



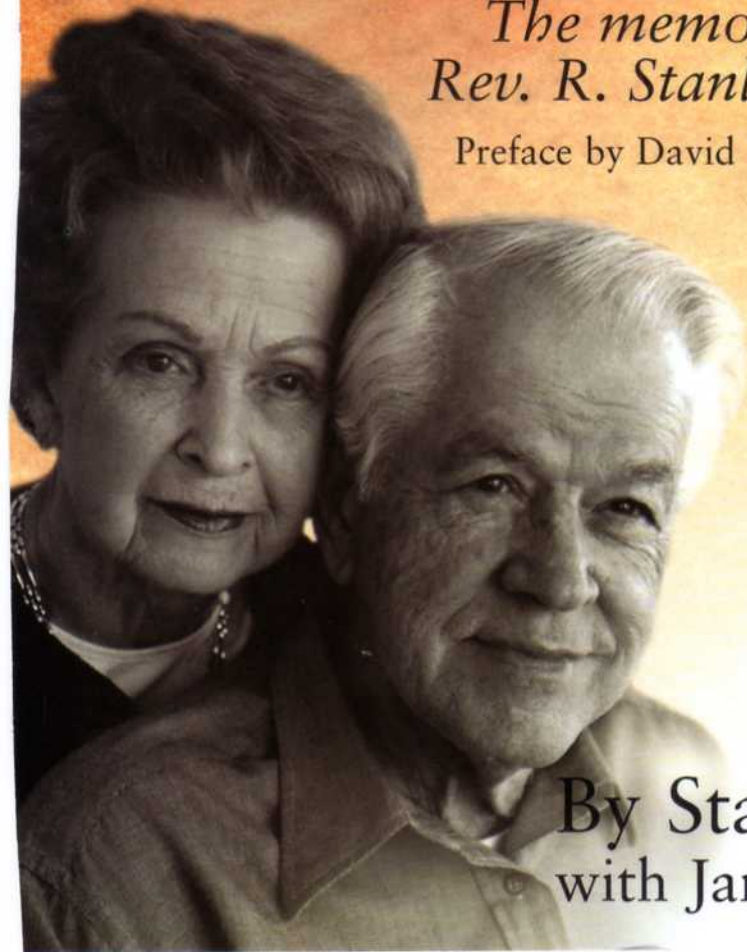
Saving Jewish children from the Holocaust. This picture was taken in 1944 in Belgium and we see Pentecostal Chaplain Stanley Berg (center with the mustache) with a Jewish chaplain holding their precious tiny Jewish evacuees at Chanukah.

I have always felt a kindred spirit with our Jewish brothers and sisters, even while a civilian. I'm confident my entire ministry has been blessed as I have endeavored to bless the Jews, as the Bible reads, "*I will bless those who bless thee*" (Genesis 12:3). As a matter of fact, my mother's twin sister married a Jewish believer who accepted our Messiah as Savior while he was still young. He was my uncle David Cohn, who lived in Chicago, and was a very active witness for our Lord. He had a powerful influence on my young life. He gave me clear insight into Jewish culture, faith and practice. As a chaplain, I had the opportunity to work very closely with Jewish chaplains and learned much from them. I helped them at every opportunity. We are reminded many times in scripture to love the Jewish people—I feel that we are indebted to them...they

# CALLED, CHOSEN, FAITHFUL

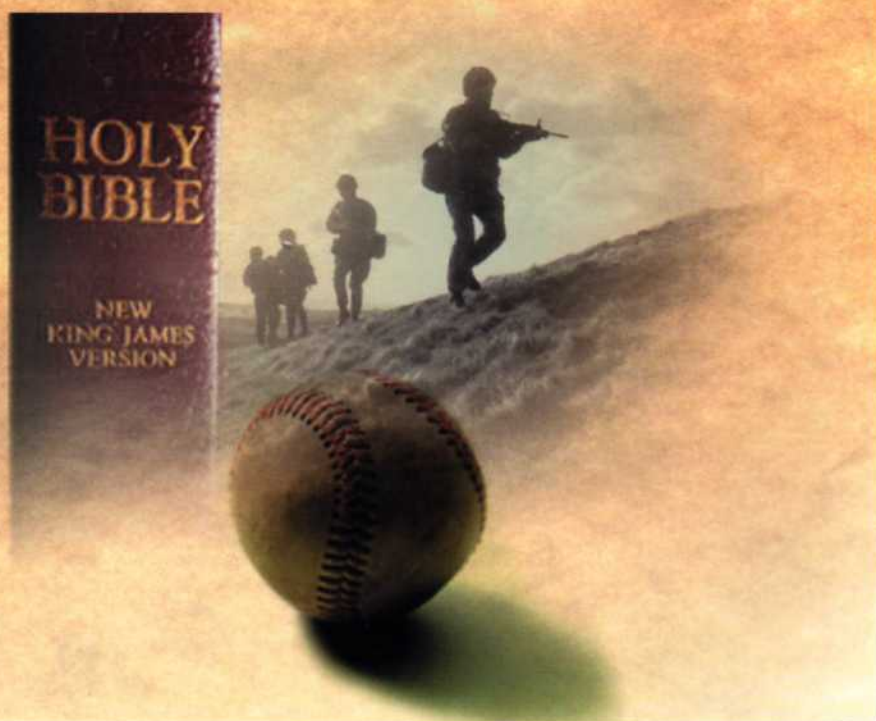
*The memoirs of  
Rev. R. Stanley Berg*

Preface by David Wilkerson



By Stan Berg  
with Jamie Bilton

**T**he life and times of R. Stanley Berg, former 45-year pastor of New York City's Glad Tidings Tabernacle, are captured forever in his new autobiography, *Called, Chosen, Faithful*. Follow Berg from the baseball diamonds of his youth, to the battlefields of World War II, to the pulpit of one of the flagship churches in the rich history of the Assemblies of God. Through Berg's unique personal testimony, experience the formation and development of Teen Challenge, relive miracles of healing and salvation, and meet an aspiring young preacher named Billy Graham.



# **CALLED, CHOSEN, FAITHFUL**

*The Memoirs of Rev. R. Stanley Berg*

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To my wife, Joybelle,  
and children,  
Kenneth, Elaine, and Robert



## FOREWORD

*by Joseph R. Flower and Almon M. Bartholomew*

The story of Glad Tidings Tabernacle in New York City is challenging. It needs to be told. No one is better qualified to do so than R. Stanley Berg. He is a nephew of the founder, who at the time of the church's inception in 1907 was a young unmarried lady by the name of Marie Burgess.

Marie Burgess had been miraculously healed of a life-threatening illness. Shortly thereafter she experienced the Pentecostal fullness of the Holy Spirit. Like many others in the early years of this century, the same Spirit who anointed her for service led her to the field in which she would labor the remainder of her life.

Together with a co-worker, she opened a mission in Manhattan, New York City. In the natural this seemed improvident, but God makes no mistakes. Little by little souls were saved, the church grew, and believers experienced the Pentecostal fullness.

One of those early adherents was a young man by the name of Robert A. Brown. He was also a Methodist lay-minister. He and Marie Burgess were eventually married, and until his death in 1948 they served as co-pastors of Glad Tidings Tabernacle.

Only in eternity will the full story of Glad Tidings Tabernacle be known. Its influence throughout the entire New York City Metropolitan area has been tremendous. Many Christian workers and churches can trace their spiritual roots to this assembly.

As a young Christian worker, Sister Brown was deeply burdened for missions. While she never went to a foreign field as a missionary, she never lost the vision or the burden. It was fulfilled in the support given by Glad Tidings Tabernacle to many missionaries.

To Brother and Sister Brown the mission field was the world. Missionaries were supported in the British West Indies, China, Egypt and other African countries, several Near Eastern nations, Tibet, India, Europe and much of South America.

We refrain from mentioning the names of missionaries supported by Glad Tidings lest we omit some, but the list is like a “who's who” in Assemblies of God Missions.

At the 40th Anniversary celebration of Glad Tidings in 1947, 41 missionaries and 8 native workers were present.

I submit a brief personal word relative to my association with Glad Tidings Tabernacle herewith. In the late 1920's, as a teenager, I was living in Scranton, Pennsylvania, where my father was pastoring. Another young man in the church and I had permission from our parents to take an excursion trip by train to New York City one weekend. The main purpose was to visit Glad Tidings. That visit, as we sat in the balcony of the church during the Sunday afternoon service, made an indelible impression on us.

Later, while serving as Superintendent of the New York District of the Assemblies of God, my relationship with the church and the pastors only enhanced my appreciation for them and the church they pastored for so many years.

Stanley Berg's unique qualification to tell the story of Glad Tidings Tabernacle is due to his long-standing relationship to Robert and Marie Brown. In addition to being a nephew to Sister Brown, he was strongly influenced by both her and her husband Robert, as to his life's calling as a minister.

Brother Berg served as a military chaplain during World War II. Later, when Robert Brown went to be with the Lord, Stanley Berg

shared the leadership of Glad Tidings Tabernacle with his aunt, Marie Burgess Brown. Even after her decease in 1971 he continued as pastor of the church for 24 more years.

After a period of semi-retirement, with his wife Joybelle at his side, Stanley Berg came home to Glad Tidings in 1995. He temporarily picked up the reins of leadership of the church that had been so much a part of their lives for so many years. I salute and commend them both. To God be the glory!

### **Joseph R. Flower**

*Former Superintendent New York District, before following his father in the office of General Secretary of the Assemblies of God in Springfield, Missouri. Now retired and living in Springfield.*

\* \* \*

One of the great joys of my life has been to know Reverend R. Stanley Berg and his wife Joybelle as close personal friends. It is a signal honor to pay tribute to them as part of the prologue to Pastor Berg's autobiography. His life has been colorful, extremely varied, and a rich source of inspiration for all who have received his ministry and have known him as a friend. Their children, Mrs. Elaine Bilton, Kenneth, and Robert have made their mark in life as well. Their character and value systems have been shaped by the godly influence of their parental heritage.

Pastor Berg lived his boyhood in Charlotte, North Carolina. He was an excellent athlete and an outstanding baseball player. He came to Christ under the ministry of parental teaching and influence. In those days he became well acquainted with another excellent ball player who later would leave an indelible stamp on the history of the world, the then young Billy Graham. Billy

attended the Bible classes that Stanley Berg's father held for young Christians at a Presbyterian Church.

Pastor Berg graduated from what was then Central Bible Institute, now Central Bible College. This was at the onset of World War II. Pastor Berg volunteered for army service and enrolled in Chaplain School at Harvard University. He became the first official Assembly of God chaplain to serve overseas in actual combat. He landed with his troops at Utah Beach in Normandy several weeks after the initial landing on D-Day, June 6, 1944. He stayed with his combat troops the entire campaign until they crossed the Rhine River into Germany and finally Czechoslovakia. The impact of his life was felt, literally, by thousands of soldiers, many of whom were killed in action. The call he issued for commitment, comfort, and hope in Christ, continued throughout his lifetime.

His longest stint of service in a local church was at the Glad Tidings Tabernacle on West 33rd Street in Manhattan in New York City. The church had begun under the ministry of Marie Burgess, his mother's sister, in 1907. She became the wife of Robert Brown in 1909, and together they served as pastors of Glad Tidings. Pastor Robert Brown left this world suddenly, having experienced a serious head injury in March of 1948. It was at that time that Rev. Stanley Berg came to join Pastor Brown's wife, Marie Burgess Brown, as associate pastor. Upon his aunt's death he became senior pastor and continued in that position until 1992, a total of 45 years.

During this time his ministry was felt widely across his denominational fellowship. For years his church, Glad Tidings Tabernacle, was the largest single church contributor to foreign missions among the Assemblies of God congregations. He was very active in the formation and administration of the original Teen Challenge program begun by David Wilkerson in Brooklyn, New



York. For years Pastor Berg was chairman of the Board of Directors and still serves in that capacity to this date, 1999.

He served for some 35 years on the District Presbytery of New York State with the Assemblies of God. He also was a member of the General Presbytery of the General Council of the Assemblies of God for 10 years and member of the Foreign Missions Board for six years.

One can readily see that Pastor Berg's commitment to the work of God was no mere passing fancy, but one that remained steadfast to the Lord Jesus Christ. He exhibited a vital compassion for lost humanity both at his doorstep and around the world. He has lived and ministered with an impeccable integrity. He has been a man of his word, a man with a word and a man of the Word of God. I find it both easy and a delight to honor him in these few short paragraphs.

He has brought rich meaning to the word "friendship." His sterling character sets a high mark for others to emulate. His wife, Joybelle, is a full companion with him and is equally worthy of the accolades sent his way. The memoirs that follow in this book will be read for years to come; and those who read shall be remarkably blessed.

**Rev. Almon M. Bartholomew**

*Superintendent Emeritus, New York District*

*Northeast Region Executive Presbyter*

*General Council of the Assemblies of God*

**PREFACE**  
*by David Wilkerson*

Teen Challenge is an international drug and alcohol rehabilitation program consisting of more than 400 spiritual treatment centers worldwide. This Christian program has the highest proven cure rate in the world today—a documented 86 percent.

It all began in New York City in 1958 in an old mansion on Clinton Avenue in Brooklyn. The Holy Spirit had drawn me to New York from a small town in Pennsylvania to minister to teen gangs. It quickly became evident that the gangs were turning to heroin and that an intake center was needed. The ministry to gangs expanded to this added outreach to young adults and others with life-controlling addictions.

None of this would have been possible without the support and vision of Stanley Berg, who pastored Glad Tidings Tabernacle on 33rd Street in Manhattan. I attribute the success of the Teen Challenge ministry to this dedicated man of God.

I had shared my burden for New York City gangs with Reginald Yake, a New Jersey pastor. He told me, without hesitation, “The man to see is Stan Berg. New York City police are alarmed by all the gang violence and have asked the church community to help. Stan and his congregation have been praying God would send somebody with a vision to reach gangs for Christ.” He immediately called Pastor Berg, who responded with great enthusiasm. He arranged a meeting with other interested pastors.

Some of the pastors were skeptical or wary of my credentials and my country manners. But Stan Berg would hear none of it. He was highly respected and he insisted it was God's time and that they should get behind me with counsel and financial support.

Teen Challenge was born that day in a basement room of Glad Tidings. Pastor Berg suggested that Paul Dilena, a police officer in his church, be appointed as treasurer. There were no funds, only a vision and a challenge. Brother Berg invited me to share my burden with his New York congregation and opened the doors for me to share with other churches throughout the metroplex. He was the spark that ignited a citywide fire of support.

To me, Stan Berg became not only my dear friend, but also a wise and trusted counselor. He was a man of few words, but they were always the right words at the right time. He trusted in me when few others dared to, and because of his burden for lost souls and his keen sense of Holy Ghost timing, Teen Challenge is today a mighty witness to the whole world about Christ's power to deliver from life-controlling sins.

The last time I saw Stan Berg at a Teen Challenge banquet in 1998, he and wife Faith Joybelle still had the burning zeal of former years. I thought to myself, "My dear friend, don't ever let the devil lie to you that you fell short in accomplishing some great or special ministry goal, because you are the real father of this worldwide ministry called Teen Challenge. God knows it. I know it. And when it is revealed in Glory, all will know it!"

Thanks, Pastor Stanley Berg, from untold numbers of redeemed addicts and alcoholics all over this wide world. To God alone be the glory!

Respectfully,

**David Wilkerson**  
*Times Square Church*  
*New York City*

## **Table of Contents**

Introduction by <i>R. Stanley Berg</i>	Page 13
<i>Chapter One: The Growing Up Years</i>	Page 16
<i>Chapter Two: God's Choosing</i>	Page 26
<i>Chapter Three: Early Ministry</i>	Page 32
<i>Chapter Four: The War Years</i>	Page 38
<i>Chapter Five: The Battle of the Ministry</i>	Page 65
<i>Chapter Six: An Unexpected Phone Call</i>	Page 68
<i>Chapter Seven: Glad Tidings' History &amp; Legacy</i>	Page 71
<i>Chapter Eight: Changing Times</i>	Page 80
<i>Chapter Nine: Teen Challenge</i>	Page 88
<i>Chapter Ten: Hidden Valley</i>	Page 95
<i>Chapter Eleven: A Missionary Journey</i>	Page 102
<i>Chapter Twelve: The Standard Raised</i>	Page 106
<i>Chapter Thirteen: Going Home</i>	Page 111
<i>Chapter Fourteen: Passing the Missions Legacy</i>	Page 120
<i>Chapter Fifteen: Hall of Fame of Faith</i>	Page 123
Index	Page 130





**INTRODUCTION**  
by Rev. R. Stanley Berg

Many persons have influenced the writing of these memoirs. We dare not try to list them all, lest we overlook some who are worthy of our appreciation and thanks.

My beloved and devoted wife, Joy, has been most helpful and indeed the “Joy of my life.” Her parents must have been directed by the Lord to name her “Faith Joybelle.” She has spent hours in editing and rewriting the transcript for this publication. Without her help the required work would not have been done. She has been a most faithful and loving wife these past 57 years.

Dr. Phil Goble, director of our Beth Shalom Jewish Center in Brooklyn, with his faithful wife, Linda, were among the first to encourage the writing of this publication and offered to assist with their equipment to prepare it for publication. They have been very helpful in their labors of love.

James Bilton, the second son of our daughter Elaine, graduated from Evangel College and then became promotions director of the *Pentecostal Evangel*. After serving in this capacity, he went into private business in the investment field where he serves today. His interest and knowledge in publishing and communications prepared him to be an able assistant to me in making our work available to the readers. His interest in sports followed the pattern of his Grandpa Berg and we share a partnership in bringing good news to a dying world. He and his lovely wife, Michele, and daughter, Anna, live in Ozark, Missouri.

There must be a purpose in writing the happenings and events of one's life. Such has been my own experience. In Psalm 20:4 we read: “*May He grant you according to your heart's desire, and fulfill your purpose*” (New King James Version). The title of this

publication explains the purpose of my heart's desire in telling what God has done in and through one man who was not perfect or without fault, but one who wanted above all else to honor and please the Lord according to His call. This is not intended to be a complete history of Glad Tidings Tabernacle, which is contained in other writings. Nor does time and space permit giving the history of the many areas and people involved in the writing of this publication. God alone keeps accurate record and will reward in His own way.

One friend who first encouraged me to write my experiences was Rev. Almon Bartholomew, superintendent of the New York District of the Assemblies of God. While sitting in our home one evening and listening as I shared a World War II experience, he said, "Stan, you should write these memoirs for future readers to know what God has done for and through you." When our children were growing up and heard their father's stories, they said, "Dad, you have something worth writing about for us and our children, and those after us to know how God has been with you." Their love and encouragement along with that of their mother, gave me added purpose to pursue these writings. I thank God for such a devoted family.

"Called, Chosen, Faithful"—this book's title is intended to capture my life-long, God-given desire from earliest youth. It is a Biblical principle declaring how God seeks to guide His leaders and his people. The over comers who follow the Lamb, who is the Lord of Lords and King of Kings, are those who are identified in Rev.17:14 as "the Called, Chosen, and Faithful." Each is significant.

The call reaches around the world, and the Lord continues to deal with those who will listen to Him unto the very end of time. God seeks those who will respond to His call. However, as Jesus declared in the parable of the wedding banquet recorded in

Matthew 22:14, "*For many are called* (or invited), *but few are chosen.*" In every crowd there are some who respond, but fail to be wholehearted. God chooses those who put Him first. Still fewer among the chosen are those who are faithful. I desire to be all God wants me to be, faithful to the end!



## CHAPTER ONE

### *The Growing Up Years*

It was my privilege to be born into a Christian family with a Godly heritage. My parents were thoroughly committed to the Lord, as were their parents. This is a rare heritage, but most invaluable. My parents were also Pentecostal from the early days of the great outpouring of the Holy Spirit in our country at the turn of the century. As we now face another turn of the century, this phenomenon continues unabated with God's blessing upon it. May God keep us faithful to our calling.

My father, Stanley Dauch Berg, was born in Hempstead, Long Island, New York, of strong Methodist parents. His grandfather emigrated from Denmark, his mother from Germany.

