanted to miss. One Sunday night when he was 7 years old, he cried to go to church. We had no car at the time and there were no services nearby, so I got a song book and we held a little service of our own. But this did not help. He still begged to go to church. Finally, his Dad put him on his bicycle and toted him to a church on north Main Street where they were having a revival. Only then was he happy. He still remembers a young man playing a trombone up on the platform that night. He discovered years later that the trombone player was Bruce Badger, his future brother-in-law!

"One Sunday morning when we were invited to visit an Assembly of God church, Dick surprised me again. When they gave an altar call and invited people to come forward, Dick responded to the invitation. It was there he gave his heart to Jesus Christ. He tells how the sun never shone any brighter than on that Sunday morning,

and he had never felt so clean! He said it felt like someone had gone down inside with a toothbrush and cleaned him all out. He was about 11 at the time. From then on, he seemed to have a heart for the work of God and a strong desire to be involved in some way.

"When we moved into the neighborhood adjacent to Wesley Methodist Church, he received tremendous encouragement from the leadership there and especially his pastor. He was chosen to be the president of the youth when he was only 15. There were about 15 young people at first, but Dick built it up until they were running from 40-60 youths in that church of about 200. During the summers he would attend the Methodist Youth Camps at Santa Claus, and later, Rivervale. He became youth president of the Evansville District and finally president of the Indiana Conference of the Methodist Youth Fellowship with 17,000 membership, serving for two years.

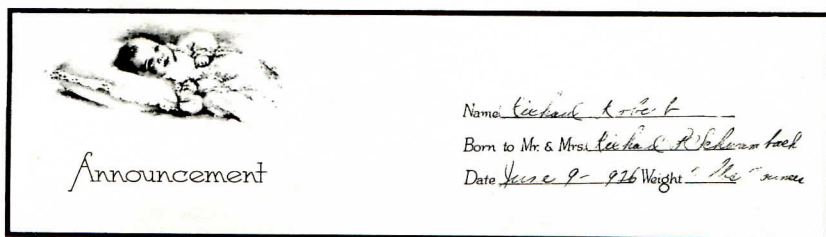
"At one of the camps they had a candlelight service down by a lake on the closing night. They asked the young people who wanted to make a lifetime commitment of service to Christ to step forward and light a candle. It made a deep impression upon Dick. He came home from camp bursting with some great news:

'MOM, I HAVE TO BE A PREACHER!'

That announcement did not surprise me. In my heart, I had felt all along that God had some special plan for Dick's life. As his parents, we are proud to call him 'OUR SON!'"

There was so much more Mom Schwambach could have told, but space will not permit. Mom and Dad have graciously shared these very personal memories from their lives, for which we thank them. They have also made available many pictures of the family, taken during Dick's early life.

Born just three years before the stockmarket crash of '29, Richard Robert Schwambach experienced the pinch of poverty quite early. The family lost nearly everything, including the grocery business. In spite of the hard times caused by the Great Depression of the '30's, the following pictures tell the story of a humble, but happy childhood.



Richard Robert Schwambach's birth announcement



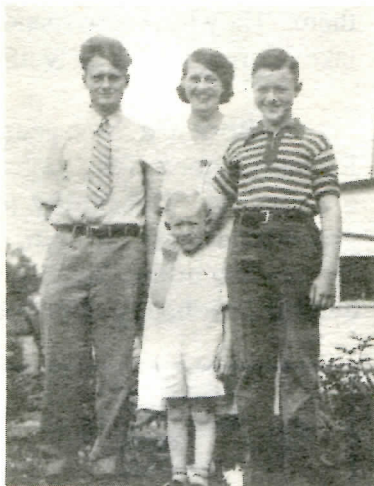
Schwambach men folks - 1934



Dick - 10 years old



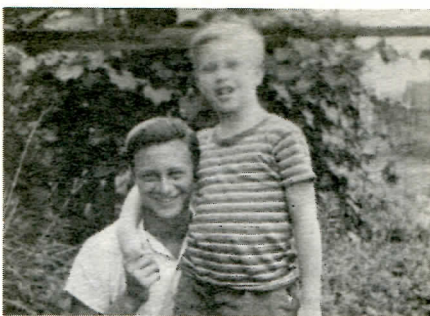
Dick and dog "Tarzan"



*Richard P., Blanche, R.R. (age 11),
Paul (age 5)
May - 1938*



Dick - 6 years old



Dick and younger brother, Paul



Summer Camp



Dick with the Central Band (middle front)



1941 - "On his way"



Lt. Paul R. Schwambach 1957



*Santa Claus Youth Camp -
1943*

*Recollections of a
Methodist Student Pastor
in the Forties*

On March 12, 1944, Richard R. Schwambach received his LOCAL PREACHER'S LICENSE from the Methodist Church, after "having been duly recommended by the Wesley Methodist Church and the Quarterly Conference of said Charge, and having been examined, as a Discipline directs by a committee of the Evansville District of the Indiana Annual Conference of The Methodist Church..." He was thereby "authorized to preach the gospel, according to the rules and regulations of The Methodist Church."

He preached his first official sermon the second Sunday in March at his home church, Wesley Methodist, using a text from Matthew 5:16:

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

Later that spring, he graduated from Central High School, received his first appointment as a student pastor in the Methodist Church, and turned 18 years old, all in rapid sequence. At the same time, he was enrolled as a sophomore at Evansville College, where he had taken college classes during his senior year in high school.

His first appointment to the Mount Vernon North Circuit was an education all by itself! His charge was comprised of three small country churches: Welborn Methodist Church, Olive Chapel, and Springfield Methodist Church. His first service on Sunday was at Welborn at 10:00 AM. He had to leave at 10:55

sharp to make it to the next church on the circuit, Olive Chapel, where the morning worship service started at 11:05. He usually ate dinner with one of the families, then spent his afternoons visiting the sick and inactive members. Sunday nights found him conducting church service at his third place of worship, Springfield Methodist Church.

The members seemed to take pride in their young student pastor. They referred to Dick as "THE PREACHER BOY" and



*Richard R., Paul, and
Richard P. Schwambach*

for the most part, just called him "PREACHER." When he discovered only 8 to 10 adults showed up at Welborn Church, he began to visit and "beat the bushes" so to speak. He quite literally went into the highways and byways and "compelled them to come in," often picking up those who needed a ride. He told me he once hauled in as many as 17 children in one load. When I

challenged his count, he just grinned and added: "they were small children!" He would line them up on the front pews and tell them a special story during the forepart of the service. Then he challenged them to sit very quietly on those front pews and listen to his sermon to grown-ups who had quietly listened during the children's sermon. He declares there was never any running in and out during service. Perhaps those children lived more relaxed lives in the country and were not hyperactive from too much sugar in their diets. On the other hand, my husband always did have the ability to put "the fear of God" in someone with a single look!

At Olive Chapel, where attendance averaged around 60,

Dick was asked by the Bishop to raise money for the Retired Methodist Ministers' Fund. As he announced the Fund Raising Project to the congregation one Sunday, things were very quiet. Finally, one member spoke: "Preacher, does that pencil have an eraser on the other end?" Without hesitation, Dick responded: "Yes, it does, but we're not going to use it!"

He does not remember the amount they were allotted to raise, but knowing my husband's persistence in such situations, I have no doubt but what they reached their full quota.

Dick has always described the Springfield Methodist Church as a very "socially minded" church. They loved good Christian fellowship and their monthly Brotherhood Fellowship was an important membership event. For some reason, Dick missed attending Brotherhood Fellowship the second month on the circuit. The following Sunday night, church attendance dropped: If he did not attend their Monthly Brotherhood Fellowship, they did not attend his Sunday night preaching service! From then on, he declares, he managed somehow to get to all of their monthly Brotherhood Fellowship Meetings! The following year, the North Circuit churches were able to afford a full time pastor.

He first met the congregation of Epworth Methodist Church when he served the remaining three weeks of another minister's year in May of 1944. He wished to continue there and was requested by that church to be their Pastor. Instead, the District Superintendent appointed him to the Mt. Vernon North Circuit. It was not until 1945, a year later, that he was appointed to serve at Epworth Methodist Church. The congregation agreed to increase the salary from the \$700.00 per year they were paying to \$1,000, at the request of the District Superintendent.

Dick describes the Epworth Church as a well organized

congregation, which made it easier on their young pastor. During his two years there, the church enjoyed a 40% increase in attendance. When he left, they were also able to afford a full-time minister.

It was at Springfield Church he had his first funeral - the man had committed suicide. Dick had just turned eighteen. It was his largest funeral as a student pastor. The man was well known, and people came out of curiosity to hear what the boy preacher had to say. The funeral home was packed, with people standing around the side walls and across the back. Dick prayed for God to help him say the right thing. He believes God did just that. Forty- seven years later he still feels much the same about suicide. For a man to take his own life, something has to go wrong in his thought processes. His mental powers are flawed and he is not reasoning properly. Therefore, we should not judge such a person, but prayerfully leave him in the hands of a merciful God. One of the family members attending that first funeral came to Dick afterward to express appreciation for his tact and wisdom, in spite of his youth.

Dick likes to tell about the 100 acres of land which someone had willed to the Olive Chapel Church. They would rent it out for two or three fifths share of the grain raised on the land. Year after year that acreage produced the best crops in the neighborhood with more bushel to the acre. Dick declares it was the blessing of God upon the harvest of His Land. The lesson is obvious: if you want the blessing of God upon your life...your finances...your family...your business; turn everything over to Him...put Him in charge. Put His interests first. It is a sure fire way to genuine, lasting success!

Each congregation he served had its own unique "personality" as a church and he felt honored to serve as their "Preacher Boy." Most of all, he had a love for the people God entrusted to

his care. From the most prominent member to the most impoverished, he loved them all. He told of one home where he went for Sunday dinner which had dirt floors, no screens, not even the usual tableware. At dinnertime, they were each given a spoon and all ate out of a common bowl. It was the best they could offer and it touched the heart of their young pastor. Over the 47 years of pastoring, Dick hasn't changed much. He tries to treat all with equal love, without discrimination. After all, that's how Jesus ministered to the multitudes in His time, wasn't it?

At Spiritual Crossroads

After I met Dick, I soon discovered he was deeply concerned for the future of his ministry. He could not ask for greater opportunities than he was being offered in the Methodist church, which he appreciated. As President of Indiana's 17,000 member Methodist Youth Fellowship, he was invited to become Vice President at the national level. Those who encouraged him and helped him as a youth had been so good to open the right doors to top leadership. At the same time, he had a professor of religion at college who seemed to reject the Bible as the inerrant, infallible Word of God. In fact, he told his students that the Bible was full of contradictions. That deeply troubled Dick, since it posed a threat to the very foundation of the



A.F. Varnell

Christian Faith. His parents had moved from the neighborhood of Wesley Methodist and were attending Bethel Tabernacle at 7th and Main. The pastor, Rev. Albert F. Varnell, had sponsored "THE BIBLE QUESTION PROGRAM" on radio station WSON for many years. He was well known for his Bible teaching expertise and his staunch defense of Scripture. He could explain Bible theology in simple laymen's terms, making it so easy to understand. God used

Rev. Varnell to explain and answer many of the questions which were troubling young R.R.

This was the kind of Bible teaching Dick was hungering to hear. He knew he was a born-again Christian and he knew he believed the Bible with all his heart. He believed in the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ, in a literal Heaven and Hell, in the miracles of the Bible, and in the Second Coming of Christ. His theology was too conservative for the circles he had been serving in. He had come to a spiritual crossroads. After much soul-searching that spring of 1947, he asked his District Superintendent of the Methodist Church to withdraw his name from the list of appointments. It was one of the toughest decisions of his life.

A Change in Direction

As Dick completed his second year at Epworth, he was earnestly seeking God's will and direction. He knew God would have to open the right doors to the future He had planned for Dick's life. In early summer, Rev. A.F. Varnell was scheduled to hold a series of Bible teaching services in Oakland City, Indiana. He invited Dick to accompany him as song leader and soloist for the two-week meeting. Since I was the pianist, we had many opportunities to talk as we worked together on the music and rode back and forth each night with the Varnells.

One night as we made the return trip from Oakland City (car windows down back then!), the moonlit countryside was heavy with the scent of honeysuckle blooming along the fence rows. The talk turned from the events of the meeting to a discussion of Scripture, which was typical when Dick and Rev. Varnell were together. Without a let-up in the spirited conversation, I suddenly felt a masculine left hand reach over for my right hand, which he cradled in both his hands for the rest of the ride home. I was glad the back seat was fairly dark because I'm almost certain I blushed! Ever since that night, I have always loved moonlight and honeysuckle!

The Bethel Ministerial Association (formerly the Bethel Baptist Assembly), founded by Rev. Varnell in about 1936, always sponsored a summer Youth Conference which was to be held at the Bethel Church in LeRoy, Illinois that summer of 1947. Since I was Bethel Youth President at the time, much of the planning and organization became my responsibility. When I asked Dick to be one of the youth speakers for the conference, I became aware he was no novice when it came to running camps

for teenagers. With his eager assistance, the conference promised to be an exciting week for young people. But God had some unexpected surprises! On Tuesday night, the Presence of the Lord was so great during the singing that young people began to weep and pray while standing at the pews. The speaker for the evening, Rev. Max Campbell, saw what was taking place. Instead of following the planned program, he followed the leading of the Holy Spirit and issued an all-out altar invitation for salvation, re-dedication, or whatever the spiritual need. For our Bethel youth, it was "Pentecost" all over again. Many young people were "born again" for the first time. Some who had slipped away from the Lord, wept their way back through repentance. Others were mightily blessed as they were filled and re-filled with the Holy Spirit.

Every minister and youth leader became an altar counselor that night. R.R. had never seen anything quite like it, but his response was total. His searching heart knew it was real. It had not been planned or "worked up." It was simply a genuine outpouring of God's Spirit upon hungry, receptive hearts. The lives of many young people present were forever changed, including Dick's. He would never be the same. For him, it was a change in direction.

Evangelistic Memories

*Fourth Annual Convention of Youth Evangelists
Bethel Apostolic Church – July 28, 1947
2nd row, left to right - 5th, Dick; 8th, Pastor Bruce Badger;
9th, Geneva; 11th and 12th, the Varnells*

During the summer of 1947, Dick received several invitations to hold youth revivals. One of those revivals was in my small home church in Bloomington, Illinois. My cousin, Wayne Hornbeck, a talented young preacher and able speaker, was invited by my father to team up with Dick for the meeting. I wanted very much to be home and help with the special music, which I felt could add to the effectiveness of those two exciting weeks. The Varnells graciously granted me time off from my duties in Evansville, since my heart was quite obviously in Bloomington!



*Rev. M.D. Hornbeck
1895-1981*

My father, M.D. Hornbeck, like Rev. Varnell, enjoyed nothing better than to spend time explaining Scripture and expounding unto his young guest speakers "the way of God more perfectly." (Acts 18:26)

Dick and I now laugh over one sermon he preached in that revival which was titled: "Perils of the Middle Passage," for the older people who might come. After the service, he asked Rev. Bruce Badger who had visited that night, what he thought of the message. Diplomatically, Rev. Badger, replied with a warm, encouraging nod: "I have found it is always wise to speak on subjects one knows about!" Here was Dick, a 21-year-old who had no personal knowledge at all of the "perils of the middle passage" speaking on the subject in a youth revival! I promise you, today we both know more about the "Perils of the Middle Passage." Even though I can't recall how many souls were saved, I well remember that revival as the best I ever attended!

By summer's end, Dick had decided two things for certain about his future ministry. He wanted me to be his wife and he did not want to be a traveling evangelist! He knew he had the heart of a pastor. In early September, Rev. Varnell invited Dick to become his associate pastor of the Evansville Bethel Tabernacle congregation effective immediately, with the understanding that Dick and I were to be married soon. Dick



*Dick and Geneva
"People Will Say
We're In Love"*

teasingly told me Rev. Varnell did not want to lose me and that's why he was willing to add him to the church staff! I knew better. They, too, were aware of the potential that lay in the future of this young minister who had asked me to share his life.

The church board offered us a starting salary of \$25.00 per week, with living quarters on the second floor of the church building at 7th and Main. We were ecstatic because we knew God had opened this door of opportunity for full-time service in His work. We set our wedding date for Thanksgiving Day, 1947, and joyfully anticipated our future life together.



*Jessie and Harvey
Joy and Dudley
Dick and Geneva*

In many ways our wedding was a most unpretentious event. I had chosen the Thanksgiving date to accommodate my large family of seven sisters and brothers who would be able to take off from work, and some of whom already planned to attend the 4-day Thanksgiving week Bible Conference to be held at

Rockport Bethel Tabernacle. This would save them from making a special trip just for our wedding. The ceremony was to take place Thursday evening, immediately after the final service of the Conference. I would have liked an innovative ceremony of our own creation, but Rev. Varnell wanted us to keep it simple. I think he was more nervous than we were! Tender renditions of "I Love You Truly" and "Always" were sung by my brother-in-law, the Rev. Bruce Badger. The small church was packed with conference delegates as well as family and friends who came to wish us

well. There was no cake and no reception. Since we owned no car of our own, Dick's best man, Harvey Davids and his wife, Jessie, chauffeured us all the way across the state line to Henderson, Kentucky where we had reservations at Hotel Soaper.

During our mad dash from church to automobile through a profuse shower of rice, I made the mistake of laughing. I promptly caught a mouthful of rice! Somehow, one small grain became lodged in my tonsil. While not painful, it was very uncomfortable and most annoying. Jessie offered me a candy bar from their auto glove compartment, suggesting it might help dislodge the offending rice grain. It worked. Not only was the rice removed, but the gnawing in my stomach was eased. In the excitement of the wedding preparations, getting dressed, photos, etc., I had neglected to eat anything since breakfast. Not even a bite of Thanksgiving turkey! God used that obnoxious little grain of rice to work to my nutritional well being. He has been doing that sort of thing for me all my life!

"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose."

Romans 8:28

Associate Pastor

The role of Associate Pastor has its advantages and its disadvantages. In terms of feeling the load of responsibility, it can be somewhat carefree, but at other times downright precarious. When members have a complaint, they do not go to the pastor. Instead, they confide in the number two man, hoping he will pass it on to the senior pastor. If the younger man is the bearer of too many disgruntled reports, it can backfire and eventually create unhealthy tensions. As the man in the middle, a wise associate pastor will prayerfully sharpen his diplomatic skills and learn to listen more than he speaks!

Dick has mentioned periodically that he was hired for \$10.00 per week, but it was actually less than that! My salary before marriage had been \$15.00 weekly, plus room and board. Now, however, although I would still have lodging, I would have to do my own cooking! It was a good bargain for the church since I would still be doing essentially the same things as a volunteer while Dick would be a full-time pastor—a package deal for \$25.00 per week plus living quarters. As it turned out, our grocery bill that first year averaged \$9.00 per week which meant Dick was actually a \$1.00 per week man! But we were young, in love and not worried about having to live frugally. One thing we discovered was true: "TWO CAN LIVE AS CHEAP AS ONE ...BUT ONLY HALF AS LONG!"

One of the church's leading tithers was not pleased when he heard the terms of our salary. He felt strongly that it was not adequate for our needs. Both he and his wife worked at good paying jobs, bringing home two paychecks which far exceeded our \$25.00 weekly income. Instead of giving his tithe to the

church, he gave it directly to Dick to supplement the income we were receiving. Dick knew it was not proper for him to accept the tithe on the side. That was not the financial agreement with the church, and he wanted no part of anything that bordered on dishonesty. Yet he did not want to offend the couple involved, and he appreciated their concern. When Dick turned the tithe over to Rev.



*Geneva, Dick and
Mom Hornbeck*

Varnell to be processed with the regular church tithe and offerings, Rev. Varnell warmly commended him. It only confirmed to him that they had chosen a man who could be trusted to uphold ministerial integrity. Dick then had a confidential talk with his friend to assure him that we were making it financially and should we need more, he was confident the board would respond to our need when the time came. Over the years, this has proven to be true again and again.

The Varnells had no children of their own but they had helped numerous young men who were called of God, often taking them into their own home. They would hold tent meetings in a city and where there was sufficient interest, they would rent a building and establish a church. After a few years, they installed a younger pastor while they moved on to another city. The church in Bloomington, Illinois was one such church which they had turned over to my father to pastor when they were ready to move on. The Evansville congregation was the last of 13 churches Rev. Varnell pioneered in this manner. He was nearing retirement age, his health was not good, so he was really needing someone qualified

to step in when he felt his work here was completed. The four years Dick served as Associate Pastor at Bethel Tabernacle, at the corner of 7th and Main in downtown Evansville were good years for all of us. They were learning years for Dick, with abundant opportunity for on-the-job training. "Doc," as Rev. Varnell was lovingly called, was a real champion of Scripture. If the Bible said something ...**IT WAS TRUE!!** When a Scripture did not seem to make sense to him, he would pursue truth with the tenacity of a detective trying to solve a mysterious murder. His library was impressive, a retreat where he spent hours upon hours in research, seeking to clarify even the finest detail. His respect for the Word of God was contagious. Sitting under his Bible teaching those four years was the best thing that could have happened to us at the beginning of our ministry.



