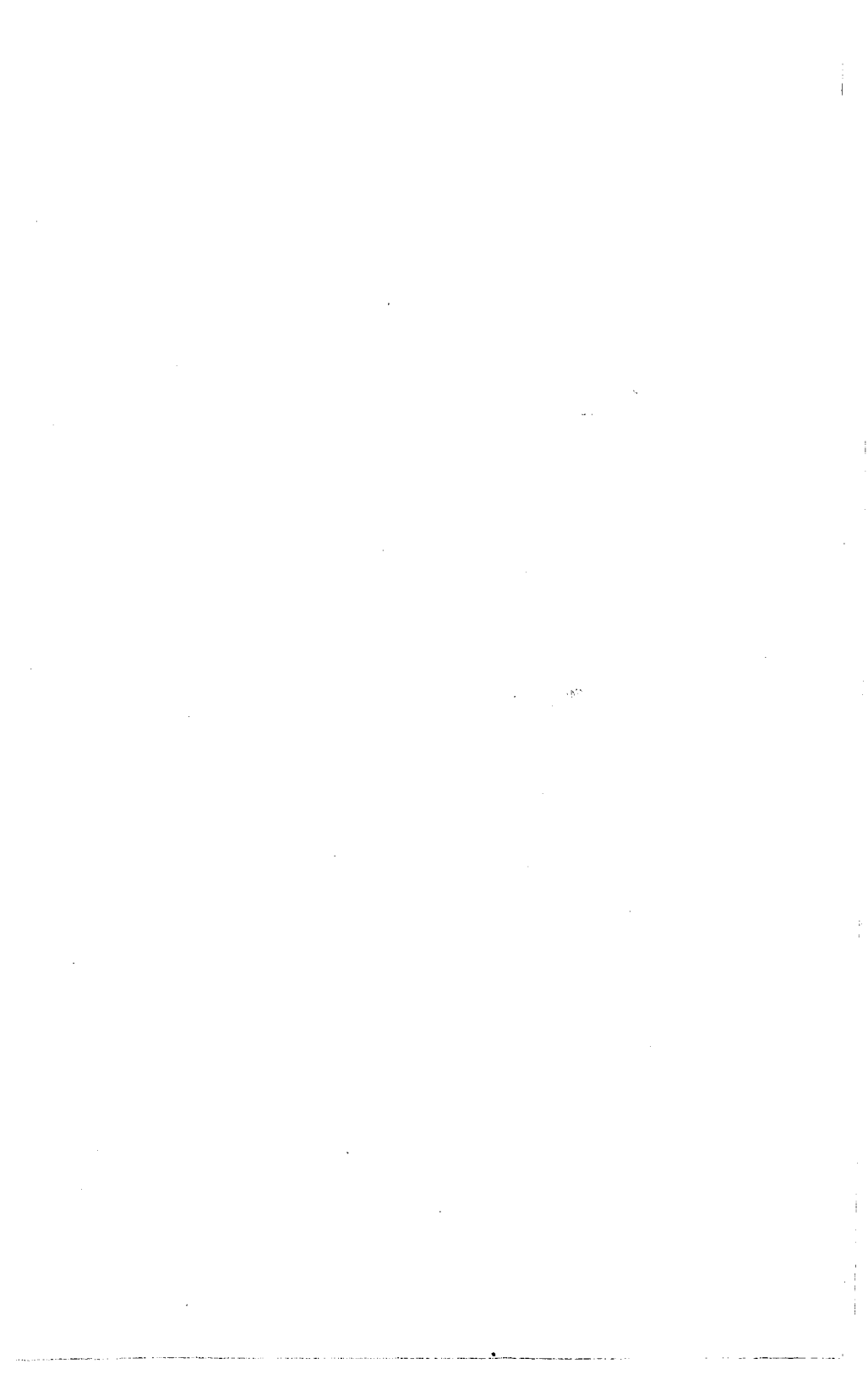


**MY  
FAVORITE  
MISSIONARY  
SERMONS**

**REGGIE THOMAS**



**MY  
FAVORITE  
MISSIONARY  
SERMONS**

**REGGIE THOMAS**



**MY FAVORITE MISSIONARY SERMONS  
PLUS  
"HOW GOD CALLED ME TO THE MINISTRY"**

A personal testimony written by Reggie Thomas. In this testimony Reggie tells in a most humorous way stories from his childhood days as he grew up in Joplin, MO. With great emotion he tells how God called him as a 16-year-old lad to preach the Gospel. You will be moved to laughter and tears as you read.

This book needs to be read by all teenagers who are a part of Sunday School and/or the youth group of your church. It will inspire youth to enter full time Christian service. It contains the powerfully told story of how God dealt with one young, shy boy in the early 1940s and how God called this boy to a world-wide soul winning mission. The book is filled with true and inspiring illustrations of how God does call, direct, and powerfully win precious souls who are lost in sin into the salvation and light of His great Kingdom, the church.

I am that young, shy boy, now grown old, but still preaching His powerful Gospel. I want you to read and understand a little of how God took my life, a very unworthy and unlikely vessel, changed my life and used me to win souls unto HIMSELF.

Now that I'm old and growing older and I can see the end of my earthly existence drawing near, I am increasingly concerned that the youth of today be challenged to accept the "greatest calling," that of preaching "the unsearchable riches of Christ."

It is my earnest prayer that this be not just another book of sermons, but that it also be a "call from God" to allow Him to use YOU in His church to win souls to Christ. I have included my own personal testimony along with scores of inspiring illustrations gleaned from 28 years of travel in 66 different foreign nations.

## MY FAVORITE MISSIONARY SERMONS

I dedicate this book to my wife Esther, my best friend, help mate, and traveling companion. Esther has inspired, encouraged, and supported me not only with her presence, but with her daily prayers. I also dedicate this volume to our eight children, Terry, Tony, Tracy, Chris, Timmy, Teresa, Tom, and Lori, all of whom have traveled and participated in our world-wide ministry of White Fields.

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## A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to Church

### *A PREACHER: THE THRILLS AND TEARS PART ONE — BIRTH TO 14 YEARS*

I first came to life in Joplin, MO, January 8, 1929. Having been conceived by Godly parents, Arthur Reginald Thomas and Florence Lucille Thomas, who prayed before I was born that I would be a preacher. It is not therefore a surprise to tell you that I began preaching the Gospel at the age of 16. But I am getting ahead of my story.

My parents were completely dedicated to God. They attended and were members of the South Joplin Methodist Church, where they took me at the tender age of 8 days old and christened me. Their understanding of this religious ceremony was that they were dedicating me to God and promising that they would teach me and bring me up in the nurture of the Lord. This they did do.

Every night before retiring, my mother always read to me out of God's Word. Then my father would get down on his knees and pray. This teaching has stayed with me all the days of my life. I can truthfully say that I learned the Bible not from Cincinnati Bible Seminary, where I graduated in 1951 with the A.B. degree, but from my parents.