My mother, Myrtle Cora Burgess, was born in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. Her parents came from English, Irish, and Scottish heritage. She was a loving housewife and a great mother, with a deep faith in God. My mother was very faithful in her housework—for she saw this calling as her ministry, since her husband was often on the road as a traveling salesman.

My father met my mother at a youth meeting in 1911, soon after he had received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. The meeting was held in a converted blacksmith's shop in Hempstead, Long Island. He helped his wife-to-be, Myrtle C. Burgess, with the youth meetings at Glad Tidings Mission at Glad Tidings Hall. Much of their early relationship consisted of helping each other at these vital services. They courted and then were married on October 14, 1914, in the Stone Church in Chicago, Illinois, which was Mom's home church. She had a twin sister, Mabel, three other sisters, and one brother.

One sister was Marie Burgess Brown, the founder of Glad Tidings Tabernacle.



**Baby Stan, held by his mother, Myrtle Cora Burgess, with sisters Miriam (top) and Ruth (right).**

My parents lived at 5453 46th Street in Brooklyn, where two of my sisters were born—Ruth Myrtle on September 9, 1914, and Miriam on August 10, 1915. The family then moved a short distance to Woodhaven, Queens, where I appeared on the scene. On that day (July 8, 1916), Aunt Marie Brown visited and had a prayer meeting for her poor sister, our Mother, who had birthed three babies in three years. Marie prayed, “that her womb be closed!” Aunt Marie's prayer was answered, at least for the time being, as David Theodore was not born until October 23, 1919. By this time the family had moved again, first to Nutley, New Jersey, and then to Bellville in the same state.

When I was born, my aunt Marie Brown gave me the name Reuel, after Moses' father-in-law, who was better known as Jethro. She thought the meaning of the name Reuel was important, as it means “friend of God.” Later, in my school years, I grew quite tired of hearing my name constantly mispronounced so I began using my middle name, Stanley.

I was one of the first children to be dedicated in the Glad Tidings Hall on 42nd Street in Manhattan. My uncle, Robert Brown, actually dedicated me to “the ministry of the Lord and His Word”—a prophetic voice indeed.

My sister Miriam and I were closest in age and in friendship. But we all got along well; I was fortunate enough to enjoy a harmonious childhood, for the most part.

We commuted by way of ferry to Glad Tidings Tabernacle in Manhattan, where my father organized the Sunday School into grades and classes for the first time. He was not called to be a pastor, but loved the Word of God and was an excellent teacher. He graduated from Pratt Institute in Brooklyn as a mechanical engineer and followed this trade all his life.





In 1924, when I was eight years old, my father was transferred to Philadelphia and we lived in the suburb of Narbeth, Pennsylvania. While living there, we attended the Highway Mission Tabernacle in Philadelphia, where E.S. Williams was pastor. My father served as teacher for the ladies' Bible class. While living at Narbeth, my sister Eunice Mae and brother, Paul Alexander, were born. Another brother, James William, did not live through childbirth.

As a young boy, I had dreams of following in my father's footsteps. He was a great Bible teacher, a good businessman, and a good father and husband. These attributes impressed me. But perhaps my biggest dream was to become a big league baseball player. This was a real passion, and God blessed me with the ability to play the game.

When the Great Depression struck, my father lost his job, and we moved to Sanford, Florida, where my father's brother Howard owned and operated a newspaper and a real estate business. My father worked with him during the Depression days.

My grade school days in Florida were enjoyable because I was ahead of the class intellectually. I was also a leader on the baseball field. My love for the game had grown since early childhood, and by fourth grade I excelled as a shortstop and leadoff hitter. When my father was recalled to his old job with the Fafnir Ball-Bearing Co., we moved again, this time to Charlotte, North Carolina, where I completed grade school, junior high, and senior high school.

A thrilling highlight during these years came one spring when the New York Yankees came through Charlotte on their way back to New York after spring training. The teams used to barnstorm through small towns in those days, playing intrasquad games in front of crowds who ordinarily would not have been able to see them.

On this particular afternoon, I was standing out beyond the outfield fence before the game while the Yankees took batting practice. A large crowd of kids had gathered to chase the home run balls that soared over the high wooden fence. When the famed Lou Gehrig stepped to the plate a mad scramble ensued—since Gehrig was a left-handed hitter, all the kids rushed to right field. Knowing the crowd would seriously hamper my chances to catch a ball, I stayed in left field. A few pitches into his round of swings I got my chance. Gehrig hit a towering fly ball...to left field! I tracked the flight of the ball and tried to position myself underneath it (the other kids were waiting for the balls to land and chasing them). As the crowd gathered near me I reached my hands skyward...and caught the ball! What a treasure—a Lou Gehrig home run ball! Unfortunately, the ball was eventually lost, as my buddies and I used it for our own baseball games.

While at Piedmont Junior High, I played baseball and football under coach Virgil Yow, who also taught classes on electricity and shop. His class inspired me to pursue these subjects as hobbies, and I eventually developed a reputation as a home repair “jack-of-all-trades.” Coach Yow encouraged me in baseball and other sports. When I graduated to Central High School, I was too small for football and too old my last year, but a group of us boys formed the Charlotte Cubs, a smaller boys’ athletic team. We played baseball in a league of our own, until the American Legion formed youth teams locally and across the country to compete in regional competition for national honors. Our team played against great competition and actually won our district title in 1933, but lost in the regional finals.

I was captain of our Charlotte American Legion baseball team my senior year of 1934. My teammates and I were watched closely and later interviewed by professional scouts, including some from the Washington Senators. They offered opportunities to try out for the Senators' farm teams. A few of my buddies took advantage of



**Above: Piedmont Junior High School's 1931 football team. Stan is in front row, third from right.**



**Left: Stan cultivated his leadership skills on the baseball field, where he starred as Charlotte American Legion's captain and shortstop in 1934.**

the opportunity and made it into pro ball. I did not feel that a pro baseball career was God's plan for me, so I did not pursue it. God had something different in His plans for me, although at the time He had not revealed that my next move would be to Central Bible Institute at Springfield, Missouri.

There, in Charlotte, North Carolina, my parents found a home spacious enough to accommodate a large growing family. It was at this time that my father met the pastor of the Caldwell Memorial Presbyterian Church, a solid preacher of the Fundamental Gospel, and he invited my father to teach a young men's Bible class. Charlotte did not have a Pentecostal church at that time, so we settled into this Presbyterian Church.

In addition to the regular Sunday morning Bible class and worship, my father invited his class to our home after church for afternoon Bible studies. Charlotte was called an "open" city at that time—there were no theatres open, no professional baseball games or ball games of any kind on Sunday. Everything was closed, so the afternoon was free and open. Many attended this afternoon session at our home. Regular members brought friends, and the class grew. I joined the class, mainly because it had a good baseball team, which actually won a Charlotte city championship one year.

During my teenage years I began to grow in my relationship with the Lord. I was always a believer, but not necessarily called into the ministry. My senior year in high school was actually a time of great confusion for me. Baseball was very important to me, but I just never felt released to pursue it for a career.

Following my high school graduation in 1934 I attended a summer Bible school at Maranatha Park in Green Lane, Pennsylvania, where Mrs. Alice Reynolds Flower directed the camp. I had received the baptism in the Holy Spirit the year before at this camp, after a powerful witness of salvation. When I was Spirit-



**Maranatha Park's Summer Bible School, 1932. Stan is on top row, fifth from left.**

filled, a sense of God's call started to ring in my soul. My Aunt Marie and Uncle Robert were with me during this second visit to the camp, and at their suggestion my sister Miriam and I made plans to attend Central Bible Institute in Springfield, Missouri. We enrolled in 1934 and graduated in 1937. My sister felt a call to be a missionary to China, but the Lord led her another direction, and she eventually moved back to Charlotte.

While I was at Central Bible Institute, I wrote home to my father's Bible class, the Stronghold Class, and explained how the Bible had become a new book to me; one with *living* and *breathing* words with fascinating roots and derivations from ancient texts. I also told how my teachers had so influenced me and helped make the Word of God jump off its pages. The Bible had come alive right before my eyes! I could hardly contain my zeal as I wrote that letter from my dimly lit dorm room at CBI.

Later that same year, while I was home for the summer in Charlotte, my friend Crook Stafford told me how that letter was read to the class one Sunday afternoon at our home. After hearing it, his cousin leaned over to him and said, "I like what Stan said, and that's what I'd like to do. If Stan Berg can do it, so can I!" That young man was Billy Graham. I have a letter from Billy confirming this as a fact. And thus began my association with one of the world's most renowned and beloved ministers of the Gospel.

In 1950, when I was in New York City, I joined a committee that invited Billy Graham to come to Madison Square Garden for his first crusade there. Upon his arrival, he invited my father and me to have dinner with him at the New Yorker hotel where he was staying. So Dad and I walked around the corner from Glad Tidings Tabernacle where the New Yorker was located. T.W. Wilson, Billy's closest assistant and a personal friend of mine met us. In fact, back in North Carolina, the Wilson and Berg families had prayer meetings together. T.W. informed us at that time that Billy had to attend a special press conference and would not be able to join us for lunch, but wanted us to come and sit on the platform for the meeting! It was quite a thrill to sit there each night of the crusade as a representative of the committee.

After Billy preached, he invited seekers to come forward to the platform where altar workers would meet with them. One night after leaving the platform, he turned, walked past the many dignitaries seated on the platform, and approached my father and me. Stretching his hand across me, he reached out to my father and said, "Brother Berg, you'll never know how much those meetings in your home meant to me. I received a spiritual awakening there that later caused me to make a full commitment to the Lord. Thank you again for being such an inspiration to me." My dad was a faithful worker and teacher, and only God knows how much fruit will be accredited to his faithfulness.

## CHAPTER TWO

### *God's Choosing*

During my final year at Central Bible Institute in 1937, I wrote to the Potomac District of the Assemblies of God Superintendent Walter Long, to inquire if he knew of any church opening where I could be of service. I've found through the years that to feel called of God is indeed special and undeniable, but to ascertain where He has chosen to place you is often more difficult. It is often best to seek the counsel of other mature leaders in determining where one should go. Brother Long advised me to go to South Norfolk, Virginia, to assume the pastorate of a church that had experienced some problems. I wasn't sure what the problems were about until I arrived there, but we got along just fine. Things were well under control and the church was on solid ground when I left.

After one year in Norfolk, God impressed me to return to Charlotte to open the first Assemblies of God Church in that “queen city” of the South. My parents had been praying for this, and they finally suggested that I come home to start a new church there.

I arrived back in Charlotte eager to do something special for the Lord. Friends of the family started meeting in various homes, and we eventually rented a storefront on Eighth Street. While pastoring this new assembly I was able to attend High Point College in High Point, North Carolina, having received a partial scholarship to play baseball. I commuted to Charlotte by bus each weekend for services and church activities. My sister Miriam, who lived in Charlotte, took care of the weeknight meetings while I was at college during the week.

This was a challenging but exciting time in my life. As things started working out for the new church, I started to sense that God might keep me in Charlotte long-term. But I always stayed open to







God's call on my life. Wherever He led me I was determined to go. Not many people get to fulfill two dreams at the same time: play college baseball and pastor a church—but that's exactly what I got to do during my years in Charlotte!

In 1939, after one year of supernatural growth, I contacted the Georgia-South Carolina District office and requested that our church have the opportunity to become an official member of the Assemblies of God. Superintendent S.W. Knowles and Secretary James Hammil responded by joining us for a service in the spring of 1939, which officially recognized First Assembly of God as an official Assemblies of God Church. As I stood before the congregation during that ceremony, tears came to my eyes. What a great feeling indeed—to know that God had confirmed His anointing on this church from the very beginning. And we were confident that His blessing would continue.

Once our church was firmly established in Charlotte, my staff and I invited Wildon Colbaugh to open the first Assemblies of God Church in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. He and his young bride Florence came there to stay shortly after their wedding. Another young couple, Walter and Miriam Haydus, was invited to Statesville, North Carolina, to open a church there. The spirit of God was moving across North Carolina, and it was exciting to be a part of the early Pentecostal movement in that state.

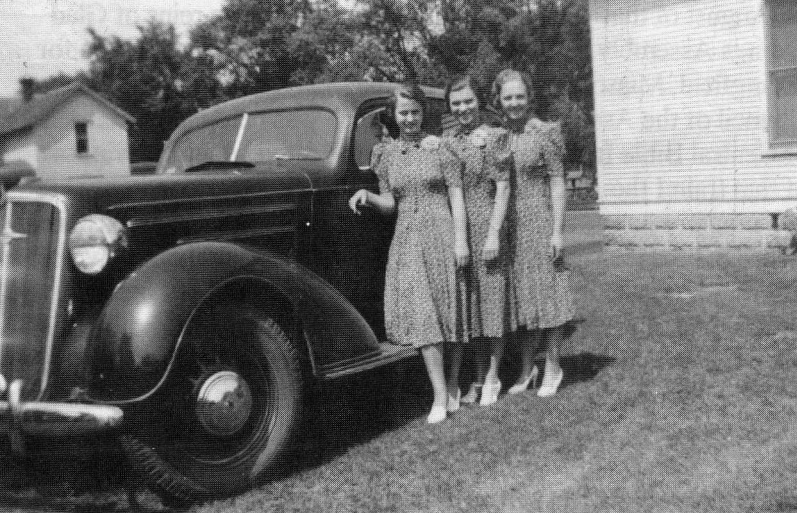
Though First Assembly was doing well and we were reaching many people for Christ, my heart was still open to God for His direction. In June 1940 I was approached about an opportunity to pastor a church in Pocomoke City, Maryland, on the Eastern shore. After much prayer I decided to take the position. Though it was hard to leave Charlotte, I knew that God had a plan for my life and ministry, and I was heavily burdened and determined to find that plan and follow it.

In August of that year, two months after I took the reins of Glad Tidings Assembly of God in Pocomoke City, I boarded a train for Springfield, Missouri, to attend the national meeting of the General Council of the Assemblies of God, which was held on the campus of Central Bible Institute. As I gazed reflectively out the window of that train I thought about what God had already done in my life and ministry just two short years after leaving CBI. I had pastored three churches, including one I had pioneered in my hometown of Charlotte. Thanksgiving and praise welled up inside of me. I'd already learned that God can surprise us at any second, but I could not have known that my life would literally never be the same when this week at General Council was over.

As we remain faithful where God places us, He provides for our future and reveals His will to us at the proper time. Such was my exhilarating experience at this General Council. While I was pastoring in Charlotte I had invited the men's quartet from Central Bible Institute to minister at one of our services. They were a blessing to the church because of their ministry in music, but an even greater blessing to me when they told me of a young lady at CBI that I should meet. She sang in the ladies' trio, which traveled for the school in the summers. Her name was Joybelle Sternall and it just so happened that she was attending the 1939 General Council with the King's Daughters Trio.

We were introduced and for me it was love at first sight. We hit it off rather well and we corresponded regularly after I returned to my pastorate. It wasn't all smooth sailing, however—before long I discovered there was another man in the picture! Being persistent by nature, I determined not to give up easily. I *knew* she was the girl for me. Joy desired God's choice for her future, so she devoted the matter to prayer and eventually the question was settled.

She had two more years before she finished her studies at CBI, and our correspondence increased. Of course I took a few trips to visit



**The King's Daughters Trio, 1940. Joy is on the left in each photo.**



her, until her graduation, when we were engaged to be married. Her father was one of the founding ministers of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. Her three sisters had married Pentecostal ministers (Dorothy to Earl Mallory; Aleta to Jack Piper; Olive to Richard Bombay).

## CHAPTER THREE

### *Early Ministry*

Joybelle and I were married on September 4, 1941, in London, Ontario during the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada annual conference. There's a comical side note to this: I went to the city of Paris to get my permit to be wed at London (all in Ontario, of course)! My sister Miriam and my Aunt Marie Brown from New York were at our wedding, and my brother David flew in from Charlotte to be my best man.

As we stood before the minister and pledged our vows to one another and God, with the witness of the Spirit, we were confident that our future was in His hands.

We had a lovely garden reception, but had to leave immediately to travel to Ottawa, barely making it on time to leave the country with a permit registered with Joy's new name, Mrs. Joybelle Berg. After our honeymoon, we came back to Pocomoke City, Maryland, to our lovely parsonage, and to the church family, which welcomed us with open arms.

A time of adjustment took us through many difficult experiences. The pressures of leading a church, coupled with adjusting to life with a spouse, proved to be challenging. But through it all God was faithful, and many confirmations led us to understand that God had brought my new bride and me to His chosen place.

Little did we realize what our first year together would bring. I'll never forget the shocking words that came from one of our church members on Sunday, December 7, 1941, as we were walking from the parsonage to the church: "Have you heard the latest news?" she said. "Pearl Harbor has been bombed. We are at war!" As soon as I heard these words, an inner voice spoke to my heart in an unmistakable way: "*You will be in it.*"

We conducted the morning service as usual, and hearts were lifted to God in intercessory prayer for our country in this time of crisis. I didn't mention anything about my intention to join the war effort at that time—I wanted to wait until something definite had been determined. I shared with Joy what I felt God wanted me to do, and she agreed that I should pursue the possibilities.

A few days later I looked into the possibility of entering the Chaplaincy of the U.S. Army. I spent much of the next several months on my knees, seeking God's will for me at this critical time. I looked for answers everywhere: other pastors, church leaders, my father, military personnel, and, of course, the Lord. My church could not know what God had laid on my heart for the war, so I waited for a more definite leading. I felt very strongly that I needed to be involved in the war effort. *But how? In what capacity could I serve the Lord at a time like this?* These questions burdened me for many days.

After writing to our Assemblies of God Headquarters in Springfield, I received an answer from Brother J. Roswell Flower, General Secretary, telling me there was little possibility of being appointed as an Assemblies of God Chaplain. At that time, most A/G men were “Conscientious Objectors”—meaning they were opposed to the war effort.

I wrote a letter to the War Department requesting information and instruction for becoming a chaplain, but I received nothing back. So I waited...and waited.

Finally, a telegram arrived, stating my application had been accepted by the War Department and I was to report to chaplain's school at Harvard University in 30 days. I immediately wrote back, asking for a 30-day extension so that I could help my church find an interim pastor. I still had not yet told the church body of my intentions to join the war effort. The days swiftly flew by, and

no answer came. Joy and I both anxiously awaited word regarding my acceptance. I grew anxious and uneasy, so I decided to drive to Washington, D.C., in an effort to contact the Army's Chief of Chaplains and receive some final word on my inquiry. On the way to Washington I stopped at Annapolis and telephoned to make an appointment with him. The chief of chaplains harshly informed me that we were in a war, and advised me to report to Chaplain's School, as my orders read. He thought it very unlikely the Army would change their orders for any reason.

I returned home after a long drive, arriving about 2 a.m.—tired, distraught, wondering how I could manage to be at Harvard in just a few days. Somewhere along the way, I'd heard on the radio that Hitler was advancing through Europe and North Africa. I took the mail from the mailbox, placed it on the table, and went to bed. After a little sleep, I took the mail and read it before breakfast. To my happy surprise, there was a telegram from the War Department revoking my previous orders and granting me a 30-day extension. *How great is our God!* When the highest official in Washington said it couldn't be done, the One who directs our way had already done it. I was reminded of a motto my father had on his desk in his office. It read, "*The man who says it can't be done is interrupted by the man who is doing it.*" Again, the Captain of my salvation stepped in to save the day.

After the Lord provided a replacement for me at the pulpit, I reported on time to chaplain's school at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts. This was in the frigid November of 1942. Appreciation for our soldiers' war efforts and much anxiety was prevalent in America at that time. President Roosevelt had announced that we would wholeheartedly support the Allies. So the war effort was in full force as the battles raged overseas.