March, 1948
"Workers Together for the Lord"
Varnells and Schwambachs

In the spring of 1951, we received a call to a church which was needing a pastor. Dick talked it over with Rev. Varnell, expressing his desire to check it out. He was ready to make the change. When we returned to Evansville after being gone that weekend, the first news we heard was that Rev. Varnell had tendered his resignation

as pastor of the Bethel Tabernacle and had recommended they install Dick as their next pastor. We were present in the church-wide meeting where the final decision was made. When Rev. Varnell asked the people if they would support Dick as pastor and stand by us as they had always stood by him, the entire congrega-

tion rose to their feet without a dissenting voice. It had all happened so fast, we could scarcely believe the turn of events. The Varnells wasted no time in purchasing a small motor home and heading for California, stopping at will along the way to visit old acquaintances and speaking at churches or conferences in their travels. Obviously God wanted us to remain in Evansville!

Our carefree days as Associate Pastor were over. For the first time, we began to understand what Rev. Varnell meant when he spoke of "the load" being so heavy. We both felt it – that awesome sense of being responsible before God for the eternal souls of the men, women, boys and girls whom He placed in our care. It was not something to be taken lightly, for we knew that some day we will stand in the Presence of Almighty God to give account for the stewardship of each soul. We knew, as never before, our lives must be dedicated to their spiritual welfare.

It's Fun Growing a Church!

Becoming the pastor of Bethel Tabernacle at 7th and Main was not your average pastoral assignment. For one thing, it was not on some back street. It was right downtown on Main Street, back when downtown was where all the action was. I'll never forget a prayer my husband prayed as we faced the future without the Varnells, who had founded the church, and had now retired.



Emmanuel Gospel Lighthouse

brings honor to Your Name throughout this tri-state community."

- "Lord, You've placed us here to pastor in the heart of the city. We sure need Your help. If it goes well with the church, the whole city will know. But if it goes ill, they will know that, too. Give us the wisdom we need to grow a church that

It was in 1933 that Rev. A.F. Varnell, nationally known Bible teacher, founded the church at 514 W. Oregon Street and called it: "Emmanuel Gospel Lighthouse." The name was changed to "Bethel Tabernacle" in 1945 after the congregation purchased the downtown property and moved to 7th and Main Streets. The building was empty and had been for sale for quite a long time, so they faced a major renovation with few financial resources. I heard Rev. Varnell say many times: "You don't buy a building on Main Street for a song that you can sing yourself!"

When he realized they were falling behind financially, he knew something would have to be done to keep from losing the building. It was decided to turn the second floor into business offices and rent them out to help make the payments.



Bethel Tabernacle, 7th and Main Streets

The people of the church rolled up their sleeves and did all the remodeling work themselves. What had been a huge warehouse-type space where they had Bible conferences and served meals to delegates two or three times a year, was now partitioned off into rooms suitable for office suites. When the space was all rented, the total rental income of \$10,000 per year made the difference between bankruptcy and solvency! But it was a lot of work. Rental property always is! One of my jobs was to keep the office hallways clean and waxed. Of course, it had to be done after hours or on weekends. Dick collected the trash daily, cleaned up the sidewalks after the pigeons and did numerous other maintenance chores whenever something needed repair. The Varnells and other volunteers did their share of keeping the church and building clean. I have seen Rev. Varnell on many occasions dusting the theatre-style seats with his oil mop before a church service.

It was rumored in certain circles around town that Varnell had allowed a saloon to rent space over the church. Well, not quite. Actually, it was the "POLLY TUREMEN REDUCING SALON." Polly operated a beauty and health spa long before they were all the rage. Once, when she heard Mrs. Varnell and I were going to a ministers' convention, she insisted on giving us the full treatment, including a free manicure! It was the first manicure I ever had.

After the Varnells left, Dick felt it would be a wise step to hire someone for the cleaning chores so we could give our full time and energies toward growing the church. Eventually, he even hired a secretary to assist with the telephone and routine paper work. What a blessing that turned out to be. My husband knows how to keep any secretary very busy, or a wife . . . when there is no secretary!

Since the Bethel Churches are autonomous (few organizational restrictions) we were free to be led of the Lord in charting the course of future ministry. My husband is "allergic" to empty seats in classrooms or empty pews in church sanctuaries! He knows empty seats have no souls, and angels who are rumored to fill those empties, have no need to be saved. Besides, as I have heard him say, it is just as easy to preach to a full church as one only half-full. He invited special guest speakers, had many revivals, planned contests and special event days – anything to bring the people in to hear the Gospel. During Dick's first decade as Pastor, the Sunday School nearly tripled in size from an average of 135 in 1951. As the need arose for classroom space, we took over the offices, one by one, for church use, until we had no renters at all on that second floor! Church income also grew so we could make it financially without the rent money coming in.

The Christian Life Magazine sparked a renewal of interest in Sunday School during the '50s by sponsoring nationwide

attendance contests among the evangelistic churches across America. We first entered Bethel Tabernacle in their contest in the fall of 1951, using the theme: "The Great Physician for a Troubled World." Invitations were rolled up tightly and enclosed in empty pill capsules. These "prescriptions" were scattered far and wide by members inviting their family and friends. Volunteers to pick up people in their cars became our "Ambulance Corps" to bring in the patients! Sunday School teachers donned nurses caps and uniforms or dressed like interns. Out on Main Street, carrying his sickle over one shoulder, "Death" paced back and forth in front of the church wearing his sandwich board with the message:

"Down With Bethel Tabernacle!"

"Down with Sunday School Contests!"

"Down with the Great Physician!"



*Pastor Schwambach with his
"medical staff of interns and nurses."*

Each Sunday a different doctor friend of Dick's spoke on parts of the body, from top to bottom: his optometrist, dentist, a cardiologist, chiropractor, orthopedist, podiatrist, and a neighbor who was

a pediatrician. After each guest, Dick would conclude with a spiritual application. Enthusiasm ran high. People invited their friends and some were saved as a result.

The following year, 1952, was an election year. A political theme was a natural. We tried to "get out the vote" by luring people out to Sunday School. Balloons, banners, red, white, and blue decorations set the mood for a great political rally for our "CANDIDATE, JESUS" on "KICK-OFF SUNDAY."

Members distributed "ballots."



2 year old David Schwambach "helping" prepare campaign literature

Handmade posters declared: "A VOTE FOR CHRIST IS A WINNING VOTE," "YOU CAN'T LOSE IN THIS ELECTION IF YOU VOTE FOR CHRIST," and "CHILDREN CAN VOTE IN THIS ELECTION!"



By the last Sunday of that contest (100% Sunday) attendance had soared to 561 with every classroom bulging and standing room only in the main auditorium. Thirteen souls were saved on that final Sunday alone, according to the record.



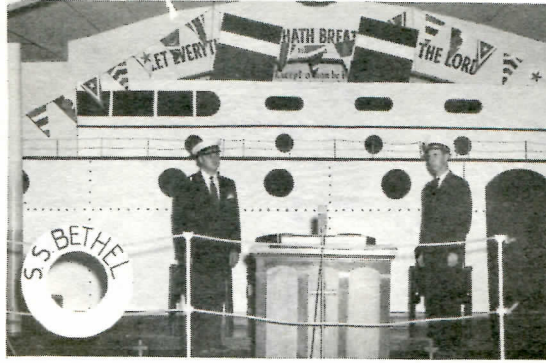
Balloon drop

Other innovative contest themes were used in subsequent years. There was our space ship theme with "THE S.S. BETHEL, GOING INTO OUTER SPACE THROUGH INNER GRACE." Decorations included the space ship constructed by church carpenters, the Earth, Moon, and many stars hanging "suspended in space" from the ceiling. Each person who attended provided "rocket fuel" to thrust our rocket ship, "S.S. Bethel," another 85 miles through

space. Still another year was a "TREASURE HUNT" theme, complete with all the trappings of hunting for buried treasure. On the final Sunday, we opened the lid of a high steamer trunk which had been up front as part of the decorations. When the lid was opened, up popped three little round heads of children who had been secretly concealed inside shortly before. Everyone agreed they were "real treasures."

Perhaps the most dramatic of all was the year we transformed the entire platform into a steamship. A crew of 90 workers presented a pageant of song and pathos. The ship's "horn" sounded dramatically in the dark as the "Good Ship Sunday School" reached out across the dark waters of sin to rescue the perishing. "FREE PASSPORTS" were distributed inviting everyone to "COME ABOARD, OUR PILOT IS THE LORD!" Each Sunday was a different port o' call beginning with Japan (free chopsticks), Palestine, India, Africa, and Russia, with special speakers, singers or events to fit the theme. We always tried to involve every

member in one or more of the special committees so all would have an important part in making the contest a success. In every case, we followed each contest with a special evangelistic



*Captain RRS and Dudley Cobb
aboard the Good Ship SS Bethel*

meeting which emphasized salvation through repentance from sin, burial with Christ in water baptism, and Christian living by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Special soul-winning classes were always part of the advance preparation for all contests. In this way we were able to conserve the results of these annual attendance drives and reap lasting spiritual results. Our attendance increased an average of 75 per year during this period.

I well remember all the hard work and late hours of those first years, but I also remember how much fun we had as we enjoyed good fellowship with our Bethel family. The best kind of Christian fellowship comes as a by-product of serving the Lord together for the purpose of reaching eternal souls for His Kingdom. Fellowship simply for the sake of fellowship can be counter-productive.

On at least one occasion, our young people decorated a float to enter in the downtown Christmas parade. As a downtown church, we wanted to do our part to keep Christ in the Christmas parade, reminding the public of the reason for it all. Our entry, "JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM," with a live Mary and Joseph, depicted the humble simplicity of that momentous event in



Fellowship in serving. There was always a friendly rivalry between the Ladies and Men's Classes. In this case, the losing class had to cook and serve a victory banquet to the winners. Ladies won. They put this apron on Pastor and took the picture: "Sure I Can Cook."

history. The life-size paper mache' donkey which rode on the Christmas float is the same little donkey which appears in our present nativity scenes during the Living Christmas Tree or stands over our manger offerings on Christmas Sunday mornings at Bethel. That 40-year-old little donkey has been around and seen a lot of changes in its time!



David and Judy Merwin as Mary and Joseph

The summers of 1954 and 1955 were devoted to evangelistic tent revivals. We had a thriving, active, unusually talented group of teenagers at that time who expressed a great desire to be involved in winning souls for the Lord. They started praying for a tent which could be pitched in different cities and towns around Evansville for the purpose of holding evangelistic meetings. When one of the men in the church heard about this, he decided he was going to have to be the one to help God answer their prayers and buy their tent. Without question, God did use him to answer their prayers! It was a wonderful way for young folks to spend their summers. The tent kept them busy helping pitch it, setting up chairs, hauling and spreading the sawdust so there would be a "sawdust trail" for the lost ones to walk down to the altar at the front. There were endless rehearsals for the singers, youth choir,

and orchestra. But everyone involved was having a great time serving the Lord!

One morning in the middle of all this tent activity, my husband awoke with chest pains so severe they restricted his breathing. I took the children over to Grandma's and drove him to the hospital. They promptly rushed him into intensive care. I had some very sobering thoughts as I waited to hear the results of all the monitoring and testing. They found he had a strong healthy heart and nothing was basically wrong except some sore muscles around his heart area. He had spent the day before driving tent stakes into drought-hardened soil in preparation for the next tent crusade. Doctors said he had apparently strained these muscles by doing work to which he was not accustomed. The muscle spasms were painful and scary, but not life-threatening. How grateful I was to God for the good news. It had been quite a scare for both of us!

During our second summer of tent meetings, Dick realized he was away too much for the well-being of the Bethel congregation. Frank and Adeline Ashby had worked faithfully with us in the revivals both summers. Frank with his guitar, Adeline plucking the big string bass, Betty (McKim) Hayden on the vibra harp, and Dorothy Phillips on the accordion formed a singing trio, THE MUSICAL MESSENGERS. They were popular with the crowds who flocked to the tent revivals for the old time singin', preachin', and lingering altar invitations. When Dorothy Phillips got married and left with her new husband for California in mid-summer, I never quite forgave her! I was the one who had to polish up my accordion playing skills and fill in the rest of the tent season. She was so talented. It was difficult for me to try to fill her empty place, even singing her third-part harmony! It meant time out for rehearsals and traveling back and forth every night to towns like Sebree and Jewel City, Kentucky, Mt. Vernon or Vincennes, Indiana. I didn't see how Frank and Adeline kept it up, especially

with Frank holding down a full-time job. Obviously Frank had a desire to use his talents in serving the Lord. When Dick suggested he pray about taking charge of the tent ministry for the rest of the summer, Frank prayerfully accepted the offer. It was quite a step of faith to quit one's job and go full-time in tent meeting ministry. I continued to play and sing with them, and Dick helped out some on week nights. He was now able to devote more time to pastoral duties in Evansville.

In the following summers, the tent was pitched at the site of our future Bethel Youth Camp, where revivals and special events were held. After the Camp opened, it was used during several seasons for the mass sessions and nightly camp meetings until a permanent tabernacle could be built.

As for Frank Ashby, he was invited to join the staff of the Evansville church (as Dick's assistant) at the close of the summer tent meetings. The time the Ashbys worked with us on the Evansville church staff, during 1954 and 1955, was a most fruitful partnership in the Lord . . . an exciting time in the history



*Rev. and Mrs. R.R. Schwambach
Rev. and Mrs. F.D. Ashby*

of the Bethel membership. Yes . . . we had fun together, serving the Lord and winning souls for Christ!

As I previously mentioned, it was also in the busy '50s that our church, in coop-

eration with other Bethel churches, purchased and helped develop



*Youth orchestra for the
summer tent crusades*

a 72-acre parcel of land near Folsomville, Indiana for use as a Youth Camp. This was no small endeavor for the Bethel pastors. Dick was very much involved in traveling to army surplus centers around the country,

seeking supplies and equipment at bargain prices in order to keep costs of the camp at bare minimum. He was in a carload of ministers which included Bruce Badger of LeRoy, Illinois, Glenn Dyhouse of Rockport, Indiana, and Ivan Wilson of Hatfield, Indiana who drove all the way to Washington, D.C. to appear before the House Subcommittee headed by Congressman John McCormack for the purpose of expediting the distribution of government surplus materials for use in teenage programs and camps across the country.

After renting summer camps for years, the pastors set a goal of opening our own Bethel Youth Camp in 1959. There was much to be done. Each pastor assumed responsibility for certain projects and an all-out effort was made to have it operational by the deadline they had set. Except for being in the pulpit on Sundays, Dick



The dining hall -1961

was, once again, pretty much of an absentee Pastor until the camp was ready for use that summer of 1959.

In addition to the contests, revivals, tent meetings and youth camps, there was always plenty happening at Bethel Tabernacle. If there wasn't some special event to plan for, like a Christmas Play to produce, the New Year's Eve Watch Night, Easter Sunrise Service, or summer Vacation Bible School coming up, then Dick would create a happening, such as organizing a crew to give the prayer room a nice, new coat of paint or joining a beer parade! Almost everyone in town over fifty years of age knows about the time Budweiser Beer brought its famous Clydesdale horses to town and Dick "rained" on their parade! I guess he had counseled too many suffering wives of alcoholic husbands. He had seen what happens to young mothers who slipped into the agony of secret addiction. He witnessed first hand the devastating effects on their little ones when Mommy or Daddy is an alcoholic. Besides, he couldn't figure out what connection beautiful horses, which God created, had with their beer.



Bud beer wagon parade. (That's Dorothy Phillips dangling outside the car.)

When he heard they were scheduled to parade through town, he organized a crew who worked most of the night painting signs to decorate his car for the parade he planned to "crash." He was not one to stand in his pulpit and rave against booze, but the signs left no doubt where he stood on drinking: "BEER + AUTOS = DEATH"; "IF YOU DRIVE, DON'T DRINK; IF YOU DRINK, DON'T DRIVE"; "BUD, YOU'LL BE WISER TO LEAVE IT ALONE." Permanent cross-shaped signs on the back of his automobile read: "JESUS SAVES." He was all ready to join the parade. He told his secretary, Dorothy Phillips, she didn't have to work in the office the next day. Instead he doused her generously with catsup, put her in the back seat of his car, making sure she was draped over the rolled down window, with one "bloody" arm hanging out over one side of the car. A teenage boy, also bloodied with catsup, hung out the other side.



Other ministers joined the parade.

I personally had no part in his "Operation Beer Parade." However, in early afternoon, our telephone began ringing. First was a reporter who asked for my husband. I told him quite honestly he was not at home and I wasn't sure just where he could

be found. The reporter persisted: "Could he be driving a 1952 Packard with anti-beer slogans mounted on it?" I could not tell a lie. I admitted it was possible. The story covered the front page of the Evansville Press that evening. His secretary ruefully told me she had always secretly wanted to be famous, but she never dreamed that when she became an instant celebrity on the front page of the newspaper, she would be all messed up with catsup!

Throughout the afternoon and evening, numerous calls came to the home, mostly commending my husband and cheering him on. The president of the WCTU (Women's Christian Temperance Union) hailed him as a young champion of their beleaguered cause. Those ladies loved it! Since the Budweiser wagon was to be in town for 3 days, it gave my husband a chance to recruit about 17 other local pastors to join him in his anti-drinking crusade, passing out salvation tracts everywhere they went, much to the disgust and consternation of the Budweiser promoters.

I cannot honestly say he shut down any taverns in town. His efforts may not have deterred even one person from taking a drink. But one thing is certain: As a minister of the Gospel, he let everyone in town know which side of the issue he was on . . . and everyone involved in the anti-drinking crusade had fun sharing in the cause!

When Dick first began the 24-hour Dial-A-Prayer service Thanksgiving Eve of 1955, he thought it might just be a novelty for a season and then fade off the scene as *passee*!. At first, so many calls jammed the lines, the telephone company recorded a backlog of more than 5,000 busy signals in two 24-hour periods. We were required to install additional lines and answering units to handle the load of calls. Of course, as the new wore off, so did the load level. However, in the 35 years of providing this service, we have received many letters and testimonies telling how God used this



*1956 First Anniversary of
Dial-A-Prayer.*

verages about 300 callers per day. As long as he can continue to have a word of prayer with that many people each day, I know Dick will consider it well worth the time and expense.

The church had no organ and we learned that Christian Life Magazine had a contest in which one of the prizes to the winning church was a Wicks Pipe Organ. Our people really worked hard to win that prize. However, we fell short and another church in California took the top prize. It had been a good contest for us with an enrollment increase of over 100, an average attendance of 432 per Sunday, and a total of 64 souls saved. Still our people were disappointed. Someone suggested: "Let's raise the money ourselves and buy a Hammond Organ!" That is just what we did. I think we enjoyed the organ we had to pay for even more than if we had won the Wicks Pipe Organ! I certainly enjoyed it, because I was the one who was privileged to play it most of the time. To me, the exquisite harmony of beautiful organ

quiet ministry outreach to help them through a life crisis. Dial-A-Prayer has prevented a number of suicides, including that of a trapeze artist in town, who found the number in the Evansville Yellow Pages. When the weather is dreary or in time of national crises, incoming calls are up. Also on holidays when people are lonely and depressed, the calls are about double the normal number. The Dial-A-Prayer service still averages

music is the nearest thing we have on earth to compare to the celestial sounds we will hear some day in Heaven! I love it, especially when someone as talented as Jan Metcalfe is at the console!

Another Sunday School Contest prize we did not win was a free trip to the Holy Land for the pastor and superintendent of the winning church. My husband had always dreamed of going to the Holy Land some day . . . of walking where Jesus once walked. On this occasion he was denied that privilege, but God had a reason for the delay. For the time being, God's answer to his private yearning was . . . WAIT!



Mrs. R.R. Schwambach at the console of the new Hammond organ which arrived in time for Easter that year.

As I finish writing this chapter, I suddenly feel . . . very tired! How about you? I have often told people that my life with Dick Schwambach has, at times, been exhausting. I have often been . . . too tired. But bored ? NEVER!

***A Dream Come True:
Winning a Trip to
the Holy Land!***

During the summer of 1961, the Sunday Courier and Press announced a "Favorite Clergyman Contest." The prize to be given was a free trip to the Holy Land. One of our long time members and friends took action. He knew such a trip was Dick's dream of a lifetime.

"We're going to win this one for our pastor!" declared Hurshel B. Cobb. He personally headed a church-wide drive encouraging members to collect coupons to be clipped each week from the Sunday papers of neighbors and friends whose pastors were not involved. Most of our folks at that time were in the lower income bracket or were retired people who lived on fixed incomes. In fact, when the Sunday offerings were taken to the bank, the teller used to jokingly call us "the church of the one-dollar bill" because we had so many dollar bills in the deposit! The church could not afford to send their pastor on a trip to the Holy Land as a Christmas or birthday gift as some churches had been known to do. But our Bethel Family has never been afraid of hard work. Nor were they shy about asking their neighbors to save those coupons for Dick, telling others how much he wanted to go to the land of Jesus' birth. That's why they were so faithful all that summer, accumulating the votes. I think every family in the church subscribed to the Sunday Courier and Press, if they weren't already taking it. They didn't have a lot of money, but that's something they could do!

