

# ***FROM LAW TO GRACE***

## **CHAPTER ONE**

It was a cold morning Tuesday, January 27th, 1987. My wife Mary Alice and I had gotten up around 5:30 A.M. to make the 125 mile drive to Gainesville, Florida for a 9:00 A. M. appointment at Shands Medical Center to see Dr. Wiseman. We had been told to bring my medical history and the large file containing fifty or more X-rays that had been made at Fish Hospital in New Smyrna Beach, over the past three or four months.

As we arrived in Gainesville, we at first had some problems finding directions to Shands. It was right at the morning rush hour and all roads were crowded. Finally, we found the large medical building and located the out-patient's parking facilities. As we left the car and stepped out into the morning air, the icy wind seemed to go directly into the bones. The temperature was in the middle to low 20's. It was unusual for Florida weather. But, perhaps we were also a little nervous which made us notice the cold even more.

We entered the center and located the registration office where we gave all the pertinent information for insurance purposes, next of kin, and other personal information which was placed in a computer and I was issued a blue patients card similar to a plastic credit card to be used for all future medical services.

We were then directed to Diagnostics Physicians II located on the second floor where we were told to wait for Dr. Wiseman. The nurse took all of my files and gave them to an oriental looking man who was Dr. Wiseman's assistant. This physician then

proceeded to study the numerous X-rays and information that we had brought over from Dr. Youngman, my urologist in New Smyrna Beach.

As Mary Alice and I looked at each other, we began to wonder just what was next in our lives. Soon we were both escorted into a small room and in a few minutes a medium height, somewhat stocky built man came in and introduced himself in a heavy accented voice as Dr. Wiseman. He asked me to take off my coat and shirt, and made the usual examination of my pulse, blood pressure, heart beat, tapping on my chest and back, etc., when about that time the oriental looking doctor who had been examining my medical files came in, and they discussed them at great length.

Finally Dr. Wiseman turned to us and said that it was hard for them to make any definite statement on the status of my case, and that he would like to set up another appointment for me at a later date with Dr. Oblon, who was one of the head doctors of the Oncology Department there at Shands. He told us that there were continual new studies and treatments for cancer and that Dr. Oblon might consider chemotherapy treatment using interferon or perhaps some new treatment still in experimental stages.

His next statement, "You might possibly have five years of life left, and my advice to you is, if there is anything in your life that you have always wanted to do and haven't, you had better do it now", was frank and blunt. I thought to myself, I'm doing what I want most to do! As a pastor sharing the good news of Jesus Christ and preaching God's wonderful and infallible Word, I have found this to be the greatest fulfillment in my life.

Next, Dr. Wiseman said he would make all the necessary arrangements for an appointment with Dr. Oblon, and wished me good luck as he said good bye and dismissed us from his office.

We left the hospital and walked slowly out to the parking lot. Looking at each other we both agreed that a person without Christ might have left that office feeling like a walking dead person, and could very easily, at this point, give up hope. But, as Christians we know that it is not according to man's time but God's time when we have that appointed time with death.

As we began the long drive home to New Smyrna Beach, my mind began to wander back over the 55 years of my life, and the numerous times I had faced death through many situations. . . .

## CHAPTER TWO

I was only a little boy of about eighteen months when my father was killed in a plane that crashed into the sand dunes behind the beach at Ponce DeLeon Inlet. It was 1933, and he was one of the early pioneer pilots. I like to compare him with today's astronauts. He was flying an old World War I, surplus, twin wing, open cockpit Jenny, and on the day of the crash was instructing another pilot how to fly. That morning, they had just taken off from the golf course that served as a runway and soared out over the inlet heading east into the early morning sun, which was just beginning to give it's warm rays to the earth. I guess no one really knows exactly what happened, but it was thought that the single magneto failed, causing the engine to quit. As they attempted to reach the beach for a forced landing they were unable to clear the high sand dunes and crashed into one of them. The student survived with only a broken leg, but my father received fatal injuries to the head, and died a few hours later.

My mother was left a young widow, with my sister Bobbie who was four and myself. She had an insurance policy which barely paid for the funeral expenses and nothing else. Those were the days of the great depression and there were few jobs available. Fortunately she found work as a clerk with the Florida East Coast Railway. New Smyrna was a railroad town in those days and most of the town folk either worked for the railroad or were in businesses that were supported by trading with those who did.

They tell me that my great, great, grandfather was the chief steam engine mechanic for the Chase Railroad before it became the Florida East Coast Railroad, and that his son, my great grandfather, had been the first engineer to drive a train into

Daytona Beach. So my folks had come to Florida as railroad people, and Mama managed to support us as a railroad clerk.

I guess things went along fairly well with us until the mid thirties when an epidemic of diphtheria hit our area, and I came down with it. I was four years old then. I remember how sick I was. My temperature kept going higher and higher, and they seemed unable to bring it down. Dr. Jones, the town doctor at that time, was summoned to our house. By that time I had sunk into a coma, and upon examining me he was unable to find any life. He told my mother there was nothing he could do for me, and that he would send the hearse from Settle's funeral home over for my body. My mother was beside herself with grief.

It so happened that we lived next door to the county health nurse, Miss Lacey who came over after the doctor had left. She checked me over and detected a little sign of life. She began to work on me, and was able to bring me out of the coma. I seemed to recover slowly after that, but my mother contracted diphtheria from me and was very sick. She received early medication though and recovered more quickly than I had.

Not long after our bout with diphtheria my mother married again. This time she married a man named Frank Lee, who adopted my sister and me, giving us the name Lee instead of Bell, which was our given name.

We had a good childhood as far as material things were concerned. I spent most of my summers on a dairy farm with my mothers brother, Uncle Tommie. He was more like a father to me than anyone I ever knew. I spent some time with my mother's parents, and my grandmother is the only one I remember who ever shared anything

spiritual with me. I used to sit on her lap in an old rocking chair, and she would read the bible to me. I didn't understand what she read, but it left an indelible impression in my mind. She died when I was still a little boy, but I never forgot her.

My step-father began to drink, and more and more often he would come home very drunk. He argued and fussed at us. We went through some very difficult times. When he sobered up he tried to make up for a guilty conscience by buying us expensive gifts. It wouldn't be long though before it would happen all over again. Two more children were born into the family, a sister and a younger brother. There were six years between myself and my younger sister, and I was gone so much staying with relatives, we were never as close as I would have liked for us to have been.

These times of staying with relatives are some of the most memorable and enjoyable times of my early life. I especially loved to stay with my Uncle Tommy and with my grandparents in Geneva, Florida.

Soon after my father's death, Uncle Tommy married Aunt Leona and they took me with them on their honeymoon. They had a dairy farm and I loved the animals. He had an old mule named Bill who I used to ride. Bill was long and tall and had a backbone like a razor. We didn't have a saddle, so I would ride with a croaker sack only and it sure got sore. To get on old Bill, I would wait until he would put his head down to eat and I'd jump on his head. When he raised his head, I'd skid onto his back. I remember the first time I fell off he was trotting back to the barn and the croaker sack began to slide and off I went.