*My sister's birth*

I really have no recollection of my first 3 or 4 years on this earth except that of being really loved by my parents and grandparents.

At the age of 4 years, I remember my daddy awaking me one morning with these words, "You have a little sister!" This was a tremendous surprise that they had not prepared me for. Words like sex, pregnant, conception, etc. were never spoken in our house!

So Barbara Lucille Thomas was born March 8, 1933. As a little boy and teenager, I apparently, did not take too well to a "little sister." Many stories have been told to me by my sister how I argued with her, teased her, and ignored her. I remember none of these things and am happy to say that my sister and I have become very close in later years as we served the Lord together.

*Switches and ashes*

A story which made an indelible impression on me was told by my Grandpa, A.W. Thomas.

As a young lad, he was repeatedly warned by his parents, "You must be good or you'll get switches and ashes for Christmas." One year he had been a naughty boy, as he arose expectantly for Christmas, he found nothing but switches and ashes!

The next year he was very careful to be good. On Christmas Day, he received one chocolate candy!

*The Great Depression*

From about the time of my sister's birth until I was 8 years old, I remember as a time of poverty. The Great Depression was in full swing. My father was a printer. He and my grandfather, Arthur William Thomas, had a small job shop located at 32nd and Byers

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in Joplin in my grandparents' garage. They had a good growing business, but with the deepening problem of depression people had a nasty habit of ordering printed materials and then not paying the printer. My grandfather saw the inevitable so he reluctantly closed the job shop (which left my father unemployed) while he took a job in printing with the *Joplin Globe and News Herald*.

My parents had purchased our home place (which still stands) at 3102 Pearl Street for \$600 with money borrowed from my Aunt Delpha Higginbotham. They were obligated to repay this loan \$1 per week.

### *Tithing*

My parents, deeply dedicated Godly people, were tithers, but as the Great Depression went on and my father's unemployment was extended they finally decided they could no longer tithe.

A story my father told me from this period of time greatly affected me. Daddy said, "Because the church was always in the habit of taking unexpected Missionary offerings, I would save back part of the tithe and then we would have that to give in the special offering. At that time the tires went out on our Model T Ford. I decided we would have to take the \$40 which was God's money and purchase tires. Otherwise we could not go to church. At the time I took the \$40, my dad closed the job shop! For one entire year I had no income. I worked briefly on the P.W.A. and WPA. I did odd jobs repairing furniture, cutting wood, anything to make a dime.

"At the end of 1 year, my wife and I talked. We decided from then on if we got a dime, God gets a penny. If I make \$1, God gets a dime. From now on we will tithe. Following that decision, I got a job at the *Joplin Globe and News Herald*." To the end of his life, my father was never again in need. Malachi 3:10, "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this, says the Lord Almighty, and see if I will not throw open

the floodgates of Heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.”

The only other memory I have of this period of my life is church at South Joplin Methodist. I was probably 4 to 6 years old. Our preacher was an old fashioned man who shouted, jumped, waved his fists, and preached hell fire and brimstone.

### *Mocking the Preacher!*

I asked to sit in the pew behind my parents and I would mimic the preacher.

One Sunday the preacher was expounding on Noah and the Ark. He was jumping and running, trying to escape the flood. He was preaching and pleading trying to get the world in the Ark. I was mimicking him perfectly! Suddenly my Daddy turned around and caught me in the act! I was taken out and given a blistering! It made the proper impression. I never misbehaved in church again.

### *Food or a Car Ride?*

One of vivid memories of the depression was my daddy coming home one day to say, “I have 30¢. We can purchase 3 gallons of gas for the Model T and take a drive. I have 2 shells for the shotgun and I’ll kill two rabbits for supper or we can spend the 30¢ on food.” Our family voted for the ride. My father, a skilled sharpshooter, missed 2 rabbits! We went to sleep hungry that night.

At the age of 8 in the year 1937 my father was employed at *Joplin Globe and News Herald* for \$6 a week. He was not able to resume our house payments to my aunt at \$1 per week. We had food to eat, but in the meantime we lost our car. We walked everywhere; to school, to church, to the grocery store. We soon forgot what it was like to ride.

I secured my first job selling *Liberty* Magazines. Being a shy

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little boy, I would ask my mother to go with me to sell the magazines. *Liberty* sold for 5¢ each. I made 1¢ on each sale. I soon had a route and began to make 15¢ or 20¢ each week. I was rich!

### *Playing with Daddy*

At this time in our lives we looked forward to our Daddy's homecoming each day. He arrived at 4:00 pm. We jumped for joy as he entered the house. My mother always had supper ready promptly at 4:00 and then the rest of the evening daddy played with us. We played croquet, rode bicycles, wrestled, played marbles, Monopoly and Rook: all the children in the neighborhood gathered at our house because our daddy played with everyone.

### *Daddy's Jokes*

Halloween was a great time. My daddy was always playing tricks on people. Everyone had an outhouse and my dad really enjoyed tipping over people's outhouses on Halloween. Of course he was not happy when others tipped our outhouse over. One Halloween he waited until dark then moved the outhouse 6 feet forward. That night when the boys came to tip it over, they scaled the fence and dropped in the hole! My daddy laughed for weeks.

Another Halloween my daddy did a tick tack joke. This was a wooden spool which he wrapped a string around. A nail went through the spool. This was attached under the clap-board of a house. We would get across the street and hide in the bushes and pull the string. The notched spool clacking on the house sounded like someone pulling the boards off. The people would come running out, but would find no one. My father and I, across the street, would laugh like crazy.

My father was a very humorous man and he played lots of jokes on people. One of the funniest jokes he did was this: he saw

our neighbor out in his yard sowing grass. My father put some lettuce seed, poppy seed, and radish seed in his pocket. Daddy walked over and started a conversation with our neighbor sowing grass seed. As they walked over the yard my daddy was scattering these seeds. When the grass grew up, there was also a crop of lettuce, radishes, and poppy seeds. Our neighbor was so annoyed and complained at the store where he purchased the seed. My daddy laughed for weeks about this.

Another very humorous joke was played by my father on one of his fellow printers at the *Joplin Globe and News Herald*. One day my daddy killed a huge, hairy tarantula. He managed to keep the spider so that it looked alive. He took the dead spider to work and managed to distract the attention of the Linotype operator who sat beside him. While this man looked the other way, Daddy attached the dead spider to the line of type that would shortly appear before the operator's line of sight. As the Linotype operator began setting type, suddenly he shouted with fear and fell over backwards as the huge spider appeared before his eyes. This practical joke caused days of laughter as daddy told and re-told the story.

### *The Snake!*

One other story to show you the funny side of my father comes from his childhood days. He used to delight in telling this at family gatherings!

His father, A.W. Thomas, went out to visit the outhouse. He had just gotten seated when A.R. Thomas (my dad) let a big, black snake down on a string in front of A.W. Thomas. A.W. Thomas screamed in fear, jumped out, and hopped down the path towards the house, all the while trying to pull his pants up!!