It wasn't until early fall, as the contest was in the final weeks, that many of the other churches in town began to take an interest. By then the pastor of Bethel Tabernacle had a commanding lead. But when the 91 area Catholic churches turned in their collection of votes and the final tally was announced, Dick won by a margin of less than

500 votes, in spite of his accumulated 53,000 Grand Total. Had the contest run one more week, his summer-long lead would most likely have been inundated by the belated enthusiasm of the area Catholic school children. Although we knew of the untiring efforts of our people from the very beginning, it still seemed too good to be true that Dick had really won.

It was mid-afternoon when I heard the front door bell ring at our residence at 935 E. Mulberry Street. When I answered the door, there on the porch stood reporters and photographers from the Sunday Courier and Press Newspaper. They had come to do a feature story for the Sunday edition on the culmination of their "Favorite Clergyman Contest" promotion.

Excitement built as Dick carefully planned for his trip. Friends loaned him a camera and other traveling gear. One lady called and urged me to go along with Dick. She wanted to loan me her fur coat to wear on the trip! I felt that going on the trip was out of the question at the time; I was needed at home. Then Dick learned his old friend, Rex Humbard, was hosting a Holy Land pilgrimage in December. He requested and received permission from the editor of the Sunday paper to join Rex's entourage. It was a trip which changed the course of his ministry.

He tells of flying over New York City as thousands of tiny lights twinkled in the darkness below. Rex, who at the moment was sitting next to Dick, observed:

"Every pinpoint of light you see down there represents a home and most of those homes now own a TV set. Think how many families could be reached with the gospel via the TV set in the living room. What an evangelistic tool that would be!"

All during the trip, Dick could not dismiss that comment. Previously on several occasions, when he would get out of town to rest and pray, he would feel the spiritual tug to go on TV, but upon his return to his pastoral duties, he would become saturated by the pressing needs of the congregation. Later in the trip, as Dick knelt beneath an old olive tree in the Garden of Gethsemane, Rex's remark bore heavily on his mind. It was then that Dick promised the Lord, if the burden on his heart was really from Him and if He would open the right doors, then when Dick returned home, he would begin a television ministry. Only after he had prayed that way, could he enjoy peace of mind.

I know I probably shouldn't be telling this following episode but it is, perhaps, the only untold story of his truly fabulous trip! As for the rest of his many glorious experiences on that 17-day pilgrimage, he has shared them over and over in great detail.

That Christmas Eve of 1961, Dick stood on Bethlehem's Shepherd's Field where nearly 2000 years before, angels sang of the birth of a Saviour, "which is Christ, the Lord!" Unfortunately, he confesses, his strongest memories of that sacred moment were not about the Saviour or the angels. He said the strong garlic breath from the crowds of Christian Arabs and other pilgrims pressing around him was so over-powering, that it was foremost on his mind!

In the subsequent years, he has taken groups of people back with him, totaling seven pilgrimages to the Holy Land. Even now he talks as if he might be willing to take one more group, if and when conditions in the Mid-East are conducive to travel. But he always reminds people it is not so important to walk WHERE Jesus once walked, as it is to walk daily AS JESUS WALKED!



An elegant dining experience with Rex Humbard and fellow pilgrims.



*"Making a promise to God"
(That tree and area of the Garden of Gethsemane was made "off-limits" to later tours.)*



*"King of the hill!"
during dream come true pilgrimage.*



*R.R. Schwambach with Jerusalem,
Holy City, in the background.*

When you make a promise to God, it is always wise to keep it. When you do, you will find God's blessing is upon you . . . He goes before you, making a way. But if you renege on the commitment, it can spell the end of your peace of mind. Dick had made a promise to God while on his trip to the Holy Land . . . a promise he took very seriously. In fact, it was all he could talk about upon his return home in December of 1961. The more he talked about it, the more uneasy I became. I had made no such promise, but as Dick's wife, I really had no choice but to help him make good on his! We had no television experience – not many people did at the time. I thought of the deadlines we would have to live with, of the increased financial pressures, correspondence, and paper work it would generate. We were already too busy.

These were the thoughts upon my mind the day Dick persuaded me to accompany him for his appointment with the station manager at WTVW-7. We both knew it was not in the budget. The grand total in the Bethel Tabernacle church treasury was \$92.00. The closer we got to downtown, the greater the tension became. Without warning, I dissolved into tears. Dick quietly pulled over to the curb near 5th and Vine.

He explained all over again that it was the only way he knew to do more and reach more people. If he could stand before a TV camera and beam the Gospel into thousands of homes simultaneously, it seemed to him to be a very wise expenditure of time and money. He carefully added that if God was truly in it, as he felt He was, we had nothing to worry about. God was not broke; God would provide. On the other hand, if He wanted to block it, there were many ways for that to happen. Dick merely wanted to knock on the door by checking the

possibilities and making himself available to God, as he had promised to do. There in the car we prayed together. I dried my tears and we kept the appointment.

The \$212 price for a thirty-minute program seemed exorbitant at that time. Later the amount was increased to cover the double time they would have to pay extra employees to work on Sundays! Where was the money to come from? We didn't know any rich people to whom we could appeal. Then God gave Dick a plan . . . so simple . . . and not at all impossible. He did not need a large financial backer . . . all he needed was \$1.00 per week from 212 people to make the ministry possible. I remember at the time how Dick almost shouted. **THIS WAS THE ANSWER.** Sure enough, when he let people know what God had laid upon his heart and the plan to finance the cost of air time, he discovered he had many friends and members of the church who were interested enough to invest \$1.00 per week above their tithe and regular giving, to help send the Gospel over television.

As soon as he had 115 sponsors, he accepted the Channel 7 offer of a 15-minute time slot from 12:15 to 12:30 on Sundays. February 25, 1962 was "T-DAY" for Bethel Temple. A truck from Channel 7 rolled up to the front door of the church to take opening and closing shots of our service to be used for the telecast every week. They also taped a congregational song for the opening since we had no choir at that time. I have never seen a crowd of people open up and sing with their whole heart as they did that day: "JESUS, JESUS, JESUS, SWEETEST NAME I KNOW. FILLS MY EVERY LONGING: KEEPS ME



SINGING AS I GO." Every time I heard that song ring out across the airwaves, I felt a sense of deep satisfaction that the precious Name of Jesus was being exalted before the world. I hoped He too, felt pleased and honored. Our first telecast aired March 4th, 1962.

One day I took a telephone call from a businessman who was interested in helping and wanted to know how long we expected to be on the air. Still fearful of our precarious finances, I told him probably three months! He sent his check in the mail for \$13.00 to cover the 13 weeks. You can guess how my husband teased me about my small faith. Had my husband taken that call, he no doubt would have said at least a year and would probably have received the man's check for \$52.00 instead of the \$13.00 ! Even now it is hard for me to believe the 13 weeks have stretched into so many years. In March of 1991, we began our 30th year.

It has been a unique pastoral experience to minister by means of television. It's a little like having an extended family . . . an invisible church membership. Dick's ministry was never "for profit" or to raise funds for some other project, but has flowed from a pastor's heart. It has been our joy to see many souls won to Jesus. Our hearts have been warmed by literally bushels of letters over the years, telling of answered prayer . . . of Christians who have been helped in times of discouragement and disillusionment. We have wept with our *Television Church* viewing family in times of trial and have rejoiced with them in seasons of joy. We were truly a partnership, trying to use the best and latest methods for getting the Gospel out to the people. As we stated so many times, we CHANGED THE METHOD – BUT NEVER THE MESSAGE! The total outreach of this ministry can never be accurately calculated by the ratings experts.

At one point, we were told the average minister in Evansville had twelve funerals per year. Yet, in one month Dick had 9 funerals, all of them in a little over two weeks time. Of those nine funerals, all

but two were beyond the constituency of the church. Television Church was their reason for calling Dick in time of bereavement. One man he had personally led to the Lord when called to the home; the others were regular listeners he had never met until called to conduct the funeral.

By May 1962 our 15-minute telecast had expanded to thirty minutes. We were on "live." Sunday morning worship services had to end promptly at noon, giving us barely enough time to drive quickly to WTVW on Carpenter Street and walk in front of the cameras. To save money, we had chosen to avoid the extra charges of taping in advance. So the program was on the air "live." There was no chance for a re-take and there were some interesting moments! If we could have saved tapes of those early programs, it would make interesting viewing today! But we gave it our best, God blessed and did the rest. Later on the station dropped the extra charges for using their recording equipment. The programs could be taped ahead of time, which helped lessen the stress, as well as improving the over-all quality of programming.



TELEVISION CHURCH "burst into color" on February 26, 1967 when WTVW installed new color TV cameras. About the same time, we started adding credits at the close of our programs, including names of the men on the production crew at Channel 7. One of the men told us the first week after we rolled the credits, his mother-in-law received twenty-eight calls the following week, asking if that was her son-in-law who helped produce Television Church. When that many people noticed a name on the screen for a fleeting 5 seconds and were

interested enough to make a telephone call about it, we couldn't help feeling there must be a tremendous viewing audience out there. Dick would go to the hospital to see 5 or 6 of our members and would end up praying with 20 or 25 other people who would spot him in the hallways and request him to stop and pray with a sick loved one. Eating out in restaurants was also a problem in those early days. It wasn't very often that we could eat a meal without several people coming to our table or just dropping by on their way out to let us know they watched the telecast every Sunday. I can still remember when we went to the ice cream shop for a cone one hot summer night. As we walked past another car parked at the curb, a woman's voice called out, "Pastor Schwambach, we sure do enjoy your TV program. We watch all the time!"

One of my favorite memories is of the young boy about 8 or 9 years old who shyly came up to Dick with the question: "How much do they pay you to be on television?" It was a flattering question, and Dick hated to disillusion the boy, but he had to set the record straight. He explained that they don't pay us – instead we had to pay them for the privilege of preaching the gospel over their TV station. To this very day we are still paying them!

Perhaps the most delightful experience for me came when we were invited, along with some of our singers, as guests at a Sunday evening vesper service which launched the Edwards County Fair, held in Albion, Ill. It was a hot night in August of 1975, not a breeze stirring – yet 600 to 700 people had gathered for the Vesper Service. There were wooden bleachers there on the fairgrounds. Our stage was a large flatbed truck! We conducted an old camp-meeting-kind-of-service that night, with trios, solos, the 225 tuned sleighbells, and an altar invitation after the Gospel message. Several prayed to receive Christ and others came after service to ask for the salvation literature we made available. One of our oldest viewers, who wrote us faithfully every month, came from a nearby town to meet us personally. He was

96 at the time. When we asked all who watched Television Church to stand, over 500 people stood to their feet. Yet according to our office records, only 22 households in Albion were on our mailing list at the time. I have always felt there's a lot more people out there listening than we will ever know about.

Out of curiosity, I called WTVW the next Monday morning to learn their ratings of our viewing audience in the area. Their most recent rating for August, 1975 showed we were reaching into 40,000 different Tri-State households on an average Sunday. This, of course, was prior to the coming of cable systems to the area with their multiple stations and wide selection of programming.

We have enjoyed using many talented guests on the telecasts over the years, along with our faithful team of singers and workers. The colorful Klaudt Indian Family were the first of many guests. To insure good balance of harmony, they asked the station to play one of their records on the air and they simply sang along softly. One of the songs they used was the male quartet only, but as the recording was played during the TV program, there was Mom Klaudt singing along with the men!

It was during that first year that Dick and I realized we needed additional help on the staff if we were to continue with the television ministry. I breathed a sigh of joy and relief when David and Barbara Williams came back to Evansville to work with us. It was the spring of 1963. They had originally spent the summer of 1959 on our staff, between his third and fourth years at International Bible College. That was the summer Dick was gone so much because of building the Bethel Youth Camp. They were such a blessing to us.

For the next seven years the four of us worked as a team. Our gifts and talents complemented each other in growing the work of the Lord. They developed a choir, trios, and vocal ensembles to add to our

television talent, along with their own solo and duet work. Dave was active in the Bethel Youth Camp program and Barbara, like I, was a busy volunteer in those days. When we needed to be out of town for a convention, etc., we did not worry . . .we knew they would fill in beautifully. David went to be with the Lord in 1982 but his wife, Barbara (now Mrs. Gary Jeffries), still sings in the choir and ministers during worship services on both piano and organ.

Our experiences in the television facet of ministry alone are enough to confirm the truth of Proverbs 11:25: ". . .he who waters will also be watered himself." That is certainly how it has been with us. We sought to share the gospel of Jesus Christ by means of television, that others might be blessed with the joy of salvation. In our efforts to share, our lives have also been enriched and blessed.

In recent years it has been popular to bash TV evangelists and to criticize the gospel media. Religious radio and, especially, television ministries have been under attack for being shallow or deceptive or mercenary. Although I was a reluctant participant at the beginning of our television ministry, I must speak in defense of what has been called "The Electric Church." God has used this tool of technology to get the gospel out and to minister to the masses as a most effective supplement to the local church. Of course, there have been abuses by some, but on the whole, Christian television has been a tremendous influence for good. So many sick and shut-in people depend upon television for their spiritual sustenance. It reaches into the homes of lonely, desperate people in the cities of our land. Eternity alone will reveal how many brokenhearted people "just happened" to tune in to some Christian program at precisely the right moment to hear a song, sermon, or prayer that made a difference when their lives were in crises.

There is a lot of false religion proliferating in our nation today and I think it is even more important to stay on the airwaves, declaring the Truth. There are those who would "add to the Gospel" and other



Left to right: Jim Turner, Jim Gowen,
and Ed Irick

voices who "take away."
Unless we are there to
declare the voice of truth
from Scripture, how will
people know?

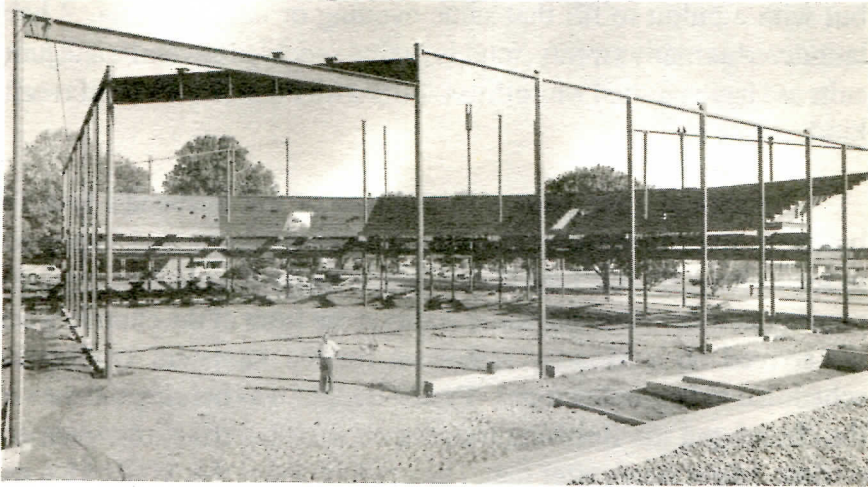
That is why I am
glad for the young lead-
ership God has given us
at Bethel Temple to carry
on the ministry that has
been upon our hearts

these many years. In 1982, we received a \$50,000 gift from the Froderman Family Foundation of Terre Haute, Indiana to purchase our own television cameras and basic equipment. It was May 16, 1982 when we aired the first program which our volunteers had recorded directly from the sanctuary worship service on the new cameras. Although we still had to take our tapes to the television station for post editing, it opened a whole new potential for this powerful media.

On Dick's retirement day, the church will dedicate our new Video Editing Center. I guess that is has been a long-time dream of Dick's to be able to completely produce our television program all under one roof. I am so thankful that the Lord has provided the resources for us to equip the new Video Center. I understand that over 350 people from Bethel Temple and from our *Television Church* supporters have contributed. I know Dick is deeply touched.

101 Years of Building Programs

" . . . built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." (Ephesians 2:20)
". . . and upon THIS ROCK I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matthew 16:18)



The title of this chapter is an exaggeration (you have already guessed that) for, of course, we have not been in building programs for 101 years - it has only seemed like it to me! Our very first building renovation began in 1951 and our last project involved building an additional parking lot in the summer of 1990 – a span of approximately 39 years. When that figure is combined for both of us, it adds up to a total of only 78 years!

Next to fund-raising, embarking on building projects of any kind is my very least favorite part of growing a church. Since raising

funds is such an inevitable part of building programs, that may be one reason for my dislike. Another reason, I am sure, is that in any building project, some people tend to become upset over the choices made by building committees and the changes which follow. When people I love are upset, then I tend to become upset, too!

With my husband, it is quite the opposite. Over the years, he has thrived on the various projects. At every age and building stage, his enthusiasm always exceeds his energies.

He would come home dirty, exhausted and ready to drop . . . but with a pulpit to fill that same evening or next morning. I have laundered as many sweaty, muddy, paint-speckled coveralls and jump suits as I have washed white dress shirts with French cuffs (his favorite kind of sleeves).

I should have known in advance of my husband's love for building. Even in the early days of our relationship, he was impressed to see LeRoy, Illinois host Pastor Bruce Badger in old blue overalls, pouring new concrete steps and walks at the front of the church when we arrived on a Monday afternoon for the ministers' conference scheduled to begin that night. Pastor Badger was helping the men of the church put the finishing touches on their building improvement project. Many times after that, Dick talked about that kind of hands-on pioneer spirit. Following that week at conference, he left for Chicago, where he checked in at the Midland Hotel "In the heart of the Loop." There he spent time alone in prayer. A few days later, I received my very first letter from him! It was dated June 1, 1947:

"Dear Genevive, (He misspelled my name!) I did not want to make a definite decision until after I was away from the conference. . . . I am leaving Chicago within the hour to return home and begin making plans to enter your church. Church will always be dear to me, but the Methodist Church is built, and God has chosen me to be a builder.

Yours in Christ, Dick"

Time has revealed that God had indeed chosen him to be a builder! Soon after he became Pastor of Bethel Tabernacle in 1951, Dick led the first building project and forever changed the appearance of the corner at 7th & Main. Brick veneer was added. Also, the entrance was moved eastward to the front and center of our building. By squaring that corner, we gained additional seating space in our auditorium. He also convinced the Bethel members that installing air conditioning would add to our summertime attendance. It wasn't long until the church bought the building right next door, which needed complete renovation. His men's class loved the extra space and thrived in the "new" Bethel Tabernacle Annex. The year was 1954.

It was also in the mid to late 50's that Dick was able to indulge his love for literally "building" the Kingdom of God by lending his enthusiastic, all-out support to help build our 72-acre Bethel Youth Camp near Dale, Indiana. Chapter nine tells more about that. In 1961 an overall "face lift" was given to the outside of the 7th and Main Church at which time we changed the name to Bethel Temple.

The most significant "building project" of all involved our goal to "BUILD A LITTLE CHURCH IN EVERY HOME" in the Tri-state by means of TELEVISION CHURCH OF THE AIR, initiated March 4th of 1962. This meant major fund-raising year after year, which continues to this very day. Before we purchased television cameras and equipment in 1982 (with a \$50,000 gift from the Froderman Family Foundation) and began airing services taped on our own equipment, the entire telecast was produced at the studios of WTVW. Over those 20 years, we built a variety of television sets at Channel 7 to match the front of our sanctuary, changing the decor to coincide with the changing seasons. More building! Each week our set had to be erected for taping, then dismantled and stored for the next time.

In the sixties, cities across the nation were caught up in the revitalization of deteriorating downtown areas. Our own city leaders

began talking about changing the face of downtown Evansville. It wasn't long before we realized that they had their eye on a section of property in the center of town, which included our corner at 7th and Main. We didn't want to give up our downtown location. The church had chosen the slogan: "IN THE HEART OF THE CITY WITH THE CITY AT HEART." That described the spirit of our congregation as we reached out to those living all around us. What we failed to realize was that during the decade from 1950 to 1960, there was an on-going exodus of people from the inner city to the suburbs. The census revealed that the population had decreased from 15,000 in 1950 to only 1500 by 1960. We didn't know it, but God did. Unbeknownst to us, He was making plans to move us.

Our building at 7th and Main was no prize-winning structure as far as architecture was concerned, but it was a solid brick building and functional, with a lot of space for Sunday School, offices, etc. We had spent a considerable amount of money to remodel and improve the appearance as best we could. We knew we would have to have quite a substantial financial settlement in order to continue at the same ministry level in another location. We were offered \$125,000 for our building, but our negotiation committee and our attorney James D. Lopp, Sr. (who refused any remuneration) got a settlement of \$210,000. This made it possible, along with the additional \$190,000 that we were able to borrow and raise, to buy a lot in a prime location on Lincoln Avenue near Evansville's rapidly growing east side and build there. Because of the city deadlines to vacate the downtown building, we were unable to do much of the work with volunteer labor. Prior to the actual building program, Dick had traveled to church architectural conventions all over the country in order to come up with his "dream church." He shared his plans with the architect, Hironymous, Knapp & Given Associates., (now known as Knapp, Given, Veazey & Shoulders). Nix Construction Co. did the building, working with our own building committee, under the leadership of chairman, Hurshel B. Cobb, we came up with a completed structure. The design won first place in the National Competition among

churches which seat more than 300 people in the 1967 Christian Life Magazine Church Architecture Contest.