Papa would plant a watermelon patch each year and when it was time to harvest, we would hitch old Bill up to the wagon and to my delight, I got to drive the wagon. There were black fellows hired to pick and load the wagon as I drove along beside them. We would drop one "accidentally" every so often and eat the heart out of it. They sure were good!

I remember one year Papa planted his watermelon patch on "new ground" as he did each year. This patch was way out in the woods and someone was coming in at night and stealing his melons. Papa never minded if they got a few to eat, but they were stealing truck loads. I was staying with Papa and Nana at that time and was four or five years of age. After supper, Papa got his shotgun and said to me, "Let's go to the watermelon patch." We arrived before dark and hid the vehicle, then hid in some bushes where we could see anyone approaching by the woods road.

After a couple of hours, we saw vehicle lights moving to the patch and when it got close enough, Papa raised his shotgun and let go with both barrels. Someone in the vehicle started to holler. "Wait a minute Mr. McLain, don't shoot - it's me!" It turned out that it was the sheriff and his family. They had gone to look for Papa and my grandmother had told them where we were. I was scared to death! I just knew we were on our way to jail, but the sheriff said he understood and his vehicle wasn't hurt too bad from the bird shot that peppered it and his family was getting over their fright. Papa loaded their car down with watermelons - ALL they could carry!

As I got older and was able to work more. I had more duties on the dairy. Uncle Tommy, Aunt Leona and I would begin around 4 a.m. and milk 40 cows, clean up the

barn, bottle the milk, then deliver it in an old Model A Ford which had the seats removed, except for the driver's, to customers in Geneva, Oviedo, and Chuluota. After that, we would wash the milk bottles and prepare for the evening milking.

The best time was before the evening milking when I would go into the pasture and gather the cows. We always had a horse or two and I was allowed to ride them to do this chore. The pasture had several small lakes on it and one large lake, named Buck Lake, where Uncle Tommy lived. There was a peninsula that stuck out in the lake and many times the cows would be out on it. To shorten the long ride around on the land, I would take my clothes off and swim across the slip, separating it and drive the cows back across the water and on to the barn. I would grab a cow by the tail and let her pull me back across.

The land at the time was "open range," which meant that livestock had free range and you were responsible to fence your gardens, yards, ect., to protect them from the free ranging cattle. Later the law was changed to "no fence law" which meant the cattle owners had to fence in their livestock and were responsible for damage to their property.

It was during the time of "open range" one day that I had swam across the neck in the lake to get the cows and, as usual, I was naked as a "jaybird." I didn't own a bathing suit. When I got back across there was a wild bull there to meet us and he was mad! I headed for the first tree that I could climb and had to wait for help. After a while, neither I nor the cows came in. Uncle Tommy came to find out why and found me up the tree naked with a mad bull keeping me there!



I spent most summers and school vacations in Geneva and when I was in 8th grade, another uncle, Uncle Willalee, who was the principal of the little Geneva school and also taught 6th - 8th grades, wanted me to go to school there. This was his last year before retirement, so I lived with Uncle Tommy, working on the dairy and went to school there. My Aunt Mamie taught 1st - 2nd grades, and another teacher taught 3rd - 5th grade. The 8th grade class only had six students. It is hard for us today, to think about how these types of classes could work, but I learned more that year than any two other school years.

I worked one summer for a surveyor named Bill Swoope and had saved up \$55.00. It was back in the day when screw worms were a great problem for the cattlemen and they had to continually ride the range watching for and doctoring the calves and cattle to keep the screw worms from killing them. The screw worm flies would lay their eggs in any open wound and when they hatched their larva would eat the animal's flesh. These flies were eradicated a few years later by sterilizing and releasing the sterile flies back into the wild.

A cattleman, Mr. Sammy Long, in Chuluota would let me work with his cowboys as they worked and doctored his beef cattle. I was never paid, but I loved it and I learned a great deal from them, especially one hand named Link who had been a rodeo champ.

Although we always had horses to ride, I never had one of my own. We were working cattle out on the St. John's Prairie one day and there was a herd of 29 horses belonging to Mr. Sammy. I think he and Uncle Tommy had already talked it over and

when we brought that herd in and corralled them, Mr. Sammy said to me, "I will let you pick any one of the herd and have it for \$50.00." which would leave me \$5.00. My heart jumped and I picked a bald faced young bay stallion who had never had a human hand touch him before. The cowboys helped rope him, but couldn't hold him. I refused to turn loose and he dragged me all over the corral. We finally got him up the cattle shoot and into a cattle truck and to the dairy. I named him "Rex".

I didn't have a saddle, so I had to break him bareback. We took him to Buck Lake and out into belly deep water where he couldn't get his head down and buck. He reared and jumped but I managed to stay on. The real problem was, we had to come out of the water sometime.

We took him to the pasture and Uncle Tommy helped me onto his back, then left to do some business. Off went Rex running under trees, tearing my shirt off, and scratching my back all up. I had no control over him with the bit and he didn't have any idea what it meant. Finally, we wound up on the back of the pasture where a mare and her foal were grazing. She thought I had come to bring her back to the barn, so Rex followed her home.

It took a long time, and many bruises before I got Rex broke. He threw me six times, bit me, and kicked me. But with the help of sugar cubes and a lot of patience, he became a wonderful horse, who would follow me like a puppy. I could shoot a shotgun across his back and jump him into any water or swamp with no hesitation.

When school was out that year and it was time to go back to New Smyrna Beach, one of the cattlemen who had a ranch at the Volusia-Brevard County line,

offered to carry me and Rex in his cattle truck that far, then I would ride the twenty miles home on "Rex". It was during World War II and there wasn't much traffic, with gas, tires, and most everything being rationed. As we unloaded Rex and I started home, I noticed he didn't act right and would give out, but with the big heart he had, he kept going and we made it all the way. The next couple of days he got worse and when the vet checked him he said he had the blind staggers and there was no hope for him. I held his head and tried to comfort him as much as possible as I watched him struggle until he died. My heart, at 13 years old, was broken. I've had many horses that I've raised and trained, but he will always have a special place in my memories of that year together.

## CHAPTER THREE

I enjoyed fishing, hunting, sports, and all the good things that a boy enjoys in life. I met my wife, to be, in the second grade of school, and we dated each other through our high school years. She was a cheer-leader, and I played right end for the New Smyrna Beach Barracudas. We didn't win very many games in those days, but we enjoyed it immensely - win or lose!

It was during this time, around the age of 15, while playing football, I began having chest pains, and as they progressively got worse, my mother took me over to Sanford, Florida for a medical check-up. The doctors there ran an electrical cardiogram and came to the conclusion that I had strained my heart playing ball. I was to rest for a little while, and they were sure everything would be all right. I didn't have much trouble after that, and I made it through the rest of high school to graduation.

I had always loved art, and spent a lot of my time sketching any and everything around, from animals to boats, and even people. I guess it paid off, because I won an art scholarship to Stetson University, and after high school graduation in 1950, I began my freshman year there.