I can still hear my daddy and my grandpa roaring with laughter each time my daddy told this!

Grandpa always got the last laugh as he told how he blistered my daddy with a switch once he found out who did it!!!

*Life's Greatest Decision*

At the age of 8 I made the greatest decision of my life. I decided to accept Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. There is a very interesting story back of this.

As faithful Methodists, my mother and father attended Sunday School and Worship services every Lord's Day without fail. Of course I attended with them and learned the basics: faith in God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the Bible stories, and worship of God. My father throughout his entire life was a good Bible student. As he continued to study daily, he began to point out to my mother the Bible teaching of Christian baptism. He showed my mother Matthew 3, how Jesus was baptized in the river Jordan; Acts 8:36-39, "They both went down into the water and he baptized him and when he was come up out of the water . . ."; Romans 6:4, "We are buried with Him in baptism." Throughout these scriptures and the many, many other related scriptures, my mother came to realize that as a sprinkled Methodist she had not been scripturally baptized.

My mother then approached our minister and asked, "Have you been baptized into Christ by immersion?" and "If so, why do you sprinkle?" Our minister responded, "Yes, I have been immersed and I did it to be SURE! But it is not necessary. Sprinkling is an acceptable substitution."

My mother was not satisfied and requested immersion. The Methodist minister promised he would, but he delayed. One year later my mother again requested immersion, again the minister promised, but delayed. After a second year of waiting, my parents were very disappointed and decided to leave that church.

We began visiting other churches. We visited the Presbyterian, Episcopalian, Baptists, Nazarene, and various Pentecostal churches. The Pentecostal churches fascinated us, because they shouted, cried, rolled in the aisles, and spoke in tongues. During our visiting various churches, we visited South Joplin Christian Church, where my father was baptized as a boy of 12 years. The Sunday we visit-

ed, someone accepted Jesus and was baptized. My mother was thrilled. She said, "That's what the Bible teaches. I want to be baptized." So the next Sunday my mother went forward. This decision of my mother together with the trauma associated with leaving the Methodist church and the family repercussion it caused, all made an indelible impression upon me.

Consequently, on Easter Sunday 1937 at the tender age of 8 years, I was baptized scripturally along with my mother.

This was not an easy decision. When I first mentioned to my parents that I too wanted to go forward, my father opposed it. He said, "You are too young to understand. You must wait until you are older," but I persisted. Finally my father said, "Reggie, this is the most important decision of your life. I think you are too young to understand, but if I am wrong it would be a terrible sin on my part to hold you back. So since it is your decision you can make up your own mind."

I was a very shy little boy and not until the last moment did I realize that I would have to go to the robing room and change clothes. The very thought of changing clothes in front of strangers caused me to say "I will not do it." My parents were shocked and questioned me. When they found out it was a case of modesty, my father told me he would go with me to the robing room.

So at the close of Thomas J. Bennett's message, I rushed forward on the first word of the first verse of the hymn. The minister was so surprised he jumped from the platform to shake my hand. Then an elderly lady came. She hugged me and said, "Little boy, if you had not come I would not have come." This was a beautiful moment that helped me to realize the importance of little things in winning souls to Christ.

The day of my baptism was truly the most important day of my life. Jesus not only washed my sins away, but He also changed the course of my life forever.



*The Preacher Quits in Huff*

Following the resignation of Thomas J. Bennett, a new minister from California came to our church. His name was Francis Aarant. He was a good preacher and attendance grew.

After sometime passed, he requested a raise in salary. The church board felt they could not, so Mr. Aarant got up Sunday morning during the worship service and announced he was resigning because the board had refused to raise his salary.

The congregation became quite irritable and blamed the board. The following Sunday, Charles Colson, the Sunday School Superintendent, got up during worship and said he wished to make a suggestion that we take a vote. All who liked the preacher and wanted him to stay should stand up. Almost everyone jumped to their feet.

The Chairman of the Board then stood and said it was in illegal vote. He said that according to the Constitution and By-laws the congregation could not vote without a two weeks' advance notice.

Loud arguing and disagreements followed. Finally, the Chairman of the Board said that if they persisted then the vote would be to dismiss all Elders and Deacons. Finally, someone suggested a vote of confidence for the board. The congregation voted overwhelmingly.

This caused Brother Aarant to get up the following Sunday to say he had reconsidered and would stay without a raise. But so much ill-will had been caused that the Chairman of the Board said he would have to leave, which he did.

This was my first experience with church business matters. It left a bad impression on me. Also, my father never wanted to be on the church board after this experience.

*A Violinist*

At the age of 8 I also made another important decision, to learn to play the violin. My mother was an excellent musician and

a piano teacher. She had already started me on the piano, but for some reason I was not interested.

My great-grandfather on my grandmother Thomas' side had owned a violin. It was a beautiful old instrument with rounded edges instead of flat ones. My grandmother Thomas gave me this violin and urged me to learn to play.

Robert Rue, a member of the South Joplin Christian Church, was my first teacher. He must have been a good teacher because he had me playing in numerous recitals and finally prepared me for entry in the Missouri State Fair violin contest at Sedalia. I worked, practiced, and memorized long and hard for this contest.

The day before we left for Sedalia, I went to my Grandfather Higginbotham's garage at 32nd and Main Street to play. There was an old drill press in the garage that I liked to spin. On this particular day I was playing with that drill and I took my left hand and spun the fly wheel with all my might. As my hand passed around the backside of the flywheel, it was smashed horribly between the wheel and the concrete wall. The pain was terrible, but I did not cry because I instantly thought of the violin contest at the Missouri State Fair. I ran to my grandfather Higginbotham and showed him the finger. He had me soak it in coal oil. After I went home and showed it to my father and mother, they had me put ice packs on it.

That afternoon, Robert Rue came to get us to drive to Sedalia for the fair contest. He was so angry when I showed him my finger and told him what had happened, I really thought he would strike me. He drove very recklessly all the way to Sedalia. Once we arrived and got a room where we would sleep that night, he insisted I practice. I tried, but each time I applied pressure to the finger the pain was unbearable. Mr. Rue was furious!

All night long I soaked the finger in coal oil. I kept my mother and father awake because of the pain.

Early the next morning my father bandaged the finger and put more ice packs on it. The ice took away the pain.

One hour before the contest, Mr. Rue insisted I must take the bandage off and I must play the violin. He gave me a pep talk,

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telling me how much of his time and effort had gone into me and that in spite of pain, I could play.

So with the grit and determination, I stepped on the stage and performed. Although the pain was unbearable, I played the 3 pieces to perfection and the judges gave me the blue ribbon for First Place!

### *Boyhood Friends*

From the age of 8-14, I had four main friends. They were Junior Travis, Freddy Treece, Nathan Holt, and Winston Neal. These four friends all lived in the same block with us on Pearl Street.