On Sunday, February 5th, 1967, our congregation met at the old 7th and Main location for the last time. At 9:30 a.m., we led the way from the OLD to the NEW, in a 106-car motorcade, plus two buses loaded with Sunday School children. There were tears as we pulled away from the corner at 7th and Main, but by the time we had threaded our way to the east side, horns were blowing, and most tears were forgotten. It was a mild, sunshiny day. John Maier's Comaier Escort Service and Civil Defense volunteers, along with the Evansville Police Department, expedited our journey across town to our new church home.

It was a great moment when Dick and our Associate Pastor, Rev. David Williams, turned keys in the two front entrance double doors and people swept into the brand new pews. Although we thought we had been optimistic in setting up classroom seating, some areas were filled to overflowing, sending ushers scrambling for extra chairs. When Dick stepped behind the brand new pulpit that first Sunday, we all gave thanks to God for His goodness to us. I well remember the jubilation we felt as we sang: "MAGNIFY THE LORD WITH ME, O, MAGNIFY THE LORD WITH ME!" and "TO GOD BE THE GLORY GREAT THINGS HE HATH DONE. . . . !!!" Clearly, this is one move that was totally ordained and provided for by God. The building program had been a turn-key experience. In spite of the cash settlement, we still had to shoulder a \$120,000 indebtedness with monthly payments of over \$1,100 per month. But we knew our God, who had arranged the move, would make a way and provide according to the church needs.

You would think a building program experience like this one, which we ourselves did not initiate, would have had 100% approval from our Bethel membership. Not so. One dear business lady who

lived and worked downtown within walking distance of the old church was very upset that we were moving way out on the east side, where Realtor Glen Wilkie had succeeded in putting together three properties for us. She thought we should buy another empty building in the downtown area and relocate there. Strangely, the company she worked for transferred her to manage another of its hotels in the South. By the time we made the move, she was already living in Nashville.

Still another of our older members who was quite outspoken about her displeasure, vowed she would never drive clear across town to the new church building. Although 17 of the 21 members of the church board and building committee had voted for the Lincoln Avenue location, and of the other four men, three chose it as a second choice, this lady was most unhappy with the board's decision. When she became ill, we thought little about it except to use her sickness as an opportunity to show a little extra love and pastoral attention to her, hoping to soften her bitter opposition. She had vowed never to attend the new church, and she never did. Her death preceded our move from the downtown location. Can you now understand why building programs which always upset some people, upset me?

According to statistics given to us at that time, 80% of the pastors who go through a building program end up resigning from the church within six months. We did not resign, but I would not be telling the whole truth if I did not admit there were times during those first months when we almost felt like it. We lost some good families in the move, people we loved and sorely missed. But we were told it was a modest loss, considering the distance and inevitable cultural changes triggered by the move from downtown to the East side, where only 30% of our members lived.

As we settled into our lovely new building, it wasn't long until that space filled up, not just for special events, but for the regular Sunday morning services as well. On one special night, ushers set up

extra chairs in every available nook and cranny, including the foyer adjoining the main sanctuary. Ushers estimated an attendance of nearly 700 people crammed into a structure built to accommodate a total of only 520 people. One of our beloved board members, Hurshel Cobb, who had originally wanted to build a 1000-seat auditorium, was now shaking a finger in our faces and saying: "I told you so! You should have had enough faith to listen to me. Then we would not be facing a new building program now!"

When it appeared our next move might be to build a much larger sanctuary, a real estate agent in the church, Bud Schnell, whose mother, Elizabeth Schnell, had been a charter member, volunteered to negotiate with the homeowners adjoining church property to see if space for a much larger building might become available. In one of the most remarkable real estate coups of the decade, Bud was able to purchase every piece of property we needed (21 properties) at or near the appraised market value, just ahead of the runaway inflation which sent real estate prices soaring out of sight. Surely God was in it. He had used our own Bud Schnell's hard work and expert sales ability to insure the future growth of His church at that prime location. Bud never accepted any remuneration from buyers nor sellers for his many hours of patient, long-term negotiations. His spirit of devotion to the cause of Christ and the Church, as well as many others in numerous leadership capacities, is the spirit that helped to grow the congregation from about 300 in 1951 to almost 3,000 in 1991.

It was in 1976 that we began Phase One of our master plan for a sanctuary that would more than triple our 4350 Lincoln Avenue seating capacity. Phase One was to provide much needed classrooms for our bulging Christian School, Sunday School and office space. To save money, we recruited as much volunteer help as possible from the membership. Men who had already put in long hours at their building trade jobs, would eat a quick supper and head for the church to work several hours on the latest building project--Phase One, which was

built with 85% volunteer labor. With the completion of Phase One, we launched immediately into Phase Two, the actual construction of the new larger sanctuary. The mere dimensions of the proposed building ruled out use of volunteers on much of the work. Highly skilled labor, and lots of it, would be required to meet all the legal specifications of erecting any public building exceeding a 999-seat capacity. To make it earthquake-safe and comply with fire safety regulations would drive up the building costs. It didn't help that we had endured some of the most severe winters our Tri-State had experienced in years. Ice, snow and bone-chilling cold dealt bitter blows to our building program and our budget. According to a National Weather service report released in 1991, January of 1977 was the coldest January on record. And 1978 wasn't much better. I remember the unfinished framework outlined against the sky, with no protection against the snows of '78. We were trying to raise the money for construction as we went along, but our faith was sorely tried. We were sure the exposed framework would be rusted and warped by the weather. I could just visualize big cracks appearing in the brick and concrete work. At one point, before the building was finished enough to move into it, we were totally out of funds. We had also exhausted our borrowing resources at the bank. One of our members had expressed intentions of doing something major toward the building program but was thinking in terms of preparing her will, to make it available upon her decease. The problem was that we desperately needed help NOW in order to get into the building.

One morning during this period, my husband dressed more carefully than usual and was unusually quiet. As he left the house, he asked me to be in prayer for him. I asked, "Where are you going?" He replied, "I am going to see Mrs. Adam (Georgia) Neu and ask her for A HALF MILLION DOLLARS." It was the first time in his life he had ever gone on such a visit! Mrs. Neu was a member of his Sunday morning Bible Class and of the church. Knowing the gravity of our financial straits, he needed to say no more. We both knew it was

God who touched the heart of Georgia Neu with a spirit of generosity toward the work of the Lord. We were able to get the new sanctuary under roof and to complete it enough to at least move in. (There was still much to be done.) I will never forget the last Sunday in the "old" sanctuary at 4350 Lincoln Ave. I had grown to love that sanctuary. To me, it was the most beautiful and most sacred auditorium in the city. The cross designs in the brick work cast holy shadows along the walls. The laminated wooden arches supporting the roof, the lighting fixtures, everything about it seemed designed to draw one's spirit into an attitude of worship. As we held our last service there on March 4, 1979, I discovered myself churning inside with a mixture of powerful emotions. I thought of many blessings I had enjoyed during services there . . . of the times when I had retreated with a heavy heart to the Prayer Chapel where I left my burdens and came away with a song . . . Pastor Steve and our daughter, Evangeline, had been married in that sanctuary . . . it was there, behind that old pulpit, that Pastor Steve and later Pastor Dave stood to preach their first sermons. These and many other memories played upon my heart strings. In the multi-emotions of the moment, I wanted to cling to the past.

My heart wanted no part of moving into that large, cavernous sanctuary at 4400 Lincoln Ave. I loved the old building. Bodily I would make the move, but it would take a prolonged spiritual struggle before my inner spirit could follow! I hope I never again allow myself to love a building as much as I cherished the one at 4350 Lincoln Ave. When people asked me how I liked our new sanctuary, I always tried to say something positive. After all, I was the pastor's wife. I must not create problems by expressing negative emotions at a time when everyone was attempting to adjust to all the changes. I was supposed to be a part of the solution, not a part of the problem! I finally came up with the ultimate response by saying: "Well, at least it's big enough that we'll never again have to go through the trauma of another building program!" That's the best answer I could think of, at the time, which expressed my feelings honestly! Looking back after more than

a decade, I can now see that God was behind the erection of the landmark building on Evansville's east side, where the cross lights up the night time sky! Although we had "high day" attendances with special guests such as Paul Harvey, the Bill Gaither Trio and others over the years, it was not until 1979 that we enjoyed a weekly average Sunday School attendance of over 1,000 people, as we moved into our additional classrooms and large sanctuary. It was named appropriately "The Adam J. Neu Sanctuary." In the years ahead, God would use this expanded space to reach and nurture many more souls for His Kingdom!

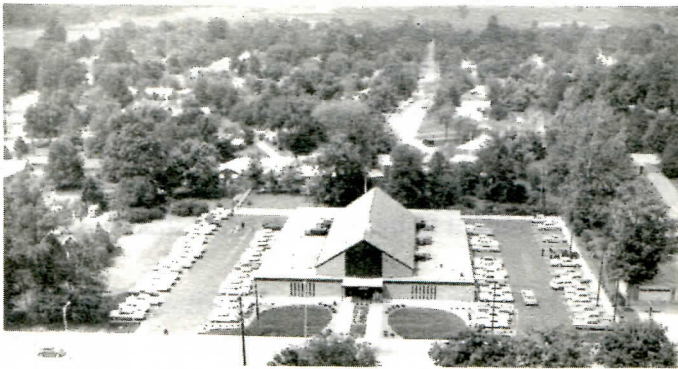
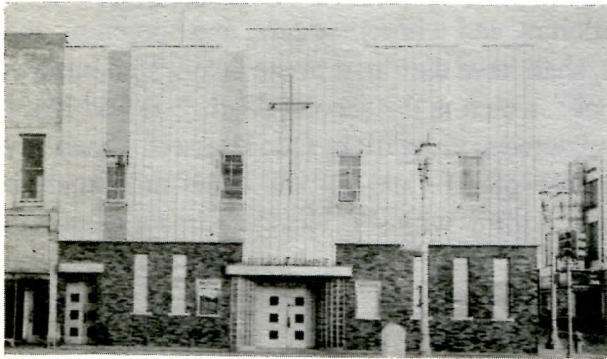
Our move into the spacious sanctuary at 4400 Lincoln Avenue on Sunday March 11, 1979 did not end all building activity. There was much to finish up, most of which had to be done on a volunteer basis since there was no money to hire workers. We were not on easy street by any means. The stress and anxiety of the post-building program period took its toll on my husband physically. He developed stress-related hypoglycemia and his blood pressure gave real cause for concern. He had trouble sleeping nights. His health was slipping at a time when he needed to be at his very best. His deep concern for the future of the church, should anything suddenly happen to him, prompted Dick to request the board to accept Pastor Steve as pastor of the church. Had not the top administrative load of pastoral responsibilities been shifted to Pastor Steve's shoulders in 1981, I am not at all certain his father would still be around to celebrate his 65th birthday on June 9th, 1991.

As for me, I was having my own set of problems, caused, in part, by my concern over Dick. He telephoned me one day from his Aunt Marie's house at 624 East Blackford Avenue, saying he had accidentally locked himself out of his car. I was to bring him a second set of car keys. On the return to the church, I followed him. As he approached busy Highway 41, headed east on Lincoln Avenue, the light was red, but he did not stop. He never looked to his right or left, but just kept driving right across Highway 41. Apparently he never

even noticed his violation of the red light. I could only hold my breath and pray he would not crash into anyone or be broadsided by a vehicle traveling the highway that afternoon. God did protect him, but as for me, I was nearly traumatized.

Fear and worry for Dick's health, for the church, and how to meet the payments on the huge debt wiped out my joy for months. I felt personally responsible for that mortgage. A period of depression held my spirit captive until one day when I was reading Revelation 21:7-8. If ever God spoke to me through Scripture, it was on that occasion: "He that overcomes shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." It was like a shock treatment administered to my spirit by God Himself. I knew my problem stemmed from being fearful and full of unbelief, but somehow I did not associate those qualities with sin. I had legitimate reasons to be fearful and unbelieving. However, when I saw those sins listed at the head of a list of notorious sins, things like murder, immorality, witchcraft, idol worship and lying, I fell on my knees in repentance. I remembered it was Adam and Eve's original sin of unbelief which triggered the fall of the whole human race. I knew it was time to rise up out of my depression, to renounce my unbelief in God's promises and stop worrying about the church debt and my husband's health. I determined to let God be God once again; to cast all my cares upon Him, knowing He cared for me as no one in heaven or on earth could possibly care for me. God knew how He was going to take care of the church debt. I didn't need to worry about that. I am thankful to report I have never succumbed to depression since that time.

I must also report that the end of the Phase II Building Program did not put an end to further building programs! The old Monastery



at 509 South Kentucky Avenue was bought and given to the church by Jim and Janet Ludwyck in 1986. Once again we were faced with a clean-up, paint-up, fix-up project to top all previous projects in our lifetime. Most older men try to take into consideration their advancing



years and curtail certain types of hard labor, but not Dick. It seemed to work in reverse with him! On behalf of the pastoral staff, Dick asked another member, Richard Havens, to serve as Chairman of the Board of Directors on this new non-profit corporation. (Brother Havens was a co-founder of Windsor Plastics and had supervised the construction of many millions of dollars of buildings for his company.) Almost every Saturday, and many evenings for the next four years, he and Richard Havens met with crews of volunteer workers at the monastery, which was incorporated as the Evansville Christian Life Center. Dick worked alongside carpenters, painters, plumbers, housewives, and jacks-of-all-trades, trying to bring the huge complex into readiness for the many missionary and outreach ministries that now flourish there, in the inner city.

The summer of 1990 found Dick sweating under the heat and humidity of the August sun as he assisted in laying out our new playground space and equipment for Evansville Christian School. When the church trustees concluded that additional parking space was an absolute necessity, they voted to develop the property along Oak Street for that purpose. At the same time, the school playground needed to be relocated and upgraded. They asked longtime member Bill Felts to serve as our general contractor on a volunteer basis. In addition to developing his own Felts Lock Company business, Bill is

a licensed general contractor. He spent many hours laying out the parking lot, supervising the contractors, and lending a hand to volunteers who helped on the project.

Personally, I didn't do much to help on the parking lot except to carry thermos jugs of iced tea and cold lemonade for thirsty volunteers. However, Dick was there in his old work clothes every time he could take a break from hospital visits or other pastoral duties. Although the parking lot and playground project covered a relatively short period of time, the summer and fall of 1990, it still cost a tidy total of approximately \$325,000. The



R.R. clearing trees for the parking lot expansion.

The parking lot quickly began filling up on Sunday mornings as grateful members and visitors took advantage of its convenience. The ECS children were so proud and appreciative of their new, improved playground facilities, it was worth all the labor and expense.

Down through the years the deacons and trustees have been men of vision and courage, with an amazing faith in the God by Whom all things are possible. But there has always been an underlying reason and purpose behind these ongoing building programs. As one trustee so aptly described the most recent project of building the parking lot:

"WE ARE PAVING THE WAY TO SALVATION!...for our un-churched loved ones . . . our Tri-state friends and neighbors!"

*Evansville Christian School
Another Dream Come True*

I'm not certain just when my husband began to dream of a Christian Day School, sponsored by the church. It may date back to his college experience when he sat under an unsaved professor who seemed bent on dismantling the Christian faith of his young students. I do know that when plans were made for the new church building at 4350 Lincoln Avenue, he made sure the construction quality and layout were in compliance with state regulations specifications for public school classrooms. It was in the early '70s, when we began offering quality Bethel Temple Day Care with a professional staff headed by Mrs. James Taylor as director. It was more than just a baby-sitting service for working parents. It included a professional curriculum preschool education, licensed by the State of Indiana, but with a totally Christian atmosphere. The parents and their children loved it. One year they even offered lessons in French to those lucky toddlers. Financially, it was a service that was self-supporting except for the facilities which the church made available.

When the church members met to decide whether to begin a Christian school, I was, as always, on the conservative side of the fence. It seemed to me our kids could be educated in the public school system, with the church providing supplementary classes after school, weekends, and during summers, which would be far less costly. Our daughter Evangeline was a senior at Harrison High School at the time. On the way to the meeting I asked her if she thought the church really needed to establish a Christian school. I wanted her honest appraisal. She was silent as she thought about it. Then she said: "Yes, Mom, I really think it is needed."

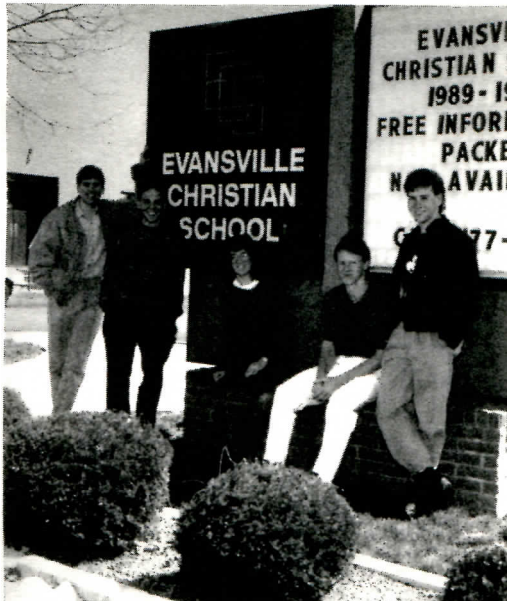
I was surprised, but I should not have been. For one thing, I knew she was afraid to use the restrooms at school and would always wait until she got home. Since her friendships and social life centered around the church youth ministry, the peer pressure from classmates at Harrison had little influence on her life, but reports from other students more involved in campus life painted a different picture. As Youth Pastor, our son David strongly supported the Christian School project as the best way to insure the future of our next generation by instilling strong Biblical values along with the three "Rs." Although the membership was made aware that the church might have to subsidized the school, they agreed it was something that was needed. They accepted it as a long-term commitment to home missions, with our own children of the church and Tri-State as beneficiaries.

In the fall of 1975, we were to begin offering elementary classes through grade six. Our plan was to offer an additional grade each year until all twelve grades were available.

Up to this point, Dick had been a prime "mover and shaker" in bringing about the implementation of the school. Then a freak accident happened. We had been disturbed by a series of petty burglaries around the property. Dick was determined to catch the thief in the act. He almost did. He chased the intruder through the hallways, hot on his trail, but the thief shot out the west door. As Dick, who was wearing a new pair of leather shoes, chased him across the parking lot he began to slip and lose his balance. He was also wearing a new suit given to him for his birthday by some of the congregation and did not want to damage it in a fall, so he did some contortions in the air and regained his balance. However, he injured his back in the process which led to surgery. The thief got away.

At a time when Dick had planned to devote himself to interviewing teachers, acquiring school classroom equipment, supervising setting up the rooms, and the many other requirements for such

a major project, he was literally flat on his back from the surgery. Not only did Pastor Steve suddenly have all the pulpit and television preaching during that period, but also the load of getting the school in operation as well. He never could have done it without the helping hands of faculty and volunteers. Dick was home from the hospital by school opening. I can still remember him on that Labor Day rolling around the property in his wheel chair trying to get a look at all that had been accomplished during his stay in the hospital. I think he was also trying to spot something left undone that he might still be able to do to help get ready for the start of school the next day! It would be November before he was able to be in the pulpit and back on television again. He likes to tell how he gets the credit for being the founder of Evansville Christian School but Steve had to do all the work!



*The Awesome Gift of a
Vacant Monastery*

When the Old Monastery at 509 South Kentucky was presented to Bethel Temple by members Jim and Janet Ludwyck in the spring of 1986, no one was more excited than my husband. He could see such a missionary potential in that setting that it was impossible for him to sit on the sidelines. The original structure was completed in the late 1890's and was enclosed by a high brick wall around the 2 1/2 acres it occupies. After several additions over the years, it presently contains over 150 rooms and 85,000 square feet (60,000 square feet of living area.) From 1982 until 1986 the property was unheated and uninhabited. During that time, considerable deterioration occurred. When we first walked through the long hallways and seemingly countless rooms, I was appalled by the build-up of dust, dirt, hanging cobwebs, and peeling paint. Why, just to clean out the place would take a whole year, I thought. (We learned the Sisters had left it in immaculate condition four years earlier.) There was no heat on that day in February and the bone-chilling cold penetrated my heavy coat. When we descended to the basement level to the area which had been used as a burial vault for deceased sisters, it was literally cold as a tomb. But none of this fazed my husband's enthusiasm. He couldn't wait to organize a sturdy crew of volunteers and pitch in.

One day, as he was descending a glass enclosed stairway in the center of the complex, he felt something that tied with the past. He paused, looked down and a strange sensation swept over him – an odd feeling that he had seen that stairway before. Then it came back to him. Over the years, when our church was still downtown, he would dream of a large piece of property in Evansville and of being on a stairway just like this one. Prior to the congregation moving to

Lincoln Avenue he had looked for such an available piece of property, but nothing materialized at that time. Richard Havens, who had been appointed our first Chairman of the Board of Directors was with him that day. Dick turned to him and said, "Brother Havens, this is it!"