Chaplain's school was basic training for ministers, many of whom had no prior training in marching, drill work, etc. The drill

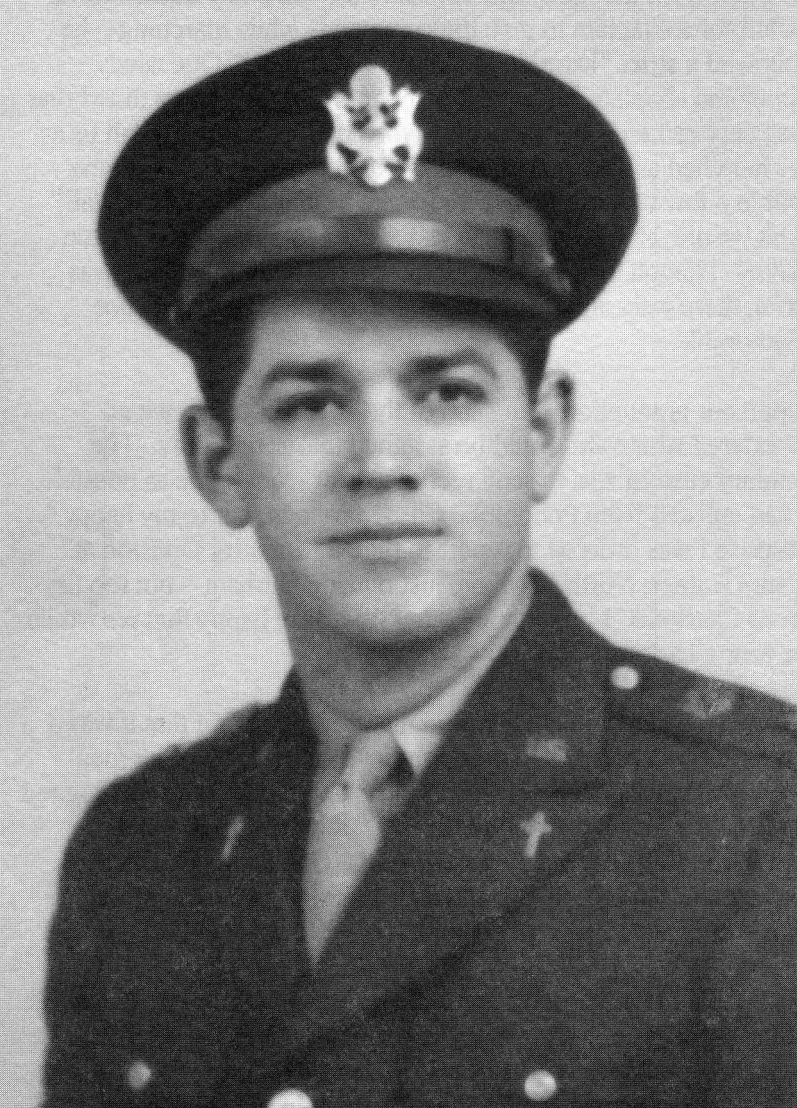
sergeant from the Army did not spare us. On many occasions he called for a chaplain to give the commands while marching—he followed a strict “learning by doing” philosophy. One newly appointed chaplain from the Deep South had a southern drawl that was very pronounced, especially when he forgot how to halt us as we marched across a tennis court in drill practice. As we came within a few feet of the wire backstop, he shouted, “Whoa, y'all!” And we did, although some in jest started to climb the backstop fence! Though the country was at war and the atmosphere was grim, there were some light moments to make the experience memorable.

Upon our graduation at the end of the 10-week camp, we all wondered where we would be assigned to our first duty. The military custom was to send recruits as far from home as possible. I had enlisted from Pocomoke City, Maryland, but to my happy surprise I was ordered to report to the 78<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division at Camp Butner, North Carolina, just outside Durham—not too far from Charlotte. I was going home! We were happy that we would be near Charlotte.

We arrived at Camp Butner in January 1943, to find that it was a new base, established as a basic training camp. The other men were also new recruits for the infantry, and the training was rugged and rough. I was assigned to the 311<sup>th</sup> regiment of the 78th Division. I made monthly reports to the Chaplain's Department concerning services held, hospital visitations, personal interviews, conferences, etc.

As I endured the hardships of basic training, the Lord was working in my spirit. He soon revealed to me why He had chosen me to be in actual combat in World War II—*He was preparing me for the years of ministry ahead.* In the military, you learn that life is not





your own, and you agree to obey orders at all times, regardless of likes or dislikes, with no talking back. You learn that *"to obey is better than sacrifice."* I learned to resign myself to the fact that *"He knows the way that I take"* (Job 23:10). Indeed, I leaned on the Lord considerably during this physically, emotionally, and mentally challenging time in my life.

No quarters were available for married officers at Camp Butner, so Joy and I rented a house in nearby Durham. It was there that Joy brought the news we were going to have a baby! What thrilling news! Our precious firstborn son, Kenneth, came into the world on Sept. 3, 1943, at Duke University Hospital in Durham, which was one of the finest in the country. I often joked with Ken in later years that he started at the top!

## CHAPTER FOUR

### *The War Years*

After almost one year at Camp Butner, where I served with the 311th and 309th regiments of the 78th Infantry Division, I received my assignment for overseas duty. The war effort was at its peak—Hitler was taking over the Scandinavian countries; Americans were rationing food and water; war bonds were being issued; domestic industry shifted gears to support the military; and tensions were high. I'd volunteered for combat duty, and now the time had arrived to move in that direction. My desire was not for excitement or even military adventure. I kept remembering that still small voice within me at the time we heard of Pearl Harbor. I realized that I had been called and now I was chosen, to face the enemy with all of his forces.

Joy and I only had a few days to take our belongings and leave them at my parents' home in Charlotte. With mixed emotions we drove over snow and icy roads to Canada, where Joy and our baby son would be staying with her parents. As I held our little son in my arms, with no idea when I would return, I became very emotional. But God's presence gave me peace.

After a tearful goodbye I returned immediately to Charlotte, left my car with my father, and took a train to New York City and Fort Hamilton. From there I would embark for overseas, not knowing exactly where that would be. It was indeed a trial of faith and obedience, not knowing where God was directing me at this time. *Would it be France? Africa? Spain? England?* Nobody knew for sure. But God gave me an inner peace and assurance in the knowledge that He was in full control.

While awaiting final orders to board our ship, and wondering what our destination would be, I was able to cast all my *"cares upon Him, for He careth for you."* To be sure, I had nerves, and there



Saying goodbye, winter 1943. Stan Jov and baby Ken.

were anxious moments. But during my time in New York City, I attended Glad Tidings Tabernacle in Manhattan a few times, where I received new courage and blessing. I had attended the same church as a carefree youngster...and now here I was, two decades later, kneeling at the same altar where I once played, asking God for His help and protection on the eve of my greatest earthly adventure.

Orders finally arrived. We'd be leaving at night, from a pier on the Hudson River. Our final destination was still unknown. There were many GI's (soldier boys) in our crowd as we boarded a ferryboat at the river. We were all placed in the hold of the ferry, where the cars usually ride. All lights were darkened in full blackout. Many of the GI's were from Brooklyn, and knew the various piers and ports along the Hudson. One of them stood on the shoulders of another and, looking out the small porthole, gave us a "play-by-play" on what could be seen. The rest of us listened eagerly to his words: "No.... not yet.... not this one!" as we continued up the Hudson until we reached 34th Street and began to slow down. "Can it be?... Yes, it is!" he exclaimed. "The *Queen Elizabeth!*"

Sure enough, we boarded the majestic *Queen*, which we knew was bound for England. Overall, we had 6,000 troops onboard. As we shoved off on Feb. 15, 1944, my anticipation had reached a climax. We had been well trained and well prepared for this moment. I bowed my head and prayed a prayer of thanksgiving and protection as the shallow coastal waters of the United States gave way to the deep, dark waters of the Atlantic Ocean.

The journey was one I'll never forget. We ate and slept in shifts. The GI's slept in hammocks five and six deep. The officers enjoyed better living conditions than the GI's, who were under the decks below—we officers had staterooms in the decks above. I had a bed in a room with another chaplain. We spent most of the

days walking around and talking to soldiers who were apprehensive about the days ahead—it was widely accepted that many of them would not be returning home. We prayed with many of them and did all we could to help keep morale high.

The *Queen Elizabeth* had been built for the World's Fair, but was not completed on time, so we were among the first to travel on the giant ship.

The *Queen Elizabeth* was strongly equipped with armaments of every kind. I was rudely awakened our first night on the sea by the loud blast of a gun that seemed to fire just over my head—thankfully, it was just a round of practice anti-aircraft gunning by our British crew.

As we approached England, I assembled a group of Christian men for a time of communion, but our service was violently interrupted when the items on our huge communion table were thrown to the floor and tossed from side to side. We struggled to keep our footing as heavy seas rocked the ship. After making my way out to the main deck, I had the unusual experience of actually jumping into the air from the deck and never coming down. Our boat was wobbling dramatically, so the deck came up and met me! Such storms are common in the North Sea, and we experienced our fair share of them.

Three-and-a-half days after our departure from Hudson Harbor we arrived at our entry port off Ireland's Firth of Clyde, and eventually docked at Preswick, Scotland. A troop train then took our group to London.

After we arrived in London, I was assigned to a station at Hartford, just outside London, for a brief time before being sent to Bristol, England. At Bristol, I was welcomed into the Advanced Section

Communications Zone Headquarters—this was a service unit for the ETO (European Theater of Operation).

Here I awaited orders concerning our involvement with the “D-Day” operation, which we knew was not too far away. The invasion of France was imminent. We were alert, prepared, and ready for the big day. I was excited, ready, and willing—I knew the Lord was with me. Despite the widespread fear, we were united in purpose—for by this time word of Hitler’s atrocities had filtered through our ranks.

D-Day was approaching. I was given orders to go to Liverpool to try to diffuse a critical situation that had developed there among our troops. It was more than a morale problem—fear had set in. As the reality of the attack drew near and the men began to understand the possible consequences of the upcoming offensive, many of them were fearful, anxious and disturbed in their hearts. The tension and trauma of D-Day was closing in on us.

I had several meetings with the many groups of GI’s and officers and was able to help stabilize the growing unrest. I led many services during this time and prayed with several who requested special prayer for strength and courage.

My heart went out to the soldiers—even strong men sometimes crack under pressure. I thanked God we were able to calm the storm, and I returned to my base in Bristol.

In the anxious days that followed, as we awaited our orders to move out of England, I had the privilege of visiting the orphanage at Bristol where George Mueller had ministered many years before. The children there were precious; I was able speak to a group of them about being brave for Christ. During my time in Bristol I was also able to visit the site outside Bristol, Cheddar

Gorge, where Rev. Augustus M. Toplady was inspired to write the popular hymn “Rock of Ages.”

When June 6th finally arrived, we heard the words of Winston Churchill over the radio tell us and all of England: “*This is our finest hour!*” After the D-Day invasion, as my group waited its turn to cross the English Channel, hundreds of wounded were brought to the various hospitals in Bristol. These were evacuees, veterans of D-Day on the Normandy beaches. I visited many of them and prayed with them. Many were simply thankful to be alive. Some were so severely wounded they cried aloud, wishing they could die. While most of the men were stoic and did not want to hear about Christ, several received Jesus through my testimonies and prayers. Some of these boys were sent back into duty, and others returned home. These were special times for me as a chaplain. For those that received Christ, all it had taken was a brush with death to help them see they needed the Savior.

During this time, I received word that my brother David had landed with the 90<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division in Newport, England. Since Newport was just across the Severn River from Bristol, I was able to make a quick visit to see him. His unit was in route to France also. David was combat-ready and relying on the Lord—His faith was strong.

Finally, our time came. We left Bristol, and traveled by train to southern England and our marshalling area at Dorsett, which is on the English Channel. On July 13, 1944, we boarded a landing craft and set out for France. As we rocked along with the waves, tension gripped each of us (me included).

We landed on Utah Beach in France amid much debris and wreckage. Smoke still consumed the air. The smell of blood and death lingered, though the battle had been fought several weeks earlier.



It was a terrible sight—one I'll never forget. Common sights of disaster greeted us: parts of landing crafts, deep holes in the sand, flag markers of sunken boats, etc.

We built a camp at St. Mary Eglise, which was not far from the beach. A fence had been erected outside the church there that ran parallel to the shoreline. I put my sleeping bag on the east side of this fence, opposite the ocean. The Lord was with me, as every morning at daybreak German fighter planes were able to get through our anti-aircraft fire and blanket the countryside with merciless rounds of strafing. Everything around our camp felt the brutal impact, but I'm a living witness that my sleeping bag was on the right side of that stone fence where it could not be hit. Some of our boys were hit and required immediate treatment to save their lives.

From St. Mary Eglise we went to Las Vez and regrouped our headquarters company that had been together in England. We then made our base for a more lengthy time at Catz, where our Chaplain's Office was located. Using this office as a headquarters, I worked with the various units in that area—mostly among companies of men scattered along the Peninsula of Normandy. For the first time during the conflict, I began to realize my calling. I worked tirelessly, holding services wherever we could assemble men—in barns, fields, jeeps, and thickets. We were able to lead many soldiers and officers to Christ during these special times. The hearts of these men were ripe for the gospel during those tension-filled days. They desperately needed “*the peace of God, which passes all understanding.*”

At this time, our outfit was mainly a “support group,” meaning we provided supplies and commodities to those on the front lines. But we were still under the constant pressure of enemy firepower. I remember vividly one soldier who had been raised in a Christian

home but never made a commitment until enemy fire brought the true “fear of God” to his heart! He then gave himself to the Lord. This was a very typical testimony.

While at Catz, I received a letter from my father that informed me that my brother David had been seriously wounded in action. My father did not know any details, for this was all the War Department could disclose to him. I knew his 90th Infantry Division had landed in Normandy, so after some investigating I was able to find the division's location. Thankfully, it was not far from Catz. I made a hurried trip and found his chaplain, whom I had met in the States. He informed me that David had been with his machine gun squad, fighting in the Hedge Row Battles, when an enemy shell exploded nearby. The impact killed the entire squad, except David. He was hit by shrapnel, evacuated, and sent back to England for hospital treatment. Sometime later I received word that he had lost one eye, had it replaced with a plastic one, and was sent back to the field in an engineering capacity because of his experience with ball bearings.

During the month of July, which was a very active one for me, I tried to assign chaplains for the many units from Cherbourg to the front lines along the beaches as we continued our advance through France. We never had sufficient chaplains to fill all of the needs—especially for soldiers of Jewish descent. One day I was driving to visit with one of the units under my care when I heard a tremendous noise in the sky. The roaring continued unabated for several minutes, with wave after wave of airplanes flying in route to the area of St. Lo, just a few miles away. Suddenly, the ground under us began to shake. Our office received word that St. Lo had been bombed, and our infantry was now moving through that area.

The next day my assistant and I drove to St. Lo. Just outside the city, I saw a French civilian and his wife walking toward the city. I felt impressed to abandon military protocol and offer this aged couple a ride. They politely accepted and settled into the back seat



our jeep. I was anxious to see their reaction upon viewing the ruins of their city. Their first words were, “Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu!” (“My God! My God!”). They soon quieted and relaxed as they realized the fighting was over and they would be able to rebuild in peace.

My time in the war gave me powerful sermon illustrations for the rest of my life. This particular experience was a vivid lesson to me, and I've shared it with congregations many times since—how God can take the scars of life's battles and destroy the enemy's power, even though it appears all is lost. But with Him and His abiding peace, we can rebuild our lives for His glory.

Our unit was eventually moved to Lemanse. After a few days there, we moved to Etamps, just outside of Paris, and then on to Wi, Belgium. These days saw heavy fighting and many casualties. I was extremely busy—trying to meet the needs of the wounded as well as the “moving” troops. One day I drove to Leige to make a hospital call. While in route, I witnessed my first buzz bomb, as it passed less than 100 yards from me. I was on a high road overlooking a valley when the bomb whistled through the air, below us and to our right. It suddenly landed with a terrific explosion, hitting and devastating a glass factory located near one of our units. Our unit had been the obvious target—this was not the last bombing I would witness on the battlefields of Europe.

Our next move was to Namur, Belgium. While there, I received orders to conduct mass funerals on several occasions for victims of the enemy attack in that area. These were temporary burials at the Fosse Military Cemetery near Namur. I have the list of names of those I buried, including enemy soldiers. It was a sobering task, knowing many had gone into eternity without knowing Christ.

In November 1944 we received word that President Franklin

Roosevelt had just been reelected for his fourth term. The tide of the war had turned in the Allies favor, as we began to force the Germans to retreat.

While still in Belgium, I took two days to drive to Holland, where my brother David had been reassigned. I took him a few miles away in my jeep to the border of Holland, where we had our picture taken together beside a road sign designating the name of a town. The town's name was "Berg." My brother had recuperated and was feeling fine, despite his newly implanted plastic eye. I would not see him again until we were both back in Charlotte.

Much of my time now was spent in hospital visitation, encouraging wounded men as they were brought to Leige and Namur. I prayed with most of the men and counseled those who wanted to converse. Many accepted Christ through these quiet, personal visits. Even with those who did not pray the sinner's prayer with me, I always left a Gospel tract.

That year we had an emotional Thanksgiving Day service at Namur. The tensions of war, coupled with homesickness and exhaustion, were still everyday struggles, but we still had much to be thankful for—and our men knew it. We stood together and gave thanks to God for our victories. My sermon that day was entitled "Thanksgiving At Such A Time." I focused on the fact that a great price had been paid for us to enjoy being alive—*Were we grateful? Did we appreciate the sacrifice?* The end had not yet come—some would still pay the ultimate price.

I missed Joy terribly. She was very faithful in writing...she wrote and mailed a letter almost every day. However, mail in wartime was not "high priority," so I usually received one letter every couple weeks. Those were *great* days! I longed to see my little Kenny. Joy's letters updated me on his physical and mental development—how those updates thrilled my soul!



Stan's personal favorite

Saving Jewish children from the Holocaust. This picture was taken in 1944 in Belgium and we see Pentecostal Chaplain Stanley Berg (center with the mustache) with a Jewish chaplain holding their precious tiny Jewish evacuees at Chanukah.

I have always felt a kindred spirit with our Jewish brothers and sisters, even while a civilian. I'm confident my entire ministry has been blessed as I have endeavored to bless the Jews, as the Bible reads, *"I will bless those who bless thee"* (Genesis 12:3). As a matter of fact, my mother's twin sister married a Jewish believer who accepted our Messiah as Savior while he was still young. He was my uncle David Cohn, who lived in Chicago, and was a very active witness for our Lord. He had a powerful influence on my young life. He gave me clear insight into Jewish culture, faith and practice. As a chaplain, I had the opportunity to work very closely with Jewish chaplains and learned much from them. I helped them at every opportunity. We are reminded many times in scripture to love the Jewish people—I feel that we are indebted to them...they

have been our “pointers to God.”

I befriended a Jewish Lieutenant Colonel in my division, named Col. Levy. One day, as we were advancing through France, he said to me, “Chaplain, if we ever find a Jewish synagogue that is still intact, let's take it and have a service for our Jewish soldiers.” I immediately agreed to this wonderful idea. A short time later, in Rheims, France, I received a call from Colonel Levy: “Chaplain Berg, I found a synagogue! I'll pick you up in 30 minutes and take you there!”

When we arrived at the site, which was in the center of the large city of Rheims, I was amazed at what I saw. The entire area had been bombed many times by German attackers, utterly destroying the metropolitan area. Nothing but debris remained...except for this synagogue. *How could this building still be intact?* I wondered aloud. Every other synagogue we had seen throughout France thus far had been leveled to the ground. Colonel Levy ran to the door, put his hand on the knob, and was about to open it, when I shouted, “Stop! Don't open that door!” It suddenly occurred to me that the Germans must have had a good reason for protecting that building. And, sure enough, as we peered through a window, we saw, stacked from the floor to the ceiling, dozens of German engines for the Messer Schmitt fighter planes. No wonder the building was still standing!

I told Colonel Levy we would have our engineers clear the place out and then invite our Jewish men to come in for a special Chanukah service, since that special time was fast approaching. We arranged transportation for those men who were permitted to come, and we filled the synagogue for a wonderful time of prayer and worship. The Jewish soldiers honored Colonel Levy and I and thanked us for arranging this precious occasion. Colonel Levy said he thought this was the first synagogue re-opened intact since the German army had been driven out of France.