I didn't care for classroom studies, but I went out for football and soon found I was too small at 5'10" and 155 lbs., for college football even back then.

My art teacher, Mr. Friend, instructed us in impressionist or so called modern art. He told us that no one could make a living at art unless they went to New York or some other large metropolitan city. So he told us that we should study it only as a hobby. I

loved realistic art and wanted to do commercial art, but under his teaching soon became very discouraged.

The Korean war was now in full swing, so I dropped out of college and volunteered for the 82nd Airborne. It seemed that I was always trying to prove something to myself.

I was inducted in the army in January of 1952 in Jacksonville, Florida. They swore us in, put us on a train for Columbia, S.C., and we were on our way! When we left Jacksonville, it was warm, Florida weather. I had on a pair of light slacks and a light jacket. When we got to Columbia, there was ice everywhere, and I almost froze! They marched us to the induction center where we were issued some fatigues, put through the showers, and assigned a bunk. I didn't know it then but I wouldn't get to lay down in that bunk for another forty-eight hours.

They soon came in and called out some names, mine being one of them, for K.P. duty at the mess hall. I peeled 900 pounds of potatoes that night. After cleaning the floors in the mess hall the next morning, they said we could go get some sleep. The problem was they failed to tell the barracks sergeant and as we were getting ready to drop into our bunks, he came in and said, "What do you think you are doing soldier? Do you think you are at home? This is the army, get dressed and fall in." Needless to say, I really did appreciate a good night's sleep that night.

Well, that was my introduction to the army. I enjoyed most of my basic training. I grew up during the years of World War II with all the young men away in the service, the black-outs, practice air-raid warning, older men serving in Civil Defense, and Coast

Watchers in the Coast Guard Reserve, keeping records from towers along the beach of all shipping convoys.

All of us young boys spent our time playing war and building forts. Now that I was in training at Ft. Jackson, it seemed I was back playing war games again. Being a soldier didn't seem real to me yet.

I got a week-end pass, and we loaded my car down with soldiers and we headed to Florida. It sure was wonderful to be with Mary Alice again. I had bought her a small diamond ring and asked her to marry me. She said I'd have to ask her parents, so I was to come over that night and ask the big question. That sure was a long afternoon, and I was really nervous. When the time finally came and I pulled up in her folks yard she came running out to meet me and had a big smile on her face. She said that her Mom and Dad had been talking to her and said that if we wanted to be married it was all right with them. What a relief that was for me. I was overjoyed.

We were engaged and began to make our wedding plans. I knew I wasn't making enough money to support a wife. After graduation from basic training I was sent to Fort Bragg, N.C., and assigned to Able Company, 1st battalion, 505 Regiment of the 82nd Airborne Division. The fun and games were over, and it was work, work, work, train, train, train! I went to Ft. Benning, Ga., in the middle of the summer to go through jump school. The temperature reached over 119 degrees. I was in good physical condition. I had never smoked or drank, and had the advantage over many that had. We finally graduated and received our jump wings. Boy, did we think we were red hot! And I had proved to myself one more time that I could take the challenge.

I went back to my Company at Ft. Bragg, N.C., and settled in to the routine of getting up each morning no matter what the weather, and running 5 miles before breakfast, eating, putting on a full field pack, taking up a 57 M.M. recoilless rifle with tripods and ammo to rotate carrying it along with the others in our squad. Then we would march 12 miles into the boondocks, eat field rations for lunch, run a field problem, then march 12 miles back.

Our commanding general we called "the great white Father", because he always wore a white uniform which matched his white hair and mustache. He had a rule that from the division flag pole at headquarters, out 12 miles in any direction, no troops could ride in vehicles. They had to march. Over 12 miles they could be trucked to and from the field. We always went up to that point and never got to ride. This was our routine.

I was offered an opportunity to attend leadership school at Fort Jackson, S.C., so I jumped at the opportunity. The school was made up of soldiers from many different outfits and were to be trained for leadership. The top three in each class would receive a promotion upon graduation to the rank of corporal. I saw this as a chance to earn enough money with a promotion to get married. So I worked extra hard to make that promotion. With the training I had received in the Airborne, it wasn't too difficult and I graduated second in my class.

I returned to my company at Fort Bragg, and began planning a furlough so I could go home for our wedding. At last the time was near, and I went to a little town about 25 miles away called Southern Pines, where a couple of the married men from my outfit lived with their families. I found a little cottage in the backyard of a family

home, which must have been a children's playhouse at one time, and it had been fixed up to rent. It had a tiny living room, with a small couch and one chair, a much smaller kitchen, a little bathroom with a shower, and a bedroom that was hardly big enough for the bed. But it was something we could afford and to us it would be a castle.



## CHAPTER FOUR

When I arrived in New Smyrna, Mary Alice was preparing for our big day. The first thing we did was to go to the preacher for counseling. I must say that it was a very disappointing experience. His advice to us was to make a lot of money and that if I made enough money our marriage would work out. What a joke! I was earning \$90.00 per month as a soldier then. He never gave us any spiritual advice whatsoever, and did not even share the gospel of Jesus Christ with us.

I was open and searching in those days, but I was not a Christian. As a boy I had attended church with some of the other kids and had even gone so far as to join two different churches, but I had never come to Christ, but then no one had ever really shared Him with me. Even at Stetson University, which is a Baptist College, and where half of the young men in my dorm were ministerial students, no one ever shared with me.

Needless to say I walked out of that pastor's office with an empty sick feeling that day. A feeling that would stay down deep inside me for many years to come. Mary Alice had accepted Christ many years before as a teenager, but hadn't grown in knowledge of His word and grace. Praise the Lord! No one had told her about "being unequally yoked". God winks at that which is done in ignorance.

We had a beautiful wedding, and left for Miami on our honeymoon. Our first stop was in Eau Gallie for dinner as we headed south along the east coast of Florida. Our plans were to travel U.S. 1 south to Miami and then drive back along the west coast of Florida. As we ate our first meal in a restaurant along the river that evening, we were

trying to act like an old married couple, even though we had only been married a few hours, and were just turning twenty years old. Our waitress asked us if we would like dessert, which we declined, and then she laughed and said, "if you don't want anyone to know that you are newly weds, you'd better get that rice out of your hair!"

All too soon the honeymoon was over, and it was time for me to report back to Fort Bragg. We loaded all of our earthly belongings in my old '49 Ford coupe, and headed for Southern Pines, North Carolina and to our little castle which would become our first home. Each morning before daylight I would carpool over to the base at Fort Bragg, and go through the regular routine of a professional soldier, preparing for war in the art of killing or of being killed. When I arrived back home late in the evening, Mary Alice would always be sitting out on the steps waiting for me. It was a very special time in our lives.

We made some wonderful friends, and even though it was a difficult time financially we hardly noticed. There was a beautiful lake nearby and sometimes we went swimming with our new found friends. It seems as though by the end of the month, just before pay day, we were always broke. I had a \$2.00 bill that I had carried for many years, and every month I'd hock it, and we would go to see a movie. Then I'd buy it back on pay day!