Nathan Holt was my best friend. He was a nice boy who did not fight or argue. He walked with me to and from school and later when we had bicycles, he rode with me. We often set up lemonade stands in the summertime and sold ice cold lemonade for one penny per glass.

Junior Travis spent a lot of time at our house. He rode bicycles with me and we also had a tree house together, but he also liked to tease me. One day he stuck his foot in my bicycle causing me to fall over. I ran home crying. My father insisted I had to do the same to Junior. So the next time Junior rode past our house, I ran out and pushed him over. He got up and hit me in the nose. This incident put a damper on our friendship.

Freddy Treece liked to ride bicycles, play ball, and pal around. He also liked to get into mischief, so I did not spend too much time with him. In later years, I was able to baptize Freddy during a revival I preached at Blendville Christian Church in Joplin.

Winston Neal was an avid stamp collector. He did not play with us, but I liked to go to his house and look at the stamps. He got me interested in starting my own stamp collection.

### *Grandpa's Death*

When I was 8 years old my grandfather Higginbotham became ill and died at the age of 59. It was a tragedy in our family. I can still hear my grandmother, two aunts, and my mother weeping. It was the saddest event of my entire childhood. After his death, I did not enjoy visiting my grandmother because she cried all the time.

When I was about 10 years old, I quit my job as a *Liberty Magazine* salesman and got a full fledged newspaper route with *Joplin News Herald*. This was a daily paper so I had to deliver 5 days a week. My route was 5 miles and ran from 32nd and Main all over Stapleton Hill. I became something of an expert bicycle rider. I rolled newspapers, carried them in a canvas bag in a basket, rode without using the handlebars, and threw papers right and left using both hands. On several occasions I ran the entire 5 mile route and never touched the handlebars!

### *War!!*

On December 7, 1941, we were at church at South Joplin Christian Church. When we came out the newsboy was shouting, "Extra, extra, read all about it. Japanese bomb Pearl Harbor!"

The war had begun! I was afraid. The only memories I have of the war are that my daddy had to register for the draft. He was deferred for awhile because of his family. Then as the war became worse it appeared he would be drafted so he volunteered for the Navy. He went for his physical at the age of 37 and passed 1A! It was a sad day for me. I knew my daddy would go and be killed! However, he was never called to go. We never knew why.

As the war began to wind down, General MacArthur liberated over 2000 Americans held by the Japanese in the Philippines. The Vernon Newland family was among those liberated. Our church had helped the Newlands when they first went to China after they fled the communists and went to the Philippines. Our church con-

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tinued to help, so upon their return home, Vernon Newland came to report to South Joplin Church. It was my first remembrance of a missionary; he profoundly influenced my life.

### *Moving to Arizona*

As we approached June of 1943, my father announced we were moving to Tucson, AZ. At first it seemed my life was coming to an end, but I gradually adjusted to the idea. Our \$600 home was sold. With the money from the house my dad bought an old 1935 GMC moving van. We loaded all our earthly belongings (3 little rooms) into the van and as soon as school finished, we set off for Tucson. Gasoline was rationed, but we obtained a book of T stamps to make the trip. Four smooth, worn out tires were on the rear wheels. Two tires with a little tread were on the front wheels. I was old enough to sense the danger of the situation and my heart was in my throat the entire trip.

We traveled old highway 66 out of Joplin towards Tulsa and Oklahoma City. As I had never traveled any further than Sedalia and Kansas City, about 150 miles, this was a big thrill. The first day we made it as far as Oklahoma City. The second day we made it almost to Amarillo, TX when a huge explosion scared us! It was one of the rear tires! A blowout! Our spirits sank as daddy crept along about 15 mph until we reached a service station capable of changing such a big tire.

The spare was put on; it was down to the cords! A big boot was put in the blown tire, and that became our spare. We spent the night in Amarillo. The next day we headed on into New Mexico. We got to see the Painted Desert and the Petrified Forest! This was a thrilling experience I had never expected to see in my lifetime.

We then turned south to Alamogordo. We were amazed to see the White Sands, but then began the most fearsome part of our journey. We began the long, slow ascent of Organ Peak. It was growing dark as we began this climb. The old GMC did not have

the power needed. In a little while the water began to boil. Daddy ordered me to find a big rock and put it behind the rear wheels to block us from rolling down the mountain backwards in case the brakes failed!

For the next three hours daddy would start the truck, I would remove the rock and jump into the truck, and we would go 1/10 of a mile. The water would boil. Daddy would stop and I would jump out and put the rock under the wheel.

An Army convoy was crossing the mountain that night. You could hear the army trucks growling, groaning, stripping gears for miles away. When the Army trucks would pass us, they would shake our moving van and we were terrified one was going to hit us in the darkness and send us careening over the mountain side.

Finally, at midnight, we reached the top. My father shut off the motor and we began coasting. We coasted 23 miles until we reached the outskirts of Alamogordo. What a relief when we finally got a motel and went to sleep.

The next day we journeyed on to Tucson and stayed in a motel for 6 weeks. My dad worked as a Linotype operator for one of the newspapers in Tucson. We had friends there named the Skidmores. They were very kind to us. They had an old Model T Ford. On one occasion they took us to Nogales, Mexico. This was another thrill I will never forget.

### *My Parents Argue!*

After 6 weeks my daddy was very homesick and wanted to return to Joplin. My mother was very much against this and it caused the only argument I ever knew my parents to have.

My daddy applied for and received the gasoline to make the trip. We started back in silence. Every mile was agony for my sister and me because mama was not speaking to daddy. When we arrived back in Joplin, my mother refused to go see her parents or daddy's. We slept in a motel. My sister and I felt they would divorce.

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However, the next week, daddy announced we were moving to Miami, OK. My mother accepted this and began talking again. Peace and harmony returned to our family.

### *August 1943*

The move to Miami, Oklahoma was a time of trauma and re-adjustments. We moved into a tiny, two room apartment upstairs at 102 A. NW in Miami. Daddy got a job as a Linotype operator with the *Miami News Record*. I got a job as a newspaper delivery boy at the *Miami News Record*. Because World War II had taken all the available men to war, I got a man's route with over 300 customers. I was now making \$150 per month, I was rich! We sold the 1935 GMC moving van to a local moving company and daddy bought a 1935 Panel Ford. After the sale of the truck, we also moved to a beautiful, large, 2 story house at 7 G NE. It felt wonderful to live in a large house. At the age of 14 this was the first time in my life that I had a room all to myself!

### *Back to the Methodists*

The first thing we did upon getting established in Miami was to go to church. Naturally, we went to First Christian Church. It was cold and dead! A very old man, Coral D. Walker, was the minister. He spoke slowly and used very big words. The congregation was small and unfriendly.