*Incidentally, when we took the 50th Anniversary Normandy Campaign Tour in 1994, I found this same synagogue still standing and in use again!*

In February 1945, I was assigned to the 26<sup>th</sup> Infantry of the U.S. First Division, one of the finest infantry units in the Army. I was thankful to witness God's providential direction in my life yet again. You see, the men of this division were the same men I had trained with at Camp Butner. It was like coming home. By this time I had grown weary, both mentally and physically; we all had. Being reunited with my friends from home was a nice relief...but a short-lived one. Within days we were in continual combat. I conducted many services with artillery flying overhead. These sermons were somewhat challenging—I had to halt reading scripture until the shells stopped firing! Much of my time during these battles was spent at the aid station, ministering to wounded men.

Time and space prevent me from telling many experiences in which God alone was the Protector and the Keeper of our souls.

On one occasion we were making a night attack in Germany. Our caravan, which had already broken through the enemy's front line, included about 20 vehicles, with a tank destroyer (TD) at both the head and rear of our line. The GI's had their weapons drawn and ready as they rode aboard the jeeps and personnel carriers. Tension ran thick and deep—one wrong turn could lead directly into a minefield. We had no lights to direct our way and the road was very dusty.

I always followed the medics' jeep. Suddenly everything halted, and it became evident that the vehicles ahead had run into some problems. My jeep was about midway in the line of vehicles. My driver, Corporal Carter, gradually lost contact with the vehicles



ahead. This was the first time this had happened to him—he was a dependable and accomplished driver. He sure picked a great time to get lost—behind enemy lines!! We tried to fight panic as we whispered ideas back and forth. Eventually we came to a fork in the road, and I immediately ordered my driver to stop. I saw a house on a hill just off the road with a light still burning, so I told Corporal Carter to follow me with his pistol ready (chaplains did not carry weapons). Since we had stopped, all the vehicles behind us had to do the same, without knowing the reason—we had no phone connections.

As we climbed the little hill and approached the small house I could feel my heart pounding in my chest. My knees grew weak with anxiety, but I knew I couldn't let nerves deter me—our entire unit was depending on me. We slowly stepped up to the front porch on a creaking stairway. As we did so, the light went out. I knocked on the door and stepped back out of sight while my driver stood at ready with his drawn pistol...no response. I knocked a few more times. Finally, a man appeared, dressed in civilian clothes. My driver spoke, as he knew the German language better than I. I told him to ask which way the Americans went. The man pointed to the road on the right. We thanked the man and quickly returned to our jeep. As Carter turned the ignition, I said to my driver, "That man is lying. We are taking the other road." And down the left road we went.

Before long, we ran into our unit, which had stopped to wait for us. We then proceeded and continued our planned attack throughout that night. Eventually, we encountered the enemy forces, battled all night, and won a great victory.

As I look back on that night, the question arises: *How did I know that man was lying?* In those moments, as Corporal Carter and I descended the hill and approached our jeep, the following scripture rang loud and clear in my mind: "*You shall hear a word behind*

*you, saying, this is the way, walk ye in it when you turn to the right or to the left (Is 30:21).*” Those words became alive and fresh to me, as I asked God to show me the way to go...and He did. We would not go man's way...we would go God's way. I knew in my spirit that God had spoken—that's the reason we did not walk right into the trap of the enemy. I learned later that the Germans were waiting in ambush along the other road, ready to blow us away. Thank God for His protecting hand.

I eagerly anticipated the mail each day, hoping to receive one of those few-and-far-between letters from my beloved Joy. Each one reminded me that many were praying for me and eagerly anticipating my arrival back home.

As Easter approached, we happened to be in what the Army calls “a holding position.” That simply means we were resting, or waiting, until orders came to advance. I arranged to have Easter services in a lovely church in nearby Mieste. I had a good organist, special singers, and everything was ready for an inspiring Easter service. But again, as had become quite typical throughout this campaign, orders came through and we were to move out in 30 minutes—service had to be canceled. I made this note in my monthly chaplain's report: *“No Easter Sunday Service conducted because all units were in movement all day from early morning until late at night.”*

I was quite disturbed, as this was the first time in my life I failed to attend an Easter Sunday service. However, later that day I saw and heard what I believe to be the greatest lesson ever preached on Easter.

That Easter Sunday of 1945 the Army was moving. Along the route, one of the large tanks went off the road, slipping into a gully over a bank. Several men were instantly killed as the tank turned



Ston (right) stands with Corporal Carter, assistant chaplain, by

over and crushed them to death. Survivors were rushed to medical aid and hospitals. However, the squad-leading sergeant was pinned under the belly of the tank. The track of the tank had rolled onto his body. Somehow he survived the immediate impact and was still alive and conscious when I arrived on the scene. We dug desperately to release the sergeant, but to no avail. After sufficient earth was removed, I crawled under the tank and squeezed alongside him. He was conscious, but in great pain. The medics gave him painkilling shots while I conversed with him. I was able to encourage him by quoting scripture. We had a time of prayer together while another tank prepared a cable to lift the wrecked tank from the sergeant's body. This was my Easter Service that Sunday—but the message was yet to come.

Throughout our time together, the sergeant asked me several times: “Chaplain, how are my boys?” He was genuinely more concerned about his “boys” than he was about himself. There he was, pinned underneath a tank, suspended between life and death, and all he could talk about was the condition of his team. Now I could not tell him what had actually happened—that would have been too much of a shock for a man holding on for dear life. But, what an Easter lesson! The first Easter was the time for Jesus to reveal himself to his disciples as the One who had conquered death, hell, and the grave. Even as He hung on the cross he demonstrated a concern for those around Him. Like Jesus, in his dying moments this sergeant showed concern for his men. This real-life example of selfless love and concern gave me a powerful sermon illustration to use throughout my pulpit ministry.

When I finished talking with the sergeant, I crawled out from under the tank, climbed back into my jeep and off we went. I was never able to follow up on the man's condition, but I felt confident that he was at peace with God.

While in combat, I stayed with the medics, working in the Forward Aid Station—a mobile hospital. On March 25, 1945, during a lengthy and terrible battle, a doctor received a call saying, “*We need more vehicles to take the wounded back!*” The doctor replied, “None are available at this time; all are evacuating the wounded.” So, I offered to take my jeep and bring the wounded back.

Facing an assault of enemy fire, my assistant and I drove into a cloud of wreckage and smoke. Eventually, we found several wounded and hauled the bloodied, dazed, and fearful men into my jeep. I also noticed some wounded German soldiers who were waiting to be evacuated. So I offered to take them also—God gave his life for ALL men, and out of respect for His creation I felt obligated to help the Germans as well. American, French, German, it didn't matter...they needed aid. We laid them across the hood of the jeep and returned to our Aid Station. For this I was later awarded a Bronze Star medal.

During our combat drive through Germany, which began in March 1945, many GI's and officers accepted Christ as savior. I had the privilege of leading many of them to Christ in small-group Bible studies, and in services as well. Many of the new converts were eager to be baptized in water. Our surroundings were not exactly conducive to water baptism services, so I baptized men in swimming pools, cow barns, water troughs, dirty rivers, and church baptisteries.

We moved across Germany, headed for Berlin. The First Infantry Division would again be the first unit to occupy a strategic site, in this case Berlin. The Russian forces were not far from us when we entered Czechoslovakia. One day, near Schonback, we received orders to halt progress and hold our location. As we awaited our next orders, we saw hundreds of German forces of all descriptions coming toward us to surrender, with hands lifted, ready to do as instructed. After weeks of severe conflict, the Germans had

realized their fight had come to an end—they were trapped and under our command.

We marched them into an open field and told them to drop their weapons and other items in piles. From this heap, I claimed what would become a prized possession: a P38, the most popular German pistol of that day. I also later obtained a German gas mask and a few other medals. After all, our prisoners would need them no longer.

A few days after this we received the glorious news: “Germany has surrendered!” VE Day had finally arrived! We were in Czechoslovakia, on our way to Berlin, when we heard the news. We were suddenly ordered to halt our position—instantly morale skyrocketed and we rejoiced in celebration! What a great day! I learned later that Joy and the folks back home had already heard the news and were already celebrating when I heard of the surrender.

After a few weeks in Czechoslovakia we were ordered to Nuremberg, where I learned why our unit was not permitted to go to Berlin: the Supreme High Command had agreed to allow the Russian Army to take Germany's capitol and later govern it as the Allies directed. We also learned why we had been sent to Nuremberg rather than to a marshalling area to be sent home: Nuremberg was to be the place where Nazi War Criminals would stand judgment and trial, and our troops were to be the guards for the trials. My Second Battalion was given the old castle at Letzenoo, just outside Nuremberg, as our temporary dwelling place. This old castle had housed some of Germany's elite units in the past, but at this time was void of normal housing facilities. The walls were bare, the rooms had no bedding or furniture, and the whole atmosphere was dismal and dark. It was most depressing.

I sympathized with the frustration of our fighting men; they had fought to the end of the war and *won*. They had willed their way through several critical battles; had sweat, bled, and sacrificed for the United States and for world freedom. Now they were rewarded with conditions unfit for the lowest of civilians. What should have been a time of celebration became a time of despair. The men did very little—no plans had been made for a circumstance like this. Rampant bitterness made it worse; even the chaplain rightfully complained to higher officials.

In the hopes of brightening the spirits of our men, I arranged a contest to see which company could make its castle rooms the most comfortable and inviting. I suggested they visit nearby towns that housed cloth taken by the Germans from the many countries they had conquered. Our GI's wasted no time in obtaining bolts of beautiful tapestry and bringing them back to the castle. Some were very valuable, exquisite in color and patterns. To my surprise, they tacked these expensive fabrics to the walls and ceilings, and even threw them over the bare floors! This decoration binge lasted only a few days, as an order came through which closed the places where the fabric was sold. However, we later discovered that General Eisenhower's staff had learned of the availability of the beautiful fabric and his trucks had packed much of it away for future use. I was able to ship some materials home before the “off limits” label was placed on them. These would serve as valuable keepsakes in later years. More importantly, they are also tangible reminders of the saving and protecting hand of the almighty God.

We all knew that the great conflict had been won, and with this knowledge came unspeakable relief and release. I felt that I had accomplished God's plan for my life—so my thoughts traveled homeward and to God's next step for my life. I had no plans of my own—I would follow God's leading.





Each man had accumulated points throughout the conflict, based on time in service, time in combat, number of battles served, age, family, etc. I was thankful for the benefit of having sufficient points, including five Battle Stars to my credit, which allowed me to be among the first of our unit to go home. August 19, 1945, was indeed a happy day as I left Germany behind in a ship bound for the southern coast of France at our marshalling area in Marseilles. After a few long days there, the ship that would take us home finally arrived at port. We boarded not the *Queen Elizabeth*, but a converted freighter ship called the *S.S. Sea Snipe*. I could not help comparing this ship to the one that brought us to England. On this voyage, no provisions had been made for passengers aside from the regular crew. We were assigned to hanging bunks of bedding in the lower cargo hold of the ship. But nobody cared about the adverse conditions—it was taking us HOME!

We were told, “No pets permitted onboard!”, but I saw an officer board with an unusually protruding chest! It was obvious he had disobeyed the order. But the war was over...why start another one? Now we were on our way home!

We sailed on a calm Mediterranean sea past Gibraltar. Strangely, I became seasick for the first time, as did many others. Our quarters were located down in the heart of the ship, near the motors, and the vibration produced a constant rumbling and shaking. Soon we discovered the secret behind the officer's big chest: a seasick dog! The officer had documents on a genuine German Dachshund, a beautiful animal. The rest of us had a hard time appreciating the dog's beauty now!

After we had been at sea for two days, word that animals were on board made its way around the ship. The public address system announced, “All pets onboard are allowed on deck for fresh air.” Those words led to what was arguably the most humorous event of my entire war experience. The Dachshund tried to maneuver the

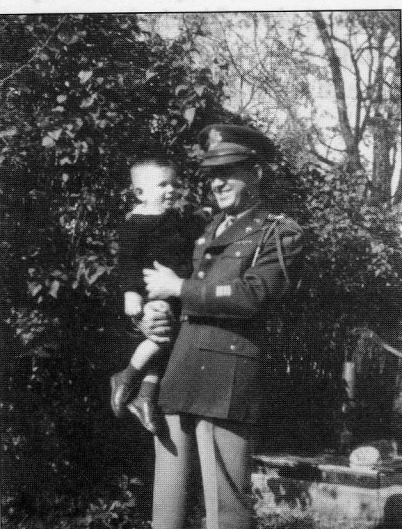
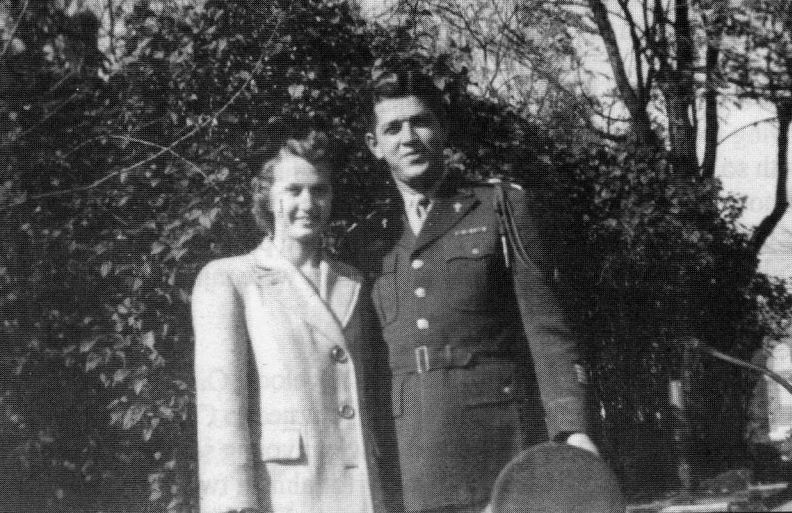


Charlain Rera near the war's end

short, steep steps from the hold up to the deck, but could not decide which end should go up first! After several attempts, some head first, some tail first, the owner finally lifted the dog to the deck. While on deck, the dog faced a similar challenge in trying to work his way around a hoisting pole. He slowly approached it, but again couldn't decide which end should go over first. To our great amusement, his success finally came by trial and error.

Our trip was long and unimpressive. But we were on our way home—I found an incredible peace in that. As I reflected on the events of the past few years, I was inspired to start an article about heaven, which I entitled “Going Home.” The piece examines the battles of life and the conflicts we must endure. The message of the article is found in this thought: though it sometimes seems we'll fall victim to our hardships, the rough times become insignificant when we realize we are on our journey home. Many times throughout the war, especially in times of intense combat and difficulty, I dreamed about going home. But then the Lord would always remind me that I had been sent to Europe for a purpose, and as long as I followed the will of Him who sent me I would make it home. And now that promise had been realized from an earthly perspective, as I sailed for the United States, where my dear wife and little boy would be waiting to greet me. Ultimately, that promise will be realized from a heavenly perspective, as my heavenly Father welcomes me into my eternal home with open and loving arms.

On September 27, 1945, I saw it—barely visible on the horizon. It was the east coast of the USA! We let out a collective cheer upon the first sight of our homeland. After docking at Newport News, Virginia, we were soon on a train to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, where we would be ushered out of the military and back into civilian life. Only experience can describe and know the feeling of this great transition. My father greeted me with a hug at Fort Bragg, and as we drove home to Charlotte, North Carolina, I



**The joyful reunion, October  
1946.**

related many of my war experiences. How wonderful it was to be back home with my father at my side.

A few days later, Joy arrived in Charlotte from Canada with a loving welcome home for me. After so many long, lonely months, with so many miles separating us, we were finally together! It was a moment neither one of us will ever forget. We expressed our gratitude to the Lord for His faithfulness and protection, as we realized that thousands had not returned or were injured in hospitals.

Joy had left Kenny with her parents in Havelock, Ontario. We bought a used car, an Oldsmobile, and returned to Canada. Throughout the trip, we wondered how our young son would receive his father, who had been away for almost two years. But Joy had kept my picture in front of him, read my letters to him, and tried to bridge the distance as much as possible. As we entered the house in Havelock, Joy was amazed to see little Kenny run into my arms! Much to my relief, we were fast and close friends from the very beginning. He actually refused to go to his mother for a while, perhaps afraid that his father would again leave him!

**CHAPTER FIVE**  
*The Battle of the Ministry*

During my time overseas I had been in regular contact with the Assemblies of God Servicemen's Department in Springfield, where Harry Jeager was the director. He had asked me to come to Springfield after I returned home from the war to help in closing out the Servicemen's Department and in coordinating a great rally. This rally would be called "Reveille Reunion," and would be a great homecoming event for all Assemblies of God military personnel and their families. The event would be held in the Central Bible Institute auditorium. I gladly accepted his offer, under the condition that housing be provided—post-war conditions left my family and me with little money.

I had planned to take a break and spend a few days relaxing in Florida with my family before going to Springfield. However, just as we were preparing to leave for Florida, I received an urgent message from Harry Jeager, telling me he had found a place for us to stay: *"Please come at once!"*

After a short stay in Florida, we traveled to Springfield, Missouri. The Servicemen's Department office was in the main Assemblies of God Headquarters building, then located on West Pacific Street. From there, I worked feverishly for many weeks, making contacts for the big event, coordinating and planning for the various festivities, and making sure the right supplies and services were reserved. As chairman of the committee responsible for arranging this party, there was much to do, but cooperation from several other workers made the effort enjoyable. The pressures of this job were a far cry from the tensions of fighting a war on foreign soil!

Our Assemblies of God chaplains would be attending the Reveille Reunion, as well as hundreds of GI's and service personnel, both men and women. The day for the event, June 16, 1946, finally

arrived, and it proved to be a wonderful time. Stories were exchanged, laughs were shared, and life-long relationships established. I was very happy with the result of our committee's work and preparation—a most rewarding event. Following the party, our committee arranged for the Servicemen's ministry to be absorbed by the national Christ's Ambassadors Youth Department. Through this experience, I felt that God had once again used me to help fulfill his special purpose at just the right time.

Another monumental event in our Fellowship's history occurred during my time in Springfield. A few weeks before the reunion celebration our office received word from Assemblies of God General Secretary J.R. Flower, who was also a member of the Springfield City Council, that the O'Reilly General Hospital in Springfield had been declared inoperative and would soon be closed. The facility had been used during the war, and now rumors held that the city would make the site available to bidders.

Prior to this, there had been much discussion within the Assemblies of God about establishing a college for those desiring higher education from a Christian worldview. Many of the talks had stalled, however, as funding and land issues had presented some roadblocks. The timing of O'Reilly Hospital shutting down could not have been more perfect! Harry Jeager asked me to accompany him to visit some city officials with the idea of putting in a bid for the hospital. On the way to the meeting, I told Harry how wonderful it would be to announce at our upcoming Reveille Reunion that we now had a college where our veterans could enroll for higher education under the new GI Bill of Rights, which provided tuition funds for military personnel. We knew it was a long shot, but it was fun to dream.

We talked to the officials and asked that the Assemblies of God be considered. The meeting went about as well as we could have hoped, but we didn't get our hopes up. A few days later, much to

our surprise, we received information from Brother Flower that the Assemblies of God had been *approved* by the government and the city...the hospital was ours! Plans were soon drawn to begin the establishment of our first Assemblies of God college, which would offer degrees in Bible and other liberal arts programs, such as business, music, science, and English. When we announced this to the Reveille Reunion, a roar of appreciation welcomed the news! What a thrill it was to be involved in the early formation of Evangel College (now Evangel University) in central Springfield.

Soon after our meeting with the city officials, Assemblies of God Assistant Superintendent Ralph Riggs, who was always a strong supporter of higher education, said to me, "Now that we have the college, our greatest need is qualified teachers. We'll have to look to you and our former chaplains to help us meet this need. Will you help us?" I thanked him and told him I would pray about it and seek God's direction. A few years later, when I was called to New York City, I even took some courses at a seminary to be prepared in case the Lord did indeed lead me to a position at the new college. But as the following pages of this book will testify, this was not God's calling for me. However, Ralph Riggs' original desire to have a Berg in a place of ministry at Evangel College was fulfilled many years later, in 1989, when my son Robert, after receiving his Ph.D. and teaching at Valley Forge Christian College a few years, was called to Springfield to serve as a Bible instructor at the former O'Reilly General Hospital. What a joy it is to have a tie to Evangel College's past, with my involvement in securing the school's original site, and to its present, through my son.