One such time, Mary Alice was going to surprise me with some homemade yeast bread. She very carefully mixed the dough and put it in the refrigerator before we left for the movie. When we got back home and she opened the door to the refrigerator, the dough had risen all over the place. It was everywhere, and I made the mistake of

laughing. It broke my bride's heart, and it was over thirty years before she made any more yeast bread for me!

## CHAPTER FIVE

We had been back at Fort Bragg only a short time, when the battalion commander found out that I could do art work, and assigned me to headquarters where I was making training aids and whatever else was needed in the battalion. I learned that there was an opening in Special Services for an artist, so I requested that assignment. But instead, word came one morning that I was to report to my commanding officer. I found that I had been transferred to Fort Benning, Ga., to the Officers Combat Training School as a cadre member. So, we packed everything back into the car and left our little castle, headed for Columbus, Ga..

We stayed with Mary Alice's sister and brother-in-law who lived in Columbus until we could find a place of our own. We finally found an upstairs garage apartment, and moved into it. We liked Columbus and I was assigned to S-3 and placed in charge of the art department for visual aids, etc. It was a good position and we were happy.

About this time we found out that we were expecting our first baby. Mary Alice was a little nervous about this, so we took a trip home to New Smyrna Beach, and after a long talk with her Mom we returned to Columbus feeling very encouraged and excited.

I went into the base one morning, not long after this, and the colonel called me into his office. He handed some papers and said that I had been put on orders to be sent to the Alaskan Command in Alaska. He advised me that he could probably have my name removed if I wanted him to, but if he did so it was possible that my next orders might be for far east-command (Korea), as they were shipping many of the men out as

the war increased with Chinese troops joining the North Koreans, and if that happened he would be unable to pull me off of those orders.

I decided it would be better to accept the transfer to Alaska, even though it meant being separated from my bride of only about six months. We hoped that she would be able to join me in Alaska, but we knew that would not be possible if I went to Korea.

The colonel told me that he had no authority to give an M.O. for the position as artist that I had been filling at Fort Benning, so that left my M.O. as a combat rifleman, which was my official standing. He said that I had done a good job for them, and that he would put a letter of recommendation in my file revealing the work I had done as an artist.

Mary Alice and I drove back to New Smyrna where she would stay with her family while I was gone. It was a sad day when we had to say goodbye, and I boarded a train headed all the way across the United States to Seattle Washington and Fort Lewis, to await a ship to Alaska. We were placed in a replacement depot, and because we were going to Alaska and not Korea like so many that were there, we were given all the details that came along.

The days turned into weeks and we found out that the longshoremen who serviced the civilian ships that the U. S. government had contracted with to transport the military personnel to Alaska were on strike, and they couldn't move us.

One night, we began to hear rumors that we were being sent to Korea instead of Alaska. Navy ships were used to transport troops there. A lot of the men thought they wouldn't be allowed to do that without orders from Washington, D.C., but if that was true

they must have gotten them, because about daylight the next morning the sergeant came into our barracks and told us to fall into formation outside with all of our Alaskan equipment. We felt sure we were at last headed for Alaska, but soon all hopes were dashed when they ordered us to turn in all of our Alaskan, cold weather gear and told us to line up at the infirmary to receive our immunization shots for the Far East.

That night I had to call Mary Alice and tell her about the change of orders. Our hearts were both broken, not really knowing if we would ever see each other again. I thought about my Dad being killed at age 25, and my grandfather who had died at 32 in the great flu epidemic. I felt sure I would also probably die at a young age. I couldn't say goodbye on the phone, and neither could she. So our next month's pay check was already spent on that last phone call before I boarded the ship the next morning and left for war.

As we sailed into the stormy Pacific Ocean, we headed on the northern route up by Alaska. The closest I ever came to it was when we caught a glimpse of the shoreline on the horizon. We were 21 days in a terrible storm with 3,200 sea-sick soldiers on a World War II Kaiser ship named the "Marine Phinx". I remembered that Mary Alice had told me she wished I could experience the misery of "morning sickness", because of my lack of understanding and compassion. As I lay on my bunk, unable to eat anything but saltine crackers I thought, "I wish she could see me now!"

We arrived in Japan where we spent three days getting assigned our equipment for combat. My orders were that I was assigned to a rifle squad in a combat engineer company when we reached Korea.

We boarded the ship again and started across the Sea of Japan to Pusan, Korea. It took a couple of days to cross, and we sat around on the deck and just wondered about our future. I was sitting on a hatch where the life jackets were stored, when a friend who had a lighted cigar in his mouth, jumped up beside me, and when he did his cigar went into my right eye. The burning end came off and stuck to my eye, and cooked the eyeball pretty well before we could get it out. They took me into the ship's infirmary and a couple of interns were trying to figure out how best to help. I remember thinking of how funny it was that they couldn't decide how best to treat my injury. Finally, one had an idea and came out with a large hypodermic needle. When I saw that my heart almost stopped beating, I said, "what are you going to do?" He told me not to worry, he was only going to use it to spray clean water over my eyeball to wash out the ashes that were stuck there!

Afterwards they bandaged my eye, and asked me if I wanted a pain killer. I was going to show them how tough I was and refused it. Oh, how I suffered that night. When we sailed into Fusan the next day, I was transferred to the military hospital and placed under the care of a colonel who was about to retire and return stateside. He wasn't very optimistic about saving my eye, but he did a great job, and 9 days later when he removed the bandage I rejoiced that I still had my vision in that eye although it was somewhat blurred for a while.

While I was still in the hospital a chief warrant officer came to see me and said he had been going through the files at the replacement depot where I was to have gone, and had found the letter of recommendation from the Colonel back at Ft. Benning had

put in my files. He told me he was the personnel officer at UNCACK prisoner of war command, and that they were looking for someone to work in G-3 in the layout and planning. He asked me if I would be interested in trying out. Since my right eye which had been burned was my shooting eye, I felt it would be a real handicap. So I decided to accept his offer. He advised me to call him at the number he gave me when I was released from the hospital, and that he would send a jeep for me which would take me to Headquarters about 20 miles out of Pusan, on a bay of the Sea of Japan.

They seemed pleased with my work, and later I was placed in charge of the drafting department. We were the headquarters for over 14 prisoner of war camps. The hardened communist prisoners of war were placed on the island camps like Koji-do and Cheju-do, and the less violent ones were on the mainland camps. The commanding general, General Dodge had allowed himself to be taken prisoner by the inmates at Koji-do, and had been relieved of command and reduced to colonel. General McGarr was now our commanding officer, and had the 187th Airborne Division as guards at that camp. The United Nations had officers from many countries at UNCACK, but mostly it was the United States Army, with South Korean guards and the 187th. Airborne.

By this time the main fighting had moved back north near the 38th parallel, and we only had occasional attacks, mostly at night by guerilla troops. We slept every night with our carbines in our sleeping bags. I was really homesick for my wife, and as the months passed and it was time for our first child to be born, it really worked on me. I found in my duffel bag the little New Testament Bible that had been given to all the



soldiers during basic training, and began to read it each night. I got a lot of comfort from reading it, but I didn't really understand as I read it through.