This was further confirmation to Dick that the additional outreach ministry was of God . . . that it was all a part of God's plan for his life and ministry. The memory of that vision sustained him through the long, exhausting renovation period that lay ahead.

I remember that when K-Mart was closing one of their local stores, we were able to purchase some of their old counters and clothing racks at a remarkably low price. One day we got a call from the supervisor that we could have all remaining counters left unsold, providing we would dismantle and move them out of the way at once. That night at prayer meeting, Dick made the appeal for helpers. I joined the crew of dismantlers



Viola Hinds and Jim Francis

early next morning to salvage those display counters. After all, they were free! I must confess I was pretty inept with a hammer and screwdriver; a typewriter was more my style. This could take a long time. Then others began to arrive. I'll never forget one perky, petite housewife: she marched in carrying a fancy little red toolbox labeled "Freda's Tools." I was amazed at her energy as she climbed around and tackled those solid old counters, taking them apart as if she had been doing it all of her life! That's how the job got done – all of us helping out, the old and the young, the skilled and the unskilled. Once we got the counters moved, they all had to be reassembled, piece by piece, screw by screw. But what a blessing those display counters and

clothing racks have been. They help make the Life Center Clothing Bank look for all the world like a spacious, neat, well-organized department store, ready to serve the needs of its clients.

For the next four years, with few exceptions, Dick would spend every Saturday personally involved in the actual labor of the arduous renovation projects, working along with a faithful group of volunteers. As time went by, still others became more involved and he was able to turn over the task of providing leadership for the volunteers and multiple ministries that now flourish inside those walls.

The fact that our trustees placed the Evansville Christian Life Center into a separate, non-profit corporation apart from Bethel Temple has encouraged other churches and people to know we wanted it to be a community of Christians and churches, ministering materially and spiritually to the less fortunate in the inner city. Today, according to the president of the Life Center's Board of Directors, James D. Lopp, Jr., eight of the 21 board members are from Bethel Temple and 13 come from other good churches in our area.



*Norman and Mary Jeanette Barnett
and Francis Barton*

This story would be incomplete if I failed to introduce to you Sister Anna. She was the Mother Superior at the time the monastery was given to Bethel Temple. We accepted her gracious offer to take us through the complex, and spent most of one day while she shared its history as she herself had lived it. She knew every inch of the 150-room, 2.49 acre complex!

Sister Anna had entered the old monastery in 1938 at the age

of 19. For the next 46 years it was her home and her life, until the move to a new location on July 7, 1984. On her left hand, third finger, she reverently wore the gold ring given to her at her ceremony of ordination, a symbol of her lifetime (marriage) commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Born into a local family of well-known contractors, she was skilled in carpenter work at an early age. In her years at St. Clare, she put those skills to good use in building needed furniture, remodeling, doing maintenance on the property, even building coffins. The simple wooden chests were used for burial of the sisters who departed the convent by death and were then placed in the basement vault. Upon sale of the property, all bodies were removed and laid to rest in St. Joseph Catholic Cemetery.

After the monastery was acquired by a Realty and Development corporation, there was talk of dismantling the property and selling off the stained glass windows and other antique items of value. When this news reached the Sisters of St. Clare, they were dismayed by the thought that their majestic old monastery was about to be torn down. They began praying frantically that it would be spared and somehow be used in a manner in keeping with its original purpose.

It was at this point that C.J. Ludwyck learned the property was for sale, saw its potential for home missionary ministry and stepping in with the necessary financing, rescued the historic landmark from the wrecking ball. Sister Anna told us that when the news broke that the monastery had been given to Bethel Temple, they were ecstatic. They believed God had answered their prayers and that their former home would now continue to be a center of Christian service.

The name chosen for the venerable complex is most descriptive of its present usage: EVANSVILLE CHRISTIAN LIFE CEN-

TER. With the food and clothing distribution, hot meal programs, New Life Community Church, the many prayer breakfast meetings and Bible study groups which operate there, it is truly a hub of Christian fellowship and opportunities for growth and service. One of the early outreach ministries to be organized for the complex was a home for unwed teen-age mothers. Since its opening July 27, 1987, it has been a spiritual haven for girls in crisis pregnancy. Quite appropriately it was named: NEW LIFE HOME.

The stately old manse located on the north-east corner of the complex was an ideal building in which to house the NEW LIFE HOME, since it was separate from the main convent. It had previously been used by the visiting bishops and priests during their stay



Evansville Christian Life Center

in the city. Considerable work had to be done to adapt it for our use and also to meet fire safety codes. The unfinished third floor was completed. Two stairways and more rest rooms were added, as was air conditioning. The kitchen was totally renovated. My husband was especially proud of the five extra closets he personally built. Unlike Jesus, Dick is not a skilled carpenter, but I have a feeling the Carpenter from Nazareth gave him a bit of guidance on that assignment!

Once the major remodeling was finished, some of the younger women of the church took over the interior redecorating. They held a household shower and invited all ladies of the church to participate. As we sat in a circle in the spacious living/dining room area the night of the shower, I noticed a glass front china closet filled with exquisite china. I learned it had been donated by a young couple in the church.

They wanted the New Life Home to have their wedding china. It is used on special occasions just as many families set out their best china when they gather for their traditional celebrations. Businesses and individuals donated items ranging from a deluxe vacuum cleaner, refrigerator and dishwasher to excellent quality furniture and household furnishings. Seven hydraulic beds were donated by a business for use by the girls. To this day, whenever I have occasion to visit the New Life Home, my heart is warmed by the soft decor and cozy atmosphere of this lovely home. Love is tucked into every nook and cranny by the many volunteers who put it all together.

I also find myself thinking of Ursula, an unwed mother who had stayed in our home briefly several years ago. Ursula lived in West Germany. She had a boyfriend who was an American serviceman stationed with the military there. When he transferred back to the United States, Ursula was pregnant. He promised to marry her if she would join him in the states, so her parents provided money for her fare to follow him.

Imagine the shock to the mother of that serviceman when Ursula showed up on her doorstep and introduced herself. Ursula soon discovered the family, including her boyfriend, wanted nothing to do with her. She sat in their living room, feeling totally alone and unwanted. She was afraid to eat or even drink anything they offered her, for fear they might try to poison her. She had no place to go. The mother finally shared her dilemma with a neighbor who was a regular viewer of *Television Church*. She suggested they call Pastor Schwambach . . . maybe he would know what to do.

When Ursula was brought to our home, our hearts went out to her. She was so grateful for a haven where she could take a hot bath and not be fearful of eating the food. This was before there was a New Life Home. We were able to make arrangements for her to enter the Evansville Christian Home which was still in operation at that time.

On more than one occasion, they invited Dick as a dinner guest and also asked him to conduct a devotional service for the girls. After the birth of her baby, Ursula visited our home to express again her deep gratitude for the help received when she was so heartbroken and alone. She was able to return to West Germany and the child found a good home with adoptive parents.

Ursula is typical of the girls who come to us at the New Life Home. They do not always know the Lord, but almost without exception they do know Him before they leave. He is the only One who can turn their lives around and change their hearts forever. Most of the girls are so open to the Gospel at their time of crisis, for there seems to be no one to turn to. One of the girls at the New Life Home wrote these poignant lines:

A Place For Me

*I have no where to go. No one for me. Alone and cold . . .
afraid of the world. Then I remember . . . There's a
place for me.*

*It's a place built with love and friendship, understanding
and trust . . . a place where you don't have to feel alone
or be scared.*

*A place where people care and help all they can. These people
are special people who know . . . there's a place for me.*

It is safe to say that at least three hundred different volunteers have participated in donating many thousands of hours of dedicated service toward development and maintenance of the Evansville Christian Life Center and the New Life Home. It has provided a significant ministry to many quiet Christians who have never really been involved in Christian service. When asked why she volunteers her time at the Life Center, one lady replied, "This is an opportunity to feed Jesus, clothe Jesus, minister to Jesus . . . it is love in action." She is right about that. It was Jesus, Himself, who said, "*Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to Me.*" (Matthew 25:40b)



*Housemother, Crys Hale with one
of the New Life Home girls*

Some Memories of Marriage

In this chapter I have no intentions of elaborating at great length about the secrets of a successful marriage. I will leave that up to the experts, whoever they are. Of one thing I am convinced: every marriage is unique, as unique as the two people who comprise it. Just because you

read something in a book somewhere does not necessarily mean it is the answer for your marriage, unless of course, it is a timeless principle set forth by the God who created marriage in the first place.



Geneva and R.R. Schwambach - 1963

One thing that really disturbed me early in our marriage was the irregularity and uncertainty of my husband's hours. He would call to say he'd be home to eat at 5:30 p.m. As a solicitous young bride, I would plan my meal and hover over it so it would be just right and ready to serve upon his arrival. More often than not, 5:30 arrived on schedule, but Dick did not. Once in a while, you can expect that to happen, but time after time after time? Worse yet, was when I was expecting him home at night and the minutes of delay turned into hours. Where was he? Why wasn't he home? Why didn't he call? What terrible thing must have happened to him? An accident? Was he even now lying along a street or highway, unconscious? Just about the time I was starting to walk the floor, he would pull up, weary, but uninjured, always with a pastoral explanation of his late arrival.

I finally reached a point of Christian maturity where I could

live with his erratic time schedule without becoming all ruffled and upset. I knew God had called my husband to the ministry and had watched over him long before I ever knew Dick. I also knew God had a work for my husband to do. I was certain the Devil could not destroy him until that work on earth was finished – no matter how many ways he might try. Dick's life was in God's hands. I decided that was good enough. No need for me to worry. If Dick was late, God knew where he was and was looking after him. If I got a phone call from a hospital or if the police knocked on my door with bad news, that was soon enough for me to start worrying and crying, not before. If the time came that my husband was taken in death, then I would accept the fact that his work on earth was finished. God would have simply promoted him to serve on the other side. God would take care of me, and I would make it alone...somehow. After I had prayerfully worked my way through to the above conclusion, I can honestly say I never again paced the floor in worry whenever my husband was running late. That's just how life is when you are a pastor's wife.

In all marriages, it is highly probable that there will be times when it seems easier to just call it quits...to walk out and leave all the problems behind. But what a waste. With God's help, I believe any problem can be solved when the couple has the love and desire to go all the way to make it work. Love is powerful...love never fails...love finds a way. That's why I appreciate so much Steve's book: Tough Talk To A Stubborn Spouse. It can be a great tool in salvaging marriages and homes. Most of us go through crisis times when we think we'll never laugh again...never love again. But it's a lie of Satan. I believe many an older woman looks back on the time when she gave up on her husband and her marriage, only to live out her days in lonely regret. What makes her remorse even more bitter is to see some other woman enjoying the companionship of her ex that could have been hers had she been more understanding, more patient, more persistent, and more forgiving in her efforts to restore and preserve the marriage.

In my husband's Sunday School Class there is a man who occasionally speaks up with provocative questions. He once asked, "Pastor, how much tolerance do you allow your wife?" Without hesitation, my husband replied: "All she wants, brother, all she wants!" He's right about that. For the most part, I do what I want to do or think I should do, and I let him do as he chooses to do. Now I admit that may be somewhat of an oversimplification! Of course, it helps that we both want to do many of the same things. That is why there is an on-going struggle when one spouse is a Christian while the other is not. They are not going the same direction, making true marital companionship exceedingly difficult at crucial times..

I look at the example of Dick's parents, Mom and Dad Schwambach. At ages 89 and 87, they are still sweethearts. What a pattern they have set before their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.



*Mom and Dad Schwambach,
Dick and Geneva - June, 1988*

I know there are wives who cry and shed real tears if their husbands do not give them candy and flowers on Valentine's Day. Fortunately for us, I happen to be the kind of wife who cries if my husband does give me candy and flowers, especially since I should not have much candy. Besides, on special occasions candy seems to show up on our doorstep from one of our family members or friends.

When I was growing up during the harsh days of the Great Depression, money was never to be wasted on non-essentials. If we had any extra, it was to be given to those in more desperate circumstances than ours. In our family of eight children, it was part of our "religion" to turn out the lights when we left a room and never flush

the toilet except "when necessary!" Waste was sin with a capital "S." I am sure some of our church housekeeping crew are upset when I turn off extra lights left burning after hours. If an area looks empty to me, off goes the light, it is an automatic reflex. My husband understands this about me. He is very much the same way and in our 43 years of marriage, he has seldom gifted me with candy, flowers or non-essentials. Don't be misled, life with Dick has held many surprises. One time he "surprised" me by making a pledge of \$5,000 to help buy needed equipment for the Television Ministry. We certainly did not have the \$5,000 to give, but we did have good credit so he was able to borrow it. I did not feel as generous at that time as he apparently did, but I can tell you this: I was less upset over his gift to the TV Ministry than I would have been had he gone out and splurged by buying a boat, or putting in a new swimming pool, or some other luxury item we did not need.

I was even more "surprised" on another occasion when he committed a real no-no without my knowledge. He co-signed a note for a couple to help them obtain a loan from the bank for the purchase of a home. He wanted to give them the same kind of financial break his dad had given us early in our marriage. (On our salary, we could never have managed a down payment for our first home without Dad's help.) For four years, all went well until the couple defaulted on the note after their marriage ended in divorce. Naturally, the bank turned to my husband to make good on the payments of that loan. The secret was out. It really irritated me to think Dick would do something he knew was without scriptural support and not even ask me about it in advance. I believe my husband learned his lesson. He learned the hard way what can happen when a person ignores the warning God gives in Proverbs 11:15, "He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it."

"Smart for it" he did. The house had to be cleaned up after renters. The big lawn had to be cut during periods when he was trying

to rent or sell. Back utility bills and taxes had to be paid in addition to our own home expenses. While I said very little after my first outburst, I did nothing to help him with his "problem" in the way of cleaning and yard work. I am certain there are some wives who would have given their husbands a really rough way to go but I knew Dick's nature and what a tender heart he had for those struggling against odds to make good. He was really trying to do a good deed and didn't need me to "rub it in" as he struggled. At last accounting, he told me he had lost about \$2,000, not counting the time he spent trying to work things out, remodeling, and keeping the extra property in shape until he could dispose of it in a satisfactory way. At least he was able to sell the house on contract to a deserving Christian couple who were thrilled with the unusual opportunity to become homeowners. If all goes well, this should cut his losses! God is so good, even when we make blunders. Perhaps when He saw Dick ignore His warning in Proverbs 11:15, He mercifully set in motion the promise in Romans 8:28 to cover it and make "all things work together for good . . ." for His well-meaning child.

If Dick had devoted his ambitions and energies into making money, I am satisfied he would have become a wealthy man. Instead, all that extra energy and drive has been "invested" into building the Kingdom of God. He is not especially proud of the fact that nearing retirement age when most people have their homes paid for, we still have a sizeable mortgage on ours. But there is a good reason for that. More than once an insurance loan or our home equity has helped finance the purchase of a key piece of property for the church, or some other urgent need, such as meeting payroll. Still, Dick has been a good provider and when things were too tight, he was not too proud to work with his hands if necessary.

The summer before Steve was born, we realized more money would be needed to pay the doctor and hospital bills. Our \$25 per week salary permitted nothing left over for savings, and we had no

hospital insurance. Dick decided to paint mailboxes in subdivisions where the names and numbers had faded from exposure to weather. When he canvassed some neighborhoods, homeowners were glad to pay the \$1.50 he was asking. He went about it in a very businesslike manner. Since we had no car, he had to ride his bicycle, carrying supplies as well. One day he gave each mailbox a first coat of paint. His next trip, a second coat of paint was applied. Finally, he went back to do the lettering for each box. However, that day he was rained out before he could finish the last box. Though at the time he intended to do the job later, he became caught up in his busy schedule, it eventually slipped his mind, and he never did make it back.

One day he was praying for souls to be saved at the altar, as it had been quite a while since anyone had come forward during the invitation. He asked the Lord to reveal anything that might hinder the power of the Holy Spirit working in his life. He thought of the unfinished mailbox, for which he had already been paid. Wasting no time, Dick addressed an envelope, enclosed \$2.00 (\$1.50 plus 50¢ interest) and in a large scrawl, printed an apology to the person. A few days later, on the front page of the newspaper, this headline appeared: **Woman's Faith In Humanity Restored!** It told the story of the mailbox painter who had been paid in advance, but never came back to paint the name and address on the box. Neighbors would sometimes tease her by asking, "How about painting your mailbox?" She was happy because she at least got her money back – with interest, plus the two coats of protective paint. To this day, I do not know whether the lady ever found out that her young, anonymous painter was also the Associate Pastor of Bethel Tabernacle!

Another time when our family finances were in a precarious state, Dick decided he would make a few extra dollars just before Christmas by delivering flowers for Blackman Floral Company. Saturdays and evenings when there was no church service, he would make deliveries. Christmas Eve Day we did manage to rush out to

pick up a little evergreen tree. It was crooked because all the good ones had been sold. While he worked late Christmas Eve, I put the boys to bed early and tried to put up the tree. Since it was small, I wanted to set it on the coffee table in front of our picture window where it would show from the street like all the others in our 1700 block along Sweetser Avenue. Bracing a crooked tree on a coffee table wasn't too easy, but I was proud of my evening's work when at last it was all decorated. Dick would be pleased when he came in tired from delivering all those Christmas poinsettias. And he was!

After a snack in the kitchen, we went to the boy's bedroom where they were sleeping soundly. All at once we heard a noise from the living room, a crashing sound. We can laugh about it now, but my pitiful little tree had toppled from its stand. It was lying in shambles all over the coffee table and living room floor. What a mess!

One of Dick's qualities which has always commanded my deep respect has been his insatiable desire for winning souls for Christ. His vision always exceeded mine. When he came up with an idea for a new outreach, I would invariably try to persuade him that we were already doing enough...that he should leave something for other churches and pastors in town to do! But for some reason, he felt that since God had given him the vision for the new ministry, he was personally responsible to follow through. He was always open to any new method of evangelism that offered potential for reaching the oncoming generation with the Gospel. When he launched enlargement campaigns to increase church and Sunday School attendance, it was not to add numbers just for the sake of greater numbers. It was a way to bring more people to Jesus Christ.

Concerning church growth, Dick has always practiced a simple theory:

1. VISION

"Where there is no vision, the people perish." (Proverbs

pick up a little evergreen tree. It was crooked because all the good ones had been sold. While he worked late Christmas Eve, I put the boys to bed early and tried to put up the tree. Since it was small, I wanted to set it on the coffee table in front of our picture window where it would show from the street like all the others in our 1700 block along Sweetser Avenue. Bracing a crooked tree on a coffee table wasn't too easy, but I was proud of my evening's work when at last it was all decorated. Dick would be pleased when he came in tired from delivering all those Christmas poinsettias. And he was!

After a snack in the kitchen, we went to the boy's bedroom where they were sleeping soundly. All at once we heard a noise from the living room, a crashing sound. We can laugh about it now, but my pitiful little tree had toppled from its stand. It was lying in shambles all over the coffee table and living room floor. What a mess!

One of Dick's qualities which has always commanded my deep respect has been his insatiable desire for winning souls for Christ. His vision always exceeded mine. When he came up with an idea for a new outreach, I would invariably try to persuade him that we were already doing enough...that he should leave something for other churches and pastors in town to do! But for some reason, he felt that since God had given him the vision for the new ministry, he was personally responsible to follow through. He was always open to any new method of evangelism that offered potential for reaching the on-coming generation with the Gospel. When he launched enlargement campaigns to increase church and Sunday School attendance, it was not to add numbers just for the sake of greater numbers. It was a way to bring more people to Jesus Christ.

Concerning church growth, Dick has always practiced a simple theory:

1. VISION

"Where there is no vision, the people perish." (Proverbs

29:10) People need a revelation from God, or they have no direction. When that revelation comes from the Word and the Spirit, it will include the winning of the unsaved.

2. SPACE TO GROW IN

A congregation's attendance will not consistently be more than the number of people that can be ministered to comfortably. This includes sanctuary space, Sunday School classrooms, and parking spaces.

3. ENOUGH ORGANIZATION TO CARRY THE LOAD

Everything rises and falls on leadership. If there is not enough qualified leadership, it must be developed and directed in order to hold the number of members and to further reach the unsaved.

One great quality I especially appreciate in my husband is the freedom to make purchases when it is something I really want or need. I am the tightwad of the family and he knows I probably won't go overboard in my shopping. However, it means a lot to me that I can make an unbudgeted purchase and not face an irate husband yelling at me for spending his hard-earned money on foolishness! I have known some women who did not dare buy anything without their husband's approval. That I would find most difficult to tolerate!

One last comment about remembering birthdays, anniversaries and special occasions: we do try to remember to present each other with an appropriate card – just to let the other know we have not forgotten. I personally prefer a simple, moderately-priced greeting. Have you noticed how expensive cards have become? It bothers me. If my husband gets too busy and forgets, well, I assure him I would rather have a husband hold me close and say "I love you," than to be presented with a gorgeous gift and fancy greeting that comes as a "peace offering" to make up for an ugly quarrel. That's how I am.