**CHAPTER SIX**  
*An Unexpected Phone Call*

During the war, the federal government transferred several of its offices to various secure places in our country. Some of these were transferred to Asheville, North Carolina. Among the people sent to Asheville was a group who had been members of the Full Gospel Church, an Assemblies of God Church in Washington, D.C. Ben Mayhan, a friend of mine, was the pastor. Ben suggested I go to Asheville and start a new church for the transferred government officials and their families. We had no definite plans at this time—we were just patiently waiting for God's leading.

We left Springfield in August 1946 and journeyed to Asheville, which is beautifully set in the Appalachian Mountains of western North Carolina. I wasted no time in contacting the people, who, thankfully, invited us to lead their church. God's direction had come swiftly this time—we had followed His leading and now His plan for us was confirmed by the loving relationship we had with our church body in Asheville. We started a church called Full Gospel Assembly with approximately 45 members. The church building was a former store on a street corner. It had upstairs facilities for sleeping quarters, and the sanctuary seated about 100.

While in Asheville, the newest member of our family arrived. Faith Elaine was born at Mission Hospital, not far from our church on Montford Avenue. She was a very happy baby, and she blessed Joy and me with her joyful laughter and smiles. Our parsonage was an apartment in our church's second floor, just above the sanctuary. Elaine was literally raised in the church from birth—you can't get much closer to the church than one floor from the sanctuary!

While pastoring in Asheville, I was elected assistant superintendent of the North Carolina District under Andrew Sterling. He lived on the opposite end of the lengthy state, on the outer banks of North Carolina. Because of the distance involved, we arranged that he would handle matters from the center of the state eastward, and I from the center west.

While attending a district conference at Edenton, N.C., in June 1948, I received a phone call from Joy with the news that my Uncle Robert Brown, Pastor of Glad Tidings Tabernacle in New York City, had passed away and my presence had been requested at the funeral. My heart immediately sank and for a moment I was numb. I had not expected to hear this.

There have been moments in my life when God's calling has cracked me over the head like a ton of bricks; other times, His leading has come slowly and progressively. This moment was one of the former; the second I heard the news about my Uncle Robert, God strongly impressed upon me that I would be taking his place at Glad Tidings. I didn't know when...I didn't know how...I was happy in my current place of ministry. But the same inner voice that spoke this calling into my spirit inspired me to simply *"trust and obey."*

I left the conference immediately and drove back to Asheville, where I was just barely able to catch the next train to New York City. Several hours later, as the train approached Grand Central Station, I fixed my gaze upon the awesome expanse of buildings and skyscrapers. Immediately a sense of destiny consumed my inner being...*I was home*. Doubt had crept into my mind during the long trip from Asheville, but I could not mistake the burden I felt for the urban metropolis that had been my boyhood home. Somehow, I *knew* my future would include Glad Tidings Tabernacle.

The funeral of Robert Brown was an unusual event, even for New York City. The church was filled to overflowing. My father and mother came from Charlotte to assist my Aunt Marie in her time of sorrow. Sister Hattie Hammond served as one of the funeral speakers, as did David McDowell, longtime personal friend of Robert Brown. Assemblies of God General Superintendent E.S. Williams attended as well. The funeral procession included many cars along a police-escorted route to a Brooklyn cemetery. Robert Brown was a dearly loved man—his humor and wit were remarkable; his words direct and to the heart.

Joy and I returned to Asheville not certain of the Lord's timing, but the calling was undeniable. A few months later, Aunt Marie asked me to move to New York to assist her with the church. After receiving counsel from E.S. Williams—and from the Great Counselor Himself—we decided to accept Aunt Marie's offer. In July 1948, we left Asheville for good and embarked on what would be our last journey to a new place of ministry. I was 30 years old, Joy 26, and we were never more certain of the Lord's calling. We were going *home*.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### *The Founders of Glad Tidings: History and Legacy*

Glad Tidings Tabernacle has a unique history, much of which can, and should, be traced to the vision of Marie Burgess.

Marie was 17 years old when she felt the Lord directing her to follow Him. She was a typical young teenager, taking great pleasure in worldly excitement: dancing, card playing, theater going, etc. But as she testifies, and I quote: *"When I was nineteen I had a dream that I was dying and right before me was an awful pit of hell, dark and deep, where I was soon to go. I began to cry for Jesus to save me and He came and stood at the end of my cot, saying unto me, 'Will you forsake all and follow me?' I instantly replied, 'Yes, Lord, all.' As I spoke He reached down, put His hand that had been pierced, took mine, and began to lift me up. Then I awoke. But the dream was so real to me that I continued to repeat that consecration that I had made to Him in my dream, promising Him that I would do all I could to tell the lost world that Jesus could save them, too."*

The dream marked the beginning of her calling. She instantly became aware that she had been chosen by God to walk in His way and His plan for her life. She soon enrolled in Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, and after two years of schooling returned home to Eau Claire, Wisconsin, with a sense of calling to be a foreign missionary. She attended the Ruckland College Preparatory School in Eau Claire for almost two years and then went back to Moody for the third year.

While she was in Chicago in 1906 she heard of some strange happenings in Zion City, Illinois, where people were experiencing what is recorded in Acts chapter 2, verse 4, *"And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."* She was told by others that this



was “of the devil,” but she wondered how the devil could work in the lives of real Christians whom she knew loved and served the Lord wholeheartedly. She became very curious about this phenomenon and finally ventured to Zion City to see for herself. She felt God's presence and power in the meetings. Marie's birthday was just a few days ahead, and she longed to receive this Holy Spirit baptism as a gift from God. Because of her great expectation and anticipation, she was not surprised when God did just that for her.

*She said, “As I was under the [Holy] Spirit's power, it seemed as though I went from one country to another, praying in a language of that field. There appeared to be great walls surrounding each field, but as the Lord prayed through me, the walls crumbled and fell. I felt it must be what God wants me to do. I thought: I want to completely devote myself to spreading the Gospel and entering whatever doors of ministry the Lord would open for me.”*

And the Lord did open doors for her as she came to New York City in 1907 to help proclaim this new outpouring of the Holy Spirit and teach the Biblical doctrine of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. She was asked to go to the Big City to help clear up some misunderstandings regarding this new Pentecostal experience. She intended to stay only a few months, anticipating that perhaps this was God's way of eventually taking her to the foreign mission field where she so longed to go and serve the Lord. But God had other plans for His faithful servant.

Although Marie attended the Christian Missionary Alliance Church on 8th Avenue on Sunday mornings, she held house meetings at her home on Sunday afternoons. Many received the infilling of the Holy Spirit at these meetings, as Marie passionately prayed for the people.

As word spread about the power of Marie's Sunday meetings, many believers opened their homes for her ministry. She was invited to attend the home meetings and proclaim the powerful message she had received from the Lord. At that time, the Pentecostal doctrine and practice was brand new, even to seasoned Christians. These small gatherings developed into larger meetings that eventually necessitated the rental of a storefront on West 41st Street. Many "tarrying meetings" later, the location also became too small. So Marie relocated her meeting place to a former mission on 42nd Street. This mission became Glad Tidings Hall, where Marie led five weekly "seeking services" (every night except Saturday and Monday).

Marie did not want to interfere with Sunday morning church attendance for the existing area churches, including the Missionary Alliance, where she was attending. For this reason, Glad Tidings did not have a Sunday morning service for many years. The main worship service was in the afternoon. Marie always preached at this service. Later, when Brother Brown joined her, he spoke at a weekly Sunday night evangelistic service. He directed his preaching to unbelievers, as regular attendees were encouraged to bring their unsaved friends each Sunday night. Many accepted Christ at Glad Tidings' altars in those early days. Pastor A.B. Simpson of the Christian Missionary Alliance Church encouraged Marie Burgess in her early efforts to build the church body, and was a great blessing to Glad Tidings.

One of the first ministers Marie met when she came to New York City was Rev. David McDowell. He had been attending camp meetings in New Rochelle, New York, just across the Hudson River. The Holy Ghost had been poured out there, and many students had begun to attend the meetings.

Several of the future leaders of the Assemblies of God were filled with the Holy Spirit at these New Rochelle meetings, including

David McDowell and W.I. Evans. Some Canadians who had come to attend the Bible school at Nyack received the infilling of the Holy Spirit at New Rochelle, including my own father-in-law, R.E. Stenall.

In 1908, Marie Burgess had her first anniversary meeting in Glad Tidings Hall. Brother David McDowell served as speaker for the special occasion. From that time on, he became a close friend of Brother and Sister Brown. According to Brother McDowell, *"It was during these meetings that I became acquainted with Robert Brown and soon learned that he was planning to make his presence and help in the mission a permanent matter by marrying Marie Burgess."*

Robert Brown was a born-again Irish policeman who was licensed as a Methodist lay-minister to conduct open air meetings and do evangelistic work. At one time, this former Irish "bobby" (or cop) went to London, and had the honor of escorting the future Queen Elizabeth while on duty there.

When he migrated to the United States, he took his outreach ministry to the streets and wherever he could witness for the Lord. He also worked as a civil engineer. He frequently visited the meetings at Glad Tidings Hall and became genuinely interested in Pentecost. During the same time he also developed another interest: the young pastor of the new church, Marie Burgess.

Brother Brown was well trained in Methodist doctrine and had a gift for communicating doctrine to a lay audience. He was asked to preach the opening service at the new Glad Tidings Hall on West 42nd Street and he dared to speak on the subject of Pentecost, taking his text from Acts 2:4. When he mentioned the words of the Scripture, *"They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance,"* he heard a voice within saying, *"They all but you!"* The same





**Robert Brown**

words rang continually in his mind until he could speak his sermon no longer. And he was among the first to kneel at the altar and stayed there until he knew that he had become part of the “all” who spoke in tongues. After many months of seeking God's great outpouring on his life, he finally received the blessed gift. When asked if he had received the baptism in the Holy Spirit, he proudly responded, *“I have the Holy Spirit. And all the devils in hell can't persuade me otherwise!”* This was his initiation into the fullness of the Pentecostal life promised to all believers.

Not long after this he proposed marriage to Marie Burgess. She gladly accepted and on Oct. 14, 1909, they were married in her home church in Zion City, Illinois. They immediately returned to work as co-pastors in New York City at Glad Tidings Hall. God continued to bless their ministry, and many were added to the church until they again started looking for another location where larger quarters could be secured. Though the young couple had enlarged the building at 42nd Street, a continuous stream of new converts and new members prompted the need for expansion. Several years passed and the church continued to grow. Finally, in 1921, Robert and Marie heard of a church on West 33rd Street, adjacent to the main post office, which was being vacated by the Collegiate Baptist Church. The church planned to unite with another Baptist church uptown to form the Calvary Baptist Church, which would be located on West 57th Street in Manhattan. The vacated church's selling price—\$150,000—seemed far beyond sound financial reasoning, according to Brother Brown.

But Sister Brown had other ideas. She believed wholeheartedly that God would make a way for her church to occupy that building. She even took a few of her most faithful members and actually traversed the sidewalk in front of the church on 33rd Street, claiming the Scriptural promise, *“every place the sole of your foot shall tread shall be yours” (Joshua 1:3).*

Several months later, as Sister Brown was ministering in California, she received a telegram from her husband that reported that the church's sale price had been reduced to \$105,000. He asked in the telegram if she thought perhaps they should consider the property at this reduced price. Her immediate reply was, "That's God's will. Take it!" They only had \$35,000 in their building fund at the time, but this was enough for the down payment, and they took the building on November 1, 1921. The Browns promised the Lord and the people that as soon as the mortgage was paid, the church would immediately make its mark in foreign missions support—for this was Sister Brown's vision for Glad Tidings from the beginning. The Lord honored this pledge—in four short years they had paid off the mortgage in full!

In the fall of 1925, the church was filled to capacity to celebrate the burning of the mortgage papers. Shouts of praise and joy to God reverberated throughout the building as Brother Brown burned the mortgage before the congregation. That same day, the church took its first missions pledge, which amounted to \$8,000. That special day marked the beginning of a remarkable tradition of Glad Tidings missions giving, which faithfully continues to this day.

As Brother Brown burned the mortgage on that memorable day he wore an African missionary helmet while draped in an American flag. The symbolism was obvious: Glad Tidings would support both home and foreign missions. Through the years that followed, the church's annual missions convention was held during the same fall season. During the convention, missionaries from various countries visited to present the challenges of their respective fields—particularly on Missionary Sunday, the last day of the convention. During this emotional service, each missionary marched down the aisles in native costume and gave testimony to what God was doing overseas, with help and support from churches like Glad Tidings Tabernacle. Many have gone to the

mission field directly from the Tabernacle after receiving the call from God. Each one is encouraged to complete their training in one of our Bible schools before receiving endorsement from local and national Assemblies of God officials to prepare for the field.

Time and space does not permit me to list each name and place of ministry—but I can say with confidence that each one has been used of God for His glory and our edification and blessing. May it ever be so. There is also not sufficient space to mention individuals who have given of their time and talent in various departments of the church over the years. But special honor should be given for the work that God has done in the Tabernacle through the work of Elizabeth Shuster, who was untiringly devoted to the Tabernacle and to Pastors Robert and Marie Brown. Sister Shuster first came to Glad Tidings in 1913. She was active in the Sunday School as a teacher and secretary, and after completing three years at Bethel Bible Institute, became the personal secretary of Pastor and Mrs. Brown. She faithfully served in this important office for many years before moving away and eventually going to be with the Lord. She had been healed of a malignant fibroid tumor, and she testified of her healing every chance she got—through the spoken word and the printed page. She was solely responsible for editing the *Glad Tidings Herald*, which was published monthly for many years. She was faithful in service to the Lord at the Tabernacle. And to Him we give all the glory.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

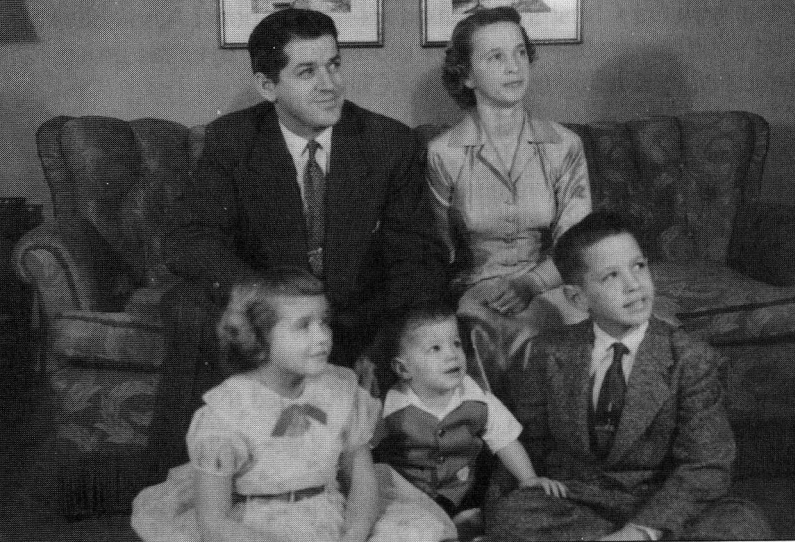
### *Changing Times*

We bought a small trailer to haul our few belongings from Asheville and set out for the “Big Apple” in the summer of 1948. We arrived in the city right on schedule, and began setting up house at an apartment that was arranged for us at 380 Riverside Drive, just off Broadway and 110th Street in the great borough of Manhattan. By this time Kenny, our young son, was ready for kindergarten. We enrolled him in a school at Riverside Church on 121st Street. Once again he started at the top, as his class met on the top floor.

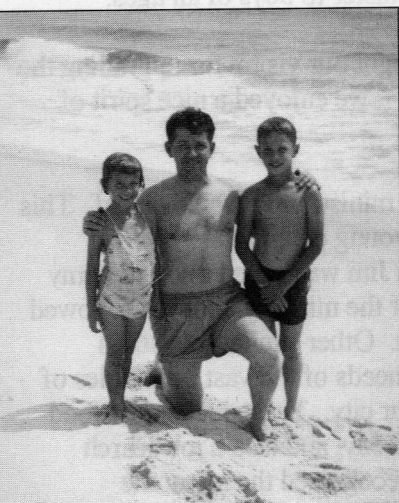
The next year, before Kenny started first grade, we felt led to move. After a short search, we found a nice Long Island house, which was located within walking distance of the elementary, junior high and senior high schools. The house was in New Hyde Park in Nassau County—this proved to be God's choosing for us, and we lived there until May 2000 (we've since moved to Springfield, MO). Since the new house was a good distance from the city, I understood that I would have to endure daily subway travel. In my eyes, this was just simply a minor detail—one of the “*all things that work together*” in His plan (Romans 8:28).

In 1952, the newest member of our family arrived to bless our home. Robert Alan was born on December 28th of that year. Bobby proved to be an excellent student, and he also loved sports—just like his dad. I also noticed that he exhibited great leadership qualities from early boyhood.

When we came onboard at Glad Tidings we immediately recognized some areas that needed attention. One high priority was the youth program. The church had a strong Young People's Society (youth group) at that time. We were able to integrate this



**The growing Berg family, 1953. L-R—Elaine, Robert and Ken**



**Elaine, Stan and Kenny on the beach in Lavallette, N.J. Robert and Marie Brown owned a beach house here for decades, and Stan continued to manage the seafront cottage until 1998.**

group with our Christ's Ambassadors—the national Assemblies of God youth program—to create a more exciting, dynamic group, dedicated to winning teenagers for Christ.

Once the youth situation had been solidified, the staff's next goal was to strengthen the women's ministry. The ladies had been meeting regularly and were organized for many years in a group called "The Gleaners." We worked to help guide the group into our Assemblies of God structure of the Women's Missionary Council, later called Women's Ministries. Various ladies took responsibility for this important ministry. Joy became president of the group, and through her leadership it formed the Missionettes, a ministry to our young girls.

In like manner, we moved our men's activities into the Men's Fellowship of the Assemblies of God, later called the Men's Ministries. Among other things, the men developed into a dynamic street witnessing team. The group also started the Royal Rangers, a program designed to minister to boys of all ages.

During this time the entire staff caught our vision for upgrading the church's departments and activities—we enjoyed a nice spirit of unity.

The church eventually developed a ministry to reach the deaf. This special outreach was first led by a young couple, James (now deceased) and Kitty Cotton. When Jim was called into the Army as a chaplain, Croft Pentz took over the ministry and was followed by William and the late Mrs. Lopez. Other similar ministries sprouted to help meet the growing needs of the vast multitudes of ethnic and cultural inhabitants of our city. These included a food pantry to help feed and clothe the needy, and also a job search ministry for the unemployed. We recognized the awesome responsibility we had to be a lighthouse in a dark city. As a church we sought God for His sovereign plan for our outreach. More than

anything in the world, I wanted to oversee a church that was using the resources it had been given to reach souls for Christ in one of the world's neediest centers of influence. What an incredible privilege our church enjoyed!

The years have brought many cultural changes to our nation and to New York City. Glad Tidings' outreach ministries have met new challenges and changes, not only on the foreign mission field, but also at home, in our own communities. Jesus teaches us to first reach those in our homes. He did not intend that we lose this first love in order to meet other needs. As the Metropolis has changed, so have we tried to meet the changing needs of those areas. This imperative has resulted in workers going into Chinatown, Harlem, Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island, Long Island, and all over the city to proclaim the gospel.

Glad Tidings Tabernacle, therefore, became a witness to the entire city. Because New York City naturally produces a high population turnover, our attendance ebbed considerably as members relocated. It often took years to rebuild and refill the vacant pews, though this has been the way that God chose to work through the church and the shifting migration of ethnic populations that have come our way.

My life and ministry at Glad Tidings Tabernacle has been a challenge and an opportunity provided by God. Through the years, after doing most of the pastoral work at Glad Tidings, I began to realize why God permitted me to serve as a U.S. Army Chaplain in Europe during World War II. A large part of that calling had to do with His future plans for me in New York City. Our urban society is composed of ethnic groups from all over Europe, as well as other countries. And, because of my overseas experiences, I was better able to relate to those God sent my way for ministry, regardless of their ethnic background. Our church had a sign



outside the building reading, “The Church For All People.” This meant all races—our Messiah died for them all.