Occasionally a chaplain would come on a Sunday and have services for us. Again I didn't really understand, although I enjoyed attending. Outside our compound was a little house where a missionary couple to the Koreans lived. I wanted badly to know them, and to know about their work there, but never got up the nerve to meet them.

Finally one day at a mail call, I received a telegram that was already a week old telling me that I was the father of a baby girl and that mother and baby were fine. The next day I got a letter from Mary Alice telling me we had a beautiful blue eyed little girl named Joy Lynn. That was a perfect name for her, for she has truly been a real joy, and is now the mother of a son and daughter herself. It would be seven more long months before I would see her for the first time. But Mary Alice sent me an 8 x 10 photograph that was taken when she was about 6 weeks old. When I got it I just sat on the edge of my bunk looking at it. My good friend Sgt. Bill Hammond came over and said "don't be shocked, all babies are ugly when they are first born". Then he looked at the picture and said, "but she is a beautiful baby. Why are you looking so sad?" I told him it was only that I missed them so much.

## CHAPTER SIX

Some nights we had to go on courier duty along with the couriers into Pusan. By this time I had been promoted to Staff Sergeant and as an N.C.O. had to ride along with them as a guard because of guerrilla activity. It was cold and there was snow and ice on the rocky road over the rough terrain through the villages and into Pusan. It was around 2:00 A. M. and all along the sidewalks we could see figures rolled up in old sacks or newspapers lying in the snow. These were only a part of the literally millions of refugees and war orphans from North Korea. My heart went out to them as I thought of my family back home. And I thought how blessed we were, even if we were many miles apart and on different sides of the world, that at least they were in the warmth and comfort of my in-laws home. I asked God never to let me forget the suffering I saw there and the depiction of human misery because of war. At last the peace talks seemed to be making progress, and we were beginning to see the end of this strange war that seemed to have no rhyme or reason and which seemed to be dictated by the politicians in Washington. It would become the forgotten war as later on the war in Vietnam with all of its problems and politics came into focus. I can look back now with pride knowing that our brave fighting men fought and died to prevent the atheistic, communist government from taking South Korea, in which God has brought about the greatest revival in our lifetime.

The South Korean president Sigmon Rhee was a dictator and wanted total power over both North and South Korea. As the negotiations were being worked out to bring about a cease fire he tried to keep the war going by bringing his troops against the

United States at the mainland P.O.W. camps. There were mostly South Korean troops guarding the camps with U. S. and U. N. personnel in charge of the operation. The Korean guards were pulled out and gave support to the P.O.W. s as they escaped. Some of our men were killed and others wounded as over 143,000 North Korean prisoners escaped. Those were dark days, as we did not know if President Sigmon Rhee would turn all of his troops on us or not.

We were outnumbered by eight divisions to less than three, and didn't know if back up support could arrive in time if worse came to worse and that happened. Every night there were fire skirmishes around the P.O.W. compound, as the escaping P.O.W. s were able to steal or somehow obtain weapons to use against us. We replaced all the South Korean guards with U. S. soldiers which spread us pretty thin, but it was necessary because we could not be sure of the South Koreans under the circumstances.

An agreement was finally made in the negotiations for peace which was taking place in France to begin exchanging wounded and crippled prisoners between North and South Korea. This exchange would be known as "Operation Little Swap" It would consist of both North Korean and Chinese P.O.W. s which were considered too severely handicapped to be a threat to further involvement in the war.

My job as draftsman was to lay out and design the plans for the railroad cars which would be used to transport these P.O.W. s to Panmunjom, known as "Freedom City" and would be the exchange point. I requested to be allowed to go along as an N.C.O. supervisor, which was required in each railroad prison car. My superior officers

would not allow me to go until the last train load in case problems arose before then and revisions might be needed in the plan. Everything went fairly smoothly, and finally the last train load was to leave Pusan for the two day trip north to "Freedom City".

I was placed in charge of 26 North Korean officers, along with a South Korean interpreter. Many of the officers were amputees and the others had been severely wounded. The interpreter and I were unarmed, but there were armed guards between each railroad car. There was trouble with the prisoners in other parts of the train, but the prisoners in my car said I had treated them fairly and that they would not give me any trouble, and they didn't.

We reached the end of the railroad at the front lines of the 38th parallel. This was where the heaviest fighting was now going on and we could see the smoke from exploding mortar shells and hear the noise of battle across from each side of the "No Man Zone". They brought chests of hot rice covered with octopus and gravy for the prisoners, which they could not even eat because it was scorched and smelled terrible. The prisoners were then loaded into military ambulances for the last few miles up "Freedom Road" to Panmunjom. This was a rough gravel road that went through the "No Man Land" from our front lines through the enemy lines and continued several miles, ending at "Freedom City". There were flags on either side of this route to indicate that it was a neutral area about one hundred yards in width. We were the last ones in and out and were uneasy for fear that the enemy would not honor this agreement of neutrality or that those bullets "to whom it might concern" flying on both sides of the neutral zone knew nothing about that agreement.

But all went well and after we returned to UNCACK, plans were begun for operation "Big Swap", which would return all of the remaining P.O.W. s at the end of the war. Again a snag came with President Rhee refusing to let the Indian troops which were to be the peace negotiators for the P.O.W. exchange set foot on South Korean soil, not wanting the war to end, hoping for total defeat of North Korea in which he would be ruler. Plans had to be worked out to use L.S.T. landing craft to move the P.O.W. s from the camps by water around South Korea to the neutral zone where they would then be turned over to the Indian troops for the exchange. At last it was all completed. The war was over and promises were made to get us home for Christmas 1953.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

The trip back home across the Pacific was calm and peaceful, and we made the voyage back to Seattle in a record 14 days. The name of the carrier was the "Marine Lynx". When we arrived at Ft. Lewis we were served the best meal I had ever eaten in the Army. We had steak, fresh salad, baked potatoes with all the trimmings, including milk and butter. After a few bites, I couldn't eat any more. My stomach simply could not handle that kind of rich food after months of canned and powdered food. The next day they told us that all who lived east of the Mississippi River would fly 1st class back east. When we arrived at the airport I saw our "first class" plane. It was an old World War II surplus D.C.-3, flown by contract to the government by Flying Tiger Airlines. It was a cargo plane with canvas seats so close together you couldn't move your legs. I took one look and said, "I've made it this far and if you will let me, I'll take a bus instead of trusting in that plane". NO DEAL! We were put on board, and off we went. As we flew over the Rockies they told us we were just ahead of a big storm, and were at an altitude that would be dangerous for us to try standing or moving around because there was no oxygen for the passengers. They told us to stay as still as possible, but as usual there is always some G. I. who will have to find out the hard way. A couple got up and tried walking around and passed out.