When it comes to the giving of expensive greeting cards, I am quite sure not everyone feels the same way I do. Especially Hallmark.

Family Memories

I will always remember Julie and her three sons. She died at 48 . . . the victim of cancer. Her medical bills took everything. Julie left behind three personal letters. Beyond that, she left her sons nothing . . . and yet . . . everything.

In her book: MOTHERHOOD: The Second Oldest Profession, Erma Bombeck tells how each son, upon his arrival home for the funeral, was given a sealed letter. . . a final message from his mother. The letter to the oldest began:

"Dearest Chuck, Since this letter is for no one's eyes but yours, I can tell you that I always loved you best."

In the letter number two, the mother wrote:

"Dearest Steve, You must have suspected, but I will say it anyway. I have always loved you best."

To the third son, she penned the words:

"Dearest Tim, A mother is not supposed to have favorites, but I have always loved you best."

Each letter capsulized the mother's loving reasons for confessing her favoritism, briefly sketching a profile of her son's endearing qualities. Each letter was an expression of joy for the privilege of having had such a son and each ended with the magic words: "YOU WERE LOVED!" At the funeral that day, each son squared his shoulders and walked a bit taller because that mother had made him feel "special" and let him know he was loved.

When I read the heart-touching story of Julie and her sons, my own heart echoed its sentiments exactly. To each of my three children I could honestly confess: "I loved you best . . . you were my favorite!" It is a miracle of parenthood that you can really love each child THE

BEST WITHOUT taking away any affection from any of them. When Stephen Richard Schwambach was born September 13, 1948, I was overwhelmed by the miracle of his birth. Each phase of development from the wonder of his first smile to the first wobbly steps to the first words – each was a cherished moment of motherhood. Then when David Allen joined our family on December 28, 1950 and still later on May 4, 1955 when Evangeline completed



*"Family Fun" - March 1957
Stephen, David, Evangeline*

our family circle, I discovered for each, in turn, a totally unique and overwhelming maternal devotion for the new baby. Yet this new love in no way diminished the special love I felt for my first-born or my middle child. Simply because there was a newcomer to the family, I did not love the previous children any less. That has to be the miracle of love which God imparts to mothers.

Each of our children brought a special joy to our home, for each one was fascinatingly different. I had never heard of the "terrible two's" back then. I cannot remember any of our children fitting that description. Of course, they went through the stages of discovering the bathroom plumbing and rolls of tissue, of opening cupboards and playing with the kitchen pots and pans instead of their toys. We had our share of spills and messes! I remember rescuing Steve from the top of my upright piano more than once. David was always curious about anything and everything he could get his hands on. This trait carried over into his early teens when he liked to dismantle flashlights, clocks, radios, etc. The only problem was, after he attempted to put

them back together, they never again worked quite the same.

Since Steve was nearly seven and David almost five when our first and only girl, Evangeline, was born, I will never know how she escaped being "spoiled rotten." She was also the darling of the church with an abundance of baby sitters vying to take care of her.

When it came to walking, none of our children broke any records. Steve took his first steps at 11 1/2 months and David was even slower. However, when our daughter was two years old, she was still hanging on to chairs and the sides of her playpen to keep her balance. Secretly I was uneasy, but it was not until my parents came to visit that I was shocked into action. As he was playing with her, my father observed Angel (as he called her) and her struggle to walk. Bluntly he remarked, "Angel is crippled, isn't she?" I had never openly faced that possibility before. Crippled? No, not my little girl! She was perfect – a little slow walking perhaps . . . but certainly not crippled."

Immediately after their visit, I wasted no time taking her to a specialist in orthopedics. The diagnosis? Cerebral palsy. Somehow, she had suffered damage to the motor nerve that controls movements on the left side. Her crooked little smile reflected a subtle side-effect when the "lazy" cheek muscle failed to respond as fully as the normal side. It was urgent that she begin therapy as soon as possible to stimulate normal growth on the damaged side. Already the left leg was shorter than the right. Our doctor made arrangements to enroll her at the Rehabilitation Center and gave me supplemental physical exercises to help her do at home. Each day the bus from the Rehabilitation Center picked her up for the half day of physical and speech therapy. In between sessions, the children enjoyed a fascinating variety of pre-school activities, including snack time. Evangeline loved going and would cry with disappointment if illness kept her home. Among other things, the children were taught etiquette. Evangeline's manners made a positive impact on our entire family as

we tried to remember our "Please," and "Thank you," and "May I be excused?" Our limited salary at the time simply would not stretch to cover the full cost of her treatment. They graciously permitted us to pay what we could, plus I was able to donate some time to assist in the care and supervision of the children.

Our concern for Evangeline was that she might end up with one leg much shorter than the other. Every time we went through our daily exercise routine at home, we prayerfully asked God to make her weak leg grow and become strong. Each time we visited the orthopedist, we held our breath as he took leg measurements. The day came when he announced both legs were the same length. Our family gave thanks to God for the good report. The skilled physician and faithful daily therapy all played a part, but it is God who makes legs grow. Even after Evangeline enrolled in regular school classes, the doctor advised us to continue exercise therapy at home during her years of rapid growth. How grateful we are that her physical problem was much less severe than so many of the little ones we came to know and love during those years of treatment at the Rehabilitation Center.

It must have been the influence of those nurses and therapists that inspired Evangeline to set her sights on a career in nursing. We happily began helping her make plans toward that goal upon graduation from Harrison High School. By the time June, 1973 arrived, she had changed her mind. Her change in plans centered around a certain young man in the Youth Ministry at church. She decided to apply for a job instead. We were disappointed at first, but when she was employed at Indiana Bell later that summer, we were happy for her because we knew she was happy. On a golden autumn day, October 5, 1974, she walked down the aisle at church, on her father's arm, and became Mrs. Larry Lee Thompson. Larry and his family had become members of Bethel Temple in 1968. We had long loved him like a son, and now that is just what he was – our son, too. We did not lose our darling daughter after all, we merely gained another son to love.



*Mother and Daughter
chat around kitchen table*

Evangeline had also gained a new set of loving, supportive parents. If I sound like a mother who "dotes" on her daughter, I plead guilty. The best part is that we are closer today than ever. Not only is Vange my beloved daughter, she is also a treasured friend. She and Larry are very much a part of the Bethel

Temple Church Family. Larry teaches a Bible class on Sunday mornings. Nine-year-old Angela and seven-year-old Justin attend Evansville Christian School, belong to the Wednesday night Pioneer Clubs, and sing in the children's choirs.

I am fortunate to have had my children in the late 40's and 50's. My mother abhorred the use of pacifiers and passed her aversion on to me. I was not about to poke a pacifier into my babies' mouths, not even to stop their whimpering in church. I really think that back then people were less easily disturbed by the small noises of little ones since many churches did not have nice nursery areas as they do now and they were accustomed to children in the services. While I would never use a pacifier to quiet my child, I was always grateful for the refuge of our church "cry room." Is it my imagination or do we have a higher percentage of children with buck teeth and deformed mouths, thanks to the popularity of pacifiers? Do I dare say it? I personally think pacifiers have provided a bonanza for the orthodontists! Just one mother's opinion!

Since, in my family, there was no money and no room for pets, I saw no real need for them, but my children felt differently. Over their

growing-up years, quite an assortment of little critters made their home with us. There was the turtle the boys found at Youth Camp and brought home. He hungrily snapped up the bits of raw liver we offered him, much to their delight. There was the stray dog the boys adopted, only to mourn his untimely death a few weeks later when he was hit by a passing car. There were two parakeets that, when let out of their cage, somehow flew away into the wild blue yonder, never to be seen again. Skeezix, the guinea pig and hamsters Lucky, Esmerelda, and Herkimeier also made their home with us, not to mention the forbidden white mice who were smuggled into our large basement at the Mulberry and Kentucky home. They had a very brief stay!



Angel and Lucky - 1961

We were getting ready for church one evening. David was first to get dressed. After he passed inspection, I sent him to the living room to wait while I helped Evangeline finish. Suddenly we heard a weird scream of agony from the living room. We discovered the convulsing body of Evangeline's pet cat lying on the carpet, bleeding profusely. It had been sitting under the platform rocker playing with the tassels when Steve and David engaged in a brother's wrestling match, fell into the chair, which tipped over and broke the cat's neck! What we had heard was its death cry. It was time to leave for church, so we made a rare exception: Steve was allowed to stay home to clean up the mess and tenderly bury our pet while the rest of us, still in tears, went on to church.

At this point, we decided the children were old enough to have outgrown the need for pets. Besides, they were detrimental to the allergic members of our family, so we cleaned house. No more pets! Not long after, when I answered the back doorbell, there stood Evangeline with a quizzical expression on her face. She asked, "May

I come in?" Puzzled, I responded somewhat hesitantly, "Why yes, why not?" Without a word, she opened the front of her coat and introduced me to Sammy Blue Eyes. "Sammy" was a beautiful, suave Siamese cat with the most gorgeous blue eyes I had ever seen. The unspoken look on Evangeline's face intimated: "Love me, love my cat!" How could I say "no" to the beseeching look on our daughter's face?! Sammy lived with us for several years. When Dick's allergies worsened the summer of 1970, we reluctantly insisted she return her pet to the lady who had originally given the cat to her. That ended the era of pets in the parsonage.

One of the delightful things we did as a family was purchase season tickets to the Philharmonic. We wanted our children to be exposed to good music at an early age. Evangeline was only three that first year. She would sit quietly on her Daddy's lap and listen to the music until she fell asleep. The last year we tried to preserve this family time, we ran into so many conflicts with church obligations that we ended up attending less than half the concerts. I still remember some of those great musical performances we shared as a family. I hope the children do, too.

Then there was the year we drove to California in our 1958 Oldsmobile to visit the Varnells, who lived in Santa Ana at the time. As a family of five, we were all quite vocal, especially Evangeline. At age four, she was an "authority" on most every subject! We finally had to invoke periods of total silence when no one spoke, in order to survive the "togetherness" and remain on amicable terms! We traveled west on the northern route through Wyoming, visiting the Corn Palace, the Mormon Tabernacle, the Badlands of South Dakota and Nebraska, the Grand Tetons, Yellowstone National Park and Yosemite. Then we returned home by the southern route with stops at the Petrified Forest, the Grand Canyon in Flagstaff, Arizona, etc. We collected souvenirs, maps, cards and artifacts along the way. All during our trip, we planned how we would make a notebook of our

journeys, as soon as we got home. That way we could enjoy our trip and relive our memories for years to come. Somewhere in our basement is a battered box filled with musty souvenirs from our trip, still waiting to be chronicled and mounted in a notebook labeled: "Our 1959 Trip To California!"

On our return trip, we stopped for the night in Flagstaff, Arizona. We had no advance reservations and ended up taking a small one-room cabin near the back of the motel complex. We set our alarm for 2:30 a.m. in order to get an early start and thus avoid the extreme desert heat. We were totally exhausted and were all sleeping soundly when the alarm broke our slumber. Clothing was laid out and packing was simple so we could be quickly on our way. When we tried to open our cabin door, we could not get it open. Strange. Something had happened to the lock and the door was jammed. Finally we removed the small window screen and helped Steve out the window to fetch the motel manager. With his big flashlight, he discovered someone had been systematically removing all the screws in the lock from the outside of the door. It would have been only a matter of minutes before they would have succeeded in gaining entrance to our cabin. Evidently the noise of our alarm going off at that unearthly hour had startled the intruder and he fled before being discovered. We shuddered to think what might have happened had we decided to sleep late that morning. After we returned home, one of our Bethel members asked if we had been in danger on our trip. She told how she had awakened from a sound sleep at that precise time with an urgency to pray for the safety of our family. Surely God was watching over us!

Since my husband had been a newspaper delivery boy, he felt it was an important part of every young boy's training to have a paper route. There was a big difference in his boyhood, however. He was able to go to bed at 7:00 p.m., get his quota of sleep and still make those early morning deliveries. Since our life centered around church, it was impossible for Steve and Dave to get to bed very early much of

the time. Apparently they were not too stunted by lack of sleep, as they did survive those years. We lived at Mulberry and Kentucky Avenue; their paper routes were centered around the Southeast Riverside, First and Second Street area. I remember one Easter Sunday, while Dick went on to church, I drove the boys to deliver their papers, then took them to church where they donned their Easter suits just in time for the 6:00 a.m. Sunrise Service. When Dick was in the Holy Land for seventeen days (in December of 1961), the weather turned very cold. I decided I would have more peace of mind if I took the boys to deliver papers, making sure of their safe return home each morning, rather than lay awake in my warm bed, while they were riding their bikes during the cold, wee morning hours, halfway across town to the paper routes. I knew there would be no sleep for me until I heard them come home again. So each of those mornings, I scooped up six-year-old Evangeline, bedding and all, and still sleeping, laid her in the back seat of the Oldsmobile, and drove the boys to Southeast First Street to pick up their papers. I waited for them in the locked car until all the papers were safely delivered at each doorstep. Then I drove my cold, weary little newspaper boys home to finish their interrupted night's sleep. I am not sure they would agree that the money earned and the valuable experience gained was worth the effort. I do know that up to this point in time, none of our grandchildren have followed the time-honored tradition of becoming a newspaper delivery boy. But that could change.

There were times, when the children were small, that my obligations at church conflicted with family care, especially in time of sickness. I felt my place was caring for the children and yet I was torn with my desire to be by my husband's side in whatever was happening at the time. That must be why God gave Dick such a wonderful Mom and Dad who were loving baby sitters. Grandma was also a great disciplinarian. She never spoiled the children while in her care so that I had to "straighten them out" when we got them home. Yet they loved going to Grandma's. Her house was always clean and neat. Her cookie jar was never empty. They loved the games she kept on hand,

especially if some of the toys were the ones their Daddy and Uncle Paul had played with when they were small. I never worried about the children when they were at Grandma and Grandpa's! Because of them, I was able to be more involved with my husband's ministry than are many wives.



Evangeline - 3 months

During the summers that we were in youth tent revivals, we usually took the children with us to the nightly meetings. They were not in school and the late hours meant they simply slept later next day. One Saturday, the entire team of singers and musicians was invited to an old-fashioned goat barbecue at the farm home of a Kentucky family. We planned to leave Saturday morning not expecting to return until late, after the service. Evangeline was only three months old at the time. She had been restless Friday night, with a low grade temperature. I could tell she wasn't feeling too

well, but next morning, she seemed better. I left her with Mom Schwambach while the rest of us went to Kentucky. When we picked her up near midnight, I discovered she had been a very sick little girl all day, her temperature soaring. She had what we called "summer complaint" which was serious for babies that young. Mom used an old-fashioned remedy of mashed bananas and buttermilk to help her avoid dehydration. I felt truly remorseful about abandoning my darling little girl just so I could go to the Kentucky barbecue and play my accordion in the tent revival. They could have managed somehow without me.

The teen years brought a whole new set of problems, as teen years always do. We had always included the children in the church activities, keeping them almost as involved as we were. It was their social life as well as their religious and spiritual life. It was what we did together as a family. As long as they lived at home, they knew our family always went to church and they were always expected to go, too. School work was to be done ahead of time. Unlike some families, we did not try to shield our children, nor did we insist they move into "starring roles." Even so, I am sure they suffered more than one "invasion of privacy" over the years! Our family portraits were often used on the annual ministry-related calendars. When a "model" was needed for a camera card scene to illustrate the sermon, our kids were usually the nearest and most available, so they were pressed into service. No money and no recognition were involved. Once we used a young man from the youth ministry, then did not give the proper identification when his picture was used on TV Church. He complained about that! That was another advantage of using our kids. It never occurred to them to complain. I think that, basically, they enjoyed most of the activity even though it was church related.



Newlyweds on I.U.
campus - 1967

I have always been thankful that television was not invented any sooner. In the early days, the television programs usually reinforced the family values rather than injecting a negative influence upon the children.

We were pleased when Steve chose to spend his first year of college at Oakland City. When he transferred to Indiana University, he was still able to enjoy frequent visits to Evansville and maintain his church ties and friendships. If his professor of religion was creating confu-

sion for him, we were able to help fortify his faith on weekends. During the summer of 1966, Steve worked at L. Berman. It was one of those times when the church was financially strapped and we did not draw a paycheck all summer. To help ease things, we all lived on Steve's paychecks during that time. We promised to pay him back when we started drawing our salary from the church once again. Just before it was time for Steve to head for school in the fall, he told us he would be needing his money soon. It was not for school expenses only, but he wanted to buy an engagement ring for one of the beautiful young girls in the church! They had planned a wedding for the following June!

I had no problem with the engagement ring for Miss Judith Gayle Buchanan . . . I admired her a lot. We knew and loved her entire family as well as loving Judy, but I did think Steve should postpone the wedding date until he finished his education and graduated from Indiana University. In a diplomatic manner, I confided to Judy that Steve was really very immature – not at all ready for marriage just yet. She did not believe me! Several times during the school year, I wrote Steve some very persuasive letters about the virtues of earning "that piece of paper" to present to his bride upon their wedding day. I gave him my unbiased opinion about young men who expect their wives to support them while putting hubby through college.

Judy had an excellent position as an executive secretary in the International Division at Mead-Johnson. She could save much of her salary since she was still living at home. Those extra savings would come in real handy when they began to set up housekeeping AFTER Steve's graduation from college.

In response to my sound reasoning, Steve wrote me several long epistles (when he should have been spending his time writing a college thesis) explaining all the great advantages of going ahead with their wedding plans come June of 1967. He had even worked out a

tentative budget which included a tentative salary Judy would earn when she landed a position in Bloomington! Her parents had given her a 1962 Corvair for her graduation from high school so that would take care of their transportation needs for years to come (according to Steve's budget). He would also add to their income by working on the side, in addition to taking classes. To read Steve's letter, you would be convinced the two of them could live as cheaply as one. Steve would learn later on that he was only half right! Two can live as cheap as one. . .but only half as long!

On June 9, 1967, Steve presented his dad with a very special birthday gift – his brand new bride – our first daughter-in-law! It was a beautiful wedding. My beautician, Lea Ann Klein, practically emptied her shop of all the greenery and lovely floral plants to help decorate the church for the occasion. It was like walking through a garden! Lea Ann had watched all of our children grow up, but her personal interest in Steve's wedding amazed us.

When Steve left in the fall for I.U., he was not alone. He has often told us he would not be in the ministry today had it not been for the companionship and steady encouragement Judy gave him during those years.

Just as I had predicted, marriage did alter Steve's educational agenda, but with Judy's help, he went much farther than he had ever intended! Following his call to preach, he switched majors and earned his B.A. in Religion. He continued his schooling with an M.A. in Theology, and then finally returned to a subject he thoroughly enjoyed while at Indiana University and earned his Ph.D. in Psychology. Their struggle as newlyweds trying to survive on the I.U. campus in the late '60s while juggling full and part-time jobs, classes and apartment life, is a separate book all by itself.

Of the three children, David is probably the one we worried about the most as he entered the teen years. I am sure it helped that

he made his first response to accept Christ at the tender age of five. But commitments made at age five sometimes weaken by age fifteen. The big issue then was over haircuts. David liked to avoid one as long as possible! He also enjoyed wearing "far-out" clothing, like floral designs on his trousers or whatever was the latest fad. I very much disapproved of some of the girls he dated, but I tried not to let my feelings show too much.



David with Bruce Badger

When he decided to become a tool and die maker, David transferred from Bosse High School to enroll in the shop classes offered at North High school. Transportation was a problem but David had a solution: just buy him a motorcycle! Knowing how vulnerable motorcyclists were in traffic, I set about to discourage that right away. My parents were visiting at that time and I began telling my mother about David's request for a motorcycle to get to school. I was sure Mom would agree motorcycles were dangerous, but I was in for a surprise. She thought that it was a good idea! Economical, too. She went on to tell how years ago, every Monday morning, her cousin picked her



David - High School graduation - 1968

up on his motorcycle, and they both rode to Manchester, Indiana where they were studying to become school teachers. Each Friday night, they motorcycled back home to their adjoining farms to spend the weekend. After her graduation from teacher's training institute, Mother taught eight grades in a one-room school house until she and my father were married on March 29, 1919.

Well, David did get his motorcycle, which he rode daily to North High School in all kinds of weather. Sometimes, when it was icy, Dick or I would take him to school, but David remembers only those times when the weather was bad and we didn't.

It was on his trusty motorcycle that David and a friend rode to check out George Dooms' Youth For Christ ministry in the fall of 1967. George was able to present a challenge David could not ignore: "You can change your world for Jesus Christ!" As a result, our David became enthusiastically involved in all the exciting things going on at Triple T during the next four years. Evangelism, dedication, commitment, and responsibility became ingrained in him as a result of the inspiration and training he received in that ministry to teens. Instead of becoming a tool and die maker as he had planned, David became aware that God was calling him into full-time service to reach his generation for Christ.

David chose to spend his freshman year at International Bible College in San Antonio, Texas where he worked at various jobs to pay his own way. One of the better paying places of employment was the dump adjacent to the Lackland Air Force Base. David was corresponding with a girl he had met during a summer convocation of Youth For Christ at Winona Lake, Indiana. He told her in a letter where he was employed at the time and asked, "Do you object to writing to a guy who works at a dump?" We laughed when David shared with us her reply. She responded, "Not as long as he doesn't send me any of the stuff!" We never met the young lady, but she did have a fine sense of humor!