So we went to the Methodist Church. It was very big, friendly, and inviting. Everyone was real nice. My daddy wrote a letter to the minister at South Joplin Christian. He explained our dilemma. I shall always be grateful for Roy Fields' reply. He wrote a very kindly letter. He did not criticize the Methodists, but he said, "Brother Thomas, you and your family are un-denominational Christians. You would be giving up considerable if you left the

## MY FAVORITE MISSIONARY SERMONS

Christian Church. Why give up Christ's name for a denominational Church? Acts 4:12, I Peter 4:16. Why give up the Lord's Supper? Matthew 26:26-31, John 6:53-59." He said, "Why not go back to First Christian where you belong and help to improve things? You be friendly and they will be friendly. You work and the church will grow!"

Thank God for Roy Fields. His wise advise was the spiritual turning point in our family and First Christian Church, Miami, Oklahoma was the place where I was challenged and helped to become a preacher.

### *First Christian Church, Miami, Oklahoma*

Once the decision was made, our family went down the aisle and we placed membership with First Christian Church. Surprisingly, everyone was friendly and we learned to love Coral D. Walker even though we didn't understand his sermons.

I joined the church orchestra directed by Mrs. Frank Kraybill. I joined the church choir directed by Noel Wyatt, Jr. I joined the Sunday School class and the Sunday Evening Christian Endeavor. I got a big newspaper route with over 300 customers.

## *PART TWO — HIGH SCHOOL*

By the time school started, I was so busy and happy that I thought I was in paradise. I also joined the high school Marching Band and the high school orchestra both directed by Claude (Doc) Killion.

### *9th Grade*

I turned 15 years old as a 9th grade freshman high school stu-



dent. All my time was occupied with the above mentioned activities. C.J. Lawrence was a year ahead of me. As his father was the superintendent of the printers at the *Miami News Record*, C.J. got a job grabbing papers off the press.

Everyday when I went to the *Miami News Record* to get my 300 papers to deliver, C.J. would hand them to me. C.J. was loud and witty. I liked him very much. C.J. was also in the Sunday evening youth group at church. He started working on me about going to summer youth camp. I was not interested, but C.J. was persistent.

### *Heart O' Hills Camp*

Every Sunday evening during Christian Endeavor, our youth sponsors Mutt and Arella Teehee, would promote going to camp. I didn't want to hear it and didn't want to go. But after 9 months of relentless pressure from Mutt Teehee on Sunday evening and C.J. Lawrence every day at the *Miami News Record*, I capitulated.

In August 1944, I went to camp. I was both frightened and thrilled! I had never been away from home one night in my life! Mutt Teehee drove and it was lots of fun. We sang silly songs, told jokes, and finally after 6 or 7 hours, we arrived at Heart O' Hills near Tahlequah, OK.

I was very shy and it was difficult living in a dormitory. I hated having to shower and use the toilet in front of other boys and men. But I survived.

The camp itself was a genuine spiritual thrill. The daily classes were all taught by Godly men who helped to reinforce all my parents had taught me for 15 years. The chapel services and nightly evangelistic services took me with the angels in the Heavenlies!

This was also the first time in my life I can ever remember being favorably impressed by girls! Some of the girls acted as though they liked me, but I was too shy to have any girlfriend! I did notice that some were pretty.

### *The Calling of God!*

As a little boy, I was always very impressed by the story of the boy Samuel and how God called, "Samuel! Samuel!" and after the third trip to Eli, he said, "It is the voice of God calling you." Then Samuel responded, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth!"

I always thought that if God spoke to me, I would hear Him and answer.

### *God Calls*

The closing night at Heart O' Hills was an emotion packed evening. The minister in charge had a fireside service. It was very inspiring as the entire student body and faculty gathered around the fireside. The song leader led us in special heart moving choruses like, "Into My Heart, Come Into My Heart Lord Jesus," "I Know The Lord Will Make A Way For Me. If I Live A Holy Life, Shun The Wrong And Do The Right, I Know the Lord Will Make A Way for Me," "Where He Leads Me I Will Follow," etc.

By the time the song service had ended, we were all in tears. Then the minister, who spoke, closed in a most dramatic way. He had us move away from the campfire out towards the dark woods. He then lit one candle and placed it on a stand in the center. he said, "This one candle represents Jesus, the True light of the world." Twelve candles were then placed around the Jesus candle and were lit. He said, "These twelve candles represent the 12 apostles." Then he asked for all ministers and missionaries in the camp to come forward and take a candle and light off the Christ candle and form an inner circle.

### *Come to the Inner Circle*

The minister spoke convincingly about the need for young

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men and women to dedicate their lives to Full Time Christian Service. This was the first time I had ever heard that expression. I understood it to mean, Preacher, Missionary, Youth Minister, etc. I could actually feel a tug in my heart as though God was urging me to be a preacher!

But I resisted! Like Moses, I made excuses. "I can't preach! I can't even pray publicly! We are too poor of a family. I could never afford to go to Bible College!"

At that moment as I offered those excuses, the song of invitation started. "I know the Lord will make a way for me!" Many went forward and dedicated their lives. I wept and held back.

### *God Taps Me on the Shoulder*

As the candlelight ceremony closed, the leader challenged us to return to our bunks without speaking a word. We were to silently pray and let God speak to us. I cooperated, as did the entire camp.

After I had retired, I lay in my bunk in the darkness praying. Suddenly there was a tap on my shoulder! I sat upright! It was Dyer Campbell, an elderly, Godly preacher. He said, "Reggie, has God called you to preach?" "No," I lied. Mr. Campbell said, "Don't preach if you can be happy doing anything else."

I had always told myself that if God spoke to me, I'd know his voice. He did speak to me, through the Bible, through my parents, through Mutt Teehee, through C.J. Lawrence, through the camp time, the candle, and Mr. Campbell. I did recognize His voice and His call. But, I made excuses!

### *Spiritually Miserable!*

I went home from camp a totally changed boy. I was miserable because I was making excuses to God's call, but I was totally dedicated to God in my daily life and church life.

## MY FAVORITE MISSIONARY SERMONS

I wanted to read the Bible, pray, and live for God. I wanted to win souls to Christ. I began to lead in public prayer, singing in the choir, playing the violin in the church orchestra, and the Sunday evening Christian Endeavor took on new meaning. Every day I talked with C.J. Lawrence about going to camp the next summer.

### *My Brother's Birth*

Around January 1, 1944, my mother became pregnant for the third time. I did not know and my sister did not know. Even though I was 15 years old, I was still totally ignorant of the facts of life. After a few months, I observed, my mother seemed to be getting fat, but I thought nothing about it!

In later life I learned that Mama and Daddy were very surprised about baby number 3. Because my mother was now 35 years old, it was considered somewhat of a disgrace to have a baby so late in life.

On September 11, 1944, my daddy came home early in the morning and announced to my sister and me, "You have a baby brother!" Barbara was thrilled. I was totally unaffected.

It is sad for me that my little brother, Edwin Eugene Thomas, was born when I was 16 years old. I was too old and too preoccupied with my own life to pay any attention to him. When I left home at 18, I held him in my arms and today the photo looks as though I am holding my own child.