We started special services for the Spanish, until they outgrew our provisions and started their own churches. Much the same was done for other ethnic groups. Our Chinese ministry soon moved to Chinatown—this effort led directly to the development of a lively, vibrant church with Chinese leadership. Our effort in the Bronx, started by one of our members, Mary Signorelli, is another fruitful Glad Tidings outreach. Our effort to reach the Jews has been blessed—we now have an organized ministry in the very heart of the most religious Jewish community in Brooklyn. Gertrude Clonce, now with the Lord, started this ministry and today Dr. Phil and Rev. Linda Goble direct the Beth Shalom Jewish Center.

We used to have street meetings on 8th Avenue and 33rd Street, in front of the General Post Office and across the street from Madison Square Garden. Our young people led many of these meetings—they were ablaze with love and zeal, and the response to the altar calls was good. We had outdoor services in various housing projects throughout Manhattan, using our own people as helpers, along with groups from other churches. God blessed these efforts as well, especially in the summers. The willing and faithful laborers of this harvest field will have their reward when God makes his Accounting Day a time of rejoicing. It's quite a challenge to do outdoor ministry today, mainly because of the necessary restrictions imposed upon such activities and the many anti-religious and anti-God forces attempting to hinder the Gospel's proclamation.

There was a time when we could and did enter housing projects, ring doorbells, distribute literature, and witness to people. Now it is more difficult, but still we persevere. God has not stopped telling us to “go into all the world.” And what He commands, He still helps us do. All He wants is our faithfulness.

At one time Glad Tidings Tabernacle had a strong radio ministry. Our show was heard on the airwaves throughout the metropolitan area and into lower New England. We received reports from many whose lives were changed as a result of this ministry. For many years, the broadcast was live from the church, during the afternoon service. Later we taped our broadcast, which was heard daily over various stations. Sister Betty McDowell came from Philadelphia to direct our radio choir and a large orchestra, which filled the front floor before the platform.

Music has always been a special part of worship at Glad Tidings Tabernacle. When the church left the facility on 42nd Street in 1921 and moved to the new quarters on West 33rd Street, everyone had to become adjusted to a stately building with modern church pews, a large balcony that extended on both sides and in the rear of the sanctuary, a high platform and an impressive altar rail extending in front of the platform. A beautiful pipe organ was located in the rear balcony with huge pipes across its rear. Pastor Brown disliked the organ, because having been a member of the staid Methodist Church, he thought it was too formal and traditional. So he had the organ removed. The piano was on the floor in front of the platform, to the speaker's right. Only the pulpit and the pulpit chairs graced the platform. Even the choir sang from the balcony. A large orchestra occupied practically the entire floor space before the platform with various instruments. Ted Strickland, Al Malachuck, and Ted Mendocha were among those who faithfully directed the orchestra through the years. After Pastor Brown's passing, Sister Brown had the organ replaced. But by that time, electric organs had become common and were more versatile, so a Baldwin Organ was placed at one end of the platform. The platform was enlarged so that a large grand piano could be placed on the opposite end, creating a balanced appearance and permitting the pianist and the organist to see one another for better coordination.



During the 1940s, a Glad Tidings youngster grew up demonstrating unusual talent. His mother had dedicated him to the Lord at an early age. After Sunday School one Sunday afternoon, Dino Kartsonakis sat down at the piano at the age of three and played with one finger "Jesus Loves Me." He started playing the piano during services at a very young age. Before long he excelled not only in piano performance, but in choir directing as well. In his late teens, Dino was called into military service and later ministered with Katherine Kuhlman. He was greatly missed, but the Lord's timing for the church was perfect. Soon after Dino's departure, a young man from Georgia by the name of Hugh Waddy came to New York City. Hugh was looking for a church home and had a desire to use his God-given abilities in ministry both at the piano and in directing the choir. He first attended Glad Tidings in 1967, and began serving as the music director soon after. To this day, he remains faithful to the church.

We are very thankful for God's faithfulness, and for these special servants and others who have dedicated their talent to Him. It is indeed wonderful to be a part of the family of God.

## CHAPTER NINE

### *Teen Challenge*

A great outreach that God began at Glad Tidings Tabernacle has had more impact on our city, our country and our world than we could have ever imagined. For many years New York City had been plagued with youth problems stemming from drugs, gangs, violence, and infidelity. In the 1950's teen gangs had actually taken over certain areas of the city. Police were afraid to confront them. In this time of anxiety throughout our city I said to my Aunt Marie Brown, "If God is the God we believe Him to be, and the Holy Spirit is the Power we claim Him to be, and we know such is the case, why can't we believe that God will move in and do something about this situation confronting us in the teen gangs?" We began having special prayer meetings to lay this serious need before the Lord.

Not long after we started praying, in 1959, I received a telephone call from Reginald Yake, a pastor in Irvington, New Jersey. Yake told me that he had a young pastor from Pennsylvania in his office who had been telling him the burden of his heart to reach the young gangs of New York City. I said to Pastor Yake, "Who is this young Pastor?" And he replied, "Well, I think you ought to talk to him." So I said, "Well, send him over." The next day he visited and gave me the same story that he had told Pastor Yake—how God had impressed on him to reach these teen gangs who were disturbing so many of our communities. I finally said to him, "I've heard you unburden your heart; now let me unburden mine and tell you what's on our hearts."

I proceeded to tell him how we'd been praying that God would send someone with this burden to our city. I told him how we so *desperately* wanted to see God do something in our city to prove He had control of those young lives. I told this young man, David



Sen. David Williams, founder of the...

Wilkerson, “We’ve talked long enough; we know the problem is real. Now instead of talking, let’s starting doing something about it.” This took place in April 1959.

After some planning, we developed an organizational structure for a new ministry to reach the teen gangs of New York City. We needed a treasurer, and I suggested a young man from our church, Paul Dilella, whom I knew had a similar burden to reach the gangs. He was a New York City policeman who worked with the Transit Authority on subways and had much experience with unruly gangs. When I phoned him, I told him a young man and I had just organized Teenage Evangelism, and explained our plans to him. He was interested, and said, “Who is this young pastor? Where are the funds?” I tried to explain briefly who Dave Wilkerson was and then told him, “We have no funds right now. That’s why we need you to be the treasurer and help us raise funds.” He consented and thus became our first treasurer and an enthusiastic promoter from the very beginning.

Later, when the youth drug problems spread to our local communities, we began to realize the true magnitude of the problem we faced—so we decided to change the ministry’s title to Teen Challenge. I began to spread the Teen Challenge message to the other sectional ministers as we gathered in various meetings, in an attempt to solicit their help in this much-needed outreach. Many were skeptical and fearful of this bold proposition, but others caught the vision immediately. We started the ministry in faith that God would clear the way for us, and gradually other workers entered the scene and cooperated.

Little did we know that 40 years later, in 1998, Teen Challenge would consist of 111 residential programs, 19 crisis and evangelism outreach centers in 43 states, and more than 100 centers in 60 countries. Nor could we have guessed that in 1962, Teen Challenge would purchase a farm in Rheresburg, Penn., to

serve as a rehabilitation center for graduates of the program to be trained to re-enter society and live productive lives for the glory of God. To God be the glory for another testimony of his called, chosen, and faithful ministries.

Teen Challenge became a place where drug addicts were sent to be delivered from the control of Satan. Dedicated workers prayed with the addicts, counseled them, and stayed with them day and night. We saw many miracles of transformation in the early days of the ministry, and we continue to hear wonderful testimonies of God's saving grace to this day.

It has been my esteemed privilege to serve as chairman and president of Teenage Evangelism/Teen Challenge from the beginning. Dave and I are still the best of friends, and since he pastors a lively church on Times Square—just a few blocks from Glad Tidings Tabernacle—we still maintain close fellowship and share brotherly love and respect for each other. In October 1998, Dave Wilkerson spoke at Teen Challenge's 40th Anniversary Celebration, which was held in one of Brooklyn's largest restaurants. The event was a celebration of thanksgiving, as we reflected on God's many blessings through the years of Teen Challenge ministry. Wilkerson also challenged and encouraged everyone to continue laboring—for God's greatest days lie ahead.

Another very important ministry developed from our Teen Challenge outreach. Over time, we realized that we had been neglecting women, who were also participants in the drug war in our city. We were able to bring this to the attention of some of the leading businessmen of the city, including Walter Hoving, who was president and chairman of the Tiffany's store on Fifth Avenue in Manhattan. He was quick to respond with financial support, and this generous gift led to a fundraising campaign for a women's home in the city. Eventually, the necessary funds were raised, and



in 1962 we dedicated our first women's facility, located opposite the Teen Challenge office on Clinton Avenue in Brooklyn.

This women's home was birthed out of a need for expansion—there was simply not enough room to accommodate those wanting to come to Teen Challenge. Girls were literally being brought off the street—prostitutes, drug addicts, homeless single mothers, etc.

In 1967 we were able to acquire a lovely country site at Garrison, located in upstate New York on the Hudson River—not far from West Point. We named this facility the Walter Hoving Home. It is still functioning for the Lord to this day, operating under the leadership of John and Elsie Benton, who were on staff at the home from its inception. Teen Challenge also has a similar home in California. Many ladies, young and old, have been rescued from the streets and have been transformed at these homes by the power of the living Gospel. God has vindicated His calling on Dave Wilkerson and me. He has blessed the ministry beyond measure, and we are grateful for the leaders who have been faithful in this great ministry.

John Benton, president of the Walter Hoving Home, recently shared this testimony with those on the home's mailing list:

*I'll never forget Donna.*

*In fact, she almost caused me a heart attack!*

*I got to know Donna out on the street. She was a drug addict out there working as a prostitute to support her habit.*

*When I first approached her, she was rather nonchalant, and as I talked to her about Jesus she kept looking over my shoulder and around.*

*I came back the next week and saw her again, thinking I'd try to tell her about the Lord and invite her to the Walter Hoving Home. No response.*

*The next week I saw her again. I went through the same story, but she just kind of nodded her head and really wouldn't respond.*

*The fourth time was the day that I remember well!*

*Donna was standing on the corner and as I walked up behind her and greeted her, she spun around and looked at me. All of a sudden, she yelled, "Oh, no!" and took off running down the street.*

*For a moment I just stood there kind of dazed. I couldn't imagine what in the world triggered that response. Then I began chasing her. I kept yelling, "Donna! Donna! Wait! It's me, John Benton from the Walter Hoving Home."*

*I was out of breath, but finally after about three blocks, I was able to catch up with her. Again she spun around. "Get away from me! Get away from me!" she screamed.*

*"Donna, what in the world is the matter? What have I done?"*

*She took a step closer and pointed her finger in my face. "Every time you talk to me and walk away, I get busted. You're part of the cops!" she exclaimed.*

*I did my best to explain to her what I was all about. I was not a cop. Finally, I guess she believed me and seemed to respond. I gave her some of our literature and she thanked me. And--as you might expect—a miracle happened.*

*Donna did come to the Walter Hoving Home and Christ dramatically changed her life.*

*After Donna graduated from the program she got married and had a little boy. Unfortunately, the marriage didn't work out, but we kept in contact with her and her son over the years.*

*Just the other day Donna called and said she wanted us to see Nathan.*

*We couldn't believe it when Donna and Nathan walked in the door. There was Nathan—a full-fledged Marine with his uniform on! You know, that impressive kind with the fancy jacket and white gloves.*

*There he stood with a big smile on his face.*

*Donna was beaming and we were proud, too. Nathan is a fine Christian young man who grew up under the godly influence of his “new” mother.*

*This is just one of many stories we constantly witness here at our Home. God has been so good in allowing us to see the power of the Gospel...a life changed by Jesus!*

Glad Tidings' effort in support of foreign missions was the highest priority by both Robert and Marie Brown. Marie had originally felt a call to be a foreign missionary, but God's calling took her to New York City, the most needy mission field in the world, where she would shepherd a church that became a leading missions-giving church in the Assemblies of God. Teen Challenge was and is a natural extension of the missions emphasis of Glad Tidings. The church faithfully supported the ministry, the staff, Dave Wilkerson, and the young men and women who progressed through the program.

## CHAPTER TEN

### *Hidden Valley*

Sometimes our best efforts for the Lord turn out to be failures—at least in human terms. We experienced some of these refining moments over the years at Glad Tidings.

At one time, we were searching for a place where we could establish a children's camp. Glad Tidings had acquired a large farm in upstate New York when Robert Brown was pastor. It had a large farmhouse with a barn and fields for grain and cattle. Pastor Brown was able to purchase this property and take hundreds of children every summer to enjoy a fun-filled week of church camp. Most of these children were from the streets. Many of them attended our regular Friday afternoon children's church, led for many years by Marie Berman and her helpers. Several testimonies tell of how God changed countless lives at this mountain farm/camp in upstate New York. Unfortunately, however, the church was forced to close the camp because it could not meet strict state building code regulations.

A few years later the vision for a kids camp was renewed, and after much effort and labor, we were able to secure a parcel of rural land outside of Kingston, New York. The land was located on the New York Thruway—a 200-acre property that included a mile-long lake, fields for ballgames, and several lovely houses.

After some promotion, some other ministers in the city became interested in the campground, and a group of us, in 1963, organized what became Hidden Valley Conference Grounds. Hidden Valley was organized as a place of retreat for churches in the metropolitan area to bring groups for recreation and fun, as well as for seeking the Lord. Marie Brown was one of the driving forces behind this project. Her burden for missions extended to the children, also—she loved them very much. The property offered

plenty of space for growth and development. Eventually, cottages were erected and facilities were constructed for seasonal sports—swimming and boating in the summer, and skiing in the winter.

It should be recognized that the Lord did indeed provide the land for Hidden Valley, and yet it also required the help of many giving what they could to make it possible. We arranged for lease agreements on the land if outside parties wanted to build on it. The lease provision meant the land could not be fully sold. This unique situation even led state Assemblies of God officials to consider moving the district headquarters from Syracuse to Hidden Valley, thus positioning it closer to the New York City metropolitan area. This idea never came to fruition, but we did organize the Southern New York Gospel Association, a legally recognized religious body organized to help provide a suitable camp and recreation area for Assemblies of God adherents in southern New York. We had no official Assemblies of God campground at that time. We had campgrounds in the northern areas—upstate New York—but nothing for the New York metro area. The group tried desperately to meet the need—and *almost* succeeded. There were financial barriers that proved too difficult to overcome. Many people contributed to the project to help it succeed, but the project proved to be too big—there just wasn't enough money to carry it out. But we did have several wonderful years on the Hidden Valley grounds.

We owe much appreciation to those who gave of their time, money and prayers to help during the years the project was in operation, including my own brother, Paul Berg, who moved with his family to Hidden Valley to manage the camp while it was in operation. Many speakers and evangelists visited the camp through the years, especially during the youth camps. Willard Cantelon and Al Garr were among the many used of God to bless our conferences. Various groups, churches, and organizations shared in the blessings provided. Many were saved, filled with the Holy Spirit,

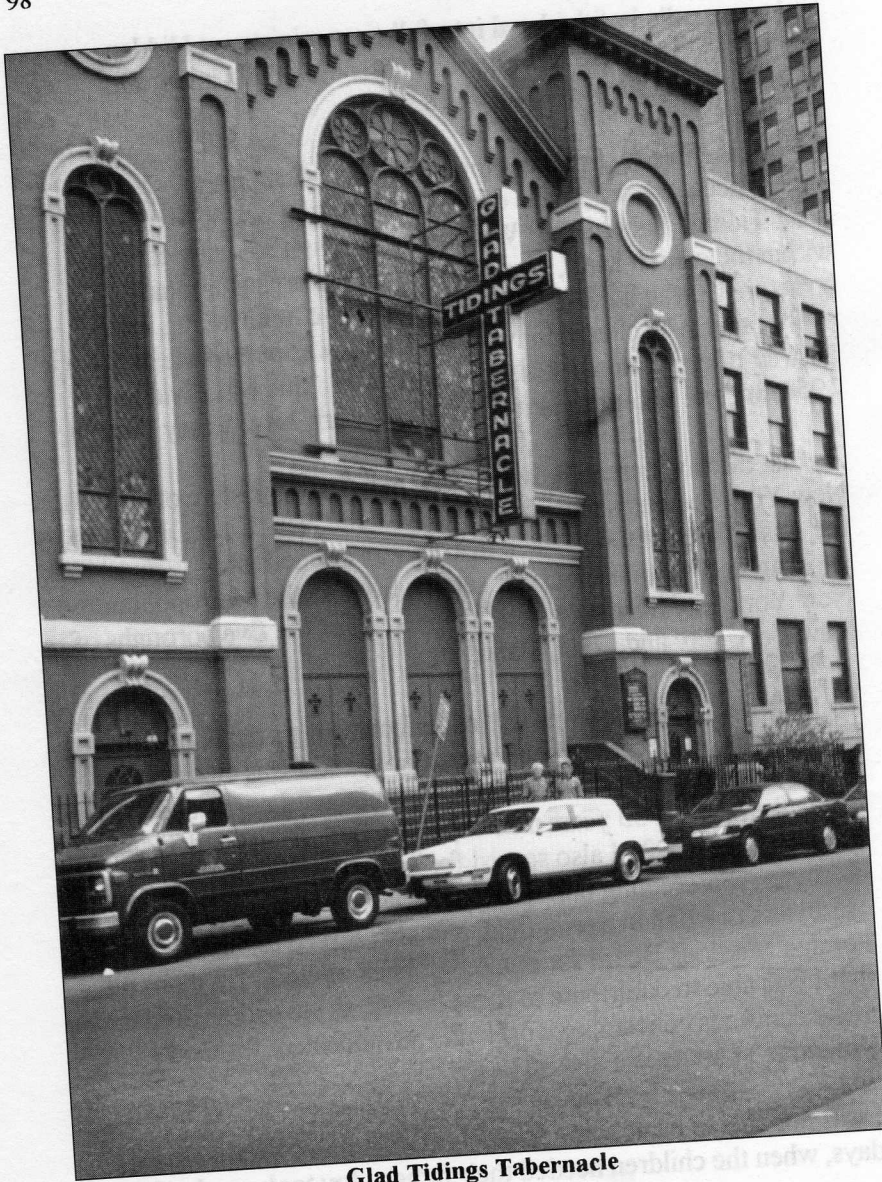
and some called of the Lord into full-time ministry at Hidden Valley. God alone knows the final outcome of this important venture during those fruitful years.

It is impossible to give a complete account of the many experiences Joy and I have encountered during our 45 years at Glad Tidings Tabernacle. We've gone through so many changes within the church itself, as well as within the organizational structure to which the church belongs. Our church, along with every other A/G church in New York City was part of the Eastern District of our national Assemblies of God. This was divided in 1954, and we became a part of the New York-New Jersey District.

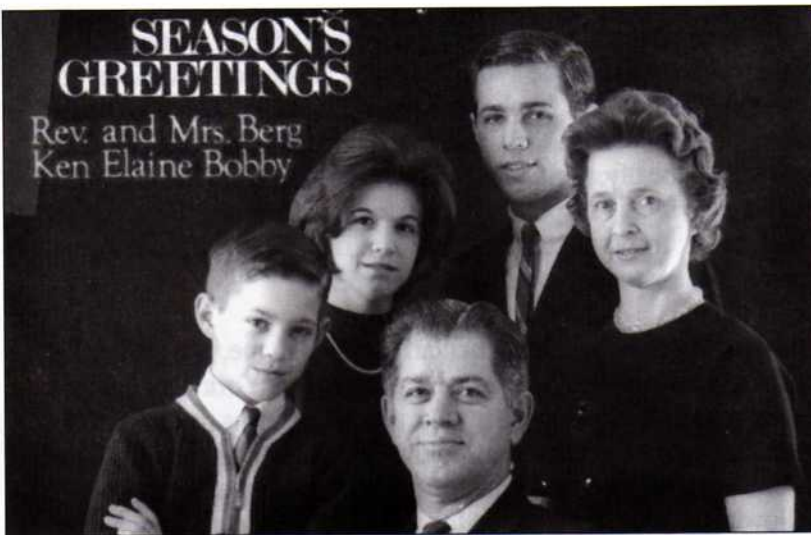
As that district increased, we divided again and the state of New York became a district of its own—the New York District of the Assemblies of God. Each district was divided into geographical sections, and our section became the Metropolitan New York City Section, which included all of the five boroughs of New York City and Long Island.