We arrived in Chicago after midnight to refuel the plane. After take off, oil started pouring out of the right engine. The pilot circled the airport a few times and decided the leak had slowed down enough to continue our flight to Columbia, S.C.. We were to be discharged at Fort Jackson where it all began three years before. By that time I had

decided we were all doomed, and thought that I'd probably never see Dixie again! But somehow we made it and I was so glad I kissed the ground when we landed. I called my wife and told her I would be home in a few days. That was the longest three days I spent in the service. They kept trying to encourage us to re-enlist by giving us one lecture after another, and then going through all the physical exams, etc. they put us through. I only wanted to be with my wife and see my little daughter who I had never seen and who was already seven months old.

My last night in my military service I pulled "Sergeant of the Guard". A friend of mine also had guard duty, and his wife had come to Columbia to meet him. I took his duty between my watch and walked guard for him so he could be with his wife.

At last we were discharged and I caught a commercial flight to Jacksonville, Fl. where my family met me for the trip home. We had finally made it and what a joy it was to be with my family again and to be able to hold my beautiful wife and baby daughter..

## CHAPTER EIGHT

Now that I was a civilian again, I needed a job to support my family. My uncle owned a sign shop in Daytona Beach which was about 18 miles away. He gave me a job sign painting and I worked for him for about 18 months.

One day I read in the newspaper that the Florida Legislature had increased the number of state troopers for the Highway Patrol and I thought I would like to try my hand at it. I put in an application and waited for several months before I got a reply. Finally, I received a telegram summoning me to Tallahassee for testing and a physical. The qualifications for size was 5'10" and a minimum of 165 lbs. I was just 5'10", but I only weighed 155 lbs.. Mary Alice had been feeding me bananas and ice cream for several weeks along with a lot of other good fat food to help me get my weight up to 165 lbs. I passed all the tests and the physical, but when I stepped on the scales I was still several pounds short on the weight. The physician who was handling the physicals told me to go to the water fountain and drink as much water as possible and come back. I drank and drank until I thought I would burst, then got back on the scales and hit the 165 lbs. mark. I had passed!

It was several more weeks before I received another telegram telling me to report to Lake City for working on the job training. There were four of us hired at that time, making the total number of troopers in the whole state of Florida 238 including the brass. We had another child in the meantime, a fine son Hal Clifford Bell Lee, Jr. who was now just 6 months old. Mary Alice and the two children moved in again with her parents until I could find a place for us to stay wherever I was to be stationed.



It was June 8th, 1955 when I reported to the Lake City Highway Patrol troop headquarters. That was our wedding anniversary, and I was gone again. There were three places I had no desire to live, and they were Jacksonville, Miami, and Tampa. Being from a small town I didn't want to live in a big city. The captain interviewed me, the 1st sergeant issued me some uniforms, and then they told me I would be stationed in Jacksonville!

In those days there were bunks at the Patrol stations for single men who wanted to stay there, or for men in transit on details, and for recruits like myself. There were four or five troopers there most nights. To begin my training I was assigned to ride with different troopers. They didn't have enough recruits to make up a class for us in Tallahassee, so I did not go through the academy until a year later.

One day, about two weeks after I arrived in Jacksonville, a teletype came in from Tallahassee informing me that I had been re-assigned to, yes that's right, Miami. I packed up everything and headed south to the other end of the state. I was able to spend a night at home with my family en-route, but it was another month before we were all together again in Miami. I moved into the barracks and continued training. At the end of the training period Mary Alice and the children joined me and we found an apartment in Hialeah Gardens. We found that it was infested with fleas and we had a real battle getting rid of them, but other than that it was sufficient. Next door there was a family who fought and argued all the time, and would go out at nights and leave their little baby alone locked in the apartment. Mary Alice had a hard time sleeping nights. I worked nights and slept in the daytime and she had to keep the children quiet so I could

sleep. We worked 6 days a week then, 12 hours a day and 14 hours on Saturday. We got paid once a month and I made a big salary of \$220.00. Needless to say it was difficult to survive in a place like Miami on that kind of income, and the traffic was unbelievable even then. I had never seen so much traffic, and had a hard enough time just trying to keep from having a wreck myself, let alone get to violators to stop them.

Many violators went unprosecuted because we simply could not get to them. I came home with a headache nearly every day because I was so tense from the situation.

One month we were broke, without any groceries, not even any milk for the children. We still hadn't learned how to manage our \$220.00, but believe me we learned the hard way. I knew I could call home and get money, and my parents would have been glad to help. As a matter of fact they probably would have been very upset that we didn't. But I was too proud for that unless it was absolutely necessary.

I was called to a truck wreck on U.S. Highway #27 about 30 miles N.W. of Miami in the everglades. When I arrived there I found a semi-tractor trailer truck had turned over, and it was loaded with onions from New Mexico. I called for another truck to transfer the load of onions into, which had to be done before we could right the wrecked truck. It took several hours, while I directed traffic around the wreck. As we finally got everything cleaned up and I started to leave I found they had put several bags of broken and bruised onions in my patrol car. They said they would have to dump them, that the stores wouldn't accept them and maybe I could use them. Well, I took some of them to a little store that we had shopped at and traded those onions for milk and bread for the

kids. Mary Alice and I ate onion soup, fried onions and onions every other way imaginable until payday. That was the roughest month we ever had but we learned a lot through it, and even though I was not a Christian then I know that the Lord was watching over us.

There was an opening for a trooper in Okeechobee, a small western town at the north end of Lake Okeechobee, and I went to the captain and requested a transfer. I knew I didn't have any seniority, and I would have understood had someone else wanted the position, but I also knew that no one really wanted to work there. It was a small town then and way out in the boondocks. Not only that, but only one trooper was assigned to that whole county, and that meant I would be on call 24 hours a day.

Since no one else wanted the position I was granted my request, so again I left to find a place for us to live. I was to start my job immediately. Mary Alice's dear mother came to Miami by train and stayed with her and the kids for a couple of weeks until I could find a home for us. Then they all came up and joined me.

There were a lot of long hours and rough duty in Okeechobee, but I was glad to be out of Miami and all that traffic. Our telephone had to be listed in the phone book as Florida Highway Patrol, and we received calls all hours of the day and night. I had not yet been to the training academy, and had only basic first aid training, so one of the hardest things for me was the severe wrecks which occurred on those long, lonely stretches of highways in that area with no ambulance service available. It was frustrating to watch people so badly hurt or dying to wait for an ambulance to come all the way from Ft. Pierce, Pahokee, or Sebring, depending on the location of the accident

and which was the closest. Funeral homes ran the ambulance service at that time as a part of their business. Some did a fine job but I really was concerned about some of the others. There was no real revenue, except in dead bodies, so they would race and fight over who got there first to get the dead. Sometimes it was 45 minutes to an hour before help arrived, and I felt so inadequate to give the proper aid many times. When I finally did go to Patrol School I majored in medical aid. In most areas, medical aid arrived at about the same time as the officer. Finally, I received help from the Okeechobee Lion's Club. They bought an old hearse, painted it red, and had volunteers drive it as an ambulance service for transporting injured and sick persons to the little hospital which had only one doctor in Okeechobee. After that the funeral homes in Ft. Pierce each stationed an ambulance in Okeechobee fearing that they might lose business.