### *10th Grade Motor Bike*

Up to this time I had always ridden a bicycle. I was quite skillful at bike riding. Approaching the age of 16 meant I had been delivering newspapers on a bicycle for 8 years. I was also quite strong and in good health.

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As my 16th birthday came closer, I asked permission to buy a motor bike. The Cushman Motor Scooter was the in thing. As I had the money, Daddy and Mama reluctantly gave in.

As soon as I got the Cushman Scooter, I was suddenly one of the most popular boys in High School! There were only 5 or 6 of us in Miami who had Scooters; John Cone, Roger Hutchison, Denver Gibson and 2 or 3 others.

Girls began hanging around! LaVerne Simpson, Pat Barlow, Pat Donica, Neewanda Schmitt, Ramona Valley, and Alice June McFerron are some I remember who were eager to ride with me.

My Daddy told me I was to be home by 8:30 pm on school nights and 9:20 pm Friday and Saturday nights. I was having so much fun taking girls riding that I forgot. I came in a half an hour late one Friday night. My daddy was waiting!! I was scared, but I apologized and he said, "Don't let it happen again!" The next week it happened again. This time daddy met me at the door and he said, "As long as you live in this house you will obey me. If you think you can whip me, let's fight right now!" I was terrified! I cried and apologized and never again did I disobey!

### *16th Birthday 3 Great Happenings*

January 8, 1945, was a memorable time for me. I had been begging and pleading for months. As you might guess, I wanted an automobile. So on my birthday I purchased, with my own hard earned money, a 1934 Plymouth. I purchased the car from Claude Donica. I thought the car was great! But there were many problems. It broke down constantly and it leaked gas.

Gas rationing was still on. However, I had a big newspaper route which was judged essential and I qualified for B stamps. That gave me enough gas to run the newspaper route. However, I used my bicycle to deliver papers and used the car to have fun!

Because of the gas leak, the B coupons ran out. I told my tale

of woe and someone said, "You can go to any truck stop and purchase T stamps on the Black Market. I did it! Daddy soon found out and asked, "Where did you get all that gas?" I told him. He was furious. He gave me a one hour lecture on Patriotism, the War Effort, the sin of Black Market gas, etc. I was ashamed and apologized for my ignorance. Then I got the leak in the gas tank fixed!

### *Russell Martin*

The second momentous happening was the coming of Russell L. Martin to First Christian. Russell was 26 years old and a ball of fire for God! He had just come from 4 years as a traveling evangelist and was a soul winner *par excellence!*

### *Wading Water*

Russell's first Sunday as our minister was a day never to be forgotten! We choir members always used the big baptismal pool as a short cut going from Sunday School to the choir robing room. The reason we could do this was because the pool was always dry. No one ever got baptized. Our church was dead so far as soul winning was concerned. Unbeknown to the congregation, Russell had persuaded the fire department to come and fill the huge baptismal pool with water.

When Sunday School ended, all the choir members started to the choir robing room. The first lady was waist deep in water before she realized she was all wet! This lady was quite upset and the news of her mishap swept through the congregation like wild-fire. By the time church started, we all knew the new preacher already had made an enemy.

But when Russell began to preach, his dramatic delivery and sincere presentation of God's word electrified the dead congrega-

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tion. We all felt like Ezekiel's army of dead bones coming to life again! When the invitation was extended 12 souls came to accept Jesus as Savior and the baptismal pool was used! Our church was set on fire and was never the same again!

### *Worldwide Influence*

During Russell Martin's 27-year ministry in Miami there were literally thousands that were saved. There were 71 young people who went into the ministry. I was the first one. Some of these 71 have really become world famous as gospel preachers! Lloyd Cameron, Charles Gibson, Ronnie Epps, Wally Rendell, Chief Rendell, Charles Scott, Freeman Bump, Davie Barger to name a few.

### *Friends for Life*

Russell was 26 and I was 16. We were instantly attracted to each other. I looked up to Russell as though he was my second father. I admired and respected him. I wanted to imitate him. He was young enough to also be my friend. He was funny and clever. He made me laugh. I wanted to be with him all the time.

### *Playing Jokes*

Russell had plenty of jokes he played on people. As a result, we began to play jokes on him!

Lloyd Cameron and I teamed up to play some of the wildest jokes on Russell. Some almost caused disaster! One day we knew Russell had a funeral at 2 pm at Cooper's Funeral Home. He was always in the habit of arriving one minute before the start of the service. So Lloyd and I jacked up the left rear wheel of Russell's big Buick. We hid and watched. At 2 minutes until 2:00 pm.,

Russell rushed out and jumped in the car. He started it and put in gear. The wheel spun and he sat there gunning the engine. We laughed until we were exhausted. Russell had to walk to Cooper's and was 5 minutes late. If he had known we were the culprits, he would have killed us!

Another day Lloyd and I slipped in the basement of the church with a big giant firecracker. We got it all set up and we had rigged up a giant, long fuse that would take 3 to 4 minutes before it would ignite the firecracker. We lit it and then ran upstairs to the baptismal door leading into Russell's office. We lit a cigar and puffed on it blowing lots of cigar smoke into Russell's office. Then we ran around the entrance door and walked in.

Russell was suspicious, he said, "Have you boys been smoking cigars?" "No," we lied! Just at that moment the big firecracker went off in the basement with the loudest explosion you could imagine. The church building shook and reverberated! Russell looked at Lloyd and me and said, "What have you dirty rats done this time?" Rose Turner, the elderly church secretary burst into the office screaming, "Call the police! A bomb has gone off!" Russell said, "Calm down, Rose, it was just Andy smoking gunpowder!" Andy was the church custodian. As soon as he calmed Rose, he turned to us very sternly and said, "Let's go to the basement and see the damage! And you boys are going to pay for every broken window!" The joke was no longer funny as we soberly went to the basement. Fortunately no windows were broken and no damage done to the building. This sobered Lloyd and me for a few days.

### *Revival and DeMolay Dance*

About this time, Russell led the church in a big 3 week revival meeting. Russell preached and Earl Grice was song evangelist. It was a thrilling meeting. Hundreds attended and over 100 were baptized. I attended every night except 1 during the 3 weeks. The one night I missed was because of a DeMolay dance. I did not dance



and I did not believe that it was right to dance. But some of my friends persuaded me to go. My conscience killed me and I did not enjoy one moment of the evening. As I left the dance, I bumped straight into Earl Grice! He looked at me and said, "Why Reggie! We missed you at the revival! What are you doing here?" My face turned fiery red! I was so ashamed! It seemed to me that God arranged for Earl to be there at that moment. I never again went to another dance.

### *The Singing Brocks*

Russell had two revivals each year. So in about six months he began advertising the Singing Brocks. We learned that Virgil and Blanche Brock were the composers of "Beyond the Sunset," "He's a Wonderful Savior to Me," "Sing and Smile and Pray" and over 200 of the hymns and choruses sung around the world.