By 1959, as the district was still experiencing significant growth, New York City became a separate section, and I was elected sectional presbyter at the first business meeting. I continued in this office for the next 33 years until my retirement from Glad Tidings Tabernacle in 1992. I also served for many years as general presbyter, representing our New York District at the annual general presbyters meeting in Springfield, and also served on the National Foreign Missions Board for our Assemblies of God. I'm thankful that I was able to contribute to these bodies, as we endeavored to make decisions concerning worldwide advancement for God's Kingdom, at home and abroad.

I was not able to be at home as much as I would've liked in those days, when the children needed their father. Joy took much of the



Glad Tidings Tabernacle



**The Bergs' 1965 Christmas Card**

child-rearing responsibilities on herself—she gave Ken, Elaine and Bob the love and care that they needed. She was also there to help them through life's daily struggles. God could not have given me a more faithful companion—both for the ministry and for our roles as parents.

New York City hosted the 1965 World's Fair. I was a member of the local Protestant Council of the churches of New York City at that time, and we decided that we wanted to have an opportunity to take advantage of the big event in any way we could. Many groups from this committee were asked to provide booths for exhibiting their various ministries at the fair.

While attending our general presbyters meeting in Springfield, I appealed to our leadership to have an Assemblies of God booth at the fair. Brother Scott, the Assemblies' assistant general superintendent, who was very instrumental in helping advance the Gospel in the States and around the world, was greatly impressed with this challenge. The request was eventually approved, and we



made arrangements to have our Assemblies of God outreach ministry displayed at the World's Fair. I arranged for various workers, pastors, and laypeople to man the booth. Because of our efforts, many became acquainted with our faith, mission, and outreach—locally, nationally, and worldwide. Our Glad Tidings Tabernacle family responded nobly to this effort and deserves much credit for its success. They were faithful to the Lord in giving witness to the power of the Gospel.

Another experience, one particularly special to me, is worthy of space in these pages. As presbyter of our New York City Section, I was in charge of planning for our annual business meeting. One year, during the 1960s, I went to the Hempstead Assembly of God to make proper arrangements for our sectional meeting the following day. After the meeting, I walked to my car, which was parallel parked along Front St.

As I prepared to unlock the door (I was on the street side, not the curb side of the car), I saw a car coming toward me from the opposite direction. There was no traffic facing this car, and the street was wide. But the car kept coming toward me! I thought surely he would not be foolish enough to hit me, but then...it happened! The car ran right into me! The jarring impact *lifted* me off the street! The key in my hand snapped off in the lock, my head hit the outside rearview mirror, knocking it off, and one of my shoes flew off my foot and landed on another parked car. I was left lying in the middle of the street, dazed and not quite sure what had just happened.

Soon after the accident, someone pulled up to park behind me. The driver, Leon Cook, said to his wife, "What's that poor fellow doing out there in the middle of the street anyhow?"

Word of the situation soon reached those inside the church. A song service had already started, but people began to come out to

see what was happening. The song leader was Charles Schaeffer. He later apologized to me for saying to the congregation jokingly, "Whoever is responsible for breaking up this service will answer to God!" Of course, he didn't know that it was one of his best friends who had caused this disastrous disturbance.

Someone called 911, and immediately an ambulance was on the scene. When I relate this to others, I suggest, "If you ever have an accident, be sure to have it a block from the hospital as I did." I was given first aid in route, and in the emergency room I was given a thorough examination. The doctors were especially concerned about any possible head injuries. I remember saying, "Doctor, there's nothing up there anyhow...no need to worry." But I did ask for some adhesive tape, as my trousers had been torn all the way down the leg!

Joy had been at home, and several of the ladies hurried to inform her of my accident. She drove right to the hospital, not knowing what to expect. You can imagine her surprise when she met me preparing to leave the hospital with a bandage over my eye and forehead in those taped-up trousers! What a joyful reunion it was for Joy and me. I was in bed just a day or so before going back to my regular schedule. A subsequent checkup by the doctors showed no negative effects. The doctor was most surprised! Thank God for His faithfulness! Psalm 121:5 says that the Lord is *"thy keeper, thy protector and guardian."* The same God of Battle, who had protected me on World War II's "front" lines, had kept me from harm again on "Front" street in Hempstead, Long Island! I should add also that it was no coincidence that not one man from Glad Tidings Tabernacle was killed in World War II, and that so many faithful members have been kept and preserved in good health to their old age...even to this day. Psalm 91:16 says, *"With long life will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation."*

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### *A Missionary Journey*

In 1966 I was privileged to fly with Dave Wilkerson to Europe for special meetings. I arranged to go to Rota, in the southern part of Spain, for our annual Assemblies of God Servicemen's Retreat to be the guest speaker. My route took me to Lisbon, Portugal; then to Seville, France; and finally to Rota, located on the Gulf of Cadiz on the Atlantic Ocean. After the retreat, I was also called in for an interview at a local military radio station.

As we flew into Berlin we knew that God had big plans for us. Dick Fulmer, a missionary there, met us and drove us to see the Remegen Bridge. He took us to Bonn, Cologne, and Aachen in Germany. We also visited a U.S. military cemetery in France, as well as some other places I had been in World War II, including Liege, Namur, and Brussels, all in Belgium. Brother Dave usually preached at our services, but the rest of us had opportunities to speak as well. Large crowds of people poured into the services—they wanted us to keep preaching by the hour and did not want us to leave! Brother Leach, another missionary, took us to Amsterdam and Hague, after which we also toured Scandinavia, including Oslo, Norway; Helsinki, Finland; and Stockholm, Sweden. After meetings in each of these cities we flew back home by way of Montreal, Canada.

From Montreal, Dave and I parted ways, as I had received word that Joy's mother had passed away and the funeral was to be near their home in Canada the following day. I arrived just in time to attend the funeral and be with the family. It was a sad day, but I was glad I had the opportunity to bid farewell to my saintly and beloved mother-in-law.

Once again, in 1967, Dave and Don Wilkerson (Don is Dave's brother—he was also involved with Teen Challenge), Ralph

Wilkerson (not related to the brothers) and I flew to Europe, this time to Rome. Dave planned the trip for the purpose of preaching and encouragement to the masses, and a little sightseeing as well. After touring and viewing important sights there, we then went to Tel Aviv, Israel, where we were met by a Messianic Jewish guide who took us to Jericho and the Judean hills. This was just a few weeks after the great Six Day War in Israel, and we passed several burned-out tanks along the highway.

After seeing Lazarus' tomb, Bethany, the Dead Sea, the temple area, Bethlehem, and many other Biblical sites, we stayed at Jerusalem.

Our guide provided an in-depth tour for us, including the most important Six Day War sites that he knew would interest us. The war produced a strategic victory for Israel, as it gained control of the Golan Heights. As a fighter in the Israeli army, our guide had personally helped lead the Jewish troops to a place where they could most easily enter the city of Jerusalem and overtake their Palestinian opposition.

After several days, we returned to Tel Aviv and flew to Athens, Greece. Here our own A/G missionaries, Mary and Jerry Metaxotos met us. Mary was from Glad Tidings in New York. Her father had pastored the Greek Assembly in New York City. Jerry, her husband, had been a Greek army doctor during World War II, and had also served as a general. They now pastored the Assemblies of God Church in Athens. They gave us a royal tour of the most important sites in Greece, including their recently opened Bible School. We saw many places where the apostle Paul preached to the Grecians, including Mars Hill and the Parthenon. We led a service in their church, and we then left for Johannesburg, South Africa.

Vernon Pettinger, a missionary in that area, met us at the airport and became our new tour guide. I stayed with him and his wife in their home in Pretoria. We had many evangelistic rallies in the surrounding areas—literally *thousands* gathered in open fields and stadiums to hear the gospel, and many were saved. Our trip to Kruger National Park, one of the world's premier safari and game parks, was most outstanding, as was my tour of the world's richest gold mine. I was able to take a small souvenir from the mine—a piece of gold ore.

From South Africa we flew to Accra, Ghana, where missionaries Bob Cobb and Ed Zieman became our hosts. They drove us to the little country next door called Togo, where Bill Lovick had just finished building a lovely new church. I was privileged to dedicate this new sanctuary in the city of Lome. Glad Tidings Tabernacle had contributed large sums of money for this project, and I was honored to be their speaker at the dedication. Togo's official government had representatives there, as did other groups who made special arrangements to attend this glorious event. The Togo Assemblies of God also had recently established a Bible School nearby. God was blessing the efforts of His faithful workers in that small country, and it was extremely touching to see the fruits of that blessing firsthand.

We then left for the United States, arriving back at JFK airport after a safe but tiresome flight. God had been faithful. We had a fresh and renewed appreciation for all our dedicated laborers in the great harvest fields of the world. They deserve our continued heartfelt support, both financially and spiritually.

Once again, in 1969, I was asked to come to Rota, Spain, to speak at another annual Assemblies of God Servicemen's Retreat there. My military bones still felt the original calling from God that I had when I entered the U.S. Army chaplaincy back in 1942. I could not refuse the invitation to go back to Rota. In August I flew to

Madrid, then on to Seville, where missionary Ruth Wheitkemp met me. We drove to Rota, which is located on Spain's west coast, overlooking the sea. We had great services and many servicemen responded to the altar calls for prayer and salvation.

After three days in Rota, I flew from Madrid to Barcelona, where I was met by missionary Paul Williscroft, who took me to Yugoslavia. We bypassed Belgrade and visited some churches in rural areas that were forced to meet in homes because of the religious persecution by the government at that time. Each service was crowded with hungry hearts. It was a blessing to speak to them as they drank in every word and asked for more. Being in that environment was a heartbreaking experience, but it also made me thankful for the religious freedom we enjoy in the States.

We drove over rough roads, crossing the Danube River, finally arriving at Bucharest, Romania. Packed crowds again filled each meeting place. After each service the people asked many spiritual questions, making the meetings unusually long. The questions were often hard to understand, but we tried our best to tell them that God's love for them is unconditional, even in the hard times. I soon learned their meaningful verbal expression as they parted from one another: "Pakashey!" This meant, "God be with you!"

We traveled by way of Vienna, Austria, stopped at Krakow, and then continued on to Warsaw, where we stayed at the Bible School. Then it was a daylong trip to Berlin, where we left early the next morning for Frankfurt. From Frankfurt I caught a plane for Tel Aviv, Israel. We—Dave, Don, and Ralph Wilkerson—stayed there just a day or so before returning to Rome, then on to London and home again. This was another memorable trip in God's choosing for me—that I might prove my love and faithfulness to Him. He used me in tremendous ways to encourage believers and bring some unbelievers to a saving knowledge of Christ. To God be the glory.

The 1970s brought new challenges, opportunities and victories for Glad Tidings. The people of our church had developed a great concern for the thousands who passed our door each day in need of our Savior. Many false doctrines and faiths had invaded the city, including that of Rev. Sun Myung Moon from Korea. The Moonies, as his followers came to be known, were very active on the streets, passing out flowers and literature. One year, Mr. Moon arranged to rent the Madison Square Garden for a special rally. He aggressively advertised for the event throughout New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. He paid for the buses that would transport people from the various outlying areas and different states to this special meeting. He even arranged to have loud speakers on the outside of the Garden so the people who would have to be turned away for lack of seating could still hear the message.

I saw this as an incredible opportunity to witness to the multitudes who would invade our city about the one true God. We asked God for wisdom to know how to proceed. Once again, He was faithful.

I called upon my military experience of the past and arranged for our Glad Tidings workers to be ready with what I called, “Our counter-attack against the Moon Invasion.” I had a special table placed at the corner of Eighth Avenue and 33rd St.—just across from the Eighth Avenue entrance to the Garden, which we learned would be one of the main stops for the Moon buses to unload. This table was loaded with tracts and Gospel literature—our “ammunition.” Our workers met each person exiting the buses with a smile and a Gospel tract, which included an invitation to attend Glad Tidings.

When we learned that the proposed outside speakers would not be allowed after all, I made immediate arrangements with a good fundamental church in the vicinity to have their excellent men's quartet come to our church on 33rd Street. We asked the men to be prepared to sing, and, in between songs, to give brief testimonials of salvation. We then arranged to have several of our Glad Tidings men take hand-held loudspeakers, called "bull horns," and announce to the overflow crowd standing outside the Garden that we were having special singing and music at the church just around the corner, and all were welcome to attend. It did not take long for hundreds of people to fill every seat in our auditorium, including the large balcony! Before we opened the doors, the crowd was literally banging on them, pleading for us to let them in. As the people crowded into our church, we handed them Gospel literature. The church was alive and the atmosphere electric—the people *wanted* to come! Those inside and outside the church heard the quartet as they shared in word and song!

Those outside almost tore the doors down—I actually had to phone the local police precinct to ask for help in protecting our building. But the police sergeant's reply to me was, "Sorry, Reverend, all our available men are at the Garden! We can't spare anyone right now." But God protected us while we dismissed the crowd and allowed another group to enter, refilling the church so that they too could hear the Gospel. This was repeated three times--each time the church was filled to capacity! We believe that our "counter-attack" produced eternal fruit to God's glory.

This was a marvelous opportunity—we were very thankful that God gave us the chance to minister to so many spiritual truth seekers. Only eternity will testify to the long-reaching impact of those special song services.

Incidentally, Mr. Moon bought the Manhattan Center, a large public theater and hall just around the corner from the church, and



later purchased the adjoining building, which was the famous Hotel New Yorker. The Moonies continue to use this facility as their headquarters, although we seldom hear of them or witness any of their activity at this time.

The Bible says, *“When the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him.”* Ironically, the infusion of Koreans into our city—due to both economic migration and the influence of Mr. Moon—led to an awesome harvesting opportunity for Glad Tidings. We regularly have folks from other countries visit our church, and among those during the 1970s were an ever growing number of young Koreans. Most of them were professionals who had come to the city to start various businesses, and many came regularly to worship with us.

It just so happened that a plan was developing (unknown to Joy and me) for the church to send us to the 1973 Pentecostal World Conference in Seoul, Korea. It was a wonderful surprise, and a trip never to be forgotten. While at the conference, I spoke with David Yonggi Cho—pastor of what is now the largest Pentecostal church in the world, with some 30,000 members—and told him of these young Korean folks attending Glad Tidings. I suggested that a Korean church could be started in New York City, and Cho was most enthusiastic. Before long, this dream became a reality.

Pastor Nam Soo Kim, leader of the Korean Full Gospel New York Church, which was birthed out of Glad Tidings, wrote the following words:

*“In 1973 there was a World Pentecostal Conference in Seoul, Korea. Pastor Berg attended and met David Yonggi Cho. He discussed with him the possibility of having a Korean full gospel church in New York City.*



**Pastor and Mrs. Nam Soo Kim, pastors of the Korean Full Gospel New York Church, which was birthed out of Glad Tidings.**

*The next year, 1974, I had a chance to visit the United States. In California I ran into a Mr. Kang from New York who invited me to come to New York City. I visited there in February and he and I were able to meet with Pastor Berg and discuss the need for a Korean Pentecostal church in New York City. Through the help of Pastor Berg we invited Yonggi Cho's mother, Mrs. Choi, to come and speak in a series of meetings. The Koreans present decided to start a church. They got permission from Pastor Berg to use Glad Tidings Tabernacle, and named the church Full Gospel New York Church, Assemblies of God. It began holding services in the lower auditorium of Glad Tidings on Sunday evenings with just a small group of people. They prepared for a revival and invited Sung Kwang Kim from Korea. He subsequently became the first pastor. On December 20, 1975 the church had its dedication. As time went by the congregation grew to 150. Because Pastor Sung Kwang Kim wanted to further his studies, he resigned.*

*I had been a missionary in Vietnam until the war there caused me to leave, at which point I went to Germany and pastored a Korean church there. In 1977 the Full Gospel New York Church meeting at Glad Tidings Tabernacle called me to come to be its pastor. At the age of 33 I became its second pastor and dedicated myself to that work, which I continue to do.*

*The church now has around 3,000 members and is presently building a sanctuary in Queens to seat more than 3,000 people. Without the vision, care, patience, and understanding of Pastor Berg, the Full Gospel New York Church would not exist. I feel wonderful that he and his family had the spiritual discernment to take care of this young immigrant church, even though we had different cultures and languages. We will never forget his loving care in helping this church grow and mature in Christ. I appreciate him and his Glad Tidings board. Thanks to all members of Glad Tidings Tabernacle and especially to Pastor and Mrs. Berg. To God be the glory!"*

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### *Going Home*

Soon after Robert Brown's passing in 1948, Marie Burgess Brown realized she needed help as pastor. A one-person staff presents enough challenges at any church, but especially in an inner city church such as Glad Tidings. So when I arrived in New York City, just a few months after Robert Brown's promotion to heavenly service, I assumed many of the duties and responsibilities of the pastor. These included visitations, hospital calls, weddings, water baptisms, preaching and many other tasks. Replacing someone like Robert Brown was no small assignment.

As the years passed, my Aunt Marie became weaker and her body began placing physical limitations on what she could do. Despite her progressively deteriorating condition, she continued to speak during the regular Sunday afternoon services, but soon this became a hardship for her also. Finally, sometime in 1970, she became unable to continue in the ministry, or even to attend the services. Each Sunday, we had called for her, picked her up at her apartment, taken her to the church, and driven her home at the end of the day. In a way, I was like the son God sent her to replace the child she had lost in infancy. But Aunt Marie's sickness eventually forced her to go to a nearby hospital. After a brief stay, she returned home. On June 2, 1971, in her own bed, she very peacefully went home to be with Jesus—the One she so much longed to see. Aunt Marie had always expected to go home in the rapture. Many mornings she would go to her window and look out at the clouds and ask, “Is this the time and are these the clouds to take us home? It could be today.” That was always her desire.

A large crowd gathered to attend her home-going service on Saturday, June 5, 1971. This was just one month after the 64th anniversary of her first arriving in New York City. The service was not just another funeral celebration; the Lord made this time of

honor to our beloved founder a time of reflection upon the life of one who had indeed been called of God—chosen by Him for a task in a great Metropolis of the world—and, by His grace, faithful to the very end. What greater reward could any mortal receive on earth?

Everyone who crowded the church sanctuary that Saturday morning was well aware that the occasion would certainly linger in their hearts and minds until they too would be called to join their beloved pastor and friend in the blessed land beyond the skies.

The service was officiated by the New York District Superintendent, Rev. Joseph R. Flower, and by the District Secretary, Rev. R.D.E. Smith, who read the scriptures and prayed. The men were followed by a special uplifting song by the Tabernacle Choir. Josephine Spina, Missionary to Bangladesh, represented many missionaries in foreign lands, in giving thanks for Sister Brown's burden, vision and support to the many fields these many years. My brother Paul, who was a missionary to Japan for a few years, followed with a wonderful solo.

I spoke briefly, relating some of Aunt Marie's experiences while laboring in the city. I mentioned the importance of the high calling she had been given and our appreciation for what she had done for the Lord. I gave tribute to her as I told of my personal experience of working with her since my Uncle Robert's demise in 1948. I then joined my brother Paul in singing a duet, one of our Aunt Marie's favorite songs, “The tears of the sower and the songs of the reaper,” and gave praise to our Lord Jesus for His faithfulness.

This was a hard time for us, but we realized that the situation was in the Lord's hands—He would give us sustaining grace and love.

Several ministers gave brief expressions and brother Thomas Zimmerman, Assemblies of God general superintendent, sent



**Rev. Joseph P. Flower, former New York District Superintendent and**



**Rev. Almon M. Bartholomew, Superintendent Emeritus, New York**

condolences from the national headquarters. Rev. E.S. Williams brought the message, "A very fitting tribute to another pioneer and faithful messenger of the cross and Pentecost in our day." We closed with singing, "What a day that will be when our Jesus we shall see, when we look upon the face of the One who saved us by His grace."