David has always loved to eat. He still does! When he came home from IBC at Christmas time however, he had lost so much weight I was shocked. He and Steve sat up late that first night, snacking and catching up on all the happenings. Steve said David

actually went over, leaned his head tenderly on the refrigerator and cried! He had missed so much the fellowship of raiding the family refrigerator late at night when he was home. That semester he was taking a class in fasting which encouraged students to practice it as well as study about it! One requirement was that he experience one three-day fast and at least one day per week of going without food. It was a good lesson in self-discipline and personal maturity for David. No wonder his excess weight melted away during that first semester.

Near the end of his second semester at IBC, David received a long-distance call from George Dooms inviting him to come to the Triple T Staff as his assistant. He transferred to Oakland City College for his sophomore year in order to work with George – a great opportunity for experience in youth ministry. When the Kandel Triplet Trio (Kris, Karen and Kathie) were featured singers at Winona Lake, George arranged to bring them to Evansville as guests of Triple T. One of the best things that ever happened to our David was meeting Miss Kristine Elaine Kandel!

In June of 1971, David enrolled in several summer courses at Azusa Pacific University in Los Angeles County, California, thus adding further variety to his educational portfolio. Frankly, he was curious to learn first hand what was happening in the collegiate scene on the West Coast at that time. He bought a secondhand Harley-Davidson which had a bad habit of developing engine trouble, leaving him stranded on those California freeways where he was "harassed" by the famous LAPD (Los Angeles Police Department)! I do not really blame them. David went without a haircut all summer long. I think the LAPD quite honestly mistook him for one of the notorious "Hell's Angels" who were terrorizing the West Coast at that time!

After David graduated from Oakland City College the following June, earning his B.S. degree in Religious Studies, he and the lovely Kristine Kandel were married July 7, 1972. David served as

our Youth Pastor for 18 years. Officially he is now Associate Pastor of Bethel Temple although he still devotes many hours every week to the Youth Ministry.

Kris, earned her B.S. degree in Elementary Education, graduating from Malone College in May, 1972, in Canton, Ohio. She now teaches classes for K-4 and K-5 at Evansville Christian School, where their two children, Charity, 11, and Joshua, 8, are both enrolled as students.

Since Steve, Dave and Evangeline are the only children in our immediate family, this chapter draws to a close. I could write much more about them, but some things are better left unsaid! However, when you have children, grandchildren often follow. We have nine!



*Stephen and Judith
"Wedding Vows"
July 9, 1967*



*The wedding of Kris and Dave
July 7, 1972
"A Family Affair"*



*Evangeline and Larry Thompson
October 4, 1974
"Gaining a Son"*

***Grandchildren Are Fun . . .
Most Of The Time***

"My heart aches for my grandchildren and the way they are being reared. My own son was raised in church but slipped away from his faith when he went into service. . . it breaks my heart. Please pray." October 1975

No, I did not write the above letter. It was picked at random from our *Television Church* prayer request files. We have received so many such requests, some which told of family alienation where grandparents were not allowed to visit the grandchildren – broken homes and broken children – cases of child abuse in which grandparents felt helpless to do anything. Then there were cases just the reverse where unwanted children were dumped on grandparents to support and raise the best they could, delinquent parents who were too busy partying and doing drugs to bother with the kids, parents without natural affection for their little ones. Even before we became grandparents ourselves, such prayer requests brought tears to our eyes.

Just as we are emotionally involved with the lives of our children, so we are affected by their offspring. When grandchildren hurt because of a stubbed toe, a skinned knee, a dead pet, a broken friendship, we hurt too. As they progress through life and encounter the greater hurts caused by peer pressure – unwise choices, fumbled opportunities, belated regrets, broken promises, broken hearts, rejection – we grandparents continue to hurt . . . right along with the parents. A Band-Aid and a loving kiss cannot bring back the smiles. It is the ache of heart and soul which brings life's greatest pain. Just because our lives have been dedicated to sharing the Gospel and

pastoring a church does not mean we are immune to such heartaches. In fact, we have always contended that Satan works harder to destroy a preacher's son or grandson than the child of an average layperson.

In recent years we have all seen how the wrecked life of a fallen minister can shatter the faith of millions. High profile clergymen and their families are Satan's special targets of spiritual sabotage. Men like Billy Graham have always been on my prayer list. I guess I should have also prayed harder for some others!

In the light of these comments, you can see why I feel so grateful to God for His goodness to our family. To have three children all serving the Lord is one of our major blessings. For their spouses to be equally dedicated Christians and devoted parents is a double blessing! To God be the glory. With nine grandchildren ranging from age 20 down to three years, we realize we still have plenty to pray about. Thus far, the joy and blessings of grandchildren have far outweighed the negatives. In our daily prayers we beseech the mercies of God for the grandkids. We ask Him to cover their lives with a Divine protection against the forces of the evil one who "comes only to steal and kill and destroy . . ." (John 10:10) Our advice to both parents and grandparents is to never stop praying . . . never give up on your offspring . . . never surrender their eternal souls to the ranks of the lost. If you do not contend for their souls against Satan, who will? Whenever you pray for the salvation or restoration of a soul, whether your own family or any lost one, you can know you are praying according to the will of God. He hears those prayers. "He is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9) 1 John 5:14-15, 2 Timothy 1:12 are scriptures I quote often, as a reminder to God, when I am praying for my nine grandchildren!

In case you have ever wondered, adopted grandchildren are just as much "family" as those who entered the family circle by natural

birth. The love we feel is exactly the same – no difference! We are convinced that Charity and Joshua were handpicked by God to become the daughter and son of our Kris and David. Judy and Steve's little Abigail is secure in the love of her adoptive family. She will never have reason to question whether or not she was a "wanted child." Abi was "chosen" to be their third one. She belongs. In fact, Judy's mom, Grandma Buchanan, told Judy that Abi looks more like Judy than any of the others! I would have to agree. Abi, with her dark hair and eyes, her tapered fingers and slender torso, strongly resembles her mother. God providentially placed her in that family for a reason. When I see little teenage mothers, foregoing their own childhood, bravely struggling to raise a baby alone, I cannot help thinking how much better it would be for all concerned, had the baby been placed with a childless couple, longing to adopt and provide a loving home in a normal family setting. Somehow I feel our society is misguiding these children who bear children, by placing an abnormal burden of guilt upon them. Two mistakes are not better than one.

While we, as a family, rejoice because of God's blessings to us, our hearts are burdened and concerned for those all about us whose lives are a daily struggle trying to cope, one day at a time. Our adopted grandchildren are a constant reminder of the young mothers who gave them birth and of the many others like them. The New Life Home is a ministry born out of that concern for teenage girls in crisis pregnancy. I am not at all certain we would have become involved in such an outreach had it not been for Charity, Joshua, and Abigail.

Even though as a family we are all involved in Bethel Temple and three Schwambachs presently serve on the Pastoral Staff, our times of family fellowship are sparse. Birthday celebrations lost out long ago! It is rare to clear an evening when everyone is free from some church activity. If we did not reserve special holidays such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, Mother's Day, etc., family get-togethers would be still more infrequent. Even then, we must share

time with the other sets of parents and grandparents. That is why we are especially grateful we can see the grandchildren at church functions and have the privilege of baby-sitting on occasion. As busy as everyone is, if we lived at a distance, we might very seldom get to see them and would miss so much.

One Tuesday evening when I was baby-sitting with Steve and Judy's three youngest children, Abi brought along a new audio cassette tape of children's songs produced by Brentwood Music, Inc. All evening long, they played that tape over and over again. It really helped make my baby-sitting a breeze. They knew all the words and I sang along joyfully. They loved that tape and so did I!

I was especially delighted with Rappin' Rabbit's song: "I Can't Wait to Have Patience!"** It reminded me of Dick. Patience has never been one of his virtues. Ever since his hyperactive kindergarten days, my husband has been a man in a hurry, impatient to get on with his life, eager to reach the next goal he had set for himself. Like starting to take college classes at 16, before graduating from high school. He had little patience when plans were delayed or when someone said it couldn't be done. Before the pant was dry on one building project, he was already planning the next one. He always began church services promptly and liked appointments to be on time. Even today, if he has to wait too long in a restaurant for his coffee cup to be refilled, it can reduce the size of the waiter's tip. That's why I couldn't help feeling as if Rappin' Rabbit's song about patience had been inspired by someone just like Dick! Suddenly a mischievous idea popped into my head. We would practice the song and sing it for him when he came home later on in the evening! I coached Abi, Beki, and Abe so they would do their robust best when it came time to serenade Grandpa. They cooperated with enthusiasm.

As he entered the back door, we turned up the volume on our tape and the children sang along merrily with Rappin' Rabbit:

*"I can't wait to have patience,
because patience is a wonderful thing;
Hurry up, let me have it - gotta get it now!
I want it more than anything!
This has taken long enough -
Give me some of that patience stuff!
I can't wait to have patience . . . hurry up . . . hurry up
. . . hurry up!
It may take a life time . . . well that's OK with me
As long as I can be a patient rabbit . . . INSTANTLY!"**

Their grandpa smiled and clapped after their performance as grandpas are supposed to do, although I thought his smile was a little oblique. "Why would you choose a song like that to sing to me?" He wanted to know. But he knew. He is the first to admit that he is short on patience at times. However, he insists he is still working on it.

If you ever visit our home, I will show you some of the beautiful samples of artwork taped on the front door of our refrigerator. Then you can see for yourself what creative, talented, thoughtful, loving, original, artistic grandchildren we have! Grandchildren are fun. They're great!

*Brentwood Music, Inc.
316 Southgate Court
Brentwood, TN 37027
writer - Rhett Parrish
©1990 Bridge Building Music/BMI
All Rights Reserved. Reprinted by Permission.



*left to right: Abraham, Stephen, Rebecca, Peter,
Judith, Tabitha, and Abigail Schwambach*



*left to right: David, Kris, Charity, and
Joshua Schwambach*



Larry, Evangeline, Angela, and Justin Thompson

Memories Of Answered Prayer

After a two-day honeymoon at Hotel Soaper in Henderson, Kentucky, Dick and I caught the Greyhound bus back to Evansville on the Saturday following our Thanksgiving night wedding. We wanted to be back for Sunday services and we both had Sunday School classes to teach. When we walked into our newlywed apartment, our kitchen table was piled up with groceries. We had given Rev. Varnell a \$5.00 honorarium for performing for our wedding. Sister Varnell had taken the money and done some shopping for us! Five dollars bought a lot more back in 1947 than it does today, but I will always believe she added another five dollars or so.

In less than a year, (nine months and 17 days, to be exact) we became a family of three. Right from the beginning, Steve inherited his father's allergy-prone genes. He had a problem with orange juice, perfumed soap and dextromaltose in his formula, to name a few. When hereached the crawling stage, he would hike all over the



Family of Three

floor of our small apartment. Everything his little hand discovered went right into his mouth. When I noticed his mouth had developed some unusual sores, I took him to the doctor, who thought it was trench mouth. He prescribed some purple medicine to be swabbed thoroughly inside Steve's mouth every four hours around the clock. It was something of a nightmare for both of us. Poor little boy – he was

less than a year old. It must have seemed to him every time he saw me coming, it was to swab out his mouth with that hateful medicine. Little wonder he developed a super sensitive throat reflex which carried over to an intense dislike of dental visits in later life.

After six weeks, we were to return to the doctor. We thought his mouth sores looked just as bad if not worse. The gums seemed to recede and there was more bleeding. The doctor wanted to send us to a specialist. But after we got home and prayed about it, the less we felt like consulting another doctor. We had already tried that route for six weeks. We wanted to give God a chance. The Varnells joined us in a special prayer for Stephen's mouth to be healed. We stopped the purple medicine, as we had no confidence in that treatment. I admit, I was anxious what might happen, but when we examined his mouth the first morning after discontinuing the medication, it was no worse. We thanked God and continued to pray. By the third day the sores appeared dried up. His mouth looked much better. In less than a week all symptoms of his mouth infection, allergy, or whatever it was, were gone.

I had been brought up in a home where we survived on prayer. With eight children, in the Depression, a trip to the doctor was absolutely the last resort. When any of us became ill or suffered an injury, our first thought was, "Daddy, pray for me." We had the usual stomach aches and childhood diseases. Except for the time one of my sisters fell out of a tree and broke her ankle, I cannot remember anything that our prayers of faith did not cover. But when it came to my own baby, I wanted to do more than just pray! I wanted him to also have the best medical care available. I still feel that way, but prayer comes first.

Our next severe test of faith came during the poliomyelitis scare in the early 1950's. One of the children we picked up for Sunday School was afflicted and ended up in the hospital for an extended

period of time. Four to five weeks later, both Steve and David developed the symptoms of polio. We prayed, but knowing how serious it could be, I put in a call to our doctor. He was out of town on vacation. I thought, "What a time for one's doctor to be on vacation – right in the middle of a polio epidemic!" Dick called the church to prayer, not only for our boys but also for the Sunday School child who was partially paralyzed. The Salk vaccine had not yet been developed. The only treatment at the time was use of moist heat coupled with physical therapy to relieve the pain and hopefully restore use of the affected muscles.

One of our neighbors was a pediatrician who lived about half a block from us. We had two very sick little boys; Dick knew I would feel better about it if he talked to our neighbor. Dick explained about our physician being out of town and



Family of Four - 1951

proceeded to describe their symptoms. The doctor came over, examined the boys and confirmed our worst fears. They had all the symptoms of polio. He seemed reluctant to treat someone else's patients, but said he would be glad to help if they did not get better in a few days. After the vomiting and fever subsided, neither of the boys seemed strong enough to stand and showed no interest in getting out of bed. I began on my own using the Nurse Kinny system of moist heat and stimulation of the muscles. Once I stood Steve against the wall intending to have him walk across the hallway into my arms. His legs seemed stiff, but held up his body weight. When I called him to walk to me, the strangest expression crossed his little face. Obviously his legs would not cooperate. Instead, he crumbled in a heap on the floor. I knew for sure then, the boys had more than just summer flu.

Somehow, the prayers of the church must have strengthened my own faith. I knew in my heart I wanted to entrust my boy's recovery to the Great Physician. Steve was just four. David was only 2 1/2 and very much a "mama's boy" at the time. I couldn't bear to think of their being confined in a strange hospital bed away from home, for weeks at a time. I also felt the doctors did not have the answer on this disease, only God did. God honored the prayers of our church folks. Not only did my own sons recover, but the little girl who had been hospitalized and suffered paralysis was eventually able to walk again. Whenever there is a question whether or not Steve and Dave had polio, or just a severe summer virus, I remember that David had regressed considerably in his walking. At 2 1/2 he could climb steps as an adult, but after the illness, he had to learn all over again. It was several months before both his legs were back to normal. (David never did climb on top of my piano as Steve had done so many times at that age.) One of our members was so burdened for the boys she promised the Lord that if He would heal them, she would begin tithing her income. God took her up on it! He healed our sons and she became a faithful tither until her death. During high school, both boys earned their letters in football – a testimony to the quality of God's healing power.

During the early days of pastoring at 7th and Main, downtown was where the action was. Teenagers lucky enough to have an automobile would drag Main Street, weddings boisterously honked by, from 8th Street to the river, dragging their tin cans and laughing and shouting in merriment, with windows rolled down in summer time. It was not unusual for an inebriated pedestrian to stumble into our open doors and slide into a back seat to sober up. One night our service was disrupted when a man, followed by two or three others, walked down the aisle all the way to the second seat, right in front of the pulpit. Once seated, he continued to talk aloud, apparently unaware he was in a church service. Finally my husband came down from the platform to try to quiet him. Instead, he became belligerent. When Dick accused him of being drunk, he angrily denied it, claiming he just had some "medicine" before coming and that was what was on his breath!

I decided things were beginning to get out of hand and left my side aisle seat to call the police. There was a telephone in the hallway which ran behind the platform. As I hurried toward the phone, my husband started to pray for the troubled man, who rose up out of his seat, and appeared to lunge at Dick. The strangest thing happened to my feet: they seemed propelled by an energy of their own as they walked directly toward the combative stranger. Without thinking, I pointed my finger straight into his face and suddenly heard my own voice commanding Satan to leave and ordering the man to be quiet and behave. He wilted and became as meek as a little boy. No one was more astonished than I, for it was totally out of character for an introvert like me. Dick took over and began to pray. He led quite a prayer meeting that night.

One time during a service, an elderly man who came to church "every time the door was open," had what appeared to be a fatal heart attack. He slumped over and those around him thought he was dead. They got Dick's attention, and he hurried to his side and began to pray. After Dick had finished his prayer, all of a sudden, the man took a deep breath, rallied and seemed to be normal. He lived a couple of years after that incident. However, on one other occasion, when there was a similar case, Dick prayed but the man did not rally. Ushers carried him out of the service and administered emergency treatment while waiting for the ambulance. The medics were able to restore a heartbeat, but the man died. We can only say it was God's time to take him home.

Dick has made many calls at all hours of the day or night to the emergency rooms of the hospitals in Evansville, facing all kinds of circumstances. In every case, he has prayed simply, in faith, believing God was greater than any emergency and would do whatever was best, in accordance with His master plan for that life. Once as he prayed for a member who was critically ill, he sensed the room lighten up. He opened his eyes and saw a bright light over the bed. To the family,

Dick said, "He's going to be all right!" Within a few minutes, the man died. Dick was shocked. He thought the supernatural light he had seen was a confirmation that God was going to perform a miracle and heal the dying man. It bothered Dick so much that he called Rev. Varnell long distance, wanting an explanation for what had gone wrong. Rev. Varnell told Dick he had simply misread the phenomenon of the white light. Instead of a healing, it was God's sign the man was going home to Heaven. Even though the family grieved at his passing, seeing the light over his bed was a great comfort to them.

There is not space to tell all the times God has spared one or all of us from disastrous accidents which could have taken our lives or crippled us for life. Under such circumstances, there was no time for long, wordy prayers. Often it was a single word . . . a Name . . . the powerful Name of "Jesus" which, in the urgency of the moment, reached the throne of God and instantly delivered us from the jaws of death. God was not finished with us yet. There was more He wanted us to do before we could leave this earth.

One of the great joys of reaching Heaven will be learning the many times when God has spared our lives, or brought us through a time of crisis because someone was praying for us. Think how exciting it will be to discover how God has used our prayers to make a difference in the lives of others, or has granted us wisdom for handling the difficult problems which arise in a church family. We have seen so many answers to prayer! To God be all the glory!

In a recent message, Pastor Dave mentioned that one of his concerns was that he does not pray enough. I have always had that same inner concern for Dick and me. I seem to spend more time praying on the run, as I go about my housework, than I do upon my knees. Yet, when my heart is burdened, it seems I am almost "praying without ceasing."

I always liked the revival prayer chains we used to organize before most every crusade. We tried to fill 24 hours with continuous prayer by asking every member to sign up and become a link in the chain. Some would commit themselves to pray 15 minutes while others pledged to pray daily 30 minutes or an hour or even more. Everyone tried their best to be faithful so they wouldn't be guilty of breaking the Chain of Prayer. Those who promised to set their alarm and fill the wee hours of the morning with prayer may have dozed off a time or two . . . but I am sure it was a "prayerful doze" and God saw the burden of concern that motivated such a promise!

One thing we have learned about taking our petitions to God in prayer: God is sovereign. While we can and do remind Him of His promises, He is not a puppet on a string, obligated to do *our* will. He is a God of variety...a God of surprises. Sometimes in our human minds, we figure out just how our prayer should be answered, only to discover God has another way! A better way! When it doesn't go our way, we have found it best to never question His goodness or His love. God has His reasons and some day, we will understand.

Some people mistakenly believe a minister is immune to Satanic attack. Nothing could be more wrong. More than once, the Apostle Paul urgently asked his friends, "*...Brethren, pray for us!*" Paul knew the prime importance of strong prayer support. Instead of criticizing men whom God has raised up across the nation to proclaim His message, we need to earnestly pray for them. I think we would all be amazed at what might happen in our churches and how much our pastors would improve if we would pray for them as we ought! There is power in prayer!

At Bethel Temple, just under the cross at the third-floor level, is our Bethel Temple Prayer Garden. It is one of the most beautiful I have been in – a veritable garden of prayer. Dedicated volunteers faithfully tend the many plants and greenery to keep it lovely.

Have you ever slipped up there when your heart was heavy?
It is a wonderful place to unburden your soul and give that problem to
Jesus. I have done so many times. When I leave, my heartache has
eased, my steps are lighter and hope is rekindled because I have the
assurance . . . *God is in control!*

*O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in pray'r!*

-Joseph Scriven/Charles C. Converse

© Public Domain



*"Together in the Prayer Garden"
1986*

*The Day My
Husband Left Me*

"Vacation! Ah, this is the life!" I yawned to myself as I settled down in my back seat "bed" of our 1970 Chevrolet. "Nothing to do for two weeks but rest and ride through the spring countryside."