Great crowds attended and scores were won to Christ. We came to the last night of the revival. When Russell extended the invitation the 99th soul walked forward. Russell signaled his associate, Dallas Kneale, and whispered in his ear. Dallas was instructed to get in his car and go get Imogene Tatum, the Indian church secretary, to place membership. Dallas drove like a madman while Russell kept pleading and extending the invitation. Suddenly at this moment, Virgil Brock grabbed the microphone and began a very emotional appeal while he concluded with his own rendition of the 90 and 9. As Virgil Brock brought tears streaming down our cheeks, down the aisle walked 5 more souls including Imogene making 104 additions.

Afterwards, Russell loved telling this story and he would always conclude by saying, "That dirty Virgil got 4 more that I was saving for next Sunday!"

### *The Policeman and Russell*

Once we had a great Christian camp at Sedan, KS. At this time Russell had a beautiful Chrysler convertible. Everyone loved riding with him in this car. One day Russell took me, Pearl Willis, Davie Barger, and a couple of others into Sedan. He parked parallel instead of angle parking. When we came out of the store, the town cop was leaning on the bumper writing a ticket. Russell shouted, "Write her good, buddy!" The policeman was highly offended by Russell's attitude and voice. He said, "I'll have you know we have rules and regulations in this town." Russell said, "Hurry up and write it!" and he started the engine. Suddenly we were very shocked as Russell put the car in gear and took off with a roar. Pearl Willis said, "Russell, aren't you afraid he'll shoot you?" Russell laughed and replied, "How can he when he's rolling in the gutter?" We all looked back and the policeman had fallen and was actually rolling in the gutter! Russell never drove into Sedan again!

### *My First Sermon*

The third big event in my 16th year was my first sermon. Russell approached me one day and said, "Reggie, I want you to preach next Sunday." I was terrified. I replied, "I can't do that!" Russ said, "Oh yes you can! I've already put in the paper that you will!"

Every day that week I went to the church during study hall and Russ helped me. By Sunday, I was ready. Even though I knew the Bible, it only took 10 minutes for me to tell everything I knew. I ran out and offered the invitation. To my thrill and amazement, 2 souls came to accept Jesus. I was smart enough to know I had not converted these people. But it was the sign from God I had been looking for. Now I knew it was His call for me to preach. The decision was made!

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### *Heart O' Hills — My Candle is Lit! A Memorable Summer-Revival Meeting*

The summer of 1946 was not only memorable because of my life's dedication to the ministry, but also because of 2 great revivals I preached in Fairland and Afton, OK.

Russell Martin had made the arrangements. Lloyd Cameron was song leader, Sarah Kraybill the pianist, and I was to preach.

First we went to Fairland, OK. Brother A.Z. Matthews was minister of the Christian Church at Fairland. He had four wonderful sons; Faust, a preacher, Bill, Jack and Monty. Monty and I had become fast and close friends in High School. We both played bass horns in Claude Killion's Championship Miami High Marching Band. I was thrilled to be with Monty and his Dad. (Later in life, Monty became the organizer and lead singer of the world famous Foggy River Boys, who sang over national TV every Saturday night with Red Foley on the Ozark Jubilee.)

#### *30 Souls Added*

The revival at Fairland was a huge success. Great crowds filled the building overflowing every night for 2 weeks. I preached my heart out. God blessed with 30 souls added. It was a sensation! News spread fast.

#### *40 Souls Added*

Following the revival at Fairland, we moved on to Afton, where an even greater revival occurred. The news of the success in Fairland fueled the fires of revival in Afton. Record crowds attended and 40 more souls were added.

*My Candle is Lit!*

I could hardly wait until camp time. This summer I drove my old 1934 Plymouth to Tahlequah. Some of the youth rode with me. Camp was another great spiritual time in my life and during the Friday campfire I went forward to light my candle and stand in the inner circle with those who were dedicating their lives to full time Christian Service. God's call was answered!

*Trouble With Russell*

From the moment Russell became our minister, he and I differed on the youth work. I wanted to go to "Heart O' Hills Camp" and Russell wanted me to go to "Sunset Bible Camp." The one I attended was the Disciples of Christ camp, while Russ was promoting the undenominational, independent Christian Church Camp. I was in ignorance of the situation.

Without realizing it, I caused Russell problems. I became President of the Heart O' Hills Camp during my Senior year and worked very hard to recruit the youth go there. Russell opposed me and worked to get the youth to Sunset.

It took Russell two years to get me straightened out and change my Bible College influence from Phillips U. to Cincinnati Bible Seminary. I shudder when I realize that I would have been a Disciples of Christ minister had Russell not come to Miami. Thank God for Russell Martin.

*11th Grade — My First Ministry*

During the spring of 1946, Russell asked me to start preaching regularly at the North Miami Christian Church. This church was only able to have Sunday School because no one was available to preach. Naturally, I was speechless and told Russell, "NO!" He

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said, "You can do it! I've already told them you would be there Sunday!"

So as a Junior in High School, I became the minister of the North Miami Christian Church. Lloyd Cameron agreed to be song leader and soloist. Our youth group cleaned up the old, dirty building at North Miami. We went visiting door-to-door in North Miami, announcing the service and inviting everyone to attend.

We enjoyed every Lord's Day for nearly 2 years that I served as minister. Some who helped play the piano were Sarah Kraybill, my mother, Florence Thomas, my sister Barbara, and others. Lloyd Cameron served faithfully as song leader and soloist and we recruited lots of young people to help with special songs; Charles Gibson, Pat Donica, Nemamah Schmitt, Pat Barlow, and many others.

### *Souls Were Won*

There were souls won to Christ. To me it appeared that God was reaffirming again and again that he had called me to preach His Gospel and to be an Evangelist!

### *More Jokes!*

It seemed that Russell Martin had 10,000 jokes. He pulled one after another. I got the idea that one of the best things for a minister to do was pull jokes on people! In retrospect it is a wonder why people did not run me out on a rail!

### *The Thing*

At Afton I started advertising that I had captured "The Thing" and would display it on a certain night. There was a popular song

at that time called, "The Thing." The basic message of the song was nobody wanted the thing, not even Hell or Heaven. As I announced this night after night the crowds grew. The night I displayed The Thing was spectacular! I held up the offering plate! The audience roared with laughter. People talked about it far and near! (How times have changed. If anyone would attempt such a sensational thing today they would be accused of blasphemy and would be driven out of the church.)

*Amen — Hallelujah — Praise the Lord!*

Another spectacular joke that I pulled in Afton was at offering time. I announced that on a certain night we would have a shouting offering! When the night came, I had 4 men in the church primed to carry out the plan.

I announced that when anyone dropped in \$1 or less the deacon would shout "Amen." When the offering was \$1 to \$5 the deacon would shout "Hallelujah." And when anyone dropped in \$10 or more would get a "Praise the Lord"! The audience roared with laughter. As the offering began there were "Amens," "Hallelujahs," and a few "Praise the Lords." Then someone dropped in a \$20 bill and Onus Waugh shouted "Whew-eee"! The audience laughed until they cried. Onus was the most respected and Godly man in the church. In retrospect, I realize that things of this nature were terrible to do in God's house. But as a 16 year old boy, I got away with it and people loved it. Although they were very funny at the time, I would never recommend anyone doing anything like this today!