Overall the work in Okeechobee was interesting and exciting for me, but it was still difficult for my family. A lot of moonshine whiskey was run through my area, along with cattle rustling, drunk drivers, and stolen vehicles as well as the typical traffic violations.

Once we had a severe summer storm with heavy flooding of the area. Many of the roads were washed out or under water. I was working night and day when I got a call that they were sending another trooper in to help me. It was a real joy to have someone to share the work and responsibility, and for the first time we would be able to rotate the wreck calls.

## CHAPTER NINE

Bob Strole was a handsome young man and a brand new recruit. I suppose he hardly knew what to think the night he climbed into my patrol car. All of Okeechobee County Was still flooded from all of the heavy rains. Most of the roads were under water, some of them completely washed out. It wasn't a very welcoming sight, and I guess he wondered what he was getting into. It was good news to me though, and it was a big help to all of us all over the state as we began to get more new men. There had been weeks at a time when I had not even seen another trooper in my county or even a supervisor for that matter. Radio contact was bad in the area and many nights I had to drive all the way down to Lake Okeechobee and drive up on one of the dykes to reach the patrol radio station to let them know that I was going off duty.

I remember one night before Bob came, my patrol car had broken down and I was riding with the only city officer Okeechobee had, Carlisle Thomas, the chief of police. Newt Stewart was the county sheriff, and he was an old man. His wife was the jailer, and that was all the law we had at that time. Sheriff Stewart would retire early, Carlisle was busy in town, and that left me for the county. The bootleggers would drive by my home to see if I was there, so they knew when to make their hauls. On this particular night they thought I was home since my car was there. but I was riding with Carlisle. We got a call that there was a reported drunk driver on the Indian Town Road between Okeechobee and Ft. Pierce, so we went to check it out. We didn't find him however, but as we started back towards Okeechobee City we met a cattle truck headed south. I remembered that a few nights earlier I had seen a truck similar to this

one backed into the woods and was suspicious of the fact that there might be some cattle rustling going on.

We spun around and pursued the vehicle into Martin County, and as we came up behind it we could see through the slatted sideboards what appeared to be vats and a large cooker. Carlisle and I looked at each other as we realized that the truck was carrying a giant liquor still. As we pulled them over I asked Carlisle to let me question the occupants since we were in Martin County which was out of his jurisdiction and I had authority state wide. We didn't want anyone coming up later with any technical loop holes.

We pulled up behind the vehicle and I went up and got the driver out for questioning. As I stood talking with him I saw someone dart out the other side. I ran around the truck and grabbed the other man who was a passenger. They both still had soot all over them from loading the truck. When I questioned them about the still they tried to play ignorant of the load and said they were hired to deliver the truck to a man in Indian Town, and were not aware of the nature of the load they were carrying.

We checked out the truck and found twelve one thousand gallon mash tanks with residue of corn mash in them and a fifteen hundred gallon cooking tank with mash residue. They were moonshiners sure as the world.

We placed the two men in Carlisle's patrol car and tried to call the beverage department on the radio. Unable to contact the state beverage agents, we called for deputy sheriff officers in Martin County, since we were in their county. As Carlisle was talking on his radio I was still standing outside. One of the two men broke out of the

door on the other side and ran. I ran after him and as I ran I stepped into soft sand and fell flat on my face, knocking out my flashlight. I felt around on the ground and found it and got it working again and continued in pursuit. He ran over the railroad tracks that were just beyond the road and hid in some bushes where I was able to catch him. I brought him back and we waited for the deputies. When they arrived at the scene we decided to let the truck driver drive the truck on into Indiantown to meet the ones who were waiting for them. I rode in the truck with him and the others followed in their patrol cars with their lights off.

We drove through Indiantown without any incident. The roads were deserted and still dark as it was around 2:00 A.M. by this time. As we headed south from Indiantown we came to a car parked on the left side of the road. The truck driver started to drive on by, but someone in the Car flashed a light at him so I made him stop. The person got out of the car and walked up on the driver's side with a flashlight. I carefully slipped out of the right side of the truck and ran around the rear of the truck to get between him and his car. I glanced behind us to see Carlisle and the deputies were behind us but it was so dark I couldn't tell.

As I walked around to the rear left of the truck I heard the man with the flashlight say, "What's the matter? What took you so long?". About that time I flipped on my flashlight and he took off running. There was a big canal along the road at this point and realizing he couldn't go in that direction he tried to run back to his car. The lights flashed on on the patrol cars behind us and we were in the light. I caught him as he ran by me. He reached into his pocket and at about the same time I heard someone rap a shotgun

shell into its chamber. I grabbed his hand and pulled away a knife. I glanced over at Carlisle and he held the shotgun to another man's head as he took a 30-30 rifle away from him. The rifle had misfired or I probably would have been shot and there would have been a terrible shoot-out that night. I thought then that I was only lucky, since I didn't know the Lord nor His providential hand. Over the years I experienced many close calls with death as all police officers do. I had never read the 13th chapter of Romans where Paul told the Romans twice that a police officer is a minister of God, but I had forgotten a lot of other things I had read. I watched a lot of church members doing things I didn't do and had decided if they were Christians I didn't want to be one. I thought that I didn't need what they professed. After all, that was hypocrisy and I didn't want to be a hypocrite.

### **THE END - FOR NOW**

The end of the manuscript. Pastor Lee passed away in 1998 before finishing his memoirs. The following was to be the preface to the book.

### **Preface**

On May 15th, 1964 my life changed forever! In the thirty two years I had lived, I thought I could do anything I wanted to within my own strength, from playing football in high school to jumping out of airplanes as a paratrooper in the 82nd Airborne. Later I went on to Korea and the prisoner of war command, and then as a State Trooper with the Florida



Highway Patrol. I was in full control of my life, so I thought, and could do anything I set my mind to do. Boy, was I in for a rude awakening!

I was a ten year veteran of the Highway Patrol on that fateful day, and for the first time in my life I was completely helpless, something I had never experienced before. I was at home, alone with my wife and three children when I suffered a near fatal heart attack. I was frightened, and all I could think of was that I was going to die and leave my wife and children. My dad had died in a plane crash when I was just a little baby, so I knew what it was like to grow up without a dad. The other thing that was on my mind was the fact that I was not ready spiritually to die. I had found comfort in reading the Bible while I was in Korea, but really had not understood much about what I read. I had gone through the rituals of joining a church and getting baptized, but it meant little to me. As a police officer I had to work late on Saturday nights and I watched a lot of “so called church members” doing things I didn’t think were becoming of a Christian, so I thought I didn’t need what they had. But on that day in May, I suddenly realized that I was the one who was going to stand before the Lord and be judged of my sins, and my sins became very real to me.

An ambulance carried me to the hospital. I couldn’t move even enough to help myself onto the stretcher. My hands and feet were numb. At the hospital I told the doctor I thought I’d had a heart attack, but he told me I was too young for that! But after looking at my cardiogram he changed his mind. He told me not to move any more than I had to,

and to stay as quiet as possible. My condition was diagnosed as a coronary thrombosis. There was little they could do for me and I was given about a two percent chance of survival. The Lord had other plans.

I spent almost two months in the hospital. Now I was down and all I could do was look up! A pastor came in to share with me the real meaning of salvation. He had previously tried to witness to me but I was too proud to listen. Praise God! He didn't give up on me. I came to know Jesus as my personal Lord and Savior on that hospital bed and my life hasn't been the same since. The Lord gave me not only a physical healing but a spiritual healing as well.

My recovery from the heart attack was slow. It took me about five years to completely regain my strength. My spiritual growth was also slow at first. We began to go to church as a family. As I grew from a spiritual babe in Christ to a mature relationship with the Lord, I started teaching Sunday School to a group of teenage boys, then later to a group of adults. About this time I heard about the Florida Bible Institute where the Bible really came alive to me and which I attended nights for seven years. After graduating from the Institute, I taught there for a year.

In 1978, I was asked to help start a mission church from the First Baptist Church in New Smyrna. We began the work there with thirteen people and held our first service in the new church building on Easter Sunday of 1980. Since then the Lord has seen fit to

increase our membership to over three hundred. I retired from the Highway Patrol after twenty five years of service and have served the Lord full time since then.

Things went well over the next few years. We saw the Lord add precious souls to His church and as the work progressed we began taking a group of them to the mission field each year. We helped with building programs and were able to witness along the way.

In 1986, a group of us went to Colombia, South America to help build a missionary school for the missionaries' children. I hadn't been feeling well and one day I felt a lump in my side. The plans had already been made and we were leaving a few days later. Not wanting to take the joy out of the trip for anyone I said nothing about the lump until we returned home. It had been a difficult trip for me and I was extremely tired. My wife made an appointment with the doctor for me right away. He thought at first I might possibly have amoebas in the liver, picked up from one of our trips to South America, which might have caused the liver to enlarge. An ultrasound revealed a large tumor in my right kidney.

Surgeons removed a nine pound tumor about the size of a volleyball along with my kidney. They told me I had renal cell carcinoma and although the surgery was successful further tests revealed that the cancer had spread to both my liver and my lungs. They sent me to Shands Hospital at the University of Florida for further tests. The

doctors there said they were sorry but there was nothing they could do for me, and if there was anything I had ever wanted to do and hadn't done, I'd better do it right away. They gave me five years at the most. Without the Lord my wife and I would have been devastated. But knowing it was up to the Lord to determine when life ends, we began a search to learn all we could about cancer. We knew from studying God's Word that when we fall into diverse trials we can ask of the Lord God and he will give us wisdom. (James 1:3-5)

Our prayers were answered in a strange way. We received a phone call from a man in Orlando whom I had never met. He was the father of my niece's husband and had learned from her what I was going through. He told me that he had cancer himself and would like to talk to me about it. We quickly agreed to meet with him and he shared with us about a health conditioning clinic in Seale, Alabama where he had been a patient himself, called Yuchee Pines. There they teach their patients how to build up their own immune system through diet, exercise and thermal water treatments. They help people with all kinds of health problems, not just cancer.

They were able to take us at the Health Center within just a few weeks. There we learned the kinds of foods that fight against cancer and how to prepare them. They also taught my wife to give me thermal water treatments, which induce an artificial temperature and it helps the body to produce its own interferon. I took three weeks of thermal water treatments there and six weeks later I took two more weeks of treatments

at home. This was to be followed by two more weeks of treatment in three months, then two more weeks in six months. Six months after my operation I had another cat-scan and the doctors could not believe that the cancer had not only not spread but the nodules had declined. I continued check-ups every three months and a cat-scan each year with no change.

Just before Christmas of 1989, I began to pass blood. We learned that the cancer had again appeared in my duodenum. I received innumerable pints of blood before the doctors decided to send me back to Shands Hospital. They took one look at my x-rays and told me my stomach was up-side-down and that it presented a medical emergency. They told me it could rupture at any time and there would be nothing anyone could do. Through the previous years, each time I had a cat-scan or x-ray of my abdomen they told me I had the largest hiatus hernia they had ever seen. But at Shands, they saw right away that it was not a hernia. I'd had problems all of my life with my stomach but didn't know until then what the problem was. I believe the Lord let the cancer come back so they could operate on it at the same time they removed the cancer.

The surgeon told us that on a scale of one to ten with a heart transplant being a ten, that this operation would be right under it. He had a cardiologist check my heart to see if it could stand the operation. He found that my cholesterol count was 105. He asked me why it was so low and I told him about the health conditioning center and of the diet I had been on. After he had checked everything out, he told me that he thought that the

only way to beat cancer was to do exactly what I had been doing by building up the immune system. He felt sure that I would be able to withstand the operation. They removed my duodenum, part of my pancreas and half of my stomach. The operation lasted nine hours and while they were inside me they checked my liver and found only scars left there from the cancer. That was over three years ago and today I am in better health than I have ever been in my life.

What I have experienced over the past seven years has truly been a blessing. The Lord has opened a whole new ministry for me. Just to be able to encourage others when they have been told they have a fatal disease and give them some hope is such a good feeling. To pray with them and encourage them not to give up, but to get the best medical help they can get and then put their trust in the Great Physician, the Lord Jesus Christ. Most of the patients they receive at Shands are terminal. The doctors at Shands told me that the difference in my case and so many others was my mental attitude.

I believe what the Bible teaches us in the book of James, if we are sick to call for the elders of the church and have them pray over the sick anointing them with oil. (James 5:13-15) "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him." The oil was the basis for the medicine at the time James wrote this, but

most important it is a type of the Holy Spirit. We need to ask God for wisdom as in James 1:5, search for the best medical help, then trust the Lord for healing.

Paul in writing to the Thessalonians said, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and *I pray God* your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful *is* he that calleth you, who also will do *it.*" (I Thessalonians 5:23-24) I believe that we need to nurture the whole man - body, soul and spirit. This includes the physical person, the psychological person and the spiritual person just as God's word says. If we are going to be all that we can be, the Bible is the word of God for man, now and forever. I call it the manufacturer's handbook. God has given us talented physicians for our well being, but we must not look only to them when we are broken. We need to take care of the whole person and keep it from being broken.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) We must make the choice to receive that everlasting life. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on His name:" (John 1:12) We must come to the place in our lives where we realize we are sinners separated from a Holy God. "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23) "For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God **is** eternal life through

Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 6:23) "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8)

The Bible further tells us "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Romans 10:9-10) I don't know what the future holds for my life, but I am certain who holds it. I live one day at a time and rejoice in the Lord and His blessings. I now have no more fear of death and the judgment for Christ has taken my judgment upon himself. His great and gracious love has opened a new and living way to the throne of heaven. Paul wrote to the Philippians these beautiful words which have become my life verses. "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:6-7)

May God richly bless each and everyone that reads these words.

In Christian Love,

Hal C. Lee, Pastor