It was May, 1974. Dick and I were headed west; St. Louis, Kansas City, and Denver were just a few of the stops we planned on this trip. Dick enjoyed driving and listening to tapes. I did, too, AFTER I had caught up on my sleep by napping on the back seat the first day or two of a trip. I usually joined Dick on the stops for meals, but when he gassed up the car, I would sometimes snooze straight through the pit stop.

We had gotten a late start. As our first day destination, Dick made reservations on the far side of St. Louis. When he stopped for gas in mid-afternoon, I decided I needed to stir a bit as I had been dozing in the back seat ever since leaving Evansville. Dick had just started pumping gas as I headed for the Ladies Room. When I came out, our car was nowhere to be seen. Neither was my husband. I told myself he had probably driven to a nearby grocery or pharmacy to purchase a forgotten item and would soon be back to pick me up. After about 15 minutes, I asked the solitary attendant if my husband had left a message for me. No message.

The muscles of my stomach began to tighten. Surely he could not have forgotten me! Was it possible he thought I was still sleeping in the back seat? That he did not see me leave the car? I hoped it wasn't so! My eyes and head began to ache from straining to see his car coming back to pick me up. The filling station was a run-down, one-room operation . . . no waiting area. No chair or stool for stranded

travelers. I had to sit on a narrow concrete ledge that elevated the building eight inches above the driveway surface. Very uncomfortable. It was surprisingly hot for late May. The hours crept slowly toward evening. No sign of Dick. I did not even know the name of our motel in St. Louis to call ahead. I could do nothing but wait . . . and pray!

At first, I was amused by my dilemma, thinking how embarrassed he would be to have driven off without me. I thought how we would have a good laugh together over this awkward incident. As I paced around the forlorn service station lot, my amusement turned to annoyance. The minutes stretched into hours and my anger began to build. This was downright embarrassing. How could he do such a ridiculous thing – leave his own wife at a filling station! Good grief! Then I began to pray. My prayers took on a new and desperate urgency as I squeezed back angry frustrated tears. I could not go on like this. If only I had a way to pass the hours, something to read.

In my purse, I carried a Daily Bread devotional guide. Good. I would read and meditate . . . and before I knew it, Dick would be back to get me.

Meanwhile, Dick was making good time through early rush hour traffic in St. Louis. He hummed along with some of the musical tapes he was enjoying as he drove, totally unaware he had left something behind on his last stop. As he pulled up to the motel, he called out, "Honey, we're here!" No response. He called again, wanting to awaken me. Still no sound from the back seat. His wife was missing! He dashed into the motel office and asked if I had called in with a message. (I didn't know where to call!) It was the peak of rush hour in St. Louis as Dick threaded his way back through lanes of traffic. He was not quite sure where he had stopped for gas. With night coming on, would he pass it without even recognizing the station? He knew it was small, in a sparse area near the edge of some little town. Then he remembered he had used his credit card. Sure

enough – the name and location of the station were both on the receipt. Praise the Lord!

Meanwhile, back at the station, I was nearing the end of my devotional book for the month of May. The station attendant informed me apologetically that they always closed at 6:00 p.m. I was alone at the forsaken station, feeling forsaken myself. Reading the devotional had been an emotional life saver for me. I was no longer amused, annoyed, irritated, or angry . . . I was just tired, my emotions spent.

By the time Dick's headlights pulled into the now-deserted station, I was so relieved and glad to see him, I couldn't think of anything but joy at his return. Never had his face been more dear and welcome. It was late when Dick drove into the motel – the second time that night – but at least we were together! When someone tipped off Bish Thompson, he told the whole town about it in his newspaper column! This is the true story of how it came about that my husband left me.

Someday, he may leave me again . . . and never come back. Or it could be the reverse: I may journey on ahead and leave him behind. Unless the Rapture of the Church happens first, as told in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18, we know death is certain, for our bodies are mortal. But we both know the separation will be merely temporary. We will see each other again! I fully believe scripture teaches I will know my husband in heaven. (Over there, we will know more than we know here, not less!) Although a departed loved one cannot return, the survivor will one day pass through the curtain of time and join all who have gone before. Whatever our relationship then, I know it will be better. While everything we have known on earth is flawed, everything is better in Heaven!

When Dick and I sang duets on *Television Church* in the early days, we used to receive requests for the song and reading: "Beyond the Sunset." I still remember the lines which I memorized. To my beloved husband, I dedicate these poignant words:

Should you go first and I remain . . .
to finish with our scroll:
No dark'ning shadows shall creep in . . .
and swallow up my soul:
We've known so much happiness . . .
We've had our cup of joy . . .
And memory is one gift of God . . .
that death cannot destroy!

"Should you go first and I remain . . .
one thing I'd have you do . . .
Walk slowly down that long, lone road . . .
For soon I'll follow you!
I'll want to know each step you take . . .
That I may walk the same . . .
For some day . . . down that lonely trail . . .
You'll hear me call your name!

Author unknown

"I guess you two get used to this sort of thing, don't you?" The question was asked during visitation at a local funeral home where Dick and I were spending some time with the bereaved family. I had to shake my head. The scene was a familiar one to us, that is true, but "get used to it"? Never! How does one get used to feeling the raw edge of grief when death has taken the loved one of someone dear to you? Is it possible to get used to seeing the unearthly beauty of a stillborn infant in its tiny casket, knowing a heartbroken mother is lying in her hospital bed with empty arms? Or can your emotions remain untouched as you hold close the sobbing frame of an early widow, robbed of a beloved husband by a freak accident? Would you not be overwhelmed to walk into a mortuary and see five caskets lined up, victims of a single car accident? On that tragic occasion, my husband had to come up with the right words of comfort to ease the pain of the bereaved, who were still in shock. You can see from these few examples why I must emphatically deny that we "get used to this sort of thing." Any pastor who cares about the people to whom God has called him to minister finds it nearly impossible to avoid being involved emotionally as well as professionally.

Romans 12:15 tells us we are to "Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep." Fulfilling this scripture is very much a part of being a good pastor. Funerals and weddings represent peak emotional highs and lows in the human experience. More than once in the course of his day as a pastor, Dick would go from a setting of rejoicing to a scene of deep sorrow. No wonder he would come home to me at day's end, his emotions totally exhausted.

One thing we have learned: when we reach the limit of our emotional resources, God has many ways of encouraging our faith lest we be overcome with despair. In the fall of 1972, when it appeared we would be blocked from building our new sanctuary (which we moved into in 1979) and developing the parking space we needed, we were feeling especially low in spirit. In a way, I sympathized with the adjacent homeowners. Who wouldn't prefer to have a grassy dead-end street in front of their house rather than have it opened to through traffic? On the other hand, I knew how critical it was to the church's future parking lot needs to have the street vacated!

Evangeline was in her senior year at Harrison High School. When I went to pick her up after school one day, I drove by the contested area and explained to her what the legal controversy was all about. She looked at me a little embarrassed, then confided that she had dreamed about it the night before. She said she was standing in the area behind the church and not a house was there. In her dream, she looked around and all she saw was parking lot. With a half sheepish laugh she finished: "Isn't that an odd dream?"

It was indeed an odd dream. Especially for Evangeline who wasn't the "dreamy" type. I couldn't wait to tell Dick. I knew in my heart God had given our daughter that dream to encourage us at a time of intense neighborhood controversy. The year was 1972. It was nearly 18 years later before the rest of the dream came true. In the summer of 1990, an additional six houses were removed to expand parking space and "pave the way to salvation." Today, as in Evangeline's dream, when you look all around that previous neighborhood, there is nothing but parking lot. I could tell much more about this, but my purpose here is to share how God sometimes uses unexpected means to reassure us that He is with us and will ultimately accomplish His plans. He is still the One in charge!

Being in the ministry is unlike any other profession or calling.

If a businessman makes an error in judgement, he may lose a few thousand dollars. If a laborer makes a mistake, he may generate waste of some industrial raw materials. When a doctor or nurse or airline pilot errs, it could result in loss of human lives. But when a minister of the Gospel fails in his responsibility to those who look to him for spiritual direction, not just lives are at stake, but immortal souls may be lost forever. We are human; we make mistakes. People may misunderstand our motives at times. To know that because of a deliberate or careless act on our part, we had been responsible for the loss of a priceless soul for whom Christ died, would be very difficult for either of us to live with.

Dick has always held a high standard of ministerial ethics, thanks in a large part to the training he received in his early years as a young student pastor in the Methodist Church. He has always tried to treat others of his profession with honor and respect. Whenever possible, he has endeavored to present a spirit of unanimity among Christian ministers before the unbelieving world. It is true that there are significant differences in Bible doctrine among the various denominations. However, in the ranks of fundamental, Bible-believing ministers, we often agree fully on the basics and actually have more areas of agreement than points at which we vary in our interpretation of Scripture. For a minister to deliberately undermine or destroy someone's confidence in another man of God, Dick feels, is the most heinous of clergy crimes. He takes no pleasure in seeing another man fail. Even now he periodically expresses sorrow at the disgrace heaped upon one high-profile minister who betrayed the trust of his adoring public. Not that Dick is soft on sin, not by any means. But such moral failure in high places brings dishonor to all of us, especially to the One whom we profess to serve. It is cause for sadness.

One of the most difficult roles we have had to accept is that of being examples of Christian living. If only we were perfect! As a

teenager, I remember my preacher father sternly reminding me that I was to be an example to all the other young people in the church. I was never comfortable in that role, but God knows I never wanted to be a stumbling block to anyone! It still makes me uneasy to read in Matthew 18:6 where Jesus warned that whoever "shall offend one of these little ones who believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea!"

The motivating power that keeps Dick and me humbly striving to measure up to God's holy standard for leadership is the realization that our influence upon other lives, whether for better or for worse, makes an ETERNAL IMPACT. It can make a difference in their eternal destiny. We also know that some day we will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ where we must give account for our life here on earth and for the souls He entrusted to our care.

Imperfect though we be, our all-consuming desire is to so live, that, some day, we will hear our Lord say:

"Well done, thou good and faithful servant[s] ; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." (Matthew 25:21)

Retirement

As I write the final chapter in this book on the life and ministry of my husband, another June is blooming on the horizon. I have always loved June! It is traditionally a month of full-blown roses; of school letting out for the summer; of graduations from elementary, high school, and college; of weddings and anniversaries. It is also my husband's birthday. This June 9th, of 1991, he will be 65.

This raised the question of retirement. Do ministers really have the prerogative of retiring when their calling is traditionally a lifetime commitment? As long as they have the ability to do so, are they not obligated before God to continue?

By June 9th, Dick will have served in the active ministry just three days shy of 47 years and 3 months. Over 47 years! That's a long time! How could those years have gone by so quickly? Recently, when the subject came up, a friend looked at Dick and exclaimed, "What? You retire? I don't believe it!" Dick just laughed and responded, "If you could see me when I first get up in the morning, struggling just to get going, you would believe it!"

Once upon a time, retirement was viewed as the end of a productive working career and, perhaps, the "beginning of the end." But no more. Look around you. Have you ever seen so many senior citizens enjoying so many additional, productive years? I believe one reason for their longevity is being able to retire at 65. Through the retirement process they shed much of their heavy load of responsibility accumulated over the years. As they explore life's options for today's vigorous retirees, many experience a renewal of energy and

zest for life. They find ways to fulfill old dreams. They discover the joy of serving the Lord through volunteer service to their fellowmen, using their reservoir of skills and wisdom. At the same time the stress level is reduced in keeping with their physical capabilities since they are generally more in control of their daily schedule.

One lady, when contemplating retirement a couple of years ago, was somewhat apprehensive. "What will I do with all my time?" she pondered. After a few weeks of "catching up" she expected to be "climbing the walls" and wondering what to do with her time. Instead, she began volunteering her services by heading up our "Look-In-On-A-Shut-In" ministry. Her days are filled with reaching out to others in Christian service. She has a ministry now that she never had time for during her working years. Recently, she was heard to say, "I never dreamed I would enjoy retirement so much!" She would be quick to tell you she is having the time of her life. That is why our senior citizens at Bethel Temple have embraced the name: "PrimeTimers." Television schedules list the evening hours as prime viewing time. Even so, we believe the prime period of our life span can, and should, be the evening hours, after the long period of working years are behind us.

Dick and I are hoping God will use us in this next phase of our lives to be effective, productive Christian witnesses before our contemporaries. There is so much we would like to do for which there has never been enough time. After we had prayerfully weighed all the pros and cons, Dick prepared the following letter which was mailed to our Bethel Temple Church Family in February of 1991.

R.R. Schwambach
4400 Lincoln Avenue
Evansville, Indiana 47714-0650

January 23, 1991

Dear Bethel Family,

Hanging from the coffee mug tree on our kitchen counter is one with the design of a church and the caption: *"Old ministers never die; they just go out to pastor!"*

I remember how Geneva and I chuckled over that mug at the time it was given to me. I was still in my 50's and retirement years seemed far away. Now...quite suddenly, it seems...it is 1991. This June 9th, I will celebrate my 65th birthday. Shall I consider retirement or shall I continue my workaholic life-style until I am felled by a heart attack...or worse? Quite frankly, I am no longer able to put in the hours I once did when I was younger. Geneva and I have talked freely to both Pastors Steve and Dave about my becoming Pastor Emeritus. (If you're wondering, that means: "honorably discharged from active duty because of age or long service, but retained on the rolls"). When I asked Pastor Steve just what I would be expected to do as "Pastor Emeritus," he said: "You can do whatever you want to do, Dad. You've earned that right."

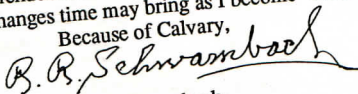
As "Pastor Emeritus" I would draw Social Security and my retirement income provided by the church and still be privileged to serve as a volunteer, including teaching my Sunday School Class. (The church does not pay any of our Sunday School teachers!) I'll enjoy that role!

Being "Pastor Emeritus" sounds better all the time! Many ministers do not have this choice and neither would I if there were no one to carry on. I would feel compelled to continue regardless. The saddest scenario I can imagine would be to reach the years of ebbing strength and failing health...with no one to take my place. Now that would be spiritual tragedy. To see the ministry deteriorate, dwindle and fall apart for lack of vigorous, dedicated young leadership - that would break the heart of this pastor.

Thank God, He doesn't work that way! For many years, God has been preparing others to take the reigns of leadership in this, His church. This has been a source of great satisfaction to me. The secular business world would be delighted to solicit the services of some of our multi-talented, well-trained young staff. However, simply because they will be the ones carrying the load of responsibility, "sweating" over the budget, etc., doesn't mean I won't be just as concerned. Oh yes! Even now, when I notice their worried looks or signs of stress, I know exactly what they're feeling. For too many years, I was the one who carried the pressures of that unrelenting top load, and I know how much they need the prayers and loving support of the entire Bethel Family.

As for me, after 47 years in the ministry, come June 9, 1991, I welcome the less strenuous role of this phase of life. I hope you will rejoice with me and adjust to whatever changes time may bring as I become "Pastor Emeritus."

Because of Calvary,



R.R. Schwambach

When word circulated concerning our retirement plans, I was asked about our hobbies. HOBBIES?? I always thought hobbies were for people who did not have enough to keep them busy! I had to admit that our hobbies consisted mainly of our family and our Bethel Church family. In the past, our recreation activities have nearly always focused on whatever was happening at church. Of course, Dick does have a fine stamp collection which he seldom has time for. He always has a backlog of stamps to be mounted and seems to relax when he is working with his collector albums.



Geneva Schwambach - 1975

I have always enjoyed reading and music. For years I have wanted to clean up my side of the basement and see what is stored in all those old boxes! Dick has often teased me about being the world's worst pack rat (yes, even before Ruth Graham's book; Legacy of a Pack Rat!). He is just

the opposite. Dick is Mr. Neatnik. He keeps his closets uncluttered. His office and desk are always well-organized. I don't even want to talk about mine. I have never been famous for my housekeeping! People who walk into the garage or Dick's side of the basement are impressed by the way his household hardware is arranged. Tools, hoses, and equipment hang in orderly fashion from wallboard hooks. Dozens of clear plastic drawers hold screws, nuts, bolts, washers, nails, etc., all neatly labeled. Almost anyone can find almost anything at anytime on his side of the basement. Please don't ask me about my side of the basement or my closets! His neatness and my "pack rat personality" may well be a source of future conflict as we attempt to put our house in order after years of considerable neglect!

I am secretly thankful that he will maintain his same familiar office and study at church even after retirement. That way, if tensions

begin to build between us, he can retreat to his beloved study to clear the domestic air at home! I predict that, basically, he will fill his time with teaching and visiting his Sanctuary Bible Study Class with an enrollment of 240 members. His class members are also his friends, some of whom are not able to attend church as they once did. If that doesn't keep him busy, he can always head across the parking lot and find plenty of action at the church to relieve boredom!

Perhaps our greatest comfort at this time in our lives is knowing our two sons, Stephen and David, our daughter, Evangeline, and their spouses, Judy, Kris, and Larry are established in the Christian faith which is built upon the foundation of God's inerrant Word. I remember going into Evangeline's room after all the wedding festivities were over and then newlyweds had driven off for their honeymoon. The room was just as she had left it. I was feeling so empty and tearful. My last child had flown the nest. Then I noticed her devotional book lying on the desk near her bed. It was open to October 4, 1974. As I read the same message of guidance her eyes had read on the morning of her wedding day, a few tears slipped down my cheeks, but they were warm tears of comfort. Our little girl was not facing the sometimes turbulent waters of matrimony alone. Although her husband had replaced us as first in her affections, I realized she knew Who to turn to when in need of help. She had learned her Savior and Friend, Jesus, was also her Source of Guidance . . . for a lifetime. Evangeline was going to be all right!

Sometimes friends will compliment us on having two sons in the ministry. I am always uneasy when this happens because it is not our doing at all. It is true they grew up in our home and have been a part of the church all of their lives, but we cannot take any credit for their calling. That was God's doing. We never pressured the boys to become "preachers like their Dad." In fact, we discouraged them, if anything. We had seen the struggles and fiascoes of men who thought they were called to preach, only to decide later it was not their calling

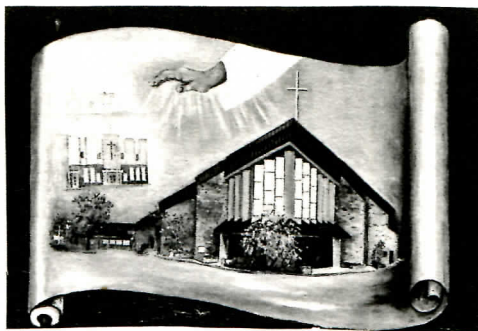
at all. We never wanted to push Steve or Dave into anything God had not chosen for their lives.

I still remember one pitiful preacher's wife whose husband was a traveling evangelist. During my high school days, they held a meeting in the small church where my father was pastor. The couple stayed in our home, as did all the evangelists back then. His wife was really a liability to his ministry. My mother tried to counsel the unhappy woman. Why did she marry the man, knowing he was a preacher? What kind of life did she expect? Her reply was revealing. "Well, I did think preachers made more money than they do!" We heard later on that she had left her husband and was suing for a divorce. In those days, a minister with a divorce on his resume' might as well look for another means of livelihood. Those who enter the ministry for any reason other than obedience to the call of God are misfits and may well bring dishonor to the Cause of Christ. It's true, God uses all kinds of people to build His Kingdom, but it takes a special kind of person to withstand the wiles of Satanic attack. It never ends. Only the Grace of God is sufficient to endure the ceaseless buffeting experienced by every man or woman who answers His call. Yet Dick and I would be the first to declare there is no higher honor, there is no greater joy than the privilege of being chosen to serve the KING OF KINGS and LORD OF LORDS.

As for the church and its many outreach ministries, it all belongs to God. Everything. It always has. He is even more interested in its continuing effectiveness than we are. Just as God has given us the strength and guidance we have needed in the past years, so will He continue to lead those who now carry the ongoing responsibility of leadership.

We have always appreciated a special painting by one of our members, Francis Barton. It depicts the four Bethel Temple locations from the humble beginnings in the old frame building at 514 W.

Oregon Street in 1933 to its present complex of buildings and multiple ministries which operate at 4314-4600 Lincoln Avenue in Evansville, Indiana. Brother Barton told how the inspiration for his painting seemed to unfold before him like an unrolling scroll. Above the buildings hovers the sheltering, protecting, anointing Hand of God.



Francis Barton's painting

This painting has been a comfort and source of inspiration to us. As the future unfolds, who knows what it may yet reveal!

Our part is to remain devoted to His Word . . .
Always faithful in our love and service to God.

"And the Word of God increased, and the number of disciples multiplied." (Acts 6:7)

As Dick and I enter this next phase of our lives, we hope that, even in retirement years, our ministry will still be making an ETERNAL IMPACT upon the people whose lives we touch.



I have often told people that my life with Dick Schwambach has, at times, been exhausting. I have often been . . . too tired. But bored? NEVER!



Bethel Temple
4400 Lincoln Avenue
Evansville, Indiana 47714