*The Joke that had a Tragic End!*

Following the meetings at Fairland and Afton, Lloyd Cameron and I resumed our ministry at North Miami. We were not only thrilled with soul winning but we now had many new jokes to play

on the members at North Miami. One was a car bomb!

I put the bomb under the hood of one of the church elders, Brother Wilson. I then quietly notified every member what I had done and invited the entire congregation to wait after the dismissal for the fun!

When Brother Wilson and his wife got into their car, unsuspecting, the entire congregation watched. As Brother Wilson turned the key there was a loud whistle followed by a very loud explosion and then billowing smoke. All of us roared in laughter. Then suddenly the laughter stopped because we realized Brother Wilson had slumped over the steering wheel! He had a heart attack!

The next few days and nights were anxious for me. Fortunately Brother Wilson recovered. He and his wife forgave me and we remained good friends!

That put an end to my practical jokes!

### *Sunset Bible Camp*

Russell Martin had continued to argue with me about the Disciples of Christ and Heart O' Hills Camp. He was very insistent that I attend Sunset Bible Camp and he said, "You will see the difference!" So the summer of '46 ended with me going to Sunset Bible Camp.

Russell had engineered things so that all the youth group went to Sunset Bible Camp. Jim Rutherford, Jr. was the president of the camp. His father, Jim Rutherford, Sr., Forest Bailey, Charley Wilbanks, Frank Grubbs, and Russell Martin were the faculty members.

The camp seemed like a pool hall or beer tavern to me. The boys were smoking, gambling, drinking, cursing and fighting! Most of these boys had just gotten out of the service as World War II was winding down. They were wild and woolly. I hated it. I was rejoicing that I was right and Russell was wrong! Sunset Bible Camp was no good!

But suddenly a little short man with a booming loud voice walked in the boys' dorm. It was Jim Rutherford, Sr. He shouted, "You bums shut up! I am ashamed of you! Where do you think you are? This is no beer hall! This is a Bible Camp. Now you either straighten up right now or I'll personally knock your block off! If any of you sissies think you're big enough to challenge me, step forward!" Not a boy moved. Everyone was ashamed!

That night Jim Rutherford, Sr. preached his famous sermon, "If I Were The Devil!" It was the most gripping, compelling, emotional sermon I have ever heard. The sermon lasted 1 hour, the invitation lasted over 3 hours. By the time it was over more than 300 had gone forward. The boys who had been drinking, cursing, gambling, and fighting had all gone forward and were on their knees weeping and praying in repentance. More than 100 were baptized. The rest rededicated their lives or dedicated to full time ministry.

At the close of camp, I was elected President of Sunset Bible Camp for the next year. I was to preside over the mid-winter rally and the biggest honor of all, I got to keep the camp Bible for the next year.

### *Invited to Preach in Tulsa*

As a result of Sunset Bible Camp, I was able to become friends with Jim Rutherford, Sr., Charley Wilbanks, Frank Grubbs, and Forrest Bailey who, along with Russell, were some of the greatest soul winners of that day.

One of the biggest thrills was to be invited by Jim Rutherford, Sr. to preach at the world famous Cincinnati Avenue Christian Church in Tulsa. The last Sunday afternoon of August, I drove to Tulsa and preached Sunday evening. I was amazed. The church met in a huge, old, white frame building. There were hundreds present. The biggest crowd I had ever seen. Jim Rutherford, Sr. introduced me like I was a big time preacher. I was flattered and



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amazed. Several souls were converted that night! This contact with Jim Rutherford, Sr. profoundly influenced me as a young preacher boy. Jim Rutherford, Sr. became a very big influence on the rest of my life.

### *Conclusion*

Dear Reader:

You have now read the story of how God called me to preach!! The years have rolled by. It is now 50 years later. Praise God. He has spared my life and is still using me to preach His Word.

If I had my life for Him to live all over again I would not change anything. I believe God has led me all the way. It has been a thrilling life. Seeing precious souls come to Christ is the most satisfying way to live.

My prayer is that YOU might be led to use your life to preach the gospel.

### *Why Print This Testimony?*

Because I am convinced that young people need a testimony like this. The years of youth are decision making years. Great numbers of young people are lost to the ministry because their questions are not answered. Satan often wins by urging youth to settle for second best rather than the best for God.

And ministers need this testimony to remind them that recruitment for the ministry depends greatly on them. No matter how heavy the load ministers should not lose sight of recruitment and should allow time and effort for programming in this direction.

One of the great tragedies in our day is that many churches are teeming with youth and have programs to meet their needs at all levels, but nothing definite in the direction of ministerial recruitment.

Youth should be made aware that at the moment of salvation God gives to them at least one spiritual gift. And the basic drive of any young man ought to be to determine what God did for him at the point of salvation, and when he discovers that, then he has an obligation to develop it and use it totally to the glory of God.

“The Spirit of the Lord (is ) upon Me, because He has anointed Me (the Anointed One, the Messiah) to preach the good news (the Gospel) to the poor; He has sent Me to announce release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind; to send forth delivered those who are oppressed — who are down trodden, bruised, crushed, and broken down by calamity; To proclaim the accepted and acceptable year of the Lord — the day when salvation and the free favors of God profusely abound.” Amplified Version Luke 4:18, 19.

“And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how can men (be expected to) preach unless they are sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings! — How welcome is the coming of those who preach the good news of His good things!” Amplified Version Romans 10:14, 15.

“He Himself appointed and gave men to us, some to be apostles (special messengers), some prophets (inspired preachers and expounders), some evangelists (preachers of the Gospel, traveling missionaries), some pastors (shepherds of His flock), and teachers. His intention was the perfecting and the full equipping of the saints (His consecrated people), that (they should do) the work of ministering toward building up Christ’s body (the church).” Amplified Version Ephesians 4:11, 12.

I do not believe that any church has the right to a preacher that is not at the same time producing preachers. And I believe that any minister worth his salt ought to be duplicating himself at least, and even multiplying himself. He should be looking for young men in the congregation where he serves and surrounding himself with Timothies, Tituses, and Silases. The image of the ministry present to these men should challenge them to the preaching ministry.

The starting point is in the dedicated Christian home. This is

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complemented by devoted Bible school teachers who love Christ, His work, and His church, and instill within the hearts of boys a vision and a challenge for service.

Youth is the time for commitment. Life soon becomes complicated!

Always with those ministering to youth there needs to be a sense of urgency to capture the best for God before it is too late.

Any young man wanting to be a preacher for God, above everything else, can be that preacher by just turning everything over to God! With a prayer that many Timothies will be swept into the preaching arena by the powerful wind of the Holy Spirit, I publish my testimony.

Reggie Thomas  
Romans 1:16