A memorial service was held the next day, on Sunday, in the main sanctuary of the church. Renowned evangelist Hattie Hammond spoke and again gave tribute to her close friend and co-worker Marie Brown. As an evangelist and missionary, Sister Hammond had visited the Tabernacle many times in the past, and she and Marie had traveled together to the World Pentecostal Conference in Switzerland. They visited several countries and spoke at many churches on that trip, as they did also on another trip to Scandinavia.

The following day, a Monday, a long procession of cars followed the hearse to the Evergreen Cemetery in Brooklyn, where Marie Brown was laid to rest in peace next to the grave of her husband. Robert and Marie Brown were buried in a mausoleum given to them by a former member of the church, John H. Shell. One of the faithful church members, George Orphan, had charge of all the funeral arrangements. We appreciated his devoted labor of love and his professional work and ministry.

Marie Burgess Brown was gone...and Now Glad Tidings Tabernacle faced a situation it had never encountered before. The church had ministered and grown for sixty-four years under its founder, then her husband, and later her nephew! The church had never elected a pastor before! These were uncharted waters for the congregation. The areas of business and administration were well taken care of, as the church was a duly recognized and organized Assemblies of God church—the New York District officials would handle the business meetings needed to get the church over this





**Robert and Marie Brown**

hurdle. At this critical point, the membership faced a challenge it had never before been called upon to consider—praying for a united spirit in ascertaining the mind and will of God for the leadership of the church. Many strong evangelists and preachers had visited over the years; district and national officials and missionaries from around the world had preached from the Glad Tidings pulpit.

But now who was God's choice to step into this important responsibility? The decision required much prayer, fasting, and waiting upon the Lord in special seasons of public gathering and also private times of prayer at home. In a situation like this, it's natural for people to assume the best evangelist or preacher would be the one that God might choose. With this thought in mind, some outstanding names were promoted, and some were contacted. For churches conducting pastoral searches, this is often a time when personalities become headliners in people's thinking and opinion runs widespread on whom God wants or who might be best suited for the position. It can be a most trying time for any church, and it was not easy for Glad Tidings Tabernacle.

The official church board met frequently to discuss various candidates as the district officials submitted names. Eventually, a special church business meeting was called. At this meeting I was asked to be the interim pastor until the church could determine God's will for a full-time pastor. I agreed to this without any hesitation. During this time, I had prayed much about the matter when the Lord took my Aunt Marie Brown from the place she had occupied for so many years. My answer from the Lord each time was the same He had given me the first time I heard that my Uncle Robert Brown had passed away, in 1948. The words kept stirring and ringing in my heart: *"You will take his place. There will be some opposition at first but hold steady and I will bring it to pass."* These were God's words to my heart and they became my assurance as I faced the serious question: "Lord, do I stay or go?"

I knew I had been called to come to Glad Tidings. I had experienced 23 years of ministry with my Aunt Marie Brown, enough time to be assured that God had chosen me to fill the ministry he wanted accomplished. Now, you can imagine this was a difficult period for me. I tried to conduct myself as the Lord would want me to. I did not do any political maneuvering to obtain support but went about my normal duties as before, trusting God to work out His plan—in His way and in His own time. My dear wife felt more of the pressure than I, because the children were placed in the difficult situation of not knowing where we would be in the next month or so. Even though Bob was the only one still at home (Elaine had married in 1970 and Ken was in California) we still wanted them to be comfortable with our situation, whatever that might be. But Joy also trusted the Lord to bring all things to pass as He desired. We rested our case with Him.

Our youngest son Bob graduated from high school in June of that year (1971) and planned to attend Wheaton College near Chicago. Kathryn Kuhlman, an evangelist with a miraculous healing ministry, had promised to make his way possible financially, because our eldest son Ken had been working with her as her publicity manager. When Kuhlman asked about Bob and heard he was graduating and wanted to attend a Christian college, she offered to finance his needs. Indeed, we thanked the Lord and certainly thanked her, because we did not have the financial means at that time to send Bob to college. As a matter of fact, I can remember several times having to borrow from the children's piggy banks to have enough subway fare to get to the church. We were never in a position of financial security in those days, but, although we told no one about it, God made a way. Without Sister Brown personally helping us financially, I don't know how we would have made it. But again God was faithful.

God's ways are always best, even though we do not always understand what the Almighty is doing or how He is doing it—but the One who doeth all things well is always in control. There are times when we are encompassed about with many difficulties, thoughts and ideas. In those times we should simply step aside and do as Pastor Brown's favorite motto—printed on the wall by the platform in the church—used to say, “Let go and let God.” When we learn to live by faith, we realize that all of our actions are dependent on what He provides.

In the end, the people voted us in. Joy and I were loved by the Glad Tidings congregation, and they made it known to the board that they did not want to see us go.

When all restrictions were finally taken away so that I could pastor the flock of Glad Tidings Tabernacle, we thanked God for His direction and for a good and supportive church board. Oh, we had differences of opinion at times, but brotherly love allowed these differences to be expressed, so long as love prevailed and we realized that we were workers together in God's great vineyard of New York City.

**CHAPTER FOURTEEN**  
*Passing the Missions Legacy*

It is always with proper pride that parents see their children step out for God in their younger days. This was our experience as we waved goodbye to our daughter Elaine in 1966, when she went with Youth With a Mission under Loren Cunningham to Jamaica and the Caribbean to give testimony and witness for Christ. Our youngest son, Bob, went to Europe in 1968 as part of a youth Missions program called Ambassadors in Mission (AIM). This did much to help their growth in love and support of Christ and, especially, foreign missions.

Our eldest son, Ken, took a different direction and enlisted in the Army. In so doing, he took full advantage of the educational opportunities provided by the government. After basic training at Fort Dix in New Jersey he attended the U.S. Army Training School at Ft. Monmouth, New Jersey, where he studied photography and later was assigned to the photography sector of the Army and sent to South Korea for two years. He was stationed in Seoul, Korea, and had the privilege of meeting and having fellowship with Pastor Cho, leader of the great church that was just beginning to flourish under God at that time. After finishing his service there he returned to the States and took further studies (provided by the Army) to be a professional film producer.

Later, in the early 1980s, he organized his own Berg Productions in Dallas, Texas, and continues to produce the Zola Levitt Program. The show is filmed each year on location in Israel and aired on several family stations through national cable television every week. Zola, a Messianic Jew, is widely renowned for Bible knowledge and his ability to relate the significance of ancient Bible prophecies to the events of today.

Ken has also produced some videos, including one with musician Dallas Holm entitled “His Last Days.” The film depicts a realistic and graphic portrayal of Jesus’ last days on Earth. The project received many awards in the film community and we thank God for this. We are also proud of Ken's daughter Angela, a beautiful young woman who graduated from Baylor University and recently married Brian Marks of Texas.

Our daughter Elaine was fortunate enough to spend four wonderful years at Evangel College. While there, she met a young man by the name of Gary Bilton, and they were engaged at graduation. She returned home and taught elementary school for a year before their marriage in 1970. Gary's parents, Elmer and Dorothy Bilton, were classmates of ours at Central Bible Institute. After serving as teachers at CBI, they followed the call of God into pastoral ministry, leading several churches throughout the country. Gary is an agent for State Farm Insurance in Lenexa, Kansas. They are both actively involved in their church. Their sons, Matt and Jamie, are living for the Lord in their chosen fields—Matt an officer in the U.S. Navy, and Jamie an investment counselor. Jamie lives in Springfield, Missouri with his wife, Michele, and daughter Anna.

Our youngest son, Bob, after graduating from Wheaton College in 1974, assisted me at Glad Tidings for a short time before furthering his education at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. Bob was a real blessing to me in so many aspects of church ministry. With him on my staff, I was able to share much of the burden of leading inner-city church ministries. Space does not allow me to relate some of the experiences that come to memory, but one incident stands out which cannot be forgotten. One Sunday night, after the evening service, Bob was counseling with a young man who had come in off the street. The hour began to get quite late, and Joy and I left for home—Bob was living in the city at the time. Suddenly this heavy-set fellow became very disturbed and irrational, and insisted on going upstairs to the altar to pray. He

grabbed Bob by the hair and one arm and dragged him up the stairs, yanked the large ring of keys from his hand, and managed to find the exact key to open the door. He continued dragging Bob down the aisle to the altar, forcing him down, and finally giving him a severe blow on the head. Bob said that was the first time in his life he had “seen stars.”

When he recovered, he was quick enough to escape and run down the street to dial 911. Fortunately, there was a police car patrolling the area, and shortly after the cops' arrival, they discovered the assailant in the balcony stark naked. Surely the Lord protected Bob that night. That night, after hearing the story and seeing that a large chunk of hair was missing from his head, his Jewish landlord was shocked that he could be so calm. She summed it up by saying, “Well, your religion must be doing something for you!”

After graduating from Gordon-Conwell Bob went to Drew University in New Jersey where he received his Ph.D. He taught a few years at Valley Forge Christian College before going to Evangel College in Springfield, Missouri in 1989. He teaches in the Department of Biblical Studies. His wife, Jane, is also on the faculty and teaches voice. She has sung overseas as well as in many cities in America with her lovely operatic voice. They have a young son, David, who is an enthusiastic soccer player and an avid reader! Our prayer for him and all our family is that each will find his or her part to play in furthering the Great Commission Missions legacy of Matthew 28:19-20:

*“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

### *A Pentecostal Hall of Fame of Faith*

We never know who God may allow to influence our lives, or what can cause good to be our portion. Such has been my experience, as I look back over my walk with Him. In Bible school days at Central Bible Institute, classmates Myer Pearlman and W.I. Evans left a deep impression on my life. Carl Brumback was a personal friend of mine and we had many good times together on the baseball field, in our homes together, and in the Potomac District, where we both pastored. We shared many experiences together and enjoyed God's blessings.

When Smith Wigglesworth came to Springfield during my time there in the period of 1934-1937, he held meetings at Central Assembly. He had just come from Glad Tidings Tabernacle in New York City, so I met him after the service and he shared with me a brief word about the worldwide move of God that he had experienced.

Throughout the years, various Assemblies of God leaders have personally added their assistance to our ministry...leaders such as Ernest S. Williams, J. Roswell Flower, Thomas Zimmerman, G. Raymond Carlson, J. Philip Hogan, Ralph Riggs, Robert Ashcroft (father of Missouri Senator and former Missouri Governor John Ashcroft), and a host of others in our great Fellowship.

I became acquainted with such men as evangelist William Branham who at least *began* his ministry well. I invited him to speak at Glad Tidings and later I was appointed chairman of his meetings held in Manhattan Center, where God used him to bring healing and blessing to many. I also headed up a crusade for Oral Roberts in Hempstead, N.Y.



Rev. David Du Plessis from South Africa ministered at Glad Tidings and we always appreciated his reports of God's supernatural outpourings. Rev. Donald Gee, another outstanding leader in our Pentecostal movement, has given much to the development of relationships between various Pentecostal groups around the world. He has been a real blessing to me by personal contact and through his writings. The same is true regarding many others, including Lewi Pethrus, C.M. Ward, Guy Duty, and Willard Cantelon.

Many missionaries have left their impact upon our Glad Tidings family, including Robert Cummings, Howard Goss, Samuel Nystrom, James Salter, W.W. Simpson, and Lillian Trasher (a favorite at Glad Tidings). Sister Trasher, founder of the great orphanage in Egypt, also was with us in our home one Christmas. This list does not include the many Glad Tidings Tabernacle members who have gone to various mission fields of the world—many are still serving where God has placed them.

I'm thankful that God allowed each one of these to cross my path, and for the enrichment they brought to my own life and ministry. There are so many others that could be listed in this brief review. God called them to minister to me and they were faithful.

When we arrived in New York City in 1948 we came in fear and trembling, with not the faintest idea what the future held. It has been a walk of faith, but through it all, we've learned to trust in Jesus, as the song says, and to depend on His Word.

I want to emphasize the importance of “giving honor to whom honor is due.” Joy has been and is the Joy of my life. Her support and love have helped me to carry on for Him. Her ministry has been in leadership of the women's groups for both Glad Tiding and the New York City Section, and in teaching various age groups in

Sunday School. God has also blessed her with a singing ministry and with assisting at the piano when needed. But, above all else, she has served as my faithful companion and very best friend. I thank God for her and the 58 wonderful years of marriage we have shared and enjoyed to this day.

Our children have added to our willingness to carry on as well. They dedicated themselves to the Lord at very young ages, and inspired us more than they could ever understand. Their father was not able to give them the time and individual attention they deserved in their younger years...missing out on many sporting events and other school events. However, they learned to enjoy God's presence in a godly home atmosphere. We tried to have family devotions each evening, and many times Joy led this effort when I was absent. Living in a large metropolitan area and being quite far removed from the church, we spent much time traveling back and forth. The younger members of the family were not always eager to climb into the car for another ride to church. But, at the same time, they realized we moved out of the city so they could have a more normal life.

We trusted the Lord for His protection as we traveled in and out of the city, and many times were aware of His hand upon us. We recall the time when Bobby was about four years old, and sitting between us in the front seat. As we traveled under an overpass bridge, suddenly a large chunk of concrete came plummeting through the windshield and landed on the floorboard, barely missing little Bobby. Glass rained on us, and I even had to fish a small piece of it out of Bobby's eye, but everyone was okay. We were conscious of the overshadowing of His presence!

The Glad Tidings family will always have a deep and lasting place in our hearts. We couldn't begin to name those who have been outstanding in their faithful ministry to the work of the Lord, never looking for acclaim. We know that God will reward them. We are

thankful for a supportive church board of trustees, who worked together in sharing our facilities with other ethnic groups.

Many have moved to distant parts of the country and the world, but still hold ties to their home church. On May 8th, 1987, many of them returned for Glad Tidings' 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Banquet at the Sheraton Hotel in New York City. More than 550 came for that memorable day of reunion and fellowship. It was a little foretaste of heaven, when all believers will gather together for eternal worship, as we meet our Lord Jesus face to face.

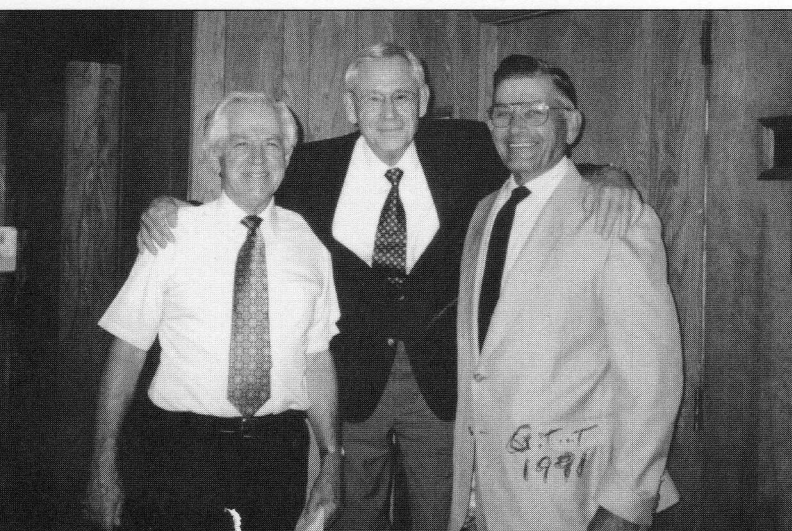
But as the “homecoming” of the Glad Tidings Tabernacle family came to a close, it became my solemn duty to lead those assembled into a time of intercessory prayer. I announced the “home going” of the first Assemblies of God missionary to Brighton Beach's Russian Jews in Brooklyn, George Oleshevsky. Brother Oleshevsky, a promising young man in his 30s—full of passion and vision—his brother-in-law, and all on board had been killed earlier that day in a plane crash. They were returning from a missions preaching trip to Poland. The Holy Spirit reminds us all, whether at homecomings or home goings, “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints” (Psalm 116:15).

We are so thankful for our children and for their desire to be used of Him in their sphere of influence and for the ministry He has given to them. Our grandchildren also have purposed in their hearts to follow His guidance in their lives, and we pray that it shall ever be so!

My time as pastor ended when I read my resignation to the congregation on October 11, 1992. We felt that after 45 years of ministry, it was God's time for someone else to step in with a fresh vision for this hour. It is God's church, and He is the One who leads His people on to victory and to greater things ahead



June 1991—Stan and Joy's 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary at Glad Tidings. Top row L-R Grandson Matt Bilton, son-in-law Gary Bilton, son Bob, son Ken Bottom row L-R Grandson Jamie Bilton, daughter Elaine Bilton, daughter-in-law Jane Berg with son David, granddaughter Angela Berg.



We continue to be actively involved in various avenues of ministry and desire to serve Him wherever He can use us. We want always to be open to His call. He leads the way, and we follow. Therefore, we fear not the future, for we know the One who holds the future, and can be confident of His continued presence...as we look for His glorious return!

Obey His call; be aware that He has chosen you for His purpose; and be faithful to the end! Amen.



# Index

- Baptism (during war), 56
- Bartholomew, Almon, 3-7, 14, 114
- Beth Shalom Jewish Center, 13, 84
- Berg, David, 18, 32, 43, 45-49
- Berg, Ken, 5, 37, 39, 48, 59, 64, 80, 81, 99, 118-121, 127
- Berg (Burgess), Myrtle Cora, 16-25
- Berg, Robert, 5, 67, 80, 81, 99, 118-127
- Berg, Stanley Dauch, 16-25
- Bilton (Berg), Elaine, 5, 13, 68, 81, 99, 118-120, 127
- Bronze Star, 56
- Camp Butner, N.C., 35, 37, 38, 51
- Carlson, G. Raymond, 123
- Central Bible Institute, 6, 23, 24, 26, 29, 65, 121, 123
- Charlotte, N.C., 5, 20, 23-29, 32, 35, 38, 48, 62, 64, 70
- Cho, David Yonggi, 108, 109
- Christ's Ambassadors, 66, 82
- Churchill, Winston, 42
- Colbaugh, Wildon, 28
- D-Day, 6, 42, 43
- Dilena, Paul, 10, 90
- Duke University, 37
- Eisenhower, Dwight D., 58
- Evangel College, 13, 67, 121, 122
- Flower, J. Roswell, 33, 66, 67, 123
- Flower, Joseph, 3-5, 112, 113
- Gehrig, Lou, 21
- General Presbyter (Stan as), 7, 97, 99
- Goble, Phil, 13, 84
- Graham, Billy, 25
- Hammil, James, 28
- Harvard University, 6, 33, 34
- Hidden Valley, N.Y., 95-97
- Hitler, Adolph, 34, 38
- Hedge Row Battles, 45
- Jeager, Harry, 65, 66
- Jewish chaplaincy, 44, 49, 50
- Jewish ministry (Glad Tidings), 84
- Kartsonakis, Dino, 86, 87
- Kim, Nam Soo, 108, 109
- King's Daughters Trio, 29, 30
- Knowles, S.W., 28
- Korean Full Gospel Church, 108, 109
- Kuhlman, Katherine, 87, 118
- Lavallette, N.J., 81
- Levitt, Zola, 120
- Maranatha Park, Penn., 23, 24
- McDowell, Rev. David, 70, 74, 75
- Moon, Rev. Sun Myung, 106-108
- Mueller, George, 42
- New Hyde Park, N.Y., 80
- Normandy Invasion, 6, 43-45, 51
- Nuremberg Trials, 57
- Outreach ministries (Glad Tidings), 82-84, 88, 90, 100
- Pearl Harbor, 32, 38
- Piedmont Junior High, 21, 22
- Pocomoke City, Md., 28, 32, 35
- The Queen Elizabeth*, 40, 41, 60
- Reveille Reunion, 65-67
- Rheims, France, 50
- Roosevelt, Franklin D., 34, 48
- Rota, Spain, 102, 104, 105
- Sea Snipe, The*, 60
- Shuster, Elizabeth, 79
- Six Day War, 103
- Stone Church, 16
- Teen Challenge, 6, 9, 10, 88-94
- Times Square Church, 10, 89
- Toplady, August M., 43
- Utah Beach, 6, 43
- VE Day, 57

Waddy, Hugh, 87  
Walter Hoving Home, 91-94  
Wilkerson, David, 6, 9, 10, 89-92,  
94, 102-105  
World's Fair, 1965, 99, 100  
World War II, 32-64  
Yake, Reginald, 9, 88  
Zimmerman, Thomas, 112, 